

MAGE

THE AWAKENING
SECOND EDITION

*A Storytelling Game
of Modern Sorcery*



Philosophy is odious and obscure;

Both law and physic are for petty wits;

Divinity is basest of the three,

Unpleasant,

harsh,

contemptible,

and vile.

'Tis magic, magic
that hath ravished me.

— Christopher Marlowe,
Doctor Faustus

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To my late father, **Peter Brookshaw**, for his pride when I got this job

To **Sharon Brookshaw**, for her infinite patience with wizards

– Dave Brookshaw



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the Door

PART I

"Three minutes, sir."

I meet Jasper's gaze in the rearview mirror and nod, then go back to my preparations. In the window, my reflection looks back at me, superimposed over the Brooklyn streets.

When did I get so old? The reflection has gray hair, a beard with only a few dark patches left, and eyes with more lines than I remember. Too many years with not enough sleep, and the stress of the role. Still, I must compose myself. My pain is not important tonight. The mages I'm meeting will rely on me to do what they can't, what they mustn't.

Many of those with my station go masked. The mask is unflinching, unchanging. I have considered it, but I always remember advice I was given, years ago. It was the Millennial Convocation, and I was only two years in my post. Then-Hierarch Turifex's Consilium was strong, but just. The worst I'd done was put down a Scelestus and execute some boy's Familiar when he refused to obey a ruling.

I remember meeting my counterparts from the attending Consilia, safely away from the Convocation. Heimdall and Locke were masked, but Cronus wasn't. He looked so out of place sitting next to the three of us, like a benign great uncle smiling at children.

"The mask is a tool for separating yourself from your duty," he said, "but used incautiously it becomes a tool for intimidation."

"Isn't that the point?" Locke asked, but the old man shook his head and smiled.

"What need do the condemned have of intimidation? Their sentence has been decided; it is for you to carry it out. To protect ourselves, we all too often become cruel. As Guardians, is it not our duty to put other mages first?"

"Even those we execute?" I asked.

Cronus had been Interfector of Philadelphia when the Reapers of Cloud Infinite infiltrated its Assembly. He had been Interfector when the Eye of Tyranny was stolen by its own caretaker, when a cabal of witches delved into alternate times and came back as hollowed-out things that ticked like clockwork. He had more blood on his hands than the three of us put together.

He seemed so sad, but kind.

"Especially those," he replied.

...

My watch reads six minutes to midnight when Jasper pulls the car up to the sidewalk outside our destination. It's nothing to look at, from here — just an anonymous, drab office conversion. One of many "temporary" field sancta for the Consilium in exile. Inside, I know that over half a dozen Awakened and many more staff are still

here, despite the hour. The anger, the threats, the recriminations — they'll have all burned out by now, replaced with a tiredness that won't let them leave, look away, or rest. That's why I'm here.

At the witching hour, death comes like an old friend.

The master of this house is Horatio, Deacon of the Brooklyn and Queens Caucus of the Silver Ladder. In most other cities on Earth, he'd be at the top of the totem pole, but this is New York. We may have lost Manhattan, Turifex may be in disgraced self-exile, but the Pentacle holds. We have a new Hierarch, and Horatio answers to her.

He meets me in his study, and lets me know just how welcome I am.

"This is an outrage! With due respect, you Guardians can't just wander in and take over. This is an internal thérarch matter, and..."

"And Hierarch Seshat, your Archdeacon, sent me. You are still a member of this Consilium, correct?"

He fumes, but I've known him long enough to know that he's not really angry. He was expecting me, as he should have been, but has to make the pretense of reluctance. Too many of his subordinates are here for him to risk looking weak.

"Correct."

"As was the victim, and as is the accused?"

He nods, glancing at the door behind him. Thinking of his Caucus, listening in.

"And the accused, she turned herself in?" I ask.

"Yes." he replies.

"Then I am here to exact justice. Take me to her."

• • •

How do you imprison a mage, especially a Mastigos? The locals have put her in a guest bedroom stripped of all but the most basic furniture, and confiscated her tools. They even put a guard outside.

No one's fooled. She could vanish in a heartbeat, if she wanted to. Which means her contrition goes beyond turning herself in — she's accepted her fate.

When I enter, she's sitting on the floor in a corner, head in her hands. She looks barely old enough to be my granddaughter, if my granddaughter still existed.

"Genevieve."

She wipes her eyes and looks up at me.

"I'm Outis." I say, as gently as I can. Recognition plays across her face. She knows who I am.

"You're here to kill me?" She sounds exhausted.

"Perhaps. First, I need to know exactly what happened. It'll be quick; I can pull your memories out with a spell and —"

She shudders, shaking her head.

"Please don't. Don't make me see it. I can't..." she draws a ragged breath, "...I can't see it again."

She's in no fit state for this.

"Alright, I won't. But Genevieve, I need your confession. It is still a confession?"

"Yes. I did it. I killed her."

I take a notebook and pen from my jacket, place it on the floor between us.

"Then write it. I'll wait, and no one else will disturb you. I'll keep them out of here until you're ready."

She nods, and I knock on the door for the guard to open it.

"Gee," she says. I turn back. She's already picked up the pen. "Everyone calls me Gee."

"I'm sorry we met like this, Gee."



INTRODUCTION

I'll tell you the ultimate secret of magic. Any cunt could do it.

- Alan Moore

As you walk down the street, you feel it. Though the sidewalk is choked with people, they all remain oblivious, not one of them reacting to the building as they walk past it. You were like them once, blind to the secrets beneath the skin of the world, but one day you Awakened. Somewhere high above you, the apartment – and the thing it contains, calls to you. It's a Mystery. You will solve it, and you'll take its power for yourself.

Mage is a game about secret knowledge and hubristic pride, about knowing too much, becoming separated from your peers by special insight into the incomprehensible forces and twisting occult conspiracies behind a Fallen World.

Mage is a game of power and hubris, of the temptation to allow your reach to exceed your grasp, of knowledge outpacing wisdom. It's a game about obsession, turning away from comfortable Sleep to chase the weird and the occult. It's mages as occult detectives, confronting the supernatural of a gnostic world.

Themes

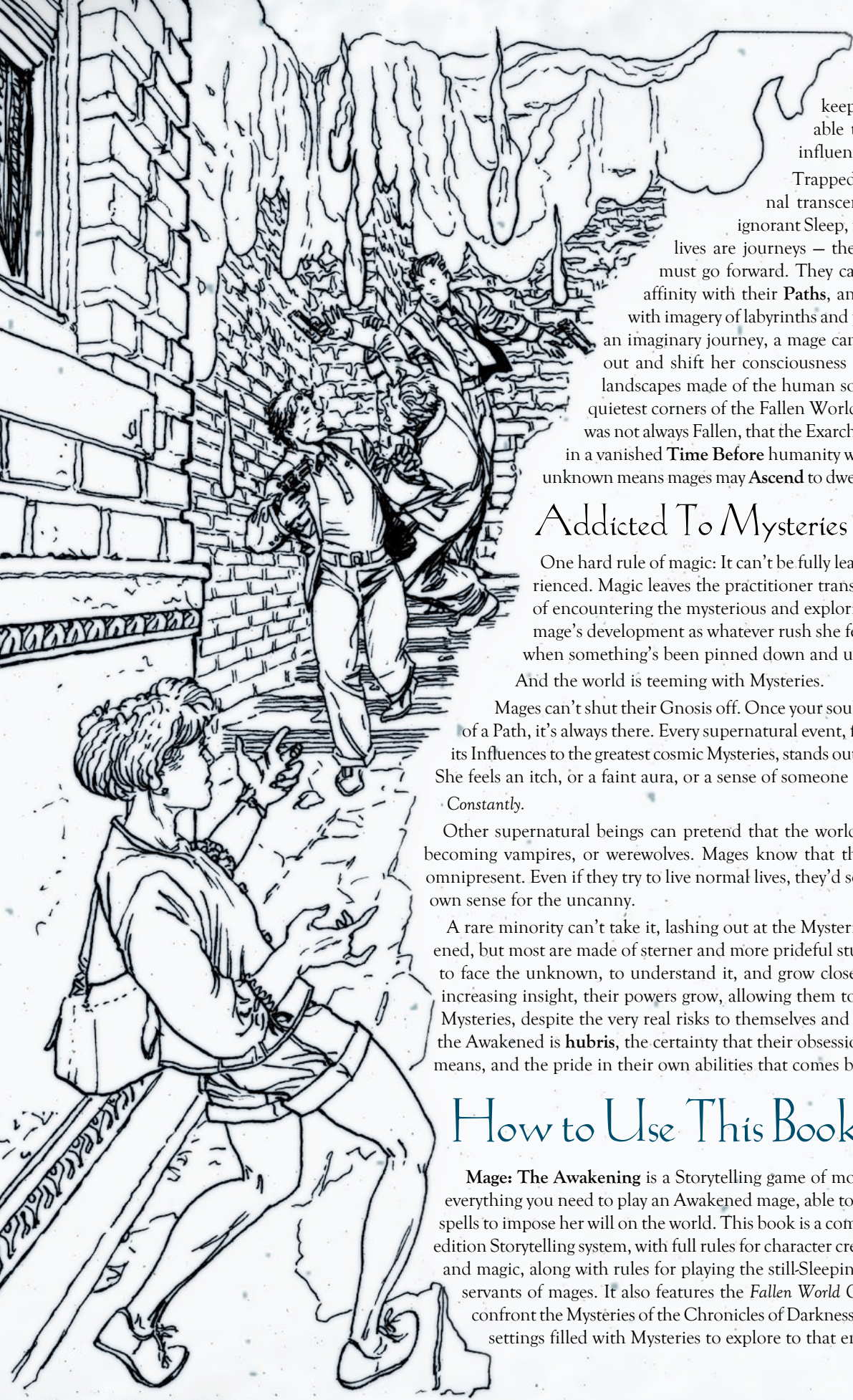
Mage depicts the **Awakened**, human beings who have unlocked the potential buried deep within everyone to see the many layers of occult symbolism and magical conspiracy influencing everything in the world. More than mere passive observers, though, mages have *power*; their insight grants them the **Art** of magic, the ability to manipulate symbols to cast spells. As vulnerable as any other human when surprised, but capable of grand, terrible feats of impossibility when prepared, mages deepen their insight – their **Gnosis** – by understanding the **Mysteries** of the supernatural, and apply it through their accumulated knowledge of ten **Arcana**, each a combination

subdivision of reality and academic discipline. The more power mages gain, the more esoteric Mysteries they can chase; and on and on it goes, until they escape the world entirely or succumb to its dangers. Mages must contend with both the monstrous inhabitants of the Fallen World and the majority of human beings, **Sleepers** whose souls recoil from magic.

The World is a Lie

People imagine that the world they can touch and see is real – more real than pure concepts. The abstract only exists to define the concrete. This world is all there is, a cruel, oppressive regime that grinds souls down with a thousand tyrannies. A whispering voice in the back of the head saying, *You're worthless. You're only human. Don't look. Concentrate on surviving the here and now.*

It's a **Lie**. A falsehood, created by invisible enemies from the symbolism of oppression and the Paradoxical energies of an **Abyss** of untruth. Mages **Awaken** when they confront the Lie, when they look deep inside themselves, or are shocked outside of themselves and see past the Lie to the symbols beneath. They call this Tapestry of hidden truth the **Supernal World**, and the concrete universe around them the **Fallen World**. Despite their Gnosis, however, mages are trapped in the Fallen World. They can look at the Supernal, but not touch. They can see how the symbols of the Supernal inform the Fallen World, but they can't become those symbols themselves, and experience the universe as pure magic. They do, however, have evidence that something *does* – the Supernal has inhabitants of its own, entities of pure magic, and over the centuries mages have realized that those they see are only the tip of the iceberg. Deep in the unseen Supernal, tyrannical beings that mages call **Exarchs** have created the Lie to



keep humanity both vulnerable to and ignorant of their influence.

Trapped halfway between Supernal transcendence and comforting, ignorant Sleep, mages often feel like their lives are journeys — they can't go back, so they must go forward. They call the symbols they have affinity with their **Paths**, and describe the Mysteries with imagery of labyrinths and prisons. By meditating on an imaginary journey, a mage can shut the physical world out and shift her consciousness inward, exploring Astral landscapes made of the human soul. And in the strangest, quietest corners of the Fallen World, mages find signs that it was not always Fallen, that the Exarchs did not always rule, that in a vanished **Time Before** humanity was free, and that through unknown means mages may **Ascend** to dwell in the Supernal forever.

Addicted To Mysteries

One hard rule of magic: It can't be fully learned without being experienced. Magic leaves the practitioner transformed, and the journey of encountering the mysterious and exploring it is as important to a mage's development as whatever rush she feels at the end of the trail when something's been pinned down and understood.

And the world is teeming with Mysteries.

Mages can't shut their Gnosis off. Once your soul is opened to the insights of a Path, it's always there. Every supernatural event, from the least ghost using its Influences to the greatest cosmic Mysteries, stands out to a mage without trying. She feels an itch, or a faint aura, or a sense of someone walking over her grave.

Constantly.

Other supernatural beings can pretend that the world's still "normal" despite becoming vampires, or werewolves. Mages know that the supernatural is nearly omnipresent. Even if they try to live normal lives, they'd soon be provoked by their own sense for the uncanny.

A rare minority can't take it, lashing out at the Mysteries and even other Awakened, but most are made of sterner and more prideful stuff. Their Paths call them to face the unknown, to understand it, and grow closer to the Supernal. With increasing insight, their powers grow, allowing them to reach for more difficult Mysteries, despite the very real risks to themselves and others. The great flaw of the Awakened is **hubris**, the certainty that their obsessions are an end worth any means, and the pride in their own abilities that comes before a terrible fall.

How to Use This Book

Mage: The Awakening is a Storytelling game of modern sorcery. It contains everything you need to play an Awakened mage, able to pierce the Lie and create spells to impose her will on the world. This book is a complete game in the second edition Storytelling system, with full rules for character creation, running the game, and magic, along with rules for playing the still-Sleeping friends, associates, and servants of mages. It also features the *Fallen World Chronicle*, in which mages confront the Mysteries of the Chronicles of Darkness, and includes five sample settings filled with Mysteries to explore to that end.

Chapters

Chapter 1: Faces of Magic introduces the five Paths to Awakening from the Lie, each one linked to a different facet of the Supernal World. It also presents the Orders, six global organizations of the Awakened who differ in their beliefs regarding magic's purpose.

Chapter 2: Through Awakened Eyes describes the Awakening itself, details the Fallen and Supernal Worlds, and explores mage society.

Chapter 3: Supernal Lore gives rules and game systems for Awakened characters. It reveals the properties of Gnosis and Mana, describes the Mage Sight willworkers use to probe Mysteries, gives rules for summoning entities from the Supernal World, and describes the many uses and vulnerabilities of the human soul.

Chapter 4: Magic presents the rules for casting spells in a game of **Mage**, whether from the many example spells given or using the guidelines for inventing your own. It reveals the Attainments, magical capabilities developed by experienced mages, and how mages can specialize their sorcery into Legacies that grant unique powers.

Chapter 5: Fallen Laws covers the Storytelling system, the rules that describe and resolve the action in a game of **Mage**. When it comes to a firefight with an eldritch horror or persuading a senior mage to give you access to a resource, this chapter has you covered.

Chapter 6: A World of Magic describes the Fallen World and its inhabitants from an Awakened perspective, from the Left-Handed mages censured by the Orders, to the myriad places of power and phenomena mages explore, to the invisible realms of the Astral, Shadow, and Underworld. It also contains rules for the many ephemeral entities mages encounter while exploring the Fallen World.

Chapter 7: Mysterious Places showcases five sample settings for **Mage** games, each with a central Mystery. Why do phantom bells ring out over Tucson? What has caused the Astral Realms to wash over Los Angeles? What secrets lie in the tangled streets of London?

Chapter 8: Storytelling covers the core principles behind running a game of **Mage**. It describes the basics of bringing the Chronicles of Darkness to life, gives advice on running mystery plotlines, and provides optional techniques for designing a character's relationships and rules for the Duel Arcane.

Appendix 1: Supporting Cast gives guidelines and rules for Sleepers, Sleepwalkers, and Proximi, and details their roles in magical society.

Appendix 2: Legends of the Fall describes the two central myths of the Awakened; the fall of Atlantis and the hope of Ascension.

Appendix 3: Conditions and Tilts is a reference section for the range of lingering effects caused by supernatural powers and other systems.

Truths and Lies Mages gain their powers from deals with the devil.

False, nor do they rely on pacts with any other being. Mages can and often do deal with supernatural entities, and even enter into binding agreements with them, but the potential for magic can't be granted by a pact and comes entirely from within.

Magic runs in the family.

No seventh sons of seventh sons here, at least not among the Awakened. Family lines called Proximus Dynasties *do* inherit a faint, weak reflection of Supernal power, but anyone can Awaken.

Magic stems from belief

False; no Sleeper culture has a monopoly on magic, and the powers of cultural practitioners remain subtle and weak, if they even exist at all. Mages perpetuate this rumor inadvertently by using the symbols of "magical" techniques and practices in their own spells, but the trappings aren't responsible for the magic.

The presence of nonbelievers ruins magic

Often used as an excuse by would-be wizards for their failures, this is actually true, but belief in magic is not the problem. Anyone not a mage or a rare nearly-Awakened **Sleepwalker** bears a shard of the Abyss within her soul, which not only damages spells she witnesses but warps memories, making a bystander forget any obvious magical effect she may have seen.

Mages see the unseen, and understand many mysteries

Very true, and it sets them apart from their Sleeping kin.

Appendix 4: Spellcasting Quick Reference is a reference section for the core systems found in Chapter Four.

An Introduction to Storytelling Games

In all likelihood, you know what a storytelling or roleplaying game is already. If you're new, here's the basics.

In **Mage**, you and your friends tell stories of a core cast of characters exploring Mysteries in the Chronicles of Darkness' Fallen World, a grim version of our own world. Roleplaying

games are like ongoing comic books or TV dramas, like *The Invisibles* or *True Detective*. Each gaming session, which usually last between two and six hours, is like a weekly episode or single issue, building into distinct storylines as you play. Mysteries are uncovered, and the price is paid.

The ideal group size for Mage is around two to five players, taking on one main character each. You'll make decisions for your character — what Mystery she's obsessed by, how and when she uses magic, how she reacts to betrayal, love, or anger.

One player, the **Storyteller**, is responsible for portraying characters who don't belong to specific players, and presenting fictional situations that challenge the other players' characters. Think of these as the supporting cast — both ongoing characters who help or oppose the core cast, and one-off antagonists who turn up to cause unique kinds of trouble.

As for challenging the player characters, it's the job of the Storyteller to come up with scenes where the players have to make decisions fraught with conflict and danger. The Storyteller narrates a situation, then the other players say how their characters respond. The most important question a Storyteller can ask is, "What do you do now?"

When a character acts, the outcome of the action is determined by rolling a handful of dice. The basics are simple.

You add a few numbers on your character sheet (a mini-dossier) and roll that many dice. You'll find out whether your action works, or fails and gets your character into more trouble.

While players other than the Storyteller will generally be advocates for their characters' successes, planning ways in which they can succeed, a lot of drama and fun comes from when things don't go well for the protagonists. Again, think of a television series...the most interesting episodes are often the ones where everything goes wrong for the characters until they find a way to turn it around. That said, the Storyteller should make sure characters have a chance to bounce back rather than constantly dumping suffering on them.

The Storyteller is responsible for...

- ...bringing the setting to life through description.
- ...deciding where scenes start and what's going on.
- ...portraying characters who don't belong to other players.
- ...involving each player and her character in the ongoing story.
- ...putting players' characters in tough spots, encouraging interesting decisions.
- ...facilitating the actions players' characters take, while making sure there are always complications.
- ...making sure that poor dice rolls affect but don't stop the story.

The players are responsible for...

- ...creating their own individual characters as members of the cast.
- ...deciding what actions their characters take.
- ...making decisions that create drama and help keep the story moving.
- ...highlighting their characters' strengths and weaknesses.
- ...confronting the problems the Storyteller introduces.

...developing their characters' personalities and abilities over time, telling personal stories within the overall story of the game.

Everyone is responsible for...

- ...giving other players chances to highlight their characters' abilities and personal stories, whether that's by showing them at their strongest or weakest.
- ...making suggestions about the story and action, while keeping in mind the authority of players over their characters and the responsibility of the Storyteller to occasionally make trouble.

Inspirational Media

Mage draws on stories of obsession, conspiracy, mysteries, and the occult. It's a popular fusion — fantasy and horror fiction is replete with occult detectives, wielding magic against mystery. Here's some of the media that inspired this game.

Mage Media

Hellblazer, published by Vertigo comics. John Constantine, nicotine-stained, trench-coated asshole demonologist and mage, has been the character other occult detectives are measured against for decades. His jackdaw magical style fits **Awakening's** mages, but it's his sheer inability to let a mystery go despite the ever-increasing fallout for those around him that really makes him stand out.

The Invisibles, published by Vertigo comics. The titular magician-terrorists assign "cabal" roles by symbolism, take on Shadow Names, and fight the forces of universal oppression in a world that's a hologram between larger, Supernal realities. The story's antagonists were a primary inspiration behind the Seers of the Throne; an early arc even has what **Mage** calls Profane Urim in it.

The Night Watch pentology, by Sergei Lukyanenko, deals with a gritty Chronicles of Darkness-like Moscow with a many-layered magical world underneath, only the shallows of which are accessible. If you need a hand understanding the Fallen / Supernal Worlds, give it a go.

House of Leaves, by Mark Z. Danielewski, is a metatextual horror novel, at least two layers of which could describe a Mastigos Awakening or Pandemonic Verge. Beware the Minotaur.

The Dresden Files, by Jim Butcher, describes a supernatural noir world inhabited by Chronicles of Darkness-like monsters and a wizard private eye who *means* well but often ends up hurting himself more than the bad guys.

Non-Mage Media

True Detective, created by Nic Pizzolatto, is an anthology TV series, each season showing a different cast of damaged, obsessed individuals chasing a terrible Mystery.

Dark City, directed by Alex Proyas, initially looks like it might be Mage Media but veers into a different genre by the end. An amnesiac suspected of murder tries to discover the secrets behind the strange, night-time city he inhabits.

John Dies at the End and *This Book is Full of Spiders*, by David Wong, depict the mind-bending possibilities of the Supernal World, as two layabouts take a drug that peels away the barriers of perception.

White Wolf Books

Although this book contains everything needed for the game, we've published many other books for the Chronicles of Darkness that can enhance your Mage chronicle.

The Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook is a definitive handbook for the rules, including expanded systems and character

options. Citations to the Rulebook in this volume refer to the second edition.

The six **Order** books detail the inner workings of their subjects, going in-depth into their history, philosophies, and factions.

Left-Hand Path details those mages proscribed and pushed away by the Orders: the heretics, apostates, Mad, Scelesti, and Reapers.

The Fallen World Anthology contains twelve short stories of Mystery and magic. It's a good way to immerse yourself in the Chronicles of Darkness, and gain inspiration for your own **Mage** stories.



the Door

PART II

Hours pass. The sky begins to brighten, and the crowd of bystanders slowly realize that they won't be seeing Gee's blood any time soon. One by one, they quietly leave to rest.

A servant brings me breakfast, and looks confused when I ask for a second tray. Taking it to Gee's makeshift cell, I knock softly and push the door open.

She's asleep, curled up on the bed. The notebook lies open on the floor, neat handwriting covering the visible pages. I pick it up and flick through the pages, realizing that it cuts off. She hasn't finished.

I put the notebook back, and leave the tray. Let her sleep.

I sit in the lobby, and build the imago in my mind. I saw the writing for seconds at most, but that's enough. Time parts before me, and I'm back in the room, frozen in the moment, looking at each page. I slowly advance the postcognition, reading Gee's words.

Lucretia, they want a confession, but I'm not writing this for them. I'm writing this to remember you. To remember the days we had together, and make sense of the Mysteries we sought together. To record the trials of young mages and to serve as a warning to those who follow after us. But, yes, I write this as a testimony to answer to those who went before us and who now hold me accountable for what has happened. The Interfactor is here, and I know what that means.

Lucretia wasn't your name when you Slept, just as my name wasn't Gee. You were Sarah, I was Constance, and we both hated the names our parents had given us. I met you at JFK, that pulse point off what others call Jamaica Bay, but whose true boundaries and energies we saw, ripples of color and texture no one seemed to stare at. Except for us. I knew you straight away among the throngs of Sleepers picking up loved ones and business associates. I saw you,

wearing formal attire even though you had traveled over twenty-four hours to get here. Your clothes were still crisp and clean.

You'd Awakened far away, but you knew early on that you wouldn't stay with your first mentor. You wanted to reinvent yourself completely, to build a Shadow Name in a new Consilium, one that needed you. The Order told you about New York, about how the Pentacle lost Manhattan to the Seers, about the Mystery of the city's geomancy, and you felt your calling. You knew where you wanted to go. Over a decade since Turifex's folly, and New York still welcomed any mage coming here for a better life. More than that - we needed you. Any who would come. If the Pentacle would ever reclaim the island, it would need every mage it could get.

I was born in New York City, and you were a newcomer. Together, we devoured the possibilities that stretched before us. We sat in the cab, your body leaning against mine as the car bounced on the streets. We chuckled whenever we caught the eyes of the cabby in the rearview mirror, his quizzical expression only enhancing the experience we shared.

Stretches of energy, lashing through the city, rippling with verve, waiting for a knowing hand to dip into them and drink from their depths. Supernatural beings going about their daily business, meeting their needs while masquerading as human. Shadows deeper than fear, ambition higher than the spires of skyscrapers, desire burning, destroying, creating. Beneath everything, the crackling tension of the leys, pulled by the Mystery, still vibrating years after the Folly. We pointed out the possibilities along the way. You asked about going into Manhattan, no magic, not to break the peace, but just to see all the museums, and I said we'd go to all of them, as long as Horatio gave us the time.

When we pulled up to the sanctum I held the door open for you and grabbed your suitcase. Horatio greeted us at the bottom of the steps, austere as always, welcoming you and telling us where your room was. I went with you to your room, just down the hall from mine, and put your luggage down. I told you I'd give you a tour but you opted to rest after all the traveling. "We'll have time to catch up," you told me with a smile. I nodded and blushed and left your room by walking backwards, my hands behind my back.

We were the two youngest théarchs in the city, and there was so much for us to do.



CHAPTER ONE: FACES OF MAGIC

I think becoming a wizard is about discovering what's real and what isn't.
— Ben Aaronovich, *Midnight Riot*

Although mages come to their Gnosis in individual acts of rebellion against the Lie, they're human, and humans are, social animals. Aside from the benefits of having someone to speak to about the Mysteries, mages make best use of the Art when instinct is married to training. For thousands of years, mages have explored the Mysteries and recorded their insights, and that accumulated body of lore has become a hidden culture of magic.

Paths

Theoretical models of the cosmos give infinite numbers of Supernal Realms, hidden deep beyond the Supernal World revealed through Mage Sight. Other, rival, theories state that there is only one Supernal Realm, and that all seeming division is imposed on magic by mortal minds. Despite the debates, for all intents and purposes mages count five different facets or Paths of the Supernal World: five ways to see through the Lie, five ways to achieve magic, five kinds of mages.

Perhaps in the Time Before mages were not limited to the Paths; a minority of mages see the reoccurring symbolism of **Watchtowers** found in many Awakenings as a sign that something in the Supernal is creating mages just as the Exarchs control the Lie. The Silver Ladder calls these beings **Oracles**, but if any mage has ever met one, she hasn't said so.

Each Path is dominated by the symbols of two Ruling Arcana, which mages of that Path have a great instinctive familiarity with, and is notably deficient in a third Inferior one. The Paths are defined by the interplays of the Ruling Arcana, each with one Subtle Arcanum governing the symbols and magic of hidden, esoteric phenomena of the Path, and one Gross Arcanum governing its concrete, eminent manifestations.

The Paths are:

- **Acanthus:** Witches and Enchanters on the Path to Arcadia, Supernal Realm of Fate and Time, and abode of Fae.
- **Mastigos:** Warlocks and Psychonauts on the Path to Pandemonium, Supernal Realm of Mind and Space, and abode of Demons.
- **Moros:** Alchemists and Necromancers on the Path to Stygia, Supernal Realm of Death and Matter, and abode of Shades.
- **Obrimos:** Thaumaturges and Theurgists on the Path to the Aether, Supernal Realm of Prime and Forces, and abode of Angels.
- **Thyrus:** Shamans and Ecstatics on the Path to the Primal Wild, Supernal Realm of Spirit and Life, and abode of Beasts.

ACANTHUS

THE WITCH

Magic is a twisting tale where Fools walk Fortune's Wheel.

We Awakened to the power of choices, jewels of possible fates – and beheld in every jewel its flaw, its consequence, its doom. We climbed the Watchtower of the Lunargent Thorn and beheld Arcadia. We screamed iron words to the Fae and mutilated our destinies.

It's never just once upon a time. You wanted revenge, like the oldest man with his sharpened stone, like your ancestor with the bronze knife, and your unborn daughter with a ceramic pistol, someday. Cut on the same thorns, their footsteps join yours along a common trail of blood: the path heroes walk. But I'm not a hero. I've stepped off the path. I leave no bloody footprints but those I choose, or paint new, twisted ways for others to follow. Take my hand and I'll drag you into mists unseen by Fate – or like witches in the stories, end your red journey with the old curses. That's freedom's danger.

Acanthus wield Time and Fate to tell the stories of other lives. In great and monstrous myths they appear as mist-shrouded figures, the tricksters and foreshadowing poets who guide events with subtle gestures. When we witness benign influence we might call them **Enchanters**, and thank them for overcoming obstacles with strange ease, but we more often call them **Witches**: cunning ones who step outside the laws that bind everyone else to spin new rules from the Wheel of Fortune.

You don't know them but you've seen their work – lived it, even.

That woman who hounded you for spare change didn't exactly jump from the bushes, but still defeated the usual alertness you exercised when you couldn't make it to the campus lot until after dark. You nearly dropped the book when she appeared out of nowhere. That would've been the worst – you'd snuck it out of Special Collections, where it languished under a layer of dust and

a dull name: SPEC 0045-3 BRI, *Cryptic Text with Illustrations of Weapons c. 1600*. You were going to decode it. You dropped your purse instead and quarters bounced, silver fairies in the dark. The panhandler didn't pick them up. You kept one eye on the book and another on her as you stooped, gathered nine quarters, and handed them off with a mutter. It was an awkward, infuriating five-minute process.

Five more minutes took you to the freeway, where you passed a burning car that looked just like yours. You drove through its skid marks before the fire trucks arrived. You'd only be five minutes late for your date, but you canceled anyway and made it home five minutes later than usual, instead. The woman from the parking lot flashed into view under a streetlight and walked to your door.

She smelled of smoke. She pulled nine quarters from a ragged pocket; you gave her the book. She tucked it under her arm and you knew you were the one making the greater payment, the book for five minutes of her time – enough to keep you from becoming smoking wreckage on the road. The quarters were a medium for the encounter, a significant accident. They bit into your hand.

That's what Witches do: Seize the Norns' skein to spin, weave, and cut our days.

Acanthus Magic

Ruling Arcana

Fate and Time. They're the root powers of destiny: Arcadian energies that turn the Wheel of Fortune. Witchcraft is the art of shaping destiny.

As a subtle Arcanum, Fate is part of every soul, the vessel containing its ultimate purpose. Like Merlin (a name Acanthus say was a title), they study and draw forth potential. Like the *Mórríoghan* who laid *Cú Chulainn* low, they turn Fate



against itself with curses and oaths that trap the fools who swear them.

Time is the loom that spins Fate into action. Acanthus part the Mists of possibility to predict portentous events. To Witches, these are scenes in a mythic story. Arcadia teaches that lives are legends, so as tricksters, allies, and prophets, they predict and shape pivotal moments — a role that puts them on the outside of great stories, setting the stage but rarely wielding the hero's sword.

Inferior Arcanum

Forces. Lightning arrives at its appointed time in the tale, not before. In Arcadia, elemental powers are visible manifestations of destiny and Fae passions. Fire isn't heat alone, but the anger of the Fair Folk or the climax of an apocalyptic myth; it is not to be raised through some mechanistic act of will.

Symbols and Myths

The Fool and the Wheel of Fortune. Tricksters, fairies, and witches. Stories of curses, blessings, and great destinies. Wishes and bargains.

In the Awakened Tarot, the Acanthus personifies the **Fool**: a trackless soul, able to move freely through the currents of destiny. Witches don't get to this state through naive wandering, but by unburdening themselves of old attachments, and using magic to slip the grasp of new ones. Their Mysteries involve the **Wheel of Fortune**, a card depicting the relentless spin of destiny. There's no still place to stand in the world, no equilibrium to be had. Even Acanthus can't just grab a spoke of the Wheel to get to a favorable situation. A Witch needs to get to the right place at the right time to nudge things *just so*. The further she is from the ideal opportunity, the more she needs to push — with stronger, more dangerous sorcery.

Witches are well known for invoking Supernal Fae, but

do not worship them. The Fair Folk respond to bargains and payments, not one-sided adulation (which as something given for free they *enjoy*, but never answer with favors). Modern Fae can take any shape. Many Acanthus invent personal fairy idols to attune themselves to Arcadia. Beyond personal inventions, Witches structure magic around trickster figures.

Tricksters demonstrate the value of breaking conventions, but also illustrate why those conventions exist. Coyote gets punished in the end, and the gods bound Loki with his son's entrails. Acanthus need not use tricksters alone, however. Some prefer gods and signs of duty, destiny, and moral obligation.

Acanthus rituals recall stories where luck, fate, obligations, and strong consequences come to the fore. Their spells are jinn-wishes with unintended consequences, or awful promises that must be kept. They recreate stories where heroes die from errant wordplay. *Macbeth* fits the pattern of an Acanthus legend. When Yudhisthira throws the dice to lose again and again, the tale follows Acanthus logic.

The Witches' Walk

Three Witches

The Acanthus Path seized Lucy Sulphate on an ordinary day and left her raving for days while she explored Arcadia as a cityscape in twisted steel and broken glass. When Lucy performs, the audience enters its frenzy willingly; but when she uses magic, she imposes, coerces — assaults. Other Acanthus manipulate lives in ways she abhors, so she finds herself stumbling between her respect for autonomy and her sense of justice. To Lucy, the Wheel of Fortune generates an intricate rhythm she can harness through music. Lucy's moved behind the scenes now, nurturing musicians capable of worldwide influence. She uses magic to bring out that greatness instead of burying herself in petty, violent Awakened disputes. Naturally, she joined the Free Council.

Movran's the best-known Merlin of the Walkers in Mists, a Legacy that travels through the realm of unrevealed destiny. His mother and sisters were Awakened, so even as a Sleeper, he knew magic was treacherous; but none of it prepared him for the Thorns, where he learned that a childhood steeped in occult



Beyond the Lunargent Thorn

Mastigos: What you call free will, I call a chain of accidents and their responses. Fight your way into their minds if you like. I surround them with the conditions they need to follow a correct path chosen of their own accord.

Moros: You know that everything moves, no matter how solid and dead it may appear. That's a start, but their transformations are just a small part of destiny's plan.

Obrimos: Your world of gods and secret names hides the truth: They don't care. Even when thunder speaks, it only wants to spark and roar.

Thysus: Even when you make your flesh a sacrament your hour of worship will pass, and when your orgasm subsides you'll be stuck with this question: What's my true purpose?

traditions had merely made him a brittle young man, too filled with preconceptions to learn the intuitive side of the Art. He Awakened a youth, but descended the Watchtower with the soul of an old man. Now in middle age, he feels he's finally starting to resemble his true self, the Fool divested of foolishness. Now he's Movran the Mentor, Movran the Meddler: a man who fits the mold of a traditional wizard, staff and all, but aches with helplessness because he knows the important things can't be taught. Nevertheless, his occult knowledge makes him a valuable member of the Mysterium.

Is Sunjata the Fool personified? He remembers cannons, swords, and sharks attacking fallen sailors before meeting foreign mages in Jamaica 13 years ago. Nobody had noticed Sunjata before, and he didn't seem to recognize any form of modern technology. He knows his Shadow Name, bareknuckle boxing, archaic sailing skills, and how to speak half a dozen languages, but not his home (he appears to have African and South Asian roots) or how he arrived. His magic is intuitive, based on the principle that oaths sealed in blood grease the Wheel of Destiny. Sunjata's world is made of wishes and earnest promises. He fell in with a cabal connected to Boston's Free Council and even approached the Silver Ladder in search of answers, but it was only when he dueled an Adamantine Arrow that he recognized certain techniques and initiation mysteries. He's the warrior with no past, and now suspects he'd rather not know about the bargains he struck in a time he only knows through dreams of blood-spattered sails.

Witches in the Orders

Adamantine Arrow: The Fallen World preys on hope and human potential. Acanthus see the mighty unwritten destinies; the Arrow trains them to defend these seeds of power. In return, Acanthus enhance Arrow zeal with efficiency. They're the blow to the pressure point, the bullet to the eye socket, the charge to the weak flank.

Free Council: We make our own fate; time is a ticking clock, a human breath, and moments of pain and love that stretch beyond objective measurement. The Free Council wants everyone to walk the Fool's path, to shake off the Lie of oppressive systems and the compromises they force people to make with their true selves. Their Acanthus free people to explore their true destinies — to a point. Freedom is precious, but dangerous. We make our own fate, but produce our own evil.

Guardians of the Veil: Horrors incubate inside foolish actions. The power to save or topple the world blazes in every soul. Some should be encouraged, but others need to be swaddled in ignorance, so they cannot even conceive of power, lest they abuse it. Acanthus sense these dangers before anyone else, and have the Art to deal with them quietly. Peering through time, they can see why the Order does its work in disastrous possible futures. They cut away these diseased, unborn fates to let a better world flourish.

Mysterium: The Wheel of Fortune is the pulse of living magic. Occult physicians, Mystagogues preserve magic's health by helping some Arts grow, and amputating forms that show signs of disease. Acanthus can sense when a sorcerer's ready for a new secret, or whether certain events must take place to prepare her, making them ideal mentors. They're notorious for speaking in riddles and demanding strange ordeals to produce mages worthy of the Mysterium.

Silver Ladder: Religions live and die by their prophets. The Ladder is a faith of sorts, devoted to humanity's secret divinity. It values Acanthus not just as practical oracles, but as those who predict when people Awaken to godhood. Every mage is a messiah, and every messiah needs a Baptist, to purify him and charge him with duties.

Seers of the Throne: Masterminds, manipulators, and decadents, Seer Acanthus hone their senses of entitlement into unshakable articles of faith. Foresight trumps force, and Seer Visionaries possess more of the former than anyone else. They honor the Ruin, Exarch of Fate, who tells them lesser people might as well serve a purpose while they march to doom. They're favorites of the Prophet of Time: anointed Great Men who make history.

Building the Witches' Mystery

Other Paths may teach ways to invade emotions and distort bodies, but Acanthus magic bends possibility itself, in a quiet, profound violation of victims' desires. You don't want to get caught, and might want to pick your Traits accordingly.

Composure confers resistance to interrogation and gives your Witch the self-control to react before anyone else. Manipulation strengthens her ability to influence events without using magic. Wits increases sensitivity to the world. Your magic works best when you know what to look for with Time and tweak with Fate. Don't underestimate the legwork it takes to make things look easy.

Witches tend to be adept at soft influence and information gathering because their best magic moves people in ways they can barely detect, or detects what people will do before they've even formed the intention to do it. Investigation and Subterfuge tease out possible destinies. Stealth might be useful to either avoid violent conflict, or if necessary, stack the deck against enemies. If they don't fall on their own swords, you've already failed.

MASTIGOS

THE WARLOCK

Magic is the soul's journey between Temperance and the Devil, through the maze of all desires.

We Awaken to the reality of our transgressions to confront our joys and sins. Your true self is a demon, trapped in an Iron Gauntlet. Release it, and it can take you anywhere.

I know you love him. Your desire arrived before you did, along a silken connection spun the moment you saw him. It strengthened when you kissed and fucked and fought, and even when he left. Now here you are, wondering why it still hurts – shouldn't the thread dissolve? No, the silk's as strong as ever, and your love's a fat little spider now, made monstrous by resentment until you can't call it love, but lust mixed with an inchoate sense of ownership. Fortunately, I can cut the thread and pluck the little monster out of you. I could use your creature and besides, you won't feel a thing – in fact, that's rather the point.

Mastigos master a world ruled by desire, thought, and perception. Thought is substance. Space is sentiment. You might feel like your true love never leaves your side or that the road stretches to an unpleasant destination. You're not imagining things, but without Awakening, you'll always trudge a lattice of miles, imprisoned in the Lie of objective distance. Without discipline, your thoughts are not your own – they can scarcely be said to inhabit your brain. Your passions travel invisible planes. Space is a set of chains forged by desire and associations, and they can be shaken from both ends.

The two common names for the Path reflect its individualistic, confrontational nature. The traditional title is **Warlock**, a name for sorcerers that also translates to "oathbreaker" in Old English. In the case of the Mastigos, the name fits not because of their untrustworthiness, but their typical disdain for taboos and impatience with social pretense. In the latter half of the 20th century, young Mastigos borrowed the term **Psychonaut** from

chaos magicians and human potential gurus; but where those Sleepers explore the shallows of their souls through drugs and meditation, mages map the depths and fish out the creatures they find.

How would they treat you, with your demon-haunted mind, lost in the prison of distance?

You never thought you'd follow a guru. He never called himself that of course, but he knew what you were afraid of – and at night, he knew what you liked. It split your mind between recognizing that you were a member of a destructive cult and reveling in the pleasure of his company.

You knew you weren't the only one to love him, or to give him your possessions, but you never met them all until you moved to the land he bought for you, three days before he disappeared. You all still follow his instructions, delivered in the last glow of the bright, gasp-wringing dreams he gives you every night. He needs money. He needs a certain item seized from a museum. He needs a killing.

You walk through a Warlock's world with slow steps, while she dances shortcuts through the rattling maze of Pandemonium, guided by gods conjured from her soul.

Mastigos Magic

Ruling Arcana

Mind and Space. Passions and the connections. The unknown reaches of the soul, manifest in hidden places in the world.

To understand the Mastigos approach to Mind, cast off the notion that consciousness is an inner advisor, babbling your thoughts. The true self is calm and transcendent, beyond even the debatable concept of the superego. It never strives, but is the path of a river, the layout of mind-palaces. A Psychonaut places himself *above* thoughts, wrangling their goetic manifestations



to do her bidding, and reaches out with transcendental clarity to touch the thoughts of others.

Warlocks rattle the chains of connection: the true nature of Space, instead of what Sleepers measure with yardsticks and maps. A Master of Space shrinks them to black iron threads, finely wrought, often tangled, and easily severed.

Inferior

Arcanum

Matter. Matter sticks in the conceptual gullet of the Mastigos. It seems to populate the Lie alone, a too-solid illusion to fill the empty spaces between Sleepers. Yet “base” elements undeniably possess Supernal vibrations and have a claim to the world of truth. Mastigos find it difficult to understand Matter’s faint, unthinking hum.

Symbols and Myths

The Devil and Temperance. Demons and wrathful gods. Serenity and decadence.

In the Awakened Tarot, Mastigos map their experience to two contrasting cards. The **Devil** represents a Warlock’s passions. Everyone carries an annex of Pandemonium where their desires dwell, but Mastigos not only possess a strong inner menagerie, but the clarity to name and subjugate its inmates. Their Mystery card is **Temperance**: the path of control and sign of the psychopomp who guides souls between worlds. Despite the initial victory of Awakening, suppressing the Goetia is a lifelong struggle, waged through raw determination, meditative calm, and occasional bribery — feeding your passions can calm them, for a time.

Mastigos may take the most direct approach to magical praxes. They treat gods and demons like states of mind to be conjured, propitiated, and bound at need. Yet they do not regard these beings as illusory — as the Astral realms demonstrate, thought is as real as flesh. Warlocks make pantheons of consciousness out of Qliphothic anti-angels and wrathful Tibetan deities. They appear beautiful or fearsome based on the summoner’s state of mind or the thoughts they symbolize. Meditative Mastigos approach with a still mind, hoping to coax bodhisattvas out of fanged, skull-bearing gods. Iron-willed Warlocks confront their Goetia at

their most hideous — the more threatening they appear, the more power they offer.

The Path’s chief concern is the problem of the self. Mastigos cast off the illusion that they’re nothing but urges and emotions. After sifting them out, what remains? Psychonauts breathe and chant mantras to banish lingering biases or rebuild themselves anew, creating gods and sigils that represent who they need to be to perform a particular task. Warlocks devote themselves to antinomian struggle. They define themselves by who they are *not*.

To conquer lust, they fuck. To defeat venality, they hoard wealth. Both approaches present risks ranging from apathy to decadence.

The sorcerer erases everything that makes her vital or feeds the Goetia too well, and lets them take over.

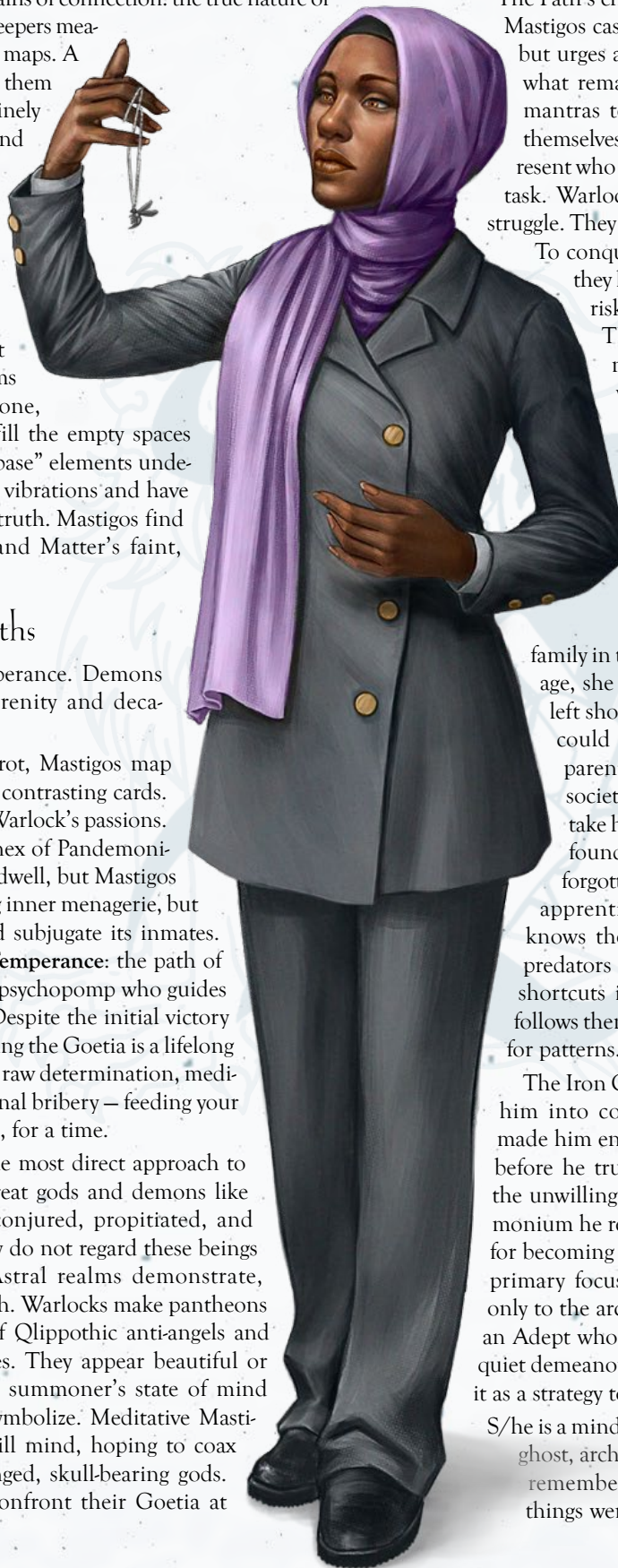
The Warlock’s Legion

Three Warlocks

She was Aasiya Ahmed, born to a good family in then-unruly Mogadishu. From an early age, she knew where unplanned construction left shortcuts and interstitial sanctuaries. She could disappear and reappear at will; her parents gave up bringing her up in proper society once they realized they could never take her anywhere she didn’t want to go. She found her way to the secret city, its *ghuls* and forgotten *ifrit* princes. Now she’s Ichneumon, apprentice lictor of the Silver Ladder, and knows the secret city extends everywhere. Its predators and demons leap between bodies and shortcuts in the endless meta-city. Ichneumon follows them, stops them when she can, and looks for patterns.

The Iron Gauntlet sought Arctos out. It dragged him into contact with amateur occultists, and made him enemy to the Scelestus called Angrboda before he truly knew what magic was. He played the unwilling prodigy, but until he entered Pandemonium he refused to admit that it was his strategy for becoming the center of attention. His ego is his primary focus, his confessional secret, whispered only to the arch-devils of his Watchtower. Now he’s an Adept who must decide whether to embrace his quiet demeanor as a route to mystic discipline, or use it as a strategy to stay in the center of attention.

S/he is a mind, a mistranslation, something between ghost, archmage, and demon. Baphomet doesn’t remember her/his original gender, but such things were unimportant in a leper colony out-



side Jerusalem, 900 years ago. S/he Awakened during the First Crusade, and made religious hate and misunderstanding into a devil – the Shadow Name “Baphomet” descends from an early spelling of Mohammed by Templars. S/he became a Master of Mind and Space, but her/his body began to fail him/her. S/he abandoned it to become her/his goetic demon, and live in the minds of Templars, priests, Satanists, and occultists. Baphomet still haunts dreams and fortified domains in the Astral reaches, though s/he struggles with the archetypal Devil itself, who would reduce the bodiless dream sorcerer into a slave or appendage.

Warlocks in the Orders

Adamantine Arrow: After battling rogue thoughts, Mastigos enter the Adamantine Arrow understanding some of the challenges to come. They approach oaths and the chain of command with less enthusiasm. They didn’t master their urges to bend knee before some officer. They’d rather be loyal out of love or a real sense of duty than a set of ritual protocols. Nevertheless, they see into souls or secret places as spies and scouts. They plague enemies with psychic horrors and delusions.

Free Council: Mastigos Libertines believe that everyone should be allowed to transform his or her own soul without Hierarchs and other titled fools twisting it to suit their ambitions. Sleepers follow gurus and priests in search of happy, calm minds. Mastigos play the part with an advantage: They can truly peer into your psyche. They provide the help Sleeper mystics falsely promise, though they can inflict abuse unimagined by the worst cult leaders, too.

Guardians of the Veil: Mastigos understand how difficult it is to Awaken without submitting to the soul’s weaknesses. Give up yourself, become pure, and guard the Awakened against anyone unable to make the same commitment. Mastigos Guardians excel at interrogation, surveillance, and assuming false identities.

Mysterium: Magic not only lives, but possesses a soul made of Awakened wants and frailties. An Imago is *what magic thinks*. Spells driven by blind impulses, hatred, and obsessive love corrupt the Supernal mind of sorcery. Therefore, a Mastigos serves the Order by acting as a moral gatekeeper, and examines Mysteries for ethical implications. Although this task normally drives such Mystagogues to talk to people instead of examining strange sites and artifacts, Space allows Mastigos to enter inaccessible places and examine their sympathetic connections, leaving a role for occult archeologists.

Silver Ladder: Rule yourself to rule others. That describes more than a best practice – it’s the *right* to govern, for the allegorical Cave represents more than intellectual ignorance. It’s the darkness cast by desire, cloaking unpleasant truths. Leaders need to drag the flock out by ministering to their fears, encouraging their ambitions, and suffocating their destructive urges.

Beyond the Iron Gauntlet

Acanthus: I didn’t break my chains to forge more with a promise, Witch. Chase my future and you’ll see my dreams come true. It may frighten you.

Moros: They deal with the stuff that fills illusory space. Leave them to it. Leave them to the dead, too. Better to live free than concentrate on the bondage of the grave.

Obrimos: If God would burn me, He must be afraid of being judged on His merits.

Thyrus: I don’t have to talk to a tree to appreciate its beauty. I don’t have to become an animal to fuck like one. But I respect anyone who explores the borders of experience and names its passions.

Seers of the Throne: They see your weakness and hate you for it. They know why the Throne needs to keep you ignorant, limited to sins of the Fallen flesh. Mastigos **Watchers** respect the Eye, the Exarch of Space and power of surveillance. People who know they’re being watched tend to behave. Channeling the Unity, Exarch of Mind, Watchers strip dissent from resistant minds to better serve the Throne.

Building the Warlocks’ Mystery

Mastigos combine a confrontational attitude with subtle magical powers. Mind’s dominion may be invisible, but it’s active, populated, and challenges intruders as vigorously as enemies they can see and touch.

The Path demands an iron will, so consider investing in Resolve and Composure. High Social Attributes not only provide an alternative to brute force magical mind control, but support the classic Warlock’s mien: the charismatic bastard who simultaneously angers and intrigues anyone he meets. Psychonauts devoted to quiet, inner discipline and self-exploration might be better portrayed with high Mental Attributes. Mastigos tend to be epicurean, ascetic, or swing between cycles of both. Use your character’s habits to decide her Physical Attributes. The clean living yogi might enjoy a higher Stamina than his opium-smoking counterpart.

Although Mastigos possess a knack for plucking secrets from inner voices and locked rooms, they need to know who to stalk and where to look. Social Skills point them in the right direction. Concentrate on Skills such as Socialize and Empathy to determine who deserves your character’s attention, and Academics to make sense of anything they say or think.

MOROS

THE ALCHEMIST

Magic is a secret transformation. Death is not still, and gold flowers from the World's corruption.

We Awaken to this secret: Within adamantine permanence lies change, and within change, permanence. For the price of the Leaden Coin, we see that nothing ends.

This is not your husband. He's dead. He's changing. His body rots in the grave. They're going to shut down his social media. One day, you'll see a face he never had, changed by the flavors of memory. This ghost was part of your husband, once. He thinks he's the essential part, but he's a component. He's a fragment that loves you too much and doesn't care enough. He's the frustration that smashes glasses and screams in the night. He's the only part that isn't changing, nourishing the future, or making space for new life. I mean to reunite this ghost with the rest of his soul, leaving you with the man as you're meant to remember him, softening with time. Only memories live forever, if you pass them on – and they'll change, as they were meant to.

She's an **Alchemist**: a scientist of change who sees atoms hum, ready to transform at her urging. She can command the slain to rise again by harnessing a body's remaining mystic potential. She can even adjust the motion of a soul, luring it away from the cycle of life and death. People believe the dead must cross into some great below or heaven above when their bodies fall, the puppet's strings cut; but Moros reach across the gulf and speak to the dead, or correct a malfunctioning demise where part of the soul stays behind. Moros who concentrate on misplaced souls, ghosts, and corpses are better known as **Necromancers**.

They can make you rich but never happy. They can bring him back, but he'll never return to who he was.

You loved that car: a 1970 Chevelle 454 SS. Like new wasn't good enough; you made it better than new, machining the parts yourself until you could practically see a Detroit line worker's handprint fading in the door. But you loved to drink too, and killed a twelve-pack and took your baby for a spin. Horns. Lights. Something tore your car apart and they put it back together wrong. You can't get out. You *won't* get out, even when that asshole brother of yours drives it like he owns it, and refuses to even acknowledge your goddamn *presence*. You kicked his ass right out of the driver's seat. That's when he got the new mechanic. You were going to toss this fucker too but he nodded at you and said, "Don't worry. I'll fix it up just right." Every time

you try to help him he slaps your hand out of the way.

But you've got to admit that he brings perfect parts every time. When he finishes, maybe it'll be time to let your brother drive and move on to something new. Maybe that's why your brother's crying. You'll have to ask the mechanic. He listens.

The Styx never stops flowing, and its black waters will carry everything you value away.

Moros Magic

Ruling Arcana

Death and Matter. They're the slow, quiet Arcana of endings and foundations. Move a mountain and the earth shudders. Errant souls can spin the world out of balance.

Death is the Arcanum of destructive change: the power to speed, slow, or shift the details of inevitable doom. Bodies shift from Life to Matter. Light scatters to the corners of the cosmos, allowing darkness to flourish. Although a soul's components include every subtle Arcanum, Death is the loose thread that, once pulled, removes it from its living home or unravels it



into its parts. Mages know that ghosts aren't souls, but Necromancers point out that doesn't mean they aren't *people*.

Matter is the world's skeleton. Forces shape it and Life puts flesh on its bones. It releases energy and accepts corpses into its embrace. The world constantly performs the Great Work Alchemists pursue, perfecting itself and, at the peak, falling apart to be rebuilt. Contemporary Moros also think of Matter in mechanical metaphors. Every speck of dust is part of a cosmic machine whose parts adapt to the tasks given it.

Inferior Arcanum

Spirit. Moros know that despite outward appearances, inert things dance with activity. Alchemists know that spirits exist, and that the world has a living Shadow, but feel little need for them. Death provides its own invisible kingdoms, and Matter moves even in the absence of will.

Symbols and Myths

Death and the World. The gods of death, prosperity, and craft. The signs and symbols of alchemy and descendants, such as chemistry and engineering.

Moros embrace the **Death** signifier because they understand that the skeletal rider doesn't just cut down its enemies, but guides them through radical change. Death takes the Lead- en Coin as payment, and points the unburdened soul to new existence. Alchemists relinquish their fear of loss and embrace their imperfections — their personal, rotting *nigredo* — as the morass from which creative power emerges. The Path's Mystery card of the **World** embraces all things, assigning the elements their functions. It represents the Alchemist's Great Work. Even the Lie contains the secrets of self-perfection, written in substances and souls as they organize themselves into novel, powerful forms that culminate in the *rubedo*: the crown, the rose, the philosopher's stone.

Moros have always honored the gods of death, alchemy, and industry, especially when they exist in one person. Hermes is a psychopomp, alchemist, and god of commerce. Hades rules the Underworld and wealth plucked from the dark earth. Anubis measures a soul's weight in sin and guards tomb wealth. Moros gods are usually lonely, set apart from the pantheon by their duties, but they aggressively guard their domains. The lords of Death prefer one-way journeys to their realms. To cross against the current, a Necromancer must honor their laws and behave with appropriate decorum.

Closely linked to practical trades, Moros magic extends from artisanal expertise and scientific insight. Most are well-versed in their cultures' alchemical and funerary traditions. Alchemists keep laboratories filled with ancient and modern instruments, from antique *athanor* furnaces to gas chromatographs. They use myrrh, corpse-eating beetles, and modern embalming procedures. Ceremonies acknowledge Death's supremacy, but eventually shift to practical craftsmanship.

Alchemical Distillations

Three Alchemists

Iosis has been one of the richest women in the world, sold drugs on a cracked Milwaukee street corner, and worked the line building ICBMs. Each time, the woman they call "Mammon's sister" walked in with a goal, met it, and moved on.

She believes that no servant of the Exarchs should develop strong personal preferences, so she finds it easy to adopt and abandon identities. Her connections span all walks of life, giving her a more accurate window to the world than her elitist comrades. Her colorless life hides the fact that no matter how often she changes herself, she can't deny her accumulated experience of human kindness and suffering. She is starting to use her subtlety to cover reluctance, inefficiency, and a fear of being found out by other Seers.

Brother Owl combines the roles of alchemist, necromancer, and priest to serve those in need. As an alchemist, he rebuilds and renews broken things in run-down communities. As a necromancer, he pacifies angry ghosts and relays whatever they never got a chance to tell the living. These all fulfill a basic commitment to the priesthood even if, after abandoning his church, it's a priesthood of one. He still wears the old Episcopal "dog collar" along with the rugged clothes he needs for a traveler's life. He still believes in God, but has no taste for any particular faith. He's loosely associated with the Silver Ladder, but believes that humanity can't return to glory without getting its collective house in order first.

The Guardian killer called Mayfly paid the Lead- en Coin in middle age, after founding a family and helping his kids get a good start. He thought that for all practical purposes his life was over and Death obliged, for a time. He Awakened during a stroke and returned from Stygia with a new purpose: to take life, after years of helping it grow. He's good at making quiet killings look accidental, not only to cover his tracks, but to minimize the trauma his victims' families might feel — and *his* family might, if they discovered he was an assassin. His wife has passed on,



but he has grown children who check on their father and worry that he spends too much time alone.

Alchemists in the Orders

Adamantine Arrow: They can't be bribed. They don't run from death. Steel breaks in their hands, and their dead soldiers rise. Moros Arrows go about their duties with a chill implacability. They're relentless warriors but avoid rash adventures. Awakening dulls their pride, preventing rash applications of violence, but inhibits their loyalty because they don't want to fall in thrall to someone else's ego.

Free Council: Can you ignore modern chemistry? Modern death? The world's full of materials ancient alchemists never dreamed of: steel-hard ceramics and nanoparticles. Modern doctors know death as a process that migrates from cell to cell instead of a curtain that falls on the last heartbeat. New knowledge creates new problems, too. Wealth offers more temptations than ever, and death stretches out when machines force hearts to beat. It's time to turn these new ways into new magic and comfort Sleepers bewildered by contemporary challenges.

Guardians of the Veil: Not even murder can hide a secret. Ghosts talk, and death's keening echoes in a killer's footsteps. Yes, there are Necromancer assassins, but Moros know that killing is a crude tool of last resort. Kill, and the mystery of death attracts investigators for generations. Bribe, and you not only win a life of silence, but build a conspiracy with the recipient. When you fear neither death nor lust for riches, you not only become an incorruptible keeper of secrets, but capable of using murder and wealth with utmost precision.

Mysterium: They say magic is alive, but this is only true in the loosest sense, for it includes death and base matter. Magic is a form of *directed change* that the layperson associates with life, but numinous energies conceal the deep truths of stone and souls. Moros investigate them in tombs and Atlantean redoubts, and are typically less interested in living Masters and questions about who deserves to learn the Art.

Silver Ladder: How do you foster human potential when you know that every prodigy will die, and their accomplishments will fade with the ages? You foster a lineage, with temples and artifacts to remind it of its obligations. Make change your tool, not your enemy. They'll pass on their knowledge, adapt the past to the future and grow stronger, closer to Imperium with every new Awakening. Don't plan for next year's revolution, but your empire.

Seers of the Throne: Seer **Executors** use the Path's insights to perfect the materialism that counterparts in other Orders avoid. The doctrines of the Chancellor, Exarch of Matter, tell them that wealth is a god ever-devoured by scarcity. Executors balance deity and devil, setting the fortunes of indi-

Beyond the Leaden Coin

Acanthus: Even eight million paths lead to the same destination, so there's no need to obsess over the details of one's journey. One day we will all lie still, yet journey to trackless lands.

Mastigos: It's not all about you. "You" are a transitional state between forms of "it."

Obrimos: You can only destroy something by burning it in the way growth destroys a child with adulthood. Ash creates the most fertile soil. That's the Creator's gift.

Thysus: We both hear things slither and speak, but mine are driftwood sliding on a beach and whispers from coffins. Your barrens and charnel grounds are my gardens, and we listen to one song, played by two instruments.

viduals and nations. As Exarch of Death, the Psychopomp condemns souls to Fallen incarnations or teases anguished ghosts from them. Seer Moros trade in souls and ghosts as commodities like any other. By keeping them from the Supernal Realms, the Psychopomp intends them to be used thus.

Building the Alchemists' Mystery

Moros sense the serenity of Matter and Death, but the process doesn't make them perfect or boring – it just frees them from worrying about trivial things. You can play against type as an unhinged Necromancer, but students of change represent the majority.

High Composure fits a Moros' detached demeanor – she seems cold not because of morbid fixations, but because she's harder to distract with small matters. Wits improves a Moros' ability to survey bodies and materials. Together with Dexterity, it facilitates their hands-on approach to magic. Moros with scientific inclinations need a certain amount of Intelligence as well.

Moros aren't terribly social figures, but dealing with Death grants them fearsome reputations that might be served with a few dots of Intimidation. The Science Skill teaches Alchemists to use Matter in innovative ways. Necromancers develop similar aptitudes but concentrate on biology instead of chemistry, and the Underworld instead of alchemy. Moros don't just wave wands and wish. They make, break, dissolve, distill, embalm, and cremate palpable things. They need Crafts dots to accomplish this without making a mess, or worse.

OBRIMOS

THE THAUMATURGE

Magic is an invisible kingdom ruled by the Strength of sacred discipline.

We grasped the Golden Key of authority and Awakened before principalities and powers, to worship with the Priestess' song and rule with the Hierophant's scepter. Fly, angels – we know your names.

The world moves as God wills, through a procession of laws and signs. He knows I tried to just watch and listen for them. I followed radio waves, magnified whispers, vortices of power, and failing spells to this unspeakable place. Corruption stains the altar here – it's a spike in the protective shell of the world. I remember names in ancient books and contemplate the sigils burned on my soul. I borrow His authority, repurpose proclamations and call the name of an invisible servant. And as it gazes upon me with a hundred blazing eyes, I invoke His authority and command it, saying "Burn."

Supernal or Fallen, the cosmos follows elaborate laws, complex and mighty as the Arcana. They're sigils and hymns, ritual instructions, and the ephemeral beings that obey. To an Obrimos, magic is the academic discipline that studies these laws or an act of faith that appeals to the God that made them. Call them **Thaumaturges**, Greek for "wonder-workers," because they follow in the footsteps of Hermes Trismegistus, read the Emerald Tablet, and sing Thoth's hymn. Label them **Theurgists** when they call magic the hidden hand of the Creator, and appeal to Heaven's aristocracy in Her name. If you broke into their sancta you might find the stereotypical marks of wizardry: robes, circles of salt, and the rest. Magic has a structure, and it's often easier to express it through traditional tools than hold it all in the imago. Others approach magic as a science and engineering feat. They prefer labs and workshops to walls carved with the names of God.

Speak God's name and it can deafen your soul. Manipulate cosmic laws, but beware – they'll snap back to equilibrium with the force of a falling star.

The storms used to happen once or twice a generation, but now they hit town every year. It's just a sandbar on the sea, where the rich build summer homes. They're leaving now, writing off the wreckage and leaving the natives to their own devices. One man remains. The storms never touch his estate, even though his mansion sits on stilts halfway to the ocean. That luck seems to rub off on every local building and business he buys. He fixes his investments and pays townies to run them as long as they sign ironclad non-disclosure agreements. His people run the government now. They've approved a ring of sculptures that hurt your eyes to look at, and they've cut funding for roads and the ferry service. You were going to attend a meeting about taking the town back but your car wouldn't start – sand in the engine from the last storm, the mechanic said – and it was a lucky thing. Another small, intense typhoon hit the meeting place and *only* there. Maybe it's time to leave but these natural disasters feel a lot like murder now, and against all reason you know where to point the finger.

They're earthshakers and storm-makers who listen to celestial music. The Supernal never stops shaking the Lie, rattling the cage to wake up its prisoners. Listen!

Obrimos Magic

Ruling Arcana

Forces and Prime. The universe moves by will. Unseen powers issue commands writ in Mana, and worlds spin in obedience.

Don't believe that Prime is power alone. It's *language*. The gods named the universe into being, and when they gave humanity the power of speech, that included the power of creation. To make a thing you must do more than imagine it. You must name it, giving your dreams a symbol that escapes the confines of individual minds.



Forces moves creation through cycles of creation and destruction. Without Forces, Time would be irrelevant; nothing would move or change. Seasons rely on a world careening through space. Fire burns away the rot and debris that would otherwise suffocate Life.

Inferior Arcanum

Death. Death is an interruption, not an end. Souls should be dispatched to their destinies in heavens, hells, and diverse incarnations instead of imprisoned by worldly obsessions, trapped in mystic receptacles, or subjected to the corruptions of Death. Obrimos represent the power that cleanses, and have little talent for the Arcanum of rot, stagnation, and bound ghosts.

Symbols and Myths

Strength, the High Priestess and the Hierophant. Gods and angels. Thunderers and fire-bringers. Science and secret names.

The Awakened Tarot's symmetry breaks against the Obrimos, for they possess two signifiers: the **Hierophant**, who translates celestial patterns into laws and scriptures, in an ordered, disciplined system; and the **High Priestess**, ruler of the elusive, intuitive forms of power. The former writes Grimoires and inscribes mystic circles. The latter meditates upon the Shekinah within, or feels the pulse of surging Kundalini Shakti after yogic concentration. In the past, Western Obrimos conceived of these roles as highly gendered, but contemporary followers of the Path see them as approaches to practice, and leave further dogma to Legacies and cults. Both signifiers represent types of **Strength**, the Path's Mystery card. By intellectual or intuitive means, an Obrimos wrestles the thrashing beast of the cosmos into submission. Like any skilled wrestler an Obrimos avoids pitting force against force. She uses technique, yielding gestures, and a calm spirit to tame arcane power.

Obrimos develop magical systems around celestial hierarchies. The stereotypical Theurgist invokes the God of Abraham and choirs of angels. Obrimos call upon the twelve Olympians and the Egyptian Ennead. They chant Kabbalistic names or entreat the Celestial Bureaucracy. They give particular reverence to sky and fire

deities, aspects of the Creator, and culture heroes who bring enlightenment and civilization to the Sleeping flock. But not all Thaumaturges give magic divine forms. To them, "angels"

are the names of natural laws, essential flavors of Prime. Many dispense with religious language completely, treating magic as a high science. All are manifestations of the Golden Key: knowledge that unlocks power.

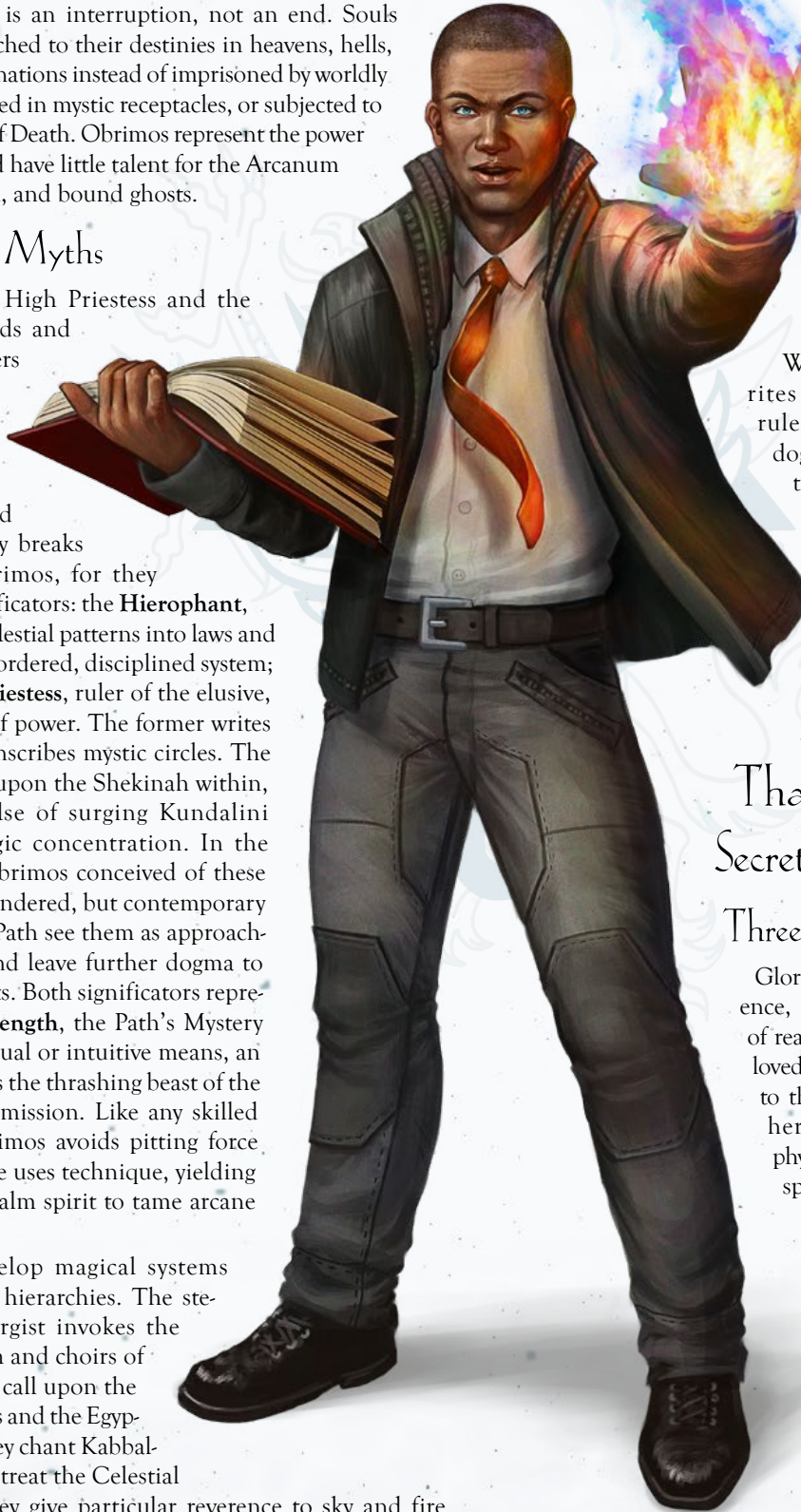
Path members encompass some of the most diverse ritual praxes. Awakened physicists, hymn singers, and Hermetic sorcerers find their way to the Aether. With experiments and cultic rites they name the Law that rules all. Some Obrimos grow dogmatic and intolerant when their thinking excludes incompatible theories, but evidence usually trumps doctrine — even fools Awaken, and summon power through their own understanding.

A Thaumaturge's Secret Names

Three Obrimos

Glorianna calls magic a secret science, accessible through a mixture of reason and intuition. She always loved making things, and exposure to the Aether only supplemented her prodigious knowledge of physics and engineering. A techné specialist in the Free Council, Glorianna builds upon the efforts of Sleeper scientists, mechanics, and engineers.

She sees Hermes stir in wheels and engines, wakes him up, and makes him run his paces in everything from automata to directed energy weapons.



Khonsu's the Eight-Fingered Man: beaten but unbowed, driven by the ceaseless gaze of the gods. As an archeologist, he learned that not a grain of dust exists that hasn't been moved by human will, to build, destroy, and conceal the most sublime human accomplishments — and the most horrific. Hunted by tomb robbers, he took refuge in an Atlantean ruin, and walked into the presence of his namesake: the moon god who protects travelers. Now he serves the Mysterium as its Censor, protecting mages from the secrets they uncover, so that they might travel in peace. Sometimes that means burying dangerous knowledge once again, until the Awakened have use for it. His job's an unpopular one, and he's learned to take beatings from sorcerers who resent Mysterium interference.

He was Boston's most feared Banisher, but Weapon's getting old in spite of the cursed power crackling through him and the exercise regimen that's given him an ageless physique from the neck down. He still has the face of the 66-year-old man he is, and the long stare of someone long deprived of the illusion of a just world. Weapon Awakened 35 years ago to see a world of vampires and other secret monsters, but no God to make it right. Magic's a soulless machine that manufactures disasters and feeds abusers. He could only be Weapon: a tool to cut and smash the machine. In spite of everything he's suffered he wants a successor, but the next Weapon needs to be broken as he was, to be reformed for the task.

Thaumaturges in the Orders

Adamantine Arrow: Booming storms and colliding ley lines demonstrate the truth of cosmic struggle. Warriors embody celestial conflict but guide it with will and moral purpose. The Arrow provides a refuge for Thaumaturges who might otherwise abuse their tempestuous Arts. The Order teaches them to calm their inner storms.

Free Council: Reason's furnace melts gods into their intellectual components: physics, anthropology and the rest. The Path's tendency to seek out fundamental patterns draws Libertines to science and technology, but also theology, psychology, and Masonic doctrine. Obrimos practice techné based on electrical engineering and mechanical principles, or Freemasonry and Jungian archetypes. They describe the path to power, teach it to Sleepers, and hope a few will Awaken to continue the process.

Guardians of the Veil: Morality follows from natural law, but a Sleeper's ignorance pits her against the true order of things, triggering the original moral paradox: You can't save some without punishing others, even if they aren't aware of their crimes. In a principled universe your only solution is to limit the damage, do your work in the dark, and beg for forgiveness, even though you know that while the Creator might possess limitless compassion his angels are merciless.

Mysterium: Magic lives in Prime's pulse. Its thoughts give Resonance to Mana. Its metabolism generates motion, heat, and light. Obrimos track ley lines and uncover Hallows to expand upon these facts, like an anatomist tracing veins and listening to blood's hum. Religious Theurgists characterize it as quest to comprehend God, but many Obrimos search for ultimate patterns in the Prime, or a storm that breeds all others.

Beyond the Golden Key

Acanthus: Time is motion, and there are no accidents — but there are *things*, fallen from Heaven, which would have you believe otherwise.

Mastigos: Your mind isn't the cosmos. It's a speck of ash and a glimmer, floating among millions of others. Look beyond to the wind we all drift upon: the Creator's breath.

Moros: It's easy to transform the dead and inert things of this world. Burn them. Banish them. Illuminate them!

Thyrus: Energy precedes form. Ecologies arise from prior laws. Don't worship those laws. Manipulate them, and honor the Lawgiver who made them.

Silver Ladder: Obrimos come to the Order with a plan written by God and natural law. They're natural théarchs, attracted to priestly duties and the urge to impose order on a broken world. The Aether's angels reveal that logic and revelation work hand in hand. Obrimos join the Ladder to bring Earth in accord with Heaven because its ruling angels would themselves be ruled by us, if we would rise to claim the right.

Seers of the Throne: As soldier-priests of the Lie, Seer Templars punish rebel souls according to the battle doctrines of the General, Exarch of Forces and cold-blooded violence. The Exarch of Prime called the Father enforces the Lie through oppressive scriptures and religious zeal. Templars keep to the true faith, while imposing the false religions Sleepers have been condemned to follow.

Building the Thaumaturges' Mystery

Obrimos magic appeals to fire-breathing warriors and reserved occult scholars alike. Your sorcerer might be aggressive or introverted. She opens her eyes to the Seals of Prime or cracks the prima materia into wind and lashing electricity.

Intelligence suits the Path's analytical focus but Wits supports intuition and mystic awareness — the way of the Hierophant and High Priestess, respectively. Increasing Resolve suits the disciplined Obrimos mind and supports a higher Willpower, which fits Thaumaturges interested in building lasting magical works. Yet Forces is *dangerous* — you can't master fire without getting burned. Stamina will help you survive errant spells and Forces-based Paradoxes.

Strong, dogmatic personalities encourage the Social Skills to argue for your beliefs. Diplomatic Thaumaturges develop Socialize; less compromising counterparts resort to Intimidation. The Science Skill teaches the physics of the Forces Obrimos manipulate. You need Crafts to build objects to enhance with Forces or enchant with Prime, including weapons, machines, and ceremonial tools.

THYRSUS

THE SHAMAN

Magic's the flesh of the universe. We eat its meat, drink its blood, and caress it under the Moon. We are Hermits, but never alone.

We Awaken between gods and beasts and, peering into their realms, see that they're masks on the same face, rooms in a common lodge. We walk the Singing Stone between; we're the singers and the song.

We don't matter to them except as prey, or because we bring cars that hit them and cats they snatch. That's where it ends, usually.

Look into my eyes. You're thinking of a little man lurking in there, wondering if he wants to fuck, if he's lying to you, if he's happy or sad. My thoughts matter to you.

But they don't give a shit about our thoughts; they operate according to older laws.

Ecologies. Hungers. Basic fears.

Those work just fine. Before they took your partner you assumed they can't think at all, but you know better now, don't you? They just don't bother with our motives,

the little people inside, unless somebody gives them the idea. Unless I give them the idea.

That's the difference between a hunter and a murderer. That's the difference between you having an accident and me getting revenge.

He's a **Shaman** who crawls the World Tree, climbs Kunlun and follows a song from world to world. Lonely but never isolated, he's set apart by his duty: to speak to humans and spirits; tell each side what the other wants; and, when necessary, bring angry gods to heel. The last part breaks his life's symmetry. He's from a world of flesh, not ephemera, and that's where his final loyalties lie. Nevertheless, he sees the shared pulse of mortal and ephemeral life. He sings its music. He could even get lost in it to be reborn an **Ecstatic**, a living example of simple, forgotten truths. Followers of the Path

often tread between these extremes along the living axis mundi that binds diverse realms and states of being.

His soul erases the divisions that cut others in two. Others aren't so lucky. The border makes them bleed. A Thyrusus heals or buries them as his conscience demands.

They say all kinds of nonsense about stone circles, but you never cared. Farmers drag rocks from their fields, pile them in one place and leave a spot to build a fire. Everything else is superstitious bullshit. You had one of

them out near the soybeans, with eight pretty black stones and the fire pit you'd use for parties. You found a ninth when you bought the adjoining plot — it made sense to add them to the rest. Then your crops died.

Your cattle vanished. Insurance wouldn't cover it because, like you, they didn't know what the hell was going on. But farmers help each other. They knew a woman who'd find the best spots for wells and warn them when a bad batch of feed came in. You paid cash; she went right to the stones.

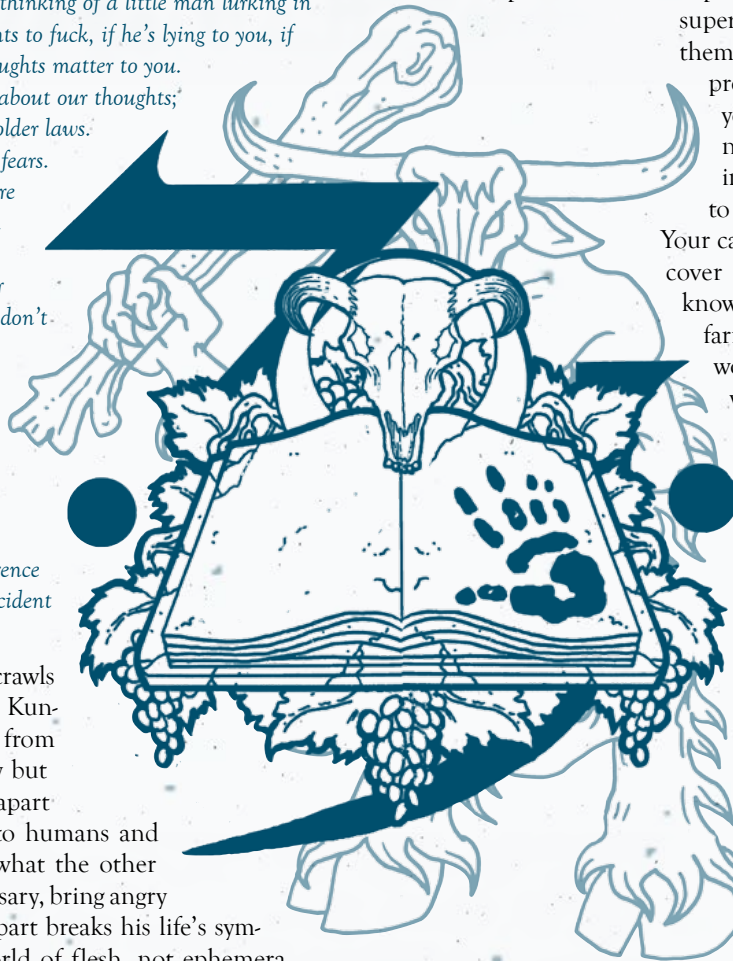
After that it got hazy for you. You woke from dreams of teeth and screaming cattle in your own bed, but she was there. Her first words were "Get a wheelbarrow," and she told you where to put the stones back.

That's the terror of only knowing half the world, but when you see the rest your fear turns to ecstasy, even though it never gets any less dangerous.

Thyrus Magic

Ruling Arcana

Life and Spirit. The Primal Wild's cosmic Moon leaves its reflection in the material realm's Life and casts the Shadow that



Spirit commands. Thyrsus consider them to be two halves of the same dominion. Change one, and the other reacts.

Life's the seat of sex, hunger, and the fight or flight response. It's everything we eat and the worms that devour us when we die, resurrect our flesh as theirs, and make us immortal. The Ecstatic honors Life's primal sensations and celebrates its lesson: We're not individuals, but colonies of tissue and bacteria that divide, are broken, and are reborn in ecological miracles.

The world lives and speaks. Before the Fall, anyone could gaze into the Shadow. The Lie blinds Spirit-senses, and even Awakened souls must practice to reclaim them, but Thyrsus see with fully open eyes, and their hands easily caress the gods beyond the Gauntlet. They know what we've forgotten: Material light and the Shadow are one realm.

Inferior Arcanum

Mind. To imagine Mind as a coherent Arcana asks Thyrsus to deny the holistic nature of existence. To a Shaman, human consciousness is an adaptation, like a thumb or biped's gait. That people can imagine themselves as individual minds is, no more relevant than a lion's jaws. They're functions, not truths of the soul.

Symbols and Myths

The Hermit and the Moon. Culture heroes and totems. Nature, the living earth, love, and lust. Rough archetypes and personal gods.

The Awakened Tarot calls the Thyrsus the Path of the **Hermit**. She's journeyed into an apparent wasteland and returned, filled with stories of the lush places hidden in the barrens. The savage paradise left wounds but gave her power. Her Mystery card's **The Moon**, symbol of primordial spirituality. The Moon shines through a thin skin of rational excuses, revealing the veins of pain, pleasure, fear, and rage that really motivate us. Just as our organs and tissues grow as our genes command, our imagination ripens around archetypes that exist before we call them Beast, Hunter, Lover, Gatherer, Leader, Death, and the rest.

Neither cleric nor heretic, the Shaman walks the edges of orthodoxy. Experience trumps

faith. Her magic invokes gods the way we might pluck favors from friends and family. She learns how they love to be flattered and fear to be threatened. Thyrsus call upon local legends, spirits of places, and particular culture heroes not as rulers of small places, but as representatives of primal principles. Gods belong to families and all families stretch back to Creation's dawn. There are many

horned gods with individual legends, but they belong to the tribe of the Horned God who represents masculinity and sacral kings.

Thyrsus truck with wood nymphs, naiads and hearth gods, and emulate maenads and mythic hermits. They forge bonds with animal and god-ancestor totems.

Thyrsus invoke conventional pantheons as well, but speak to the gods' archetypes, not the masks priests love. They prefer gods who represent basic desires, concrete phenomena, and the epitome of ecstatic practice. They honor Shiva who dwelled in the woods, Aphrodite, goddess of love, and even Weyland the smith — they know humans make things as naturally as wolves hunt in packs. Thyrsus Shamans are more likely to call upon traditional gods and heroes. Followers of the Ecstatic way seek the Mysteries without attempting to explain them to anyone else, and build personal mythologies based on spirits and phenomena they've personally experienced. Their lives are mythic epics punctuated by wordless instances of sublime sensation. Nowadays Thyrsus from both sides of the Path use biology, psychology, and other contemporary ideas.

Shaman Songs

Three Shamans

Born Amy Wu, Nine Fox Thunder Awakened within the Heavenly Masters Taoist sect. After training as an exorcist, ascetic, and martial artist at Wudang, she joined the Guardians of the Veil, but only completed its immoral initiations out of respect for a grandfather who'd served that Order. She never forgot that she had Awakened to serve Xi Wangmu, Queen of the West: a goddess of vitality who ancient oracle bones also called the tiger-fanged spirit of pestilence. She's left that Order behind to concentrate on Taoist sorcery: a so-called "Nameless Order." Two pupils study under her, and her fox familiar serves as Xi Wangmu's emissary.

Despite exercising Guardian subtlety in other arenas, Marple indulges a bit of Anglophilia in her appearance and Shadow Name while she investigates murders for her Order and her Legacy, the Eleventh Question. The thirty-something



Marple was born to Chinese immigrants in Seattle, but dresses like a spinster aunt from the 1930s. She visualizes the Primal Wild through the lens of antique British Imperialism: polite relationships that hide vicious predation. Marple is especially good at rousing the spirits of manufactured things to bear witness. To honor her ephemeral allies she takes her tea with them, sharing fine conversation and occasionally, very rare meat.

He implied he was a cannibal, but most of Boston's Awakened were content to think of the Nemean as the son of a bitch who held Boston's Hierarchy, and bullied unity out of that city of rivals. His own Silver Ladder imprisoned him in Astral dreams for unspecified "moral crimes," but he escaped before they could pry his motives and secrets from him. The Nemean Awakened after being beaten half to death by outlaw bikers. The Primal Wild taught him he was an apex predator in the making. He's the lion who eats his rivals' cubs, the king with the bloody scepter. But a lion needs his pride, and he finds himself a fugitive from those he ruled. He forms and abandons cults around himself as something in him whispers of a need to evolve further, and at last synthesizes his humanity with his pure, Ecstatic desire to dominate.

Shamans in the Orders

Adamantine Arrow: Look past the niceties of military culture to ask why the Arrow's enemies need to die, and how to do it without self-indulgent posturing or inefficiency. Fools say animals don't fight wars, but baboon troops slaughter each other and predators mark their territories with piss and claw marks. Thyrsus Arrows aren't afraid to bloody their hands in direct combat (and those skilled in Life tend to be extremely good at it), but never for some pretentious point of honor.

Free Council: Shamanism is humanity's first heritage. Ecstasy is its universal spiritual path. These twin truths tell the Free Council that Sleepers never forgot about the Supernal. They know the oldest ways to touch it, and soar so close to it in moments of pain and pleasure. It's time to help ordinary people take up the tools they already know and call to the hidden realm that beckons, demanding to rekindle old loves and obligations.

Guardians of the Veil: Who is worthy of the Veil except those willing to endure any pain? Who should defile themselves but those who can see corruption manifest in the Shadow? Guardian Thyrsus aren't emotionless operatives, but ascetics and living sacrifices to the cause. They remind the Order that beyond its practical functions it represents a spiritual calling. They test Guardian dedication with ritual ordeals and show every assassin how painful blows from their own knives will be.

Mysterium: Magic is alive. Magic feels pain. Magic is a realm of predators, prey, and scavengers, of sex and offspring. Magic acts on lust and hunger, not sterile metaphysical rules. These insights help Mystagogues from the Path to deal with cryptids, genius loci, and other living and lifelike supernatural phenomena. Anyone can identify the stones of an ancient temple, but it takes Ecstatic awareness to detect an ecosystem that bears traces of Atlantean meddling.

Silver Ladder: Don't cower in the knowledge that you're an animal. Don't despair in a world where gods manage every blade of grass from the Shadow. Every species adapts to a niche.

Beyond the Singing Stone

Acanthus: Life doesn't make bargains. Lions don't barter for meals. They eat.

Mastigos: Failing human relationships occupy one tiny corner in a vast web of lovers and hunters, birds and worms, blood cells and red stars.

Obrimos: God's in the ozone smell of lightning strikes, but it's burn scars and scorched grass too. In fact, I'd call it God because burns heal and the grass grows back. Resilience is the universal miracle. We taste pain and live!

Moros: Lead turns to gold when it wishes it. If you knew how to ask, your Art could be reduced to simple questions.

Humanity's purpose is to rise and fertilize the Supernal with new symbols. That's how the cosmos gives birth to new ages, but the Exarchs have sterilized it by putting us to Sleep, and the Abyss represents senescence without renewal. The Silver Ladder will help humanity reclaim its ecological role not to rule the universe, but revitalize it.

Seers of the Throne: If the Lie's a prison (such a biased term – call it a *habitat*) then it ought to be a controlled environment. The Seers' **Stewards** keep Sleepers semi-domesticated. It's a complex job utilizing a thousand delicate tactics. Make the environment too safe, and Sleepers unite, share their knowledge, and replace the survival urge with the drive for enlightenment. Threaten them to excess, and they might Awaken out of pure desperation. They need a little hunger and fear of the dark to keep them home, safe, and confined to little dreams. Two Exarchs help them preserve the balance of fear and comfort: the Nemesis of Spirit, which maintains fear of the unknown, and the Raptor of Life who tempts Sleepers to trust instinct over free will.

Building the Shamans' Mystery

While Thyrsus ways resemble some of most ancient forms of spirituality, traditional cultures don't have a special claim to the Path. People speak in tongues, get high to dissolve their egos, and gather around sources of intuitive inspiration and animist perspectives.

Shaman or pure Ecstatic, a Thyrsus needs to approach the Path fearlessly. A high Resolve bolsters the dedication needed to bargain with terrifying spirits or coax bodies into new shapes. Physically demanding Ecstatic practices require a high Stamina. Although Thyrsus prize the intuition associated with Wits, they watch over complex living systems and spiritual kingdoms. Intelligence reminds them who eats, and who's eaten.

Thyrsus inevitably journey to strange, isolated places so Survival is common. If she intends to return to her people, Persuasion and Socialize help communicate what she learned during her pilgrimage. The Academics and Science Skills familiarize her with unusual spirits, folklore, and nature.

Orders

Although smaller, isolated groups of mages cling on in some parts of the world, catering to regional interests or unwholesome practices other mages frown upon, the global society of magic is largely divided among six great **Orders**. Each Order is made up of thousands of smaller organizations with attached mystery cults, secret societies, and associations that give them an occult “footprint” in the Fallen World. Although most Sleeper occultists wouldn’t know them by name, those “in the know” are aware that the Orders exist even if only by rumor and inference.

Even the youngest Order contains magical societies tracing their teachings to the Stone Age, and the eldest are more than two millennia old. Without common cause with an Order, a mage is bereft of vast accumulated knowledge and influence, which the Orders are happy to leverage when recruiting.

The four Orders of the **Diamond** share common origins and a philosophy based around molding themselves after the Supernal symbols of magical society in the Time Before, taking on the roles of mages in that vanished utopia as a means to power. They are:

- The **Adamantine Arrow**, who see existence as a crucible, prize challenge and conflict for its use in honing the self, and teach students honor and ideals of service.

- The **Guardians of the Veil**, a network of Awakened spies who preach the careful, subtle use of magic, police mages for worsening the Lie, and test Sleepers close to Awakening with a labyrinth of occult societies.

- The **Mysterium**, a religion dedicated to magic itself whose adherents aggressively seek out Mysteries for their own enlightenment before storing them for safekeeping from the world.

- The **Silver Ladder**, a humanist Order dedicated to the ideal of lifting every human soul to its natural level of enlightenment, healing the Fallen World of the Exarchs’ influence.

The Diamond are joined with a fifth Order, forming an alliance known as the **Pentacle**:

- The **Free Council**, a young organization of mages who espouse democratic ideals and seek magic in human culture and science.

The Pentacle as a whole is opposed to the sixth Order:

- The **Seers of the Throne**, willing servants of the Exarchs, who keep Sleepers in the Lie in exchange for temporal power.



ADAMANTINE ARROW

Challenge is Magical

See that convenience store? No, I already know what you do. It'll be robbed in about a half hour, and it doesn't turn out pretty for the clerk or that poor kid pressed into being the trigger man.

Your Awakening wasn't pleasant, I know. Neither was your Sleeper life. I'm sympathetic, but I'm not sorry for you. Some might call you scarred by the experience, and they might pity you for it. The pride in your eyes tells me you already know what I'm going to say: Scars aren't something to be ashamed of. Life is a battle. Scars mark you as a survivor. Look around you – others don't wear their scars half as well as we do. Not everyone can brave the Mysteries, and maybe not everyone should.

Look beyond the Consilium, beyond the Awakened – almost everyone tries to avoid being scarred. Not us. We take on the ordeals and keep the vigils – because we're strong enough, so others don't have to be. Having magic and power doesn't matter, just what you do with it. That's why we step into harm's way. It's a challenge, and challenges are the only thing that matters.

I'll save you a question down the line – the lady depressing property values in this entire neighborhood is backed by the Throne. When you get to brass tacks, both clerk and kid's death will be her fault. They can't rise above the challenges forced upon them, but we can, and we can do it for them. Fixing everything is a long war, but I'm going to win this battle here and now without killing anyone, and I'm happy to have you along if you're willing. We've survived worse, haven't we?

Virtue untested is worthless. This truth is hidden by a Fallen World designed to aggressively and insidiously destroy enlightenment. The Lie oppresses souls, crushing them under somnolent burdens. Beyond the Abyss lies the ideal perfected self, a concept that can only be embodied by struggling against the Lies. Everyone is involved in this struggle, leaving the Awakened as the only ones aware they're embroiled in a universal conflict.

Every Order practices offensive and defensive occult techniques, but the Adamantine Arrow internalizes the metaphor of eternal war as principle. More than that, they seek to serve as soldiers and generals in this war, fighting to maintain their magic. Arrows are the guardians and wardens of the Pentacle, warriors of the Diamond, fighting against stagnation and complacency. They typically hold a majority of non-leadership roles in Consilia and Convocations (and no few Assemblies), as community-oriented duties find fulfillment within their philosophy. Above all else, their magic calls for dedication: striving for a chosen goal against meaningful opposition.

Mages join the Arrow when they want to define themselves by supporting others, learn self-discipline and control over their magic, come from a martial or regimented background and want to keep that ethos, or believe magic should be wielded with honor and responsibility.

Core Beliefs: The Adamant Way

Created by millennia-worth of treatises from dozens of cultural standpoints and containing a multitude of philosophical schools, the Way can be divided into five precepts – the Hand – just as five fingers make a fist. The metaphor is simple: Hands are the primary gates for the sense of touch and the means to work one's will; they create or destroy in equal measure, translating human desire into physicality.

Existence is War

The Way teaches improvement through opposition and restraint, evincing a universal state of affairs that is self-evident. All beings struggle for life, and all Awakened souls struggle against the Abyss to bridge the Supernal and Fallen. Vying for self-expression, Awakened souls grow stronger by conquering the desires of other souls. Arrows are warriors, though not always





martial ones – to a one, they seek challenge and conflict, though their competitions are often friendly. The Order as a whole regards true pacifists with disgust, but they're not bellicose – peace can be a far greater challenge to achieve than petty bloodshed.

Adaptability is Strength

Arrows understand that nothing worth doing is achieved with ease, and that limitations are self-imposed. Attack and defense, spell and sword are valuable individually, but mere components of the whole. Predictability and inflexibility are dangerous in a world of sympathetic magic, and crippling to the soul. An Arrow rises beyond these weaknesses and toward a balanced and perfected self.

Service is Mastery

Control only ever extends as far as the self – your nature and soul are the only things truly yours and yours alone. Honest service lies not in becoming the power behind the throne, but in limiting one's ambition, pride, and guilt as external factors in one's control. Until the Arrow sets aside his desires for another's, all of his high ideals are mere justifications for his own actions. Once he abandons his selfishness, he understands his place in the universe, serving the Supernal as well as himself.

The Supernal is the Self

Mind and soul are a microcosm of the universe and magic. Every trial by adversity reinforces the mage's honor and self-integrity. The mage is her magic, as inseparable as a hand's identity

from owner's intent, growing closer to her spiritual ideal with every victory. Arrows often seek to shed their personal flaws by swearing oaths to tie themselves to purposes larger than the self. Oaths declare intent to the universe and sharpen focus on the challenge at hand, whether promising to defend a dear friend or murder a hated rival. A sworn Arrow is placing her judgment in dynamic action rather than formal words.

Enlightenment is Honor

A warrior's soul that expresses her intentions, then accomplishes those specific aims, reveals a vision unimpeded by distractions and uncompromised by the Fallen World. Challenges are more worthy when the challenger restricts his options to the path he chooses to fulfill his goals. Honorable mages act in accordance with their ideals, in true harmony with their perfect selves.

Origins

The Adamantine Arrow is both the oldest and youngest Order. Like most of the Diamond Orders, the Arrow's core formed in the Hellenistic era, circa 200 BCE, primarily from an Indian school of magical philosophy called the Vajrastra ("Thunderbolt Weapons"). Alexander the Great's philosophy of eternal war was attractive to the early Arrows, and they rose alongside the nascent Orders. Since Alexander, the Arrow has ensconced itself within Sleeper societies. Rather than celebrating them or manipulating them, the Arrow allowed its members to choose to fight for mortal ideals and causes, championing the warrior ethos found within all

societies and cultures. During the Italian Renaissance, Caucuses all over Europe became enthralled by the code duello, the rules that governed single combat; at the same time, Italian mercenary culture split the Order into factions, between those who sought purity within combat and those who prized constant warfare.

The Order last reorganized itself in 1945. The strife of internal warfare from two World Wars sundered the Order, as Arrows fought one another from opposing sides of a battlefield. This wasn't unprecedented – the American Civil War, the Napoleonic Wars, and *sengoku jidai* are actually considered healthy exercises by contemporary Arrow theorists – but it was inconceivable in terms of scale and lack of purpose. The Order emerged with the conclusion that war itself had changed. Never again would the Arrow bind itself to temporal ideals. At the same time, their true enemies – Seers, Banishers, and the Abyss – were timeless. The Order abandoned the millennia-long practice of championing Sleeper societies to focus on individual Consilia, Sleepwalkers, or sites connected with magic.

Mysteries

Arrows look for Mysteries that threaten their charges, seeking to understand malicious magic with superior knowledge and craft intent to better end the threat. They seek to aid other Diamond Orders in the often-perilous experience of investigating their own Mysteries. Alternately, an Arrow will swear oaths to uncover a secret, proving dominance with self-mastery by pitting herself against a singular foe. An attractive Mystery for an Arrow involves a test or contest of his skill; Arrows are disappointed when the Fallen World gives up its secrets too easily.

Magical Symbolism: Attack and Defense

The Arrow doesn't consider all wars to be martial, but more often than not their symbolism relies on weaponry, tools that extend power in the realm of physical combat. In a philosophy based on eternal war, a weapon must be at hand at all times. Arrow tools favor the sword or the pistol, two weapons that have no other use than to take a life, though this is more a preference than anything else – after all, adaptability is strength, and anything that can be wielded as a weapon by the average person has a place in Arrow symbolism. Besides armor and other protective gear, charms that protect the user from physical or spiritual harm also feature prominently among Arrow tools – amulets, dreamcatchers, bandolier bags.

In the ideal Awakened society postulated by the Diamond's Atlantean symbolism, the Adamantine Arrow embodies *Ungula Draconis*, the Talon of the Dragon: righteous warriors who fight to keep the flame of human power alive in an age of darkness.

Hubris

Arrows fall afoul of hubris when they overestimate their abilities and create Paradoxes trying to extricate themselves, or when they're confronted with their own weakness and deficiencies. It's also easy for an efficient Arrow to assume he's conquered all his

challenges simply because he tightly manages his life, forgetting that the Order's truths lie in constant conflict. Dedicated Arrows find it easy to mistake disdain for avoiding necessary fights as willingness to forsake peaceful ends. Violence must always be a solution, but it is rarely the *best* solution, so an Arrow grows hubristic when she loses sight of this. Life to a member of the Order isn't so important when forced to choose between existence and integrity, but hubristic Arrows regard keeping your word as more important than human lives and morality.

Lastly, the Order prides itself on being above politics, focused on their ideals of service. When an Arrow assumes power, it is when they are the strongest and most capable of facing down a threat. To them, it is prudence, not power: merely choosing a side can define and shape the political arena. Hubristic Arrow mages eschew guardianship to seize power for themselves under the guise of being able defenders.

Concepts

Pro-Bono Defense: "Defense rests," I say, and I know I've won. The prosecution looks battered, exhausted. My client looks like he's just witnessed divine intervention, delivered from injustice he thought was certain, shocked that someone – anyone – would not only stand up for him but *win*. Hours, days, weeks spent practicing for the trial, and a quick finger run over my spectacle rims tells me the jury's deliberation will take less than an hour. Everyone looks at this job as a stepping stone, a trial-by-fire for one of the big firms. They look at it as a challenge and a place for improvement, and they're right; I do battle uphill every day, taking on enemies thought unassailable. That's why I'll never leave.

Gun Runner: People need weapons to start revolutions, to guard their homes or hunt their food. The strong use military force to subjugate the weak, but they can't do that if the weak fight back. Before I Awakened, when I was trying to sell a crate to some warlord in Myanmar, I thought the secret to survival was to never go to war, but the Jungle Primordial showed me the truth – *life is war*. Now I choose my clients with care; I sell Soviet surplus to my fellow Arrows and bullets to academics. Other Arrows challenge me to prove I'm not a Praetorian agent, but my motives are clear. I'm a necessary evil. Existence is war, and war needs weapons.

Stereotypes

Guardians: Regrettably necessary, but untrustworthy, even if we're on the same side.

Mysterium: Keepers of what we protect. Damn if they're not ungrateful, though.

Silver Ladder: Our oldest companions. They provide the structure, and we the service.

Free Council: Address them as individuals, not as a unity, no matter how loud they protest.

Seers of the Throne: Every war needs enemies.

GUARDIANS OF THE VEIL

Magic is Fragile

We've been watching you for a while now. Oh, don't be angry. Take it as a point of pride – even before you Awakened, you were someone worth watching. And now you're worth talking to. More than that, worth hearing from.

Can I ask you a question? Can you imagine how easy it would be to abuse your magic? You don't feel like paying for a meal, fine, you make the server forget you were even there. How easy would it be for you to justify it to yourself? It doesn't hurt anyone. You're long gone from the restaurant when they check the books.

You see what I'm saying. I can see it spreading across your face like a fire crawling across dry logs.

Are you stopping for the night, or are you still thinking of ways you could get more than a few bucks? Another spell tells you the credit card numbers of everyone in the restaurant, who's there on a date, who's rich yet vulnerable. How long until you try something that really bites you? Where does the line get drawn? When would you stop caring about the damage your magic brings to the world? Is your fire something that needs to be tended carefully, or something that could gutter out to ashes and embers?

I know you wouldn't do that, or I wouldn't be speaking to you. We can trust you not to do those things. But how can you trust everyone else?

It's not a hypothetical. One of your fellow Nameless is about to make the jump from free meals to something vile. Last question, I promise: Who is it?

The Fallen World continues to fall. The Abyss grows stronger whenever a mage inflicts Paradox upon the world. The universe frays with every vulgarity, while the Supernal resounds with the laughter of Tyrants. Humanity is inherently damaged by the Lie, and Sleepers snuff magic out in their ignorance, if they escape being driven mad by witnessing Supernal truth. Knowledge is both power and fire – left unchecked, it consumes and destroys. The hand whose reach exceeds its grasp must be slapped down.

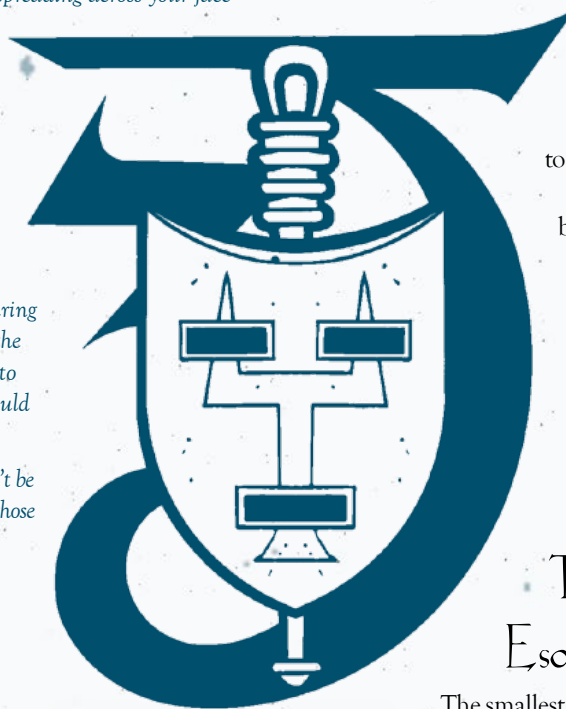
The **Guardians of the Veil** defend the Awakened from strife and treachery by employing those tools themselves, serving the Pentacle as recruiters and espionage agents keeping watch for threats from without and within. They plot to maintain the Labyrinth, a world-spanning society of conspiracy cells and contradictory mystery cults secretly under Guardian control, designed to weed out the weak, distract the unworthy, and attract those close to Awakening. A newly Awakened mage attempting to understand what's happening around him will likely stumble across the Labyrinth; in fact, the system works so well that Guardians actually detect the majority of Awakenings and pass suitable solitaries to other Orders.

By contrast, the Order also spends a great deal of resources attempting to ensure those with traits they find objectionable become lost in the Labyrinth, losing the chance to Awaken. Together, the Order works tirelessly to keep magic secret – and in secrecy, safe.

Mages join the Guardians when they believe magic should have a required level of responsibility to use, when they've suffered due to magical accident and want to make sure no one goes through that again, when their interests and skills lie in espionage, or when they Awakened within the Labyrinth and trust the system to work.

Core Beliefs: The Exoteric and Esoteric Tenets

The smallest Order, the Guardians are a true mystery religion. Initiates often join because of the Order's actions, but much of the leadership subscribes to a faith carefully concealed from outsiders – the Esoteric Tenets. The *Exoteric* Tenets, by contrast, are ones the Guardians wish to be publicly known, their ties to Supernal truth, reinforcing their identity even as they cloak themselves in mystery. Guardians cleave to Diamond symbolism with a concept they call the Diamond Wheel, representing the collected souls of mages. The Wheel reflects the spirit of the Awakened City to come. The most faithful Guardians privately



believe in a messiah – the *Hieromagus* – but the majority simply believe in the Order’s works for their own sake.

Paradox Strengthens the Abyss;

Punishment Answers Pride

The Abyss is inimical to existence. Every Paradox pushes the universe a little bit closer to final dissolution. Paradox is not an inherently spiritual failing, but a moral one made magical, caused by an individual’s choices and hubris. Humanity has the slim capacity for Awakening and Ascension, but even Awakened societies are corrupted by the Fallen World, and every Paradox exposes a mage’s fragile soul to the Abyss. Guardians will help mages with their own Paradoxes when Abyssal taint threatens innocent bystanders. They encourage mages to examine the root causes of Paradox, and the flawed reasoning behind allowing the Abyss another foothold within the faltering world.

Merit must guide the Fallen World

The Fallen World seemingly encourages every avenue to success *except* virtue. The Guardians deem only the righteous and the capable worthy of magic, defined by dedication to virtue and avoiding Paradox. Masters are wiser than apprentices; the Awakened are wiser than Sleepers. Quiescence damages the world, and Sleepers harm magic simply by encountering it. The worthy must be guided to seize enlightenment with virtuous action, while the unworthy must be dissuaded by obscure secrets and meaningless arcane lore. Guardians are not paragons,

and do not always lead by example, but the Order is the most meritocratic of the Pentacle Orders.

Sins for a just end grant Wisdom

Wisdom is a palpable force that aids a mage in controlling Paradox. Mages hone Wisdom by effecting compassionate acts, but the Guardians lie and kill, sacrificing their own integrity to safeguard the enlightened. The Tenets hold that enlightenment can be generated by sacrificial acts of sin – by assuming the karmic debt of acting against Wisdom *themselves*, Guardians purify the Wheel. Filtering the Abyss against the bulwark of their own understanding, they slow the progress of the Fallen World’s degradation. Ends don’t justify the means, but ends do *require* the means, and understanding the difference separates the Wise from the Mad.

The Esoteric Tenets

The Esoteric Tenets detail the secret faith of the Order. They’re secret because other Orders might censure the Guardians if they knew, but mostly because the Orders’ praxis is based on secrecy, and because the tenets are too sacred for outsiders to practice.

All thrones are false; all souls are flawed

Mages are inherently unworthy of the perfection of the Awakened City. Paradox is a sign of a mage’s fundamental impurity, reflecting her sins. Yet if sins for a just end grant Wisdom, Guardians are therefore capable of transferring merit, leaving all



other souls and Orders flawed in their ignorance. The Guardians consider it their duty to undermine charismatic leaders, expose the faults of wise sages, and force mages to doubt one another to remind them that their primary mission is to struggle with their own souls.

Souls have a secret hierarchy

Religious Guardians believe in reincarnation, and moreover, that some souls have more potential than others. Related to this doctrine is the idea that all souls are interrelated. The Order encourages those of superior souls, defined by Wisdom, omens, and Awakened strength, to work together. Doing so brings more Atlantean spirit to the world, allowing one single soul to attain perfection during one reincarnation.

The Hieromagus will fulfill the Diamond Wheel

Many souls have similar features; by cultivating them, mages work towards the creation of the Hieromagus, who will heal the Abyss, restore utopia, and judge the Order for the evils made in the protection of magic. Her soul shall be an indestructible bridge between Above and Below, perfect and free of Paradox. She will come not from the Order but from without. There have been a number of false Hieromagi throughout history, and other Orders are aware that a messianic, deeply eschatological faction holds some purchase over the Guardians, if not the specifics.

Origins

The earliest Guardians formed out of small cults, holding fast to the belief that magic was too dangerous or precious to trust to unworthy mages. The Arrow and the Ladder only spared them the label *Banisher* because the fledgling Guardians did concede that some were worthy. Even as the Diamond formed and grew, the Guardians stayed the smallest Order, with the most stringent entry requirements — candidates must prove themselves willing to kill to protect the Mysteries (an open secret referred to as “Passing the Crimson Veil”), but must constantly exercise their own judgment and refuse commands that conflict with the Order’s stated goals.

For much of history, the Guardians hid themselves within imperialist cultures like Rome, occasionally absorbing like-minded Nameless Orders (such as the mages who followed in the wake of the Golden Horde during the Middle Ages) but seeking to remain within the shadows, drawing subversive occult elements to the Labyrinth so they could be monitored and destroyed. This has backfired at times; in the 2nd century AD, the false Hieromagus Abraxas reformed a heretical Gnostic cult, the Basilideans, into a secretive group that continues to bedevil the modern Order. While other Orders claim famous movements and important figures as proof of their influence on Sleeper society, the Guardians consider the existence of any a point of shame rather than pride. The Order considers the British Empire to be the highlight of their influence, when they could claim a truly worldwide Labyrinth. Yet they celebrated the growth of intelligence officers and agencies, wholeheartedly adopting

the methodology of spies.

Besides carrying forth their core beliefs and hunting dangerous mages, modern Guardians perform two vital functions for Pentacle society: keeping watch for influence of the Throne, and constructing their Labyrinth to attract newly-Awakened mages. These functions keep the Order in the good graces of the Diamond, along with the Guardian Order’s concession that no Guardian will ever be asked to investigate or act against members of her own cabal.

Mysteries

The Guardians don’t *pursue* Mysteries that pit them against the Awakened, but they are inevitably drawn towards dealing with insidious threats caused by Paradox. Guardians focus on weakening the enemies of the Pentacle — hunting down rogue mages hiding under variant shadow identities, Left-Handed Legacies hiding within Orders, prospective Banishers, and their private shadow war with the Seers. The fact that these are often matters of individual interpretation doesn’t escape the Order, which encourages a culture of habitual surveillance and following carefully-honed instincts. Espionage, what Sun Tzu called the “Divine Thread,” carries Supernal resonance with the Order.

It’s not spoken of outside the Order, but Guardians initiated into the Esoteric Tenets often seek mysteries involving ritual mantling and reincarnation or matters concerning the soul. When they scrutinize the Orders, these Guardians take an interest in prodigies or mages who seem to suffer fewer Paradoxes than most.

Magical Symbolism: Concealing Identity

In Atlantean symbolism, the Guardians embody the all-seeing oculus, *Visus Draconis*. The Eye of the Dragon scrutinizes every detail of the Awakened City with an unflinching gaze. The Order prizes anonymity and security, a practical course for a group hated as a matter of ritual symbolism. The Guardians *must* be disliked, but individuals must also be able relate to their cabals and friends. The Veil itself is a powerful symbol — covering the face, yet allowing clear sight. Masks, cloaks (including long coats and hoods), and veils are all dedicated to concealing identities, allowing the Order to operate unseen. By contrast, the Order also prizes tools that allow them to see more clearly — rose-tinted glasses for those with a touch of irony, but prisms or magnifying lenses also suffice.

Hubris

Inevitably, some apprentice critical of the Guardians wonders, “Who watches the watchmen?” Arrogance and hubris come with a mage’s separation from Sleepers, and despite the Order’s focus on punishing the signs of hubris in others, they’re no less prone to it. Ruthlessness and lies are valued tools to the Guardians, but these too easily become habit, then default solutions, and finally *pleasures*. Performing unwise actions on behalf of others causes a Guardian to suffer another’s karmic debt, a state of affairs to be accepted but not celebrated. Hubristic Guardians lose sight of the true reasons for Paradox, defaulting to selfish justifications for their crimes. Furthermore, a culture of paranoia is required

for the Order to function, but also fosters distrust within and without. Some Guardians take notions of subsuming the self for the greater good to extremes, losing themselves in false identities.

Concepts

Black Hat: I am the spider in a digital web. A cold cup of coffee sits in front of me, license to free Wi-Fi. I pluck the owner's password out of the ether, then take a few minutes to quietly upgrade her encryption so it's suitable for my purposes. Soon, news alerts light up my laptop every few seconds. A few moments of concentration on each tells me which leads will pan out. A few hours later, all signs point to a shell company buying up property near the waterfront; it'll be used to smuggle artifacts. I send a quick email to a friendly journo, start pounding away at the keys. Once the sale pops up on the paper's front page, they'll scramble to find an alternate location...one of my choosing. He who controls the spotlight controls the stage.

Minotaur: The candlelit room is dimly lit to begin with, but pitch-black under the heavy bull's-head mask I wear. I lift the chalice for the third time this week. These men — soldiers all, from three different branches of service — look upon me as a high

priestess, intoning the blessing of some deity of war. The rites are meaningless, magically speaking. It's not unusual for men to come here and seek reassurance of divine favor. The newest member is different. His eyes shine with understanding, and his aura surges and struggles. He lifts his arms, seeking understanding, finding only confusion. Soon his eyes will be open, and I will be there for him. I am not Theseus in this maze, not even Ariadne; I am the minotaur. I hunt, I stalk, and now I have found my prize.

Stereotypes

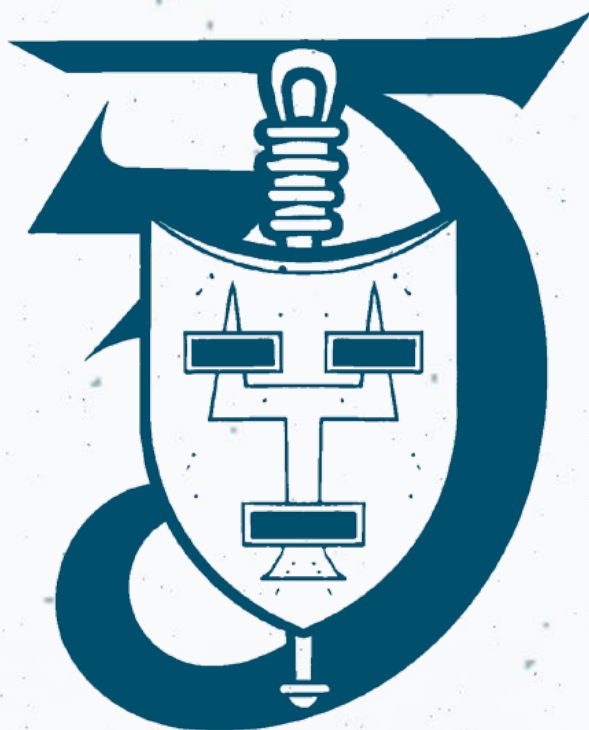
Adamantine Arrow: Let them deal with the obvious threats. We each have our strengths.

Mysterium: Some secrets should remain so. Keep your friends close...

Silver Ladder: Knowledge is power. We know that, even as we repair your errors.

Free Council: Half transparent revolutionaries, half ancient Diamond émigrés, all ignorant.

Seers of the Throne: Our Great Game might be less fun if we both played to win.



MYSTERIUM

Magic is alive

“Knowledge is power.” An elegant concept, reduced to platitude. But you’ve felt it already – that burning desire to know, the sizzle of ecstasy upon sating that desire. You’ve wrought your will upon the world and felt it respond to your touch, felt it push back. By now you’ve heard the stereotype of us, wizards sequestering secrets in their libraries. All true. The hunger for magic is a pang we know well – to feed it, we gather knowledge, preserve it, share it, and when necessary, hunt for it. Shall I tell you of my own satiation? Of the long nights spent in private libraries, alarms silenced by Arcana, perusing centuries-old manuscripts? Or maybe you’d rather hear about the wards around South American pyramids, the ones the tourists don’t get to see. I’ve fought Seers in customs warehouses, gleaned truths from the tongues of spirits and angels, traded with charlatans for the slivers of true magic they possess.

Understanding and experience are marks of value. Ignorance and deception are tools of the wicked. Knowledge isn’t power, knowledge is everything – and that’s true beyond the tautological appeal. The secrets of magic are hidden in the dark places of the world. The Mysteries await you, begging to be grasped. As it turns out, a small cult has sprung up in one of those abandoned subway stations, and their leader claims he scries the tunnels through the eyes of rats. Care to come with me to see how he does it?

The world is Fallen, but wondrous. Pure truth from the Supernal drifts downward, fragmenting from exposure to the Abyss. The driven and elect must track down this knowledge to glean true wisdom, separating Supernal wheat from Fallen chaff. Contemporary mages piece together the past, and in doing so forge a future. This pursuit of Gnosis holds together the **Mysterium** – if mystic lore is the currency of the Awakened, none are richer than Mystagogues. They scour crypts, decipher forgotten languages, and scrutinize myth cycles for signs of sorcery, retrieving and hoarding knowledge that sundered and fragmented from crossing the Abyss.

Mystagogues battle against *Pancryptia*, the tendency of sorcery to actively hide itself amidst the cultural detritus of the Fallen World. They work to foster academia, instilling the intellectual discipline and rigor needed for the Awakened to sift through the Fallen World for pearls of Supernal wisdom. The World is Fallen and damaged, but Mystagogues scrutinize with singular focus. Two open secrets propel their questioning natures: One, that magic itself is alive and active in the world; and two, that anything living can be healed.

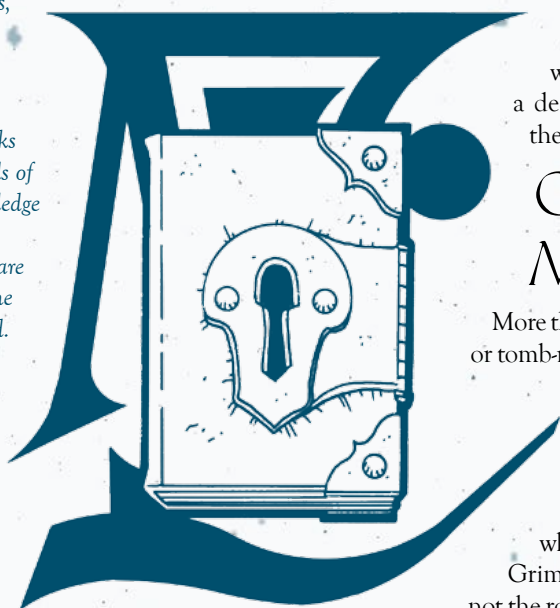
Mages join the Mysterium to proactively seek out the Mysteries, out of an academic or psychological interest in magic. They also join out of a desire to withdraw from Sleepers and chase arcane insight as far as it will go, or to preserve magic within a hostile Fallen World. Lastly, they join to travel the world while being assured they’ll get a decent reception in whichever Caucus they land.

Core Beliefs: Corpus Mysteriorum

More than just knowledge-collecting librarians or tomb-raiding adventurers, the Mysterium is a mystery religion devoted to magic itself, described by the Order as a living, sentient force diffused throughout the Fallen World. This core creed dates to the 13th century when an anonymous archmaster wrote a Grimoire setting it out. Copies of the text (if not the rotes it contained) are still given to every new Mystagogue, and the book’s title – the *Corpus Mysteriorum* – gives the Order its name. Of the Corpus Author, not much is known – he or she took great lengths to erase traces of his or her footprints from history.

Knowledge is Power

Platitude or no, to Mystagogues, magic is enlightenment. The more a mage experiences, the more enlightened she is, but only *personal* experience of the Mysteries will do. No one can just be handed answers, as the act of piecing together Supernal (or pre-Fall) lore is the well from





which the epiphanies spring. Mystagogues travel the Fallen World, hunting for magic, experiencing as much as they can, and bringing any tangible signs of it back to brimming arcane academy-libraries called Athenaea. The Order carefully conceals information from its own lower ranks, revealing it like layers of an onion as a member progresses through stages of initiation. Knowledge is filtered downward from purer to lesser, in the same manner as the Supernal.

Knowledge must be Preserved

Anything living can be wounded. Pancryptia ensures that magic in the hands of Sleepers will hide itself. The Order maintains a global network of Athenaea, but the dedication to preserving knowledge against disaster leads to Mystagogue sages learning vast amounts of lore and entering hermitage in case the libraries are destroyed. Mystagogues are infamous for stealing artifacts and Grimoires from other Orders or individual cabals when the items are felt to be vulnerable.

An Order predisposed toward travel outside of a Consilium, the Mysterium maintains an elaborate network of equitably-traded favors and “face,” or *guanxi*, for determining relative status to one other. Secret gestures, code words, and signs denote levels of initiation and favor-trading. *Guanxi* takes precedence over Consilium laws, and even bitter rivals join together to prevent Pancryptia from grasping knowledge once again. Conveniently, this also allows Mystagogues free travel between Caucuses, so long as their *guanxi* is favorable.

Knowledge has a Price

Experiential lore is acquired at great risk and cost. The only true currency is knowledge, and currency must be both spent

and earned. A Mystagogue would never share her secrets with Sleepers (to do so would risk Pancryptia), and other mages in need of the Order’s secrets have to pay the price in boons and further knowledge. Magic is demanded for knowledge rendered. The Mysterium doesn’t lie to the unworthy or destroy information from seekers, nor do they reveal knowledge that would disturb the fragile alliance of power within the Diamond and the Pentacle. The Order merely restricts access until the seeker is ready (even if they might never be).

Origins

The Mysterium is the youngest Diamond Order. While the Guardians, Ladder, and Arrow formed during the Hellenistic period, their forebears remained divided. Two Orders, the Pancryptiates and the Keepers of the Word, formed from related cultural schools dedicated to seeking out magical knowledge and preserving magic safely from Sleepers.

The Keepers focused more on the desire to acquire knowledge and preserve it, while the Pancryptiates propagated their theories of ignorance annihilating Supernal secrets forevermore. While both Orders adopted Diamond symbolism and praxes, they waxed and waned in relative popularity over the centuries. The Keepers founded the earliest Athenaea and allowed Diamond mages access to their stores when worthy, while also earning a reputation for aggressive pursuit of the Mysteries, taking magic from their allies when they could. The Pancryptiates studied Paradox, developed the **egregore** to preserve knowledge against physical loss, and pursued any means of safeguarding magic

from the world. The two Orders merged in the wake of the Corpus' publication, the new Mysterium taking equally from both traditions. With the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, the unified Order spread throughout the world along the old Silk Roads and through the magic of powerful Space Legacies.

Since then, Mystagogues have maintained a global presence. The Order holds that the earliest European mages in North America were of the Mysterium, allying with their counterparts dedicated to preservation of oral language. It was much the same in sub-Saharan Africa and Australia, and many Mysterium cabals and Cautuses can boast centuries-old lineages. The Mysterium has provided the Pentacle with global communications since before it was a single Order – Mystagogues on international trips hunting Mysteries take the news with them. They've been partially supplanted in this role by the Guardians, but publicly, there's no better method of secure communication between far-flung Cautuses.

Mysteries

The Mysterium quests for **Mysteries** in danger of vanishing, rescuing them from Pancryptia's touch – Atlantean ruins at risk of discovery (and destruction) by Sleepers, Legacies with few remaining members, lost Grimoires, verges, rare magical effects, and signs of Ascension. Sometimes the quest involves great personal danger, or requires the Mystagogue to cross fellow mages or other supernatural beings.

Magical Symbolism: Knowledge

Mystagogues worship Gnosis, the knowledge of magic through experience; many believe that lying about a magical topic directly increases Pancryptia, as a deliberate degradation of information. Especially faithful Mystagogues refuse to lie at all on any topic, while most either refuse to answer magical queries if they cannot share secrets with the asker, or only reveal part-truths. Knowledge is the *raison d'être* of the Mysterium – its procurement, preservation, and propagation. In Diamond symbolism, they are the *Alae Draconis*: the Wings of the Dragon, uplifting the Awakened City's body politic with winds of insight. The symbolism and layered initiations of the Mystagogues allows them gradual entry into a communal mind called the egregore, finding expression in avataric mages called Egregori. This communion allows Mystagogues an essential unity beyond that of their allied Orders. Beyond tomes and scribing tools, the Mysterium dedicates *objets d'art* containing symbolic messages and imagery deliberately crafted by the artist, such as Masonic paintings or cave art.

Hubris

Sleepers already have a prideful tendency to ritualize and mystify academia; for those who regard it as a living religion, hubris runs rampant. Mystagogues fall when they believe the Mystery is more important than whoever or whatever is standing between them and it. They also aggressively acquire magical sites and Grimoires for "safekeeping," causing conflict within the Pentacle and with

the Seers. Left-Handed or Reaper Legacies that would be rooted out from the other Orders of the Diamond are allowed to quietly flourish in the Athenaea, their unique praxes and secret knowledge deemed too valuable to lose. More than a few Mystagogues have fallen prey to cursed items out of a refusal to destroy them. High-security Athenaea called Censoria imprison Mysteries too dangerous for the rest of the Pentacle: the hidden names of demons, spells that warp the souls of living mages, records of Left-Handed Legacies, and Artifacts linked to the Exarchs.

Encouraging radical honesty among followers isn't the same as encouraging *tact*, but too often Mystagogues fail to grasp the difference or recognize value in the latter. Too often, the Mysterium refusing to play politics or consider options at length before abiding by a Hierarch's counsel has disturbed a Consilium's harmony, with fatal results.

The Mysterium as an Order cares the least about Sleepers – the very worst anti-Sleeper bigots and abusers in the Pentacle are proud Mystagogues, blaming innocent Sleepers for magic's rarity. Many in the Order would prioritize a Mystery over the lives of Sleeper bystanders threatening it with dissonance, and a few radical Mystagogues take magic's protection into their own hands, murdering Sleepers who pose a threat.

Concepts

Archaeomancer: Nobody's entered this temple in thousands of years – nobody human, at least – but now I'm breathing the same air as a mage before the Fall. It even *smells* more pure, clearer somehow, and I've filled my lungs on the peak of Everest. I run my hand along the walls, feeling the etching. It'll be days taking photographs and translating the *heyschia*. This is where magic resides, and it's what I need to feel alive.

Curator: There's a secret wing to this place, one the Sleepers never see. Do the Guardians truly think I'd show it to the plebes? Please. My heels click on marble floors, inlaid with great gold Atlantean runes, the sound resounding from the display cases. Illuminated texts of a time that never was, weapons from wars never fought, busts of mages who never lived. Here is our link to our great Lie, the one we tell ourselves to fight the larger Lies the enemy forces upon us. A bit of theatre in service of a greater truth. I walk these halls every night to remind myself of that, to keep truth, lies, and theatre separate within myself. After all, I'm the only one in this Consilium who remembers the difference.

Stereotypes

Adamantine Arrow: The guardians of our collections.

Guardians: Focused on magic, but repression over discovery. Our only true rivals.

Silver Ladder: One cannot lead from a position of ignorance; we give the Pentacle wings.

Free Council: Fashion and culture are not true wisdom. Too often, they obscure the true prize.

Seers of the Throne: Willing servants of the Lie, architects of Pancryptia. Betrayers of their own Gnosis.

SILVER LADDER

Magic is Humanity's Birthright

Please don't take my pronouncement during the apprentices' gathering too seriously. You're all full-grown adults, but children among mages. Look down on it from our view: if you're not heavy-handed, it won't be taken seriously. Accuse publicly, apologize privately, which brings us here.

You've been approached by the other Orders, and I don't doubt they've been persuasive. We all want you to join and bring your unique talents to aid the Consilium. Any of them could teach you what it means to be Awakened. I see in you something else, though. Ambition, desire, enjoyment of the freedom magic offers. Hold fast to that feeling; every spell cast in joy and liberty is a victory for humanity.

The Orders are all worthy endeavors. They have their place. We define those places and link them. It was we who seized the inheritance from Atlantis, who forged a Diamond from the base common elements remaining from our precursors, who formed a Pentacle against the onslaught of the Throne. With us, the exile ended, and all of human history was rendered interregnum between when mages ruled and when mages will rule. It begins again with us, here and now.

I've got to address the apprentices again before the full moon, teach them how to properly declare their position with their mentors before the Consilium. It'd be my honor if you'd lead the way by teaching others. They'll all join other Orders in the end, but we must build bridges and lead the way. Climb the Ladder, and others will follow.

All souls reach for enlightenment. Traitor-Gods have chained humanity's souls with a grand Lie, yet humanity still strives for truth and divinity. The dream of Awakened destiny will endure, even in a ruined realm of Tyrannical rule. It is the duty of those more advanced to reach down and free the others, raise their fellows up, bringing everyone to their own perfection. A helping hand is only of use if the recipient has the will to climb, though. The Awakened have hefted themselves up the first rungs on their own, but the climb — the Ladder — is all there is.

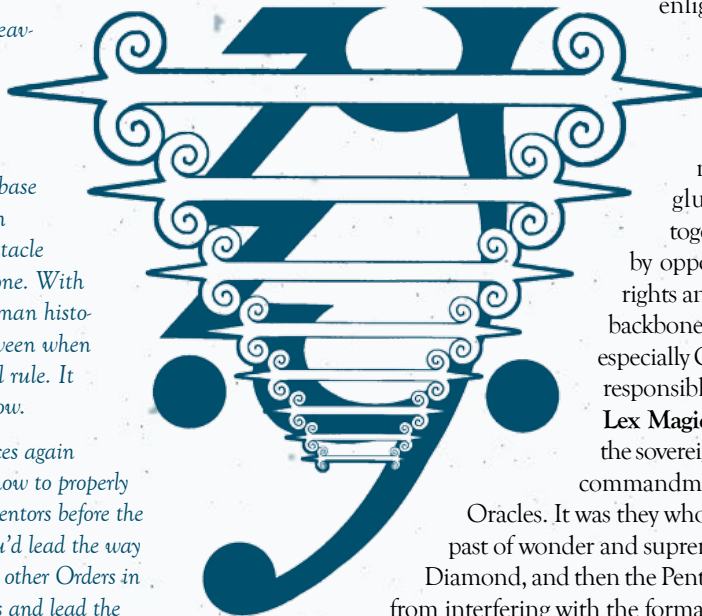
The **Silver Ladder** is invested in the Diamond and Pentacle as a whole, not just the goals of their Order — beyond their status as creators and definers of Awakened society, the Ladder requires them to advise other mages on the best path to freeing humanity from the Lie. The Enemy seeks to keep humanity in chains, turning their slaves towards keeping the Sleeping rabble ignorant and Quiescent. The Order defies those efforts by dreaming big, spreading the flame of Awakening and sundering the chains of the Lie. They create **Cryptopolies**, mystery cults that encourage Sleepers towards enlightened behavior, continually working to counter the Seers' influence over humanity. More than any other Order, they seek out and shelter families of **Proximi** in the hopes of fostering an enlightened class of human.

Ladder mages (who call themselves **théarchs**) settle disputes between Awakened, believing in a unified mage-nation. The Ladder is the glue holding Awakened society together, including the Seers (if only by opposition). Their ethos of personal rights and mediation of conflict form the backbone of the Pentacle, the Consilia, and especially Convocations. The Ladder is even responsible for the Diamond's legal system, **Lex Magica**. It was they who pronounced the sovereignty of the individual mage, citing commandments from the unseen Supernal

Oracles. It was they who linked magic to an unknowable past of wonder and supremacy. It was they who created the Diamond, and then the Pentacle, by holding the other Orders from interfering with the formation of the Free Council.

Consequently, even when the mages of the Ladder don't hold political positions, they remain interested in societal politics. A Hierarch from a different Order will often find himself picking up several unofficial advisors, and théarchs are the first to volunteer themselves as mediators and communicators.

Mages join the Silver Ladder when they want to grasp control of their lives; when they want to help Sleepers become more enlightened, or to help individual loved ones to Awakening; when they admire classical Awakened society and wish to perpetuate it; or if they feel a call to public office not out of a need to *serve* but to *lead*.



Core Beliefs: The Elemental Precepts

The Ladder espouses a legalistic philosophy that leads members towards brash yet introspective personalities, steadfast in their beliefs yet compromising when it comes to maintaining the overall integrity of Awakened society. It's simple, but all-encompassing. Much of the Diamond Orders' cohesive philosophy and structures owe their genesis to the Silver Ladder. Even the name "Diamond" originated with the precept, rather than geometry (there were five Diamond Orders when first formed, thanks to the Mysterium's late unification.) Despite the complexity of the Lex Magica, the Elemental Precepts are deceptively simple.

Thunder: Imperium is the Sovereign Right of all Humanity

There is no original sin, no deserving of the punishment levied by a Fallen World. Ascension is the birthright of all human souls, denied by the Exarchs' Lies. Sleepers can't see past the distractions of a World that keeps them from self-actualization, destroying one another's chances of escape in a vast prisoner's dilemma. In response, the Ladder strives toward a perfected society, defined by mastery of magic and progress towards Awakening and Ascension.

Diamond: The Awakened are One Nation

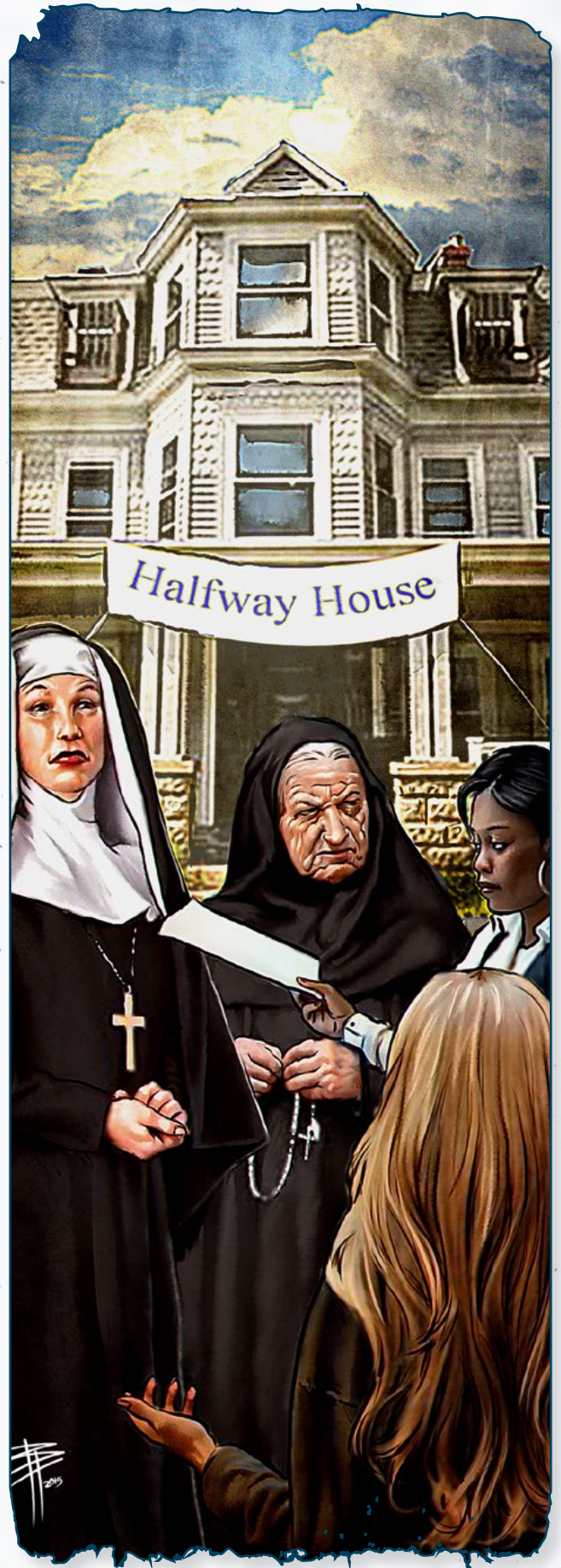
Mages have a common bond to the Time Before and the Supernal, constituting a nation and rendering all citizens beholden to the law within a perfected and equivalent array. Banishers and Seers are obviously in open rebellion and are to be treated as such, but they still have rights and privileges as mages. The Awakened are bound to Consilia, which they must exalt above any Sleeper government. This principle was extended even in the Ladder's ancient days, precipitating the formation and structure of the Diamond Orders and their millennia-long association.

Blood: The Sleepers Follow

Once all souls are free, the Exarchs will surrender or be annihilated, their conceptual identity relegated to mere theory. The perfect Awakened city will arise, not some time-lost ruin that Fell but a true utopia the Ladder will build. Humanity will rise as one, and then the Ladder's true work will begin. Until that point, the Ladder leads, commanding Sleepers for their own good and against their own unwise impulses.

Star: The Silver Ladder is the Path to Victory

The Ladder defines the stages of enlightenment souls progress up, from laborers to Ascended Sages; but despite the Free Council's rhetoric, the Ladder believes that everyone and anyone deserves the right to move to a rung that best suits her, even if it's not at the top. Let artists be artists, let managers, manage... and let mages work miracles. Awakened souls have a destiny and an obligation to uplift the Sleepers and bring Sleepwalkers to Awakening.



Origins

The Ladder grew from the intersection of low-born cultural mages and proto-Stoic philosophers in the ancient world; when Plato spoke of the duty of those who left the cave to turn back and help others, the Ladder's founders listened at his feet. By the time the Diadochi Wars erupted in Alexander's wake, the spat-upon hedge practitioners had reinvented themselves as respected sages, claiming the mantle of philosopher-king from proud Pelasgian traditions. The creation of a mythic, respected past before the teachings of Plato was the foundation of Atlantis, the ideal upon which the Diamond functions and subsumes all others. After surviving an early schism where those who thought that those less enlightened should worship their betters (and mages should worship the Tyrants – this group split off to become the ancestors of the Seers), proto-théarchs successfully forged alliances within Hellenistic culture and formed the Diamond with the other nascent Orders.

The Diamond systems of Consilium and Convocation were Ladder inventions, and they retain a slim majority of leadership roles still. Order philosophy has evolved from an enlightened ruler to describing the perfect mage as a **Sage**, a wise advisor who enables her charges and empowers those she leads. They take the roles of teachers, wise authority figures, and counselors when dealing with Cryptopolies. Théarchs have even been known to make common cause with the Seers, when something threatens the Awakened as a people. They did so during the First Crusade's Siege of Jerusalem, to preserve their power over the Sleepers of the Holy Land and stave off mutual annihilation by the soul-stealing demon Desiderus. So again, when Atlantean symbolism failed in a Triangle centered on the Pirate Republic of Nassau, caused by a democracy-devoted Nameless Order seizing power.

Mysteries

Théarchs look for **Mysteries** that give clues to the great ladder of being, especially Sleepwalkers who manifest magical abilities, ancient records of the Awakened, and Supernal entities. Save perhaps the Mysterium, the Ladder is the Order most obsessed with finding temples and artifacts of Atlantis. Despite the dangerous, oddly contradictory, and often Paradox-ridden nature of the ruins, théarchs justify their actions in search of such relics, trying to grant the Awakened pride in their past and a vision of a united future. In doing so, they hope to continually climb their Ladder. Théarchs are dedicated to the goal of freeing every soul from its shackles – Sleepers must be encouraged to Awaken, and the Awakened towards Ascension.

Magical Symbolism: Authority

The Ladder is responsible for the Diamond's claim to wisdom from an ancient ur-culture, and it strives ever to maintain that magical symbolism in the form of the Diamond and Pentacle. They are *Vox Draconis*: Voice of the Dragon, priests of Atlantis, granted primacy not because of conferred authority or divine right but recognition of wise leadership. Théarchs often use the trappings of priests and other authority figures as Yantras, but they're a humanist priesthood, exalting the potential of human-

ity rather than gods. As befits a global outlook, théarchs claim symbols of authority from many cultures as tools. Their symbolism incorporates badges of law and judges' robes. Théarchs also tend to adopt the personal trappings of the strongest member of their Order within a given Consilium. The modern Order doesn't use crowns or royal regalia. Besides being too ostentatious for good taste, it's a reminder that a théarch's purpose isn't to rule, but to *lead*.

Hubris

Hubris is a coward's word; magic is the right of every human being. Destiny lies in Ascension, in forcing reality to bend the knee. Paradox is a curse imposed by the Abyss, and the Abyss is the creation of the Enemy. Rhetoric aside, Ladder mages go too far when they overestimate their abilities and ignore advice when it advises them against acting boldly or in accordance with their pronouncements. They also succumb to hubris when they mistake the role of a leader for the role of a sovereign, or when they spin Cryptopolies and Consilium politics into temporal power, neglecting the eternal truth and grand vision their tenets stem from. Lastly, they commit unwise acts when, ironically, they believe their Wisdom to be paramount above all others, especially Sleepers.

Concepts

Cabal Negotiator: "We're agreed," their leader says, a member of the Ladder himself. It's been a hard month of negotiation; one cabal's ley line configuration is another's Resonance nightmare, and this Consilium has seen enough bloodshed. I wear the title of solitary as a badge of honor. Because I'm beholden to none but myself, I can represent the interests of all within the Consilium. More than that, I can represent the interests of the Awakened. This particular Resonance will shepherd the Sleepers towards introspection, and hopefully, enlightenment. It's been a good month.

Self-Help Guru: I step into the spotlight, shining bright and hot on my black suit. Before me stretches a packed auditorium; behind me, my own face is blown up to monstrous proportions on a high-definition screen. It doesn't capture the silver of my jewelry quite right, and the etched pentacles on my buttons don't *quite* show up. "Help me, help you," I say, and the crowd roars. I talk about climbing the ladder of our lives, how we all get tired and rest on rungs, but how we must keep climbing or fall. They feel it speaking to them, even if their souls struggle to understand. If one of them grasps a rung, it'll all be worth it... but even if they don't, I'll pass what I know down the ladder.

Stereotypes

Arrow: Loyalty, honor, and service. We cannot ask for more.

Guardians: Every tale has its necessary villains, and fear must go along with love for effective rule.

Mysterium: Reclaimers of our birthright. We climb the ladder, but they blaze the trail.

Free Council: Even democracy must recognize the firsts among equals.

Seers: True wisdom comes from leading all, including your enemies.

FREE COUNCIL

Humanity is Magical

Another video of a riot. The media treats it like it's a new occurrence, yeah? But if you live long enough, you see the same image every few decades. Fists raised in rebellion. Flaming chunks of something hurled against anonymous soldiers, ones with no face but authority. It's not enough to throw the Molotov cocktail, it's gotta be seen. The act of viewing rebellion changes the rebel and the viewer. The medium is the message, and fire carries one hell of an argument.

Just because it's cyclical doesn't mean there isn't meaning. That kind of fire runs deep in societies and culture. That's where the Supernal is closest to the Fallen World, when passion and power circle a symbol. It's like a photo of a mountain and a lake, yeah? One reflects the other so clearly you can't always be sure what's real. Throw a rock in, you start seeing the ripples and the currents. You learn more about what you're looking at by the whole picture than just one side or the other. That's how you separate the two – throw a rock. Not literally, y'know? Not always, at least.

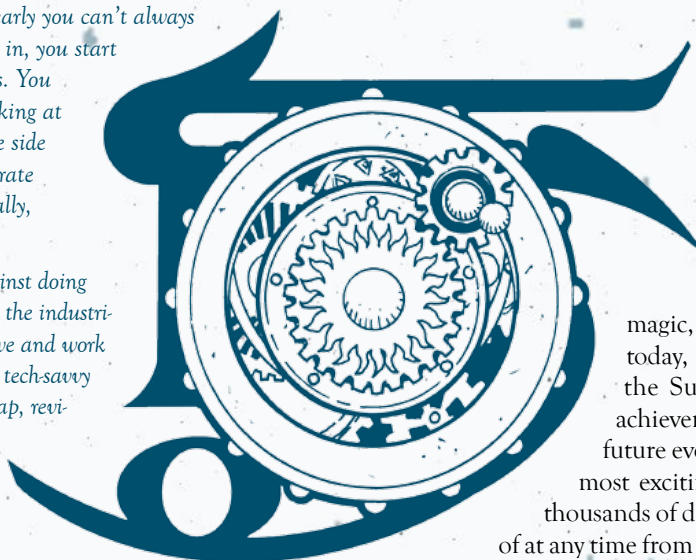
The Hierarch is advocating against doing anything about what's going on in the industrial district, but lots of people still live and work there. Not just the working class – tech-savvy start-ups buy out old buildings cheap, revitalize neighborhoods. Old and new bringing life is what we're all about; so is throwing fire when necessary. Let's raise a fist and make some noise, shall we?

Magic exists in the Fallen World, like a tree stunted by the Abyss, growing ever upward to touch the Supernal. The Awakened have always been sensitive to the spirit of an age, and the modern age is one of power and promise. All of humanity's knowledge can be held in a pocket, while revolutions are given wings by invisible birds. Mathematicians and theoretical scientists grasp the fundamental nature of reality, straining against the impossible. The Fallen World is a chain on human souls, but any chain can be reformed into a key...or a sword.

Upheaval and innovation lead to occult Wisdom: This is the basis of the **Council of Free Assemblies**, an Order comprised of modern

idealists and ancient rebels united by a shared love of humanity and the belief that the traditions of the Fallen World hold a place equal to the Supernal. Geniuses, rebels, malcontents – all have places within Assemblies, fostering a flourishing idealism tempered by practical iconoclasm. Larger and more varied than all other Orders, Libertine sancta ring with competing voices of anarchists, free-market capitalists, and doctrinaire demagogues. Ancient Legacies and formerly-Nameless societies that predate the Diamond share a table with cutting-edge technomancers, bound by the Libertine Creed and a vision of the future.

Mages join the Libertines when they want to fight for Sleepers and democracy, when they find more value in the works of modern-day humanity than those of ancient mages, when they're deeply invested in a Sleeper magical culture.



Core Beliefs: Libertine Creed

The Free Council is comprised of mages with deep ties to the Fallen World – they believe the ancients possessed extraordinary insights into magic, but prodigies exist in the world today, and new symbols are forged in the Supernal to accompany human achievement. The past is gone and the future ever-mutable, but the *present* is the most exciting time to be a mage. Despite thousands of different occult praxes, conceived of at any time from thousands of years ago to yesterday, one Creed binds Assemblies with three tenets.

Humanity is Magical

Sleepers in groups evince Supernal inspiration. Other Orders hide within, control, and inspire Sleeper societies; but Council mages *invest* in them, finding new occult secrets in culture, science, technology, and art. Sleeper art corresponds to Supernal symbols that never existed before the moment of artistic inspiration. Libertines admit that Quiescence can damage individual Sleepers, while insisting that the communal spirit of humanity reflects the Supernal. Even hardcore Libertines know it's dangerous to teach secrets to the unworthy, so they strive to make all Sleepers worthy.



Libertines rarely work to uplift Sleepers individually; direct communion with the Supernal means the Awakened are, ironically, less capable of reflecting Above and Below. Instead, Libertines work to bridge the gap between Sleepers and Awakened by destroying the pernicious Lies that crush the human soul. Doing so will draw forth the Abyssal shard within every human soul simultaneously rather than piecemealed Awakenings. Revolutions may center on powerful individuals, but they are movements of peoples entire.

Destroy the Followers of the Lie

Sleepers are enslaved by Quiescence. The world is trapped under the power of hostile forces, further dilating the relationship between Supernal and Fallen. Libertines aren't content with seeing though the Lie themselves – it forces humanity into a hierarchy of Awakened and Sleeper merely by existing.

Radical columns advocate open war against the Seers (and, sometimes, the Silver Ladder), but the Council as a whole cannot agree on the best way to reform Awakened society away from authoritarian origins. Most have settled on the idea that peaceful cooperation within the Pentacle will gradually grow the Awakened community away from outmoded governance. The Pentacle's formation is a victory already, after all.

Democracy Seeks the Truth

Democracy stands in total ideological opposition to tyranny – only by rejecting all elements of their power can the Exarchs be defied. If humans working together draw on the Supernal World, then hierarchies – even Awakened ones – dilute and neuter that power, reducing it to a mere trickle. The Free Council believes in making group decisions and elects temporary leaders in response to specific societal needs. In practice, this isn't *much* different than deference to experienced mages (and thus, Libertines can comfortably co-exist within a Consilium governed by representative democracy), but the Free Council's doctrine of *experto crede* – trusting the experts – doesn't always mean a master rules supreme in an Assembly, and if one does it is seldom for very long. Many Libertines honestly believe that a decision made by a group, or one *directly* empowered by a group, is more likely to be right than one taken alone.

Origins

For most of recorded history, mages who conflicted with the Diamond's Atlantean dogma found themselves shuffled into dead-ends within the Orders or left bereft of Order membership entirely. Powerful Legacies grew outside the shadow of Atlantis, secure in their praxes but solidly in the minority. Others took a hard stand against the Diamond, branded as heretics or Left-Handed. Many formed Nameless Orders – cults and schools that were, at best, regional powers.

The democratic revolutions of the late 18th century and 19th century changed everything. In the bombs of London anarchists, the creak of the wind against Chinese warships, and the flashes of Parisian gunpowder, mages found new and unique praxes. These revolutionary mages chafed against the Diamond, but found allies in the Nameless Orders. Ancient mystery cults and occult traditions unchanged since the Bronze Age met with mages who extolled the scientific method and were eager to escape the stifling Diamond

dominance. Both parties found themselves transformed, catalyzing the formation of a new worldwide Order. Globe-trotting revolutionaries and charismatic leaders — themselves symbols of a new order — took advantage of advances in mass travel to cross-pollinate the Libertine Creed, forming the Nameless cabals into cells capable of rapid communication with each other. Drawn into these cells (called columns, rather than cabals) and held together by their shared focus on human culture, the Nameless Orders formed column democracies to oppose Consilia. Membership grew rapidly, sparking conflicts across the globe and threatening to consume the Awakened world in arcane conflagration. The Nameless War was poised to be the dramatic Awakened conflict of the 19th century.

Seeking an advantage in their millennia-long cold war, the Hegemonic Ministry of the Seers offered the Nameless an alliance against the Diamond. Emissaries offered a marriage of human culture and technological control, sweetening the deal with wealth and temporal power. The attraction was obvious: Nameless mages embraced Fallen fashions and technology as praxes, and were deeply entrenched in mortal culture and fundamentally opposed to the attitudes of the Diamond. The Seers saw their chance to rid the world of the very *idea* of the occult, sealing the Fallen World's cracks and completely controlling the Awakening. The simultaneous answer of the Nameless came on New Year's Eve, 1899: *No*. The Great Refusal was unanimous (if only because the columns who accepted the offer were quietly, *brutally* purged) and refocused the nascent war efforts against the Seers. Within a decade, the Nameless Wars had ended. Convocations offered support and assimilation to Nameless columns, while the Silver Ladder worked to support the allied Assemblies and Nameless Orders as a true fifth Order. The Diamond became a Pentacle, albeit with a point that drew on the Supernal weight of human society and innovation rather than magically emulating a caste of an Awakened City.

Mysteries

The Free Council looks for Mysteries within scientific and cultural innovation — supernatural fringe sciences, retro-history, new theories, ancient civilizations, and social movements. Radical occult theories discarded by Diamond Orders find purchase and, occasionally, success within the Council. They were born in an era when political thinkers wrestled with notions of anarchism and communism, when occultists invented the tarot (which even the Diamond grudgingly admitted was a success), and when Western and Eastern religions fused into new forms. As the Hellenistic era gave birth to the Diamond, so too did globalization give birth to the Pentacle.

As the Free Council seeks to mix magic and science, the Libertines hold dear the institution of the Lorehouse, university and occult repository combined. Every mage of the Free Council is tasked toward improving the dissemination of magical discovery throughout the Lorehouse, requiring constant research and magical activity.

Magical Symbolism: Culture

Human genius drives the praxis of Libertine magic, considering the complex occult and scientific traditions of the Fallen World to be reciprocal Supernal symbols. Power and value ascribed symbolic importance by Sleepers creates magical resonance. Derided as *techné* ("Craft,") by the conservative elements of the Diamond Orders, the Libertines adopted the term as a

badge of honor, their unity and recognition of human power enabling a powerful and versatile Order praxis.

The Libertines dedicate complex Sleeper phenomena as magical tools, constantly seeking and inventing new Instruments to probe the Supernal, valuing their cultural power over potential Atlantean symbolism. Mathematical formulae hold a place alongside (and complementary to) Platonic gematria. Stonehenge and Baghdad batteries can be occult devices as much as solar panels and microwave power emitters. Libertines exalt the process of science itself as a tool of wonder, humanity's reach exceeding its imagination.

Hubris

Born of violence, hubristic Libertines cling fast to an ironically intolerant viewpoint in their zeal to fight the Lie. A factitious Order made of ancient Legacies and contemporary philosophies, Libertines often find themselves unable to agree on a single methodology and unwilling to take action. Lack of a hierarchy means the community responds with a singular purpose, but cannot take necessary actions that are unpopular. Mistakes stem further from abdicated responsibility for group actions, or justifying deaths in order to battle the followers of the Lie. Lone voices questioning an Assembly invite censure at best and violent expulsion at worst; most Libertines accept a great many things they might be less than comfortable with in the name of social unity, preserving their political capital for a more important vote.

Concepts

Radio Free Libertine: The antenna clicks as I unfold it, spots of rust dotting an iron frame too dull to reflect the night sky. I grasp the iron and begin to speak, my will transforming words into waves across the night sky. Sleepers don't need magic to hear me, just a working radio. This city needs a voice who can tell it like it is, one who didn't blind herself in the sunlight when she left the cave. It's easy to forget the people on the street when you're in a tower. It's easy to forget what's worth fighting for. Every night, I remind them. When I walk the streets these nights, I see my words painted over gang tags. The war for reality is won with hearts and minds.

Dreamer: I tell the stories of long, long ago, when time first began for people after creation. Every night, I stoke the fire, telling all who will listen — Sleeper or Awakened alike. I speak of how the spirits made the world, placed man there, commanded obeisance. Idly, my hands trace sigils on a rock, speaking of how the spirits live within, how new life exudes from the stones to be reborn as men. There is power in stories, that much the Diamond tells true. Truth resides in the listener, though, not in the speaker. When I'm done speaking, I always ask the listener what he thought, and I'm not satisfied until I've learned something new.

Stereotypes

Arrow: No man is an island, no matter how strong the fortifications.

Guardians: Magic is to be shepherded, not feared.

Mysterium: What good is hoarded knowledge if you don't share it?

Ladder: How does one exalt the equality of all, then claim to be first among equals?

Seers: Our antithesis, our great cause. The Great Refusal was our Calatafimi.

SEERS OF THE THRONE

Magic is Payment

"All it costs is your soul." Is that what they've told you happens when you serve the Throne? Spare me. And no, before you ask, the street meat vendor you've been eating from all these years is not an evil mage. I'm just borrowing him for a few minutes. A tip, free and friendly: shed your links if you can, cease your habits if you can't. You're quite easy to find.

Here's the truth: Humanity is oppressed, no matter what happens. You live in the Fallen World, but it will not move for you. You see the Lie, but you'll always live in it. You cannot beat the Exarchs. You can't even truly fight them. The best you can manage is a vague and persistent resistance. The Diamond does not tolerate dissent or disloyalty, and the Free Council tolerates nothing else. We are no different than the "Atlanteans," save that we serve the divine beings who are demonstrably at the helm of the universe rather than old wizards fighting a war lost before Plato first wrote down the name of some made-up island.

So don't. A far wiser saying goes, "If you can't beat them...", but you already know the rest. Pithy, perhaps, but we're speaking of magic here. Don't take my word for it. Sleep well tonight, listen to your dreams, and scrutinize the signs. If you're wise, if you desire reward for your service, They will tell you where to go.

And no, it doesn't cost your soul. Just your obeisance, better given to gods than men who think themselves divine.

The Exarchs have won. The living Supernal symbols of oppression rule supreme, while the Fallen World is kept separate by their will. Humans are blind to the wonder of magic, the

few who glimpse the truth squabbling over shattered remnants, ancient ruins, and the fragmented writings of lost archmages. Gods sit the throne of reality while men look up in envy and fear. Better to rule on Earth in order to one day serve in Heaven.

From a position of wealth and power in the Fallen World, the **Seers of the Throne** interpret the will of the Exarchs. In the kingdom of the blind, the Seers are kings. The third great sect of the Awakened opposes the Diamond and the Free Council out of religious obligation — one of many commandments from their faceless, never-seen masters in the Supernal Realms.

The Seers can directly compete with any of the Diamond Orders in their respective areas of expertise, and frequently exploit human culture to a degree that enrages the Free Council. Their battle-mages worship war itself, marching alongside sages who serve the living symbol of control through surveillance. Wealth, power, sex, magic — all are granted in exchange for oppressing humanity and furthering the Lie.

They serve the **Ministers**, earthly servants of a particular Exarch and the heads of Ministries, each dedicated to a particular form of control over the Fallen World — military force, religious

and secular authority in tandem, economics. The Ministries constitute the Iron Pyramid, a massive power structure that extends into Supernal politics with the Exarchs as capstones. Every Ministry is, essentially, a small Order patronized by a particular Exarch, affiliated with hundreds of independent cults dedicated to that Exarch. The Iron Pyramid acknowledges four Exarchs as Archgenitors, and their Ministries as Greater over the Lessers.





The Ministries didn't invent the forms of human misery they espouse and exemplify, but they draw magical strength from the suffering of the Fallen World. The Mystery cults that spawned the Ministries are still extant, providing the Seers with fanatics and, to their eyes, cannon fodder. The Great Ministries (and those who threaten their stability, such as the capitalistic Mammon) maintain stables of supernatural servant creatures, or deep ties to the societies of creatures that used to be human. Ministries rise and fall with new forms of tyranny, though Seers all pretend that the Great Ministries are eternal.

Mages join the Seers when they want to use their magic to live comfortably, taking everything they couldn't get before they Awakened. They also join when they're afraid of the Exarchs or Seers, or want to be on the winning side. Finally, the Seers have been known to poach by promising Pentacle apprentices a Mystery they desperately need.

Core Beliefs: The Will of the Tyrants

Humanity is fallible. The Exarchs are not. By the Seers' reckoning, the world isn't Fallen at all – the cosmos is a vast pyramid of power, with the Exarchs on top. The Exarchs rarely speak directly to their servants, except through Ministers and, occasionally, Prelates – Seers of good standing in the Exarch's eyes, who sometimes experience visions or dream-notions attributed to Exarchal will. Domination is the key theme common to these visions, defining a clear condition of victory but an uncertain method. Cryptic or highly metaphorical, Seers hold these to be tests of their wisdom,

with successful interpretations leading to victory over their rivals on the path to power.

Given their once-human origins, so the Seers believe, the Exarchs reward loyal service with magical secrets and a place within Pyramid hierarchy. Many Seers live as plutocrats, supported by the Ministries they serve, rewarded for performing whatever acts their divinations or their superiors demand. Advancement comes when a Seer is strong enough to demand it – most Seers watch their superiors for weakness while working to undermine their inferiors.

Mages who serve the Exarchs faithfully will be rewarded

The advantages of service within the Iron Pyramid are obvious. Money and temporal Fallen power are the least of these – even junior Seers experience a level of comfort unheard of outside of celebrity culture. Less obvious are the advanced rites, Grimoires, and potent artifacts that faithful Seers receive, including use of Profane Urim – artifacts which allow total domination over vast numbers of servants, controlling minds and manipulating wills in ways both gross and subtle. The ultimate rewards of Fallen service are archmastery and, Seers pray, Ascension to the Supernal and a place among the Exarchs.

Divination reveals the Tyrants' will

Through varied means of Fallen divination – Tarot and dream interpretation being the two most popular methods – Seers

gain insights into where to act and what to do to further the Exarchs' power. The Tyrants control the world, after all – the marks of their will are there, if only you look for them with the requisite wisdom to comprehend. The Seers are obsessed with omens and signs, even beyond raw applications of the Fate and Time Arcana. They listen for High Speech in the white noise of radio telescopes, consult charts of bird migrations, and enslave Sleepers who have the gift of foresight. The more Seers work the Exarchs' will, the more rewards they find, including unique praxes (that still serve the Tyrants), artifacts of Atlantis, and Supernal Verges.

From the Iron Pyramid comes prestige and servitude

As the Exarchs are above mages, so are mages above Sleepers, and the Seers direct minions in campaigns of surveillance and subversion. Among the Awakened, the Pyramid defines the hierarchy. Senior mages encourage their lessers to delegate tasks, offering less and less explanation further down the Pyramid while tolerating more and more personal exploitation. It's not easy – a Seer must split her time between utilizing and sabotaging subordinates while flattering and undermining her superiors. The various Ministries also wrestle for influence within the Pyramid. The net effect is that despite all the advantages the Exarchs' sponsorship brings, the Seers spend too much time jockeying for position and chasing their personal Mysteries to fully wage war on the Pentacle.

Origins

Individual cults and Ministries differ on the fine points of mythology, but the majority ascribe to something like the Diamond's Atlantean stories. Seers hold the Exarchs to be Ascended mortals who created a powerful artifact, or portal, or both, called the Celestial Ladder. The Exarchs-to-be used it to force their way physically into the Supernal Realms, Ascending *en masse* to rule the cosmos and remake it according to their vision.

When the Diamond Orders first formed, they all included groups who believed the Exarchs should be placated or worshiped. The first major Exarch cult split from the Diamond almost immediately, styling themselves slaves of the General, Exarch of control through fear of violence. They fell with the rise of Republican Rome, scattered and crushed by circumstance and rivals for the General's attention. Other cults survived both within and without the Diamond until the 16th century, when the followers of the Unity, Exarch of control through xenophobia, became the Hegemony – the first Ministry of the Lie, using political ideology, nationalism, and racism to divide and conquer humanity.

Mysteries

The Seers look for Mysteries revealing the Exarchs' will, or are directed to them by their divinations. A great many Seers are directed to search for Mysteries under the command of their hierarchy, ostensibly by the will of the Exarchs, but most often to satisfy the whims of their betters (though most Seers assume that if the Exarchs took issue, they'd say so). For their part, Exarchs command the Seers to conquer the Watchtowers

by studying Awakenings, control magic by hoarding secrets and mystic sites, enslave the Old Gods and various powers antithetical to Supernal magic, regulate the Abyss, divide humanity with rivalry and resentment to keep them Asleep, and destroy the Pentacle and the Nameless Orders.

By contrast, the Exarchs also direct Seers to protect humanity from existential threats, and renew the vault-seals of ancient horrors called the Bound. Not even the Tyrants wish to rule a kingdom of ashes. More than once in history, this has required making common cause with the Diamond – primarily the Silver Ladder, but occasionally the Guardians of the Veil and the Mysterium.

Last but not most important, the Exarchs do take direct action on very rare occasions, sending avatars called **Ochemata** out from their Supernal palaces into the Fallen World. Ochemata are Supernal entities formed of the Exarch's symbols, god-like in power, but Seers say each is but a shadow formed of its parent Exarch. Sometimes, an Ochema issues commands to a Seer. Most of the time, they are reserved for tasks the Exarchs don't trust their slaves with.

Magical Symbolism:

The Words of the Tyrants

Seer tools transcend cultural boundaries, relying on the symbolism of their Ministry's patron Exarch. Seers incorporate Exarch icons into High Speech, runes, and illuminated scripture. Most often, this is an orison to his patron, a prayer for intercession of a Tyrant's will.

Repeatedly drawing on her Exarch draws a Seer's soul closer to alignment with her patron's symbols. After successive castings of high magic, a doorway appears in her Oneiros, leading to a brutal Supernal test of loyalty in a dreamscape controlled by her patron's servants, with a successful harrowing leading to Prelacy.

Hubris

No mage serves the Throne out of altruism. Even the deluded or willfully ignorant find themselves quickly disabused of notions of fighting the good fight. Yet there's great profit in tyranny, and no shame in admitting that. Unfortunately for the Wisdom of Seers, the missions assigned them by superiors are often traumatic. The Tyrants care not for those below them, and while they reward valued servants and Prelates, few make the leap from expendable to indispensable. Seers fall to hubris when they follow orders no matter the cost to themselves or others, when they enslave Sleepers to work their will, or when they steal Artifacts and other magical supplies from other groups without regard. Sadly, these actions neatly describe the Seers' mandate.

Concepts

Abacomancer: I lazily trace a glyph in the fresh ashes. He was a father of three, and his children hardly spoke to him in the last decade of his life; their guilt means a particularly gaudy spot urn in the columbarium. The ashes of a father are a fitting tribute to my gods, so it's his ashes through which I work my divination. The wind kicks up, blowing coolly over white marble, shifting

and twisting the glyph into something new. I wipe the ashes on my greatcoat and ignore the screams of the man's ghost. The Exarchs have answered my queries, and I will not let some crying shade distract me from the call of gods.

Architect: The city stretches before me. Others of my Path would deem her a concrete jungle, but I see her as a living companion, as lonely as I am. Her lungs billow black smoke into the air, while her guts teem with thousands of residents. I raise my hands, and a dozen architects at three different firms unknowingly coordinate their efforts. The Exarchs bring order to this world, just as I bring order to this city. A skyscraper here, highway ramp there — enough to alter weather patterns, bringing storms to my lover's belly. Drop by drop, the poorest within her will wash away, their foundations crumbled and possessions destroyed. In

five years, property values will be low enough for gentrification to take hold, and my true work will begin.

Stereotypes

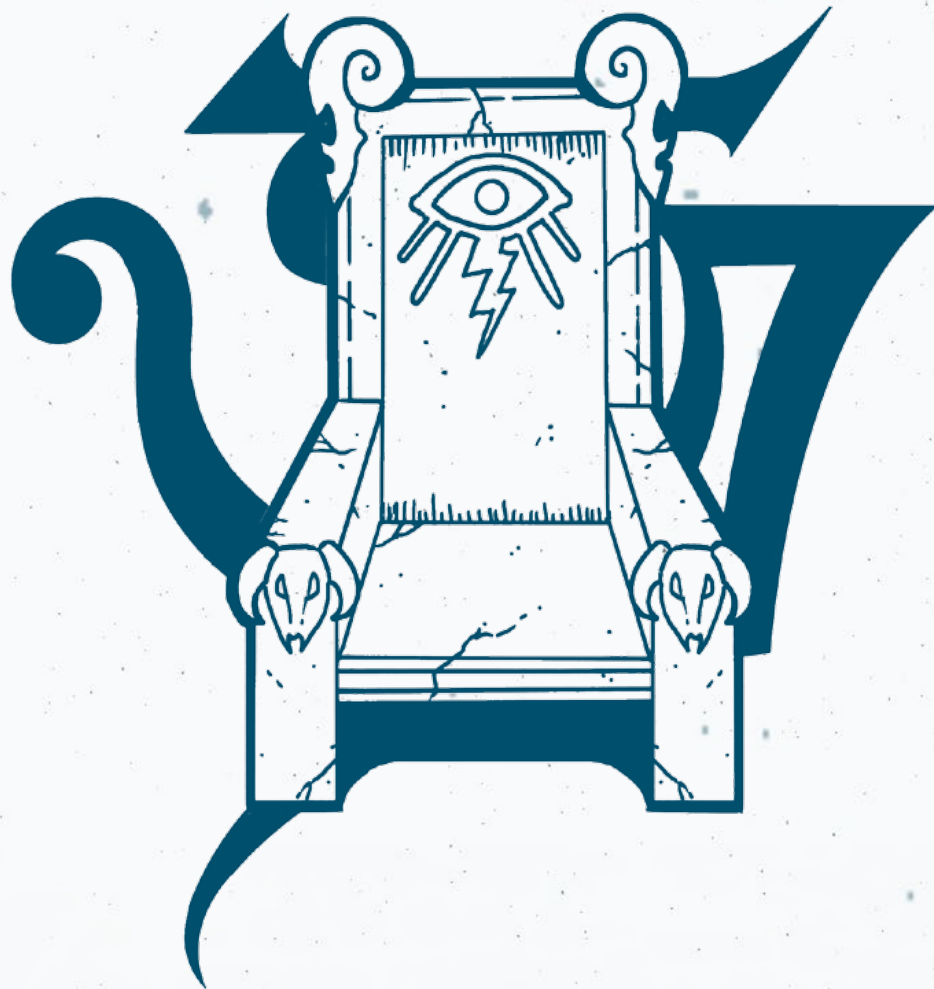
Adamantine Arrow: They exalt challenge, but not the ones who challenge them.

Free Council: Genius is unappreciated, even when it's completely backwards.

Guardians of the Veil: Their dreams aren't as empty as their conscience seems to be.

Mysterium: Career scholars who worship power? There's lots for you here, friend.

Silver Ladder: One nation under gods; accept nothing less.



The Door

PART III

I still remember the sound of your voice. The memory of it still makes my heart beat faster, even after all these years of training.

"Will you watch over my body as I enter the Astral?" you asked me. We were at Cadman Plaza Park, eating bagels and watching a man make giant, iridescent bubbles with a bubble wand. It was winter and cold and I was smoking a cigarette while I ate. You hated when I did that.

"Sure," I said, stupidly. "If you'll do the same for me," I managed not to choke on my words. You smiled and said you would.

"Of course I will, Gee," were your exact words.

The Adepts called the room "the Abattoir." They said dumb animals went in and were destroyed. It was meant as a joke, but it scared me. Diamante knew I was afraid to walk my own soul, and had told me to be patient. One day I'd be ready and the reward would be great, if I could face myself. You were ready before I was.

The room was unremarkable. I was disappointed. It was big enough for two people to sit comfortably. A single light shone overhead and a circle was painted on the ground, a worn feather pillow placed in the middle for you to sit on. You took my hands in yours. "Thank you," you said to me, your brown eyes warm. "I appreciate this."

"I'll keep watch," I said, watching as you sat in the middle of the circle, atop the pillow. I watched as you tried to get comfortable, your hands palm up on your thighs, your eyes closed. Your breathing slowed, then became more even. I watched

you, concerned my breathing was too loud, worried I might disturb you. I looked at my phone for the time, watched you for some sign of distress. Your chest rose and fell, slowly, measured, your body still. I read while I waited for you to end your journey, looking up from my studies every time you drew a sharp breath.

Finally, you sighed. I looked up, waiting, watching. Your eyes fluttered open, and you smiled at me weakly. You told me you were tired, so I suggested you rest before I try. You were quiet, contemplative, as I walked you back to your room, supporting your arm. I could feel you thinking. I wanted to ask your thoughts, but couldn't make a sound. When you closed the door to your room, I cursed to myself.

I always wanted to help people, you knew that. I told you that countless times, and you always nodded when I balled my fists and wondered why things always blew up in my face. Even other warlocks laughed behind my back.

We went to the squat in Coney Island to try and see if we couldn't do something with it. The sanctum was getting crowded. When I suggested some of us move there, Diamante protested. We knew the neighborhood could use a bright spot, I reasoned something dark lingered there the household didn't want to deal with. Let us fledgling mages go and fix it up, turn it into a place for us to live and a community center for the local Sleepers; our first Cryptopoly. How hard could it be? The neighborhood was already getting gentrified. What was one more well-meaning group getting in on unused real estate and doing something with it? I had visions of vegan potlucks and printmaking in my head, covertly teaching runes and sigils to our neighbors, encouraging them in the Ladder's teachings.

The outside of the building looked stable enough, though a dark pall hung over the entire edifice. Brick facade, empty window frames gaping out onto the street. It was ours, legally, to do with as we liked. As I crossed the threshold, I shivered. It reeked of beer, piss, and blood. The presence of so many deaths lingered in the air, like cold spider webs.

"I think we can clean this place up," I said determinedly, putting my hands on my hips.

The next thing I remember, I was lying on the floor, sprawled out. The hot, sticky feel of blood on my face made my heart thump. You were chuckling, your hand over your mouth. I reached up and felt my forehead, my fingers coming away with blood and white, chalky dust. Plaster. I looked up. A piece of the ceiling was missing.

"I don't care if this building is working against me," I muttered, avoiding your glance. "We'll fix it."



CHAPTER TWO:

THROUGH AWAKENED EYES

Open your eyes, and you shall see from the highest to the lowest.
– Dr. John Dee, *Compendium Heptarchiæ Mysticæ*

Imagine a large lake: Children swim in it – their laughter and shrieks echoing as they play in the summer sun. Sailboats drift across the horizon. Speedboats dance on the water, the waves in their wakes slapping the sandy shore where someone has built a miniature castle, its ramparts crumbling. A man and his young daughter cast fishing lines from a pier and wait in companionable silence. A scientist takes a water sample among the dragonflies and frogs that cluster among the cattails.

Everyone there knows this lake. They've eaten fish from it, caught tadpoles in it, and felt its muddy bottom between their toes. They've seen maps of it tacked to the wall of the campground office and satellite images of it on the Internet. The lake's average water temperature, its depth, and the variety of plants and animals that live in and around it are all a matter of public record.

The lake they know is a Lie.

Things lurk beneath the surface. Its bottom is riddled with tunnels leading to vast underground seas inhabited by beings too alien for mortal minds to comprehend. For the most part, the creatures that live in these depths never leave, but occasionally one finds its way into the lake and drags a swimmer into the deep to devour at its leisure. Or a curious treasure hunter dives too deep and finds himself lost in the labyrinth of submerged tunnels until he runs out of oxygen and drowns.

In either case, no one ever finds the body, and people can only speculate about the fates of those who went missing. Strange beasts from the roots of the earth and alien entities from outside of time are beyond human experience, however, and so any theories are of the entirely mundane sort – suicide, accidental drowning, or foul play.

Healthy minds do not see inhuman monsters and occult conspiracies everywhere. No one will seriously believe claims that lake monsters lurk beneath the waves. Most who discover otherwise convince themselves that what they saw was the product of stress, terror, or physical deprivation.

The Fallen World

Like the lake, the world as most Sleepers know it is a Lie. The sea serpents under the ordinary-seeming lake are real, and most urban legends and horror movies reflect some aspect of the truth humanity wants to deny. This is not because human belief shapes reality but because the terrifying realities of the world quietly nudge human minds that would prefer not to believe in such things. Vampires exist. Werewolves are real. Frankenstein is not merely a work of imaginative fiction.

Why don't humans acknowledge the truth behind the Lies? *Someone* should be curious about the vanished diver. *Someone* should notice the holes at the bottom of the lake. *Someone*, at the very least, would spot the lake monster on her fish finder often enough to realize that something is up. But very few ever do. Why?

Because they are in the grip of the Lie.

Quiescence and the Abyss

Mages who study the symptoms of the Lie argue that mere social pressure doesn't explain human reluctance to acknowledge the existence of the supernatural. In fact, some humans possess awareness of some supernatural phenomena (ghosts, spirits,

psychic powers, etc.) while remaining blind to the existence of the others. Even those who witness overt displays of undeniable magic on many occasions do not have their eyes opened to the truth. They still deny that anything strange happened, and in many cases they completely forget everything they witnessed.

Mages refer to this infinite capacity to deny the Mysteries as the **Quiescence**, or the Sleeping curse. Quiescence causes Sleepers to forget any revelation of the Mysteries they happen to encounter. It reinforces the learned impulse to rationalize away the supernatural, causing memories of overt magic to fade like half-remembered dreams. Only the Awakened remember the truth. This aspect of Quiescence presents an obstacle to the work of those mages who hope to open the eyes of all of humanity to the Lie.

The Orders agree that the Lie is too elaborate and too finely targeted to be an accident. There's a guiding intelligence behind it. Mages know that some symbols have a semblance of life. They summon Supernal entities, pulling them from the Supernal World into the Fallen. Most are content to let mages come to them, but the occult symbols bound up in the Lie are evidence that something, deep in the unseen Supernal Realms, is actively trying to cripple humanity's ability to perceive beyond the Fallen World. More than trying – it's succeeding. What this enemy is depends on the tale, but mages use the Greek word for "rule from the outside" – "Exarch."

Anything that challenges the Lie draws the power of the Abyss into the Fallen World. If the symbols of the Supernal Realms represent everything that's True, providing meaning to the platonic concepts the Fallen World embodies, then the Abyss is everything that can't be. Every so often, part of the Fallen World becomes so overwhelmed by the poisonous anti-symbols of the Abyss that impossibility breaks through to become real, an intruding Paradox that damages the world around it. On rare occasions, these intrusions happen "naturally." More often, mages overextend themselves or fall to a moment's weakness when casting spells, accidentally allowing something of the Abyss through. The Abyss isn't an empty void exploited by the Exarchs, either – it contains multitudes of impossible entities, and whole maddened, stillborn universes mages call the **Annunaki**, each trying in its own way to infect the Fallen World and twist it into itself. Lesser Abyssal entities twist the laws of the Fallen World, creating regions of corrupted reality or strange, alien entities that mages call **Gulmoth**. When the Abyss warps the inner Astral worlds of a human soul, it creates an **Acamoth**, a monster dedicated to making people's souls more like the Abyss.

The Supernal World

The Supernal Realms call to Sleepers in a soft, insistent voice that usually remains unheeded. Their slumber is simply too deep, and the whispers begging them to Awaken do not penetrate. Occasionally, though, a Sleeper will drift into semi-consciousness and hear the voice from afar. He will incorporate it into the dreams he has always thought were reality.

Sometimes these manifest in literal, vivid dreams, haunting the Sleeper with the symbols of the Supernal Realm. Other times the symbols appear in the waking world as ordinary things suddenly heavy with meaning.

However this stirring manifests, it drops unmistakable hints that some absolute truth the Sleeper has always taken for granted is, in fact, a Lie. Nature is deterministic, and no individual can control what happens to her. Physical and social boundaries can and should constrain our thoughts and actions. Nothing ever really changes. Humanity is powerless and small in a vast universe. Humans are more significant and self-aware than mere animals and inanimate matter. All of these are a part of the Lie, and the semi-conscious Sleeper begins to see them as such.

This restless Sleep frequently persists for weeks. A few mages have even reported spending decades Sleeping fitfully, their lives defined by recurring symbols and themes of the Supernal Realm to which they eventually Awakened. This stirring is only the prelude of what is yet to come – the pilgrimages that manifest as **waking world dreams** or **Supernal journeys**.

Waking World Dreams

Once a Sleeper has begun to stir, it becomes possible for her to descend into a waking world dream. The symbols of the Supernal World around her become more pronounced until they appear more real to her than the ordinary world. If she turns away from this opportunity, her soul drifts back into Sleep. If she accepts it, she no longer perceives the real world at all. Everything she experiences during the waking world dream manifests as a journey through the Supernal World. In her mind, she overcomes obstacles to the object of her quest. In the mundane world, her body interacts with strangers as though they were people in her waking world dream. Everything that happens to her in the mundane world echoes in the waking dream, and everything she does in the waking world dream affects the events of the real world. In rare cases this leads to impossible events in the real world. Quiescence quickly erases these incidents from the memories of any Sleeper witnesses.

Sleepers cannot see the world as experienced by the seeker. Even other mages need to be of the same Path and be using their Mage Sight to look into the waking world dream. The Wise are familiar with the symptoms of such Awakenings, however, and most know well enough to stay out of the way – if a mage of the same Path attempts to intervene, he will often find himself cast in a role in the Awakening's narrative. Disturbing the seeker during the dream carries the risk of preventing the Awakening, so only the Guardians and Seers contemplate it with any frequency, and only then when absolutely necessary. Mages of all Orders will often tail the seeker in hopes of recruiting her if she successfully Awakens.

Supernal Journeys

A small minority of Awakenings take place entirely within the soul of the seeker – sometimes the Sleeper is asleep or meditating when she hears the Watchtower's call, but in other cases the moment of inspiration that triggers the Awakening is so strong

Waking the Sleeper

No one knows precisely what causes Sleeping souls to stir enough to hear the whispers of the Supernal Realms. Some mages have noted certain patterns:

The first is the Nascent Obsession Phenomenon, in which the Sleeper grows fascinated with something specific and unusual – a long-disproved scientific theory, a complex mathematical proof of a narrow concept within quantum mechanics, detailed historical records of a woman who lived centuries ago, or anything else likely to be of interest to only a handful of people in the world. As the Sleeper explores her obsession, it infects her more and more until she finally uncovers its underlying symbol, and that allows her to undertake the journey to the Supernal Realms.

The First Mystery Initiation involves a Sleeper reaching the truth of the Supernal World by finding its symbols in the Fallen World. Unlike the phenomenon above, the emphasis is on a pilgrimage or process of discovery – a literal journey to a holy mountain, studying martial arts under a true master, successfully reaching the inner circle of an arcane secret society, or any number of spiritual or physical pilgrimages that take the seeker away from the everyday concerns of the Fallen World.

The Sudden Noise Theory observes that some Sleepers enter a fitful Sleep when directly confronted with the Lie – like a deep sleeper might come half-awake after a clap of thunder. Guardians caution that this is both unsafe and unlikely to result in an Awakening, but mages of the Arrow counter that *all* Awakenings must include some form of conflict with the Lie. Fitful Sleep is only a tiny part of the process of Awakening; if the soul is not ready for a journey to the Supernal Realm it will only sink deeper into Quiescence after a false start, swallowed up by the Lie.

While these three patterns manifest with some frequency, none of them is surefire, and many Awakenings don't unfold in one of these ways. This hasn't prevented the proponents of these theories from performing further experiments on the subject.

that it catapults the seeker right out of her body. In a Supernal journey Awakening, the seeker experiences the Supernal Realm itself, removed from the shape of the world. She travels dreamscapes formed of her aspirational Path's symbols, and interacts with its native entities divested of their masks. To onlookers, the seeker appears comatose or asleep for the duration of her journey, which can take any amount of time divorced from the subjective journey experienced. Some rare mages Awaken after what feels like months to find they haven't even had time to fall to the floor. Other equally rare Awakenings take years of Fallen time, the new mage emerging from a coma.

The Supernal Realms

Whatever the details of this mystical journey, it invariably requires the seeker to successfully navigate its hazards and make her mark on the Supernal. In waking world dreams this most often involves signing her name, but it can take any form that places the seeker's mark: a bloody handprint, a tool or weapon crafted in Supernal forges, a new song, or anything else unique to the seeker's identity. In Supernal journeys this symbol of all the power of the Supernal Realm and the source of Awakened magic usually manifests as a Watchtower that she must reach, scale, and mark. Once the seeker marks the Supernal World in this fashion she regains her awareness in the ordinary world. She is no longer a Sleeper. She is Awakened.

Each Supernal Realm represents a Path, and by marking it in some way, the seeker declares herself a member of that Path. Mages do not consciously choose the Supernal Realm that calls to them, but the Paths seem to have biases toward what sort of person Awakens to them. Philosophically-minded mages describe the Paths as revealing the truth behind five aspects of the Lie. Seers of the Throne sometimes go as far as to speculate that each Path is a challenge to that Realm's Exarchs, and compare their mythology of Exarchal dominions to the nature of the Paths. Some members of a Path seem to be chosen by the Realm because they saw through the facet of the Lie it challenges at the moment of their Awakening. Others struggled with it all their lives, or knew it all along but lacked the power to do anything.

The Acanthus Awakening: Arcadia

Ancient souls reborn, Acanthus may tear old burdens away with their Watchtower's thorns – but new duties beckon, written into Time and Fate made visible in Arcadia's thorns and monsters. Before Awakening a Witch thought she was powerless, shackled by family, the state, poverty, unconfessed sins, addictions – the iron-plated road of a predictable life, where pain answers any deviation. Every Sleeper walks in lockstep with karma imposed by the Lie, but before they Awakened, Acanthus felt particularly confined. They yearned to escape the way we all do after the hundredth blow from a bully, or the thousandth day at a desk. We dream of a different way; they jump from predetermined roads, into the unknown.

Witches start by breaking patterns, rebelling against destiny with strange choices. He strays from his usual pub and takes a stranger home; he's never been with another man. The nameless lover leaves a messy bed and a poem. Behind glass and steel in another city, a woman's laptop chimes with another task; her phone trembles reminders. She throws them both out an office window and walks away, obeying an impulse she can't name. She doesn't wait to be fired, and discards the box of possessions security hands her in the hallway.

They see the secret rhythms of their lives, and refuse to dance to the beat. When you don't do what life expects of you, a stranger world reveals itself. He takes his lover's poem as a clue, and follows it to an unmapped forest. She sells her condo to get by and moves back to her dead mother's house, ramshackle and

alone in the industrial barrens. Nascent Witches find hidden glades and impossible rooms, stone circles and straw dolls.

Strange places, then strangers. The lover doesn't remember him. He doesn't remember anything, and carries more poems, in his handwriting, stuffed into the pockets of an expensive coat. She *knows* squatters share the house, but she only sees a retreating boot or slamming door. Sometimes they leave her presents: money, fine food, and those strange straw dolls. Sometimes they leave bloody footprints. These Mysteries could spin out for a lifetime, drowning failed Acanthus in the consequences of old lives rejected and new ones never fully lived. Unless they chase the truth they'll either die alone, live ragged lives of fear and delusion, or penetrate the hidden world just enough to enslave themselves to its monsters.

The Watchtower of the Lunargent Thorn only opens to those who freely enter. You can never get to the thorns by running away. If they chase the first Mystery over the threshold – if they catch unseen strangers, or solve the amnesiac lover's riddle – secret woods flower into endless, bramble-edged paths and the old house sprouts a thousand new dusty rooms. Ancient mages wrote of a Watchtower dominated by twisted, vine-corrupted woods. Modern Awakened tear through hoarders' houses and factories filled with rusty, collapsed equipment. Mist and smoke flow across it all. It's unfinished business and unborn potential; a Witch shoves it aside to confront Arcadia.

Arcadia's fairy lords are living forces of destiny. Don't drink or eat what they offer. Don't fall in love or lash out from hate, because you'll trade your destiny for theirs. There are no trivial acts in the Watchtower of Fate and Time. His lover was once a fairy's slave. What will he give up to win his memory back? Her house is a fairy citadel. If she accepts the crown, her invisible squatters reveal themselves as servants. They're never simple temptations with straightforward best answers, though some enslave a soul to the Fae, making them a bit *worse* than the rest. Nevertheless, every decision has consequences. He writes his lost love a poem, but gives him a new name: his own. As one person, they return to the world. She smashes the crown, and when the fairy house collapses, makes enemies of its former residents. She carves a new name on the last wall standing, denying her legacy in full.

The Mastigos Awakening: Pandemonium

Discipline and crisis. Pain and transcendence. Mastigos Awakening is the Devil's gift: the torment that liberates, pleasure that paradoxically destroys sensual obsessions. Mastigos Awaken to confront spiritual wounds, obsessions, and destructive thought patterns. They're the ones who didn't fuck to feel good, but to feel *something*. They cut themselves. They're manic artists chained to illness as a source of inspiration. They're faithless priests and experiment-tampering scientists who've grown dependent on appearance over reality. They're survivors with unstable coping mechanisms, headed for a reckoning.

Yet it's important to understand that Warlocks don't come to the Iron Gauntlet by straightening out their lives. Pandemonium hates asceticism for its own sake. Mastigos don't do denial. Awakening unlocks the potential of so-called base desires. They

justify them with personal spiritual systems, treatises on vice they might write down, but often commit to elaborate memory palaces. They turn obsessions into functions, symbols, even self-willed servants: minds within minds.

They Awaken in a rake's progress. Obsessive desires lead them to ever-greater risks until they encounter moral or existential crises where the only escape is to take ownership of their passions. For some this takes the form of a symbolic deal with the Devil, but others take command of their wants.

Consider the faithless priest. He loves his vestments, chants, and doctrines. Instead of letting go he delves deep into scripture. His homilies bring up increasingly obscure theology. He revives antique rituals. He hopes these will drag God back to his heart, but they don't – his words sound like tired theatrics. His congregation dwindles. He wanders too far from orthodoxy, and his church dismisses him for an "extended retreat."

He's careening toward Pandemonium. The Iron Gauntlet opens its hand when the world narrows to a choice: self-destruction or Awakening. The seeker defines her inner demons and confronts them.

Look at the artist, locked to cycles of brilliance and depression. She belongs to a counterculture that respects psychological differences and that keeps some of the stigma at bay, but friends still send her shitty memes about reasons to be cheerful; and when the work doesn't flow and she runs out of money, her family attaches conditions to their help: time in the hospital, medication she doesn't want to take – the sort of thing that makes her wish she had cancer instead, because they'd fucking *get off her back*. She cuts them off, unfriends, screens her calls, and when the phone company cuts off her cell she appreciates the silence. But she still paints and sculpts and writes, even after she needs to steal her paint, repurpose trash for sculpture, and write poems on her own ragged clothes. She doesn't see the eviction notice for days – she's too busy scrounging.

The priest plunges into ancient, ascetic practices. He girds his thighs with iron thorns and chants prayers in languages he barely understands until it all turns into pain babble: raw suffering instead of the ecstasy that's supposed to vault him to the right hand of God. On the street, the artist takes her cart out of its hiding place, begs for change to spend on food and cigarettes, and after a carcinogenic exhalation, her greatest work lays itself out in the mind's eye. Completing it won't be easy; she needs supplies and a place to work.

Crisis opens the door to Pandemonium, abode of demons. Seekers navigate a labyrinth of thoughts and values. The fallen priest wanders an enormous cathedral populated by the priesthood of his secret urges. A tall man in an ice-blue cassock represents his will to power, and he learns it was never about God, but his ability to command the flock. The Devil sits on the bishop's chair. Its horns crack and its red skin peels off, and he sees his true self, unrepentant, ready to serve him because he knows its true identity. He finds a lectern with a blank book, and begins a new scripture. For the artist, Pandemonium overlays the city, made into a maze by the barriers people place before the homeless and mentally ill. She visits family members, fellow artists, shop owners, and cops, who not only bar the way to her

great work, but challenge her right to exist. But she finds shortcuts in the city — sympathies in her mind — to get everything she needs. She paints, sculpts, builds, and defends her work against people trying to tear it down. She puts the brushes down and sees the result — an effigy not of the artist as she is, but as she could be: beautiful, inscribed with secrets. She's still bipolar, but that wasn't the problem. She no longer believes what the city has to say. She strides forth, without shame, to build her own streets through a beautiful world.

The Moros Awakening: Stygia

Moros don't reach for the Leaden Coin. They're already carrying it. We all drag it through life. It's the weight of everything precious and hateful that hums in our souls. In the best of deaths we use it to pay the Ferryman and free ourselves, growing light enough to travel across the Styx. Moros leave their burdens in Stygia, paying Death's toll without dying. Moros Awakening is an alchemical transformation that trades the Leaden Coin for the gold of a fearless life.

It starts with the Death card's message: unavoidable change. The bills pile up, and she can't pay them. She's an excellent watchmaker in a world where people tell the time on screens. She goes down the line, repairing old timepieces, resisting the temptation to turn her desk over and send a rain of gears and springs across her shabby shop. Persisting, she reaches the last watch — perhaps the last one she'll ever fix. It's a curious piece, with no obvious manufacturer. She can't even see tool marks on its brass and steel.

On the other side of the world his father dies, and family savings sink into newly-revealed debts. At the funeral, monks burn his father's portrait and tell him to let go, but after the bank forecloses he can't stop loving and hating the man every day. He sees the burning picture on his ceiling at night. He goes to a retreat, chants the Heart Sutra and discusses his troubles with the monks. They tell him to sit and breathe or work mindfully, but his father seems stitched to the inside of his eyelids, and his work consists of packing to move away from their debt-sunk home.

Even diamonds burn. The more you refuse to accept change, the hotter the torch gets.

She opens the watch. The movement doesn't make any sense. There's no room for a mainspring. What are the jewels made of? She turns it over. The hands fly back and forth. It's an impossible malfunction. So she opens it again, and under a cracked magnifying glass explores the watch's anatomy.

He packs, selling furniture that won't fit into the new apartment. Something rattles in the lining of his father's old couch. He rips fabric and a wooden box falls out. It contains Roman gold coins and a crude map of the house. The living room and couch are there, marking the box's hiding place — and other boxes. If he finds one more that's just as valuable he can save the house.

Change becomes a white hot flame. You need to let go.

She digs deep, pulling out gear after gear — too many to fit in the watch, it seems. There is no mainspring, but inside is a jewel that spins back and forth in its housing. She stares at its impossible

motion, and recognizes it: Morse code. (Her grandfather taught her that as well as the watch business.) She checks the pattern three times before confidently translating it: WHO AM I? This is the malfunction. Timepieces are small history machines, she thinks. They record more than the passage of a day. They bear the story of watchmakers and wearers in their brands, bands, and tool marks. This has none of these, and seems fashioned from a cooled accident of molten metal and mineral. She makes an adjustment to the jewel and it spins out the letters of her name. This is hers now, and together, their history begins.

On the other side of the world he has a shovel in hand when his mother comes in with a man from the bank, who starts in with accusations until that shovel starts smashing fixtures. He hears them say something about the police as they leave, but nobody disturbs him as he digs into the old earth basement. The maps don't say how deep it is, so he keeps digging. He knocks pipes aside and throws old bones over his shoulder until he's made a tunnel. It grows perfectly dark but he still digs. There's nothing to do but feel the shovel and raining earth. At last he works mindfully, and thinks of the Heart Sutra: *Form is Void and Void is Form*. This is the grave of his rebirth. He writes his memorial in this lightless place.

The Obrimos Awakening: The Aether

Obrimos Awaken as the inevitable, logical consequence of their personal theories and esoteric research. That doesn't mean their Awakening is itself a sober, rational thing. Thaumaturges argue themselves into bizarre, catastrophic situations that require intuitive leaps. Obrimos don't like to feel before they think, or seek refuge in slippery, wordless knowledge before binding it to a system; yet it happens every time, and they come out the other side aware of the flaws in their personal sciences. That's when it's time to refine, rebuild, and give more perfect names to cosmic energies. Obrimos develop their Gnosis this way, expounding ever more complete theories of everything.

Before they Awakened, Obrimos usually arrayed their thoughts in ordered systems. They were physicists, philosophers, programmers, monks, priests, and linguists, or autodidacts able to blend insights from divergent fields. That doesn't make them intelligent, but speaks to a love of structure and order. They hate inconsistencies and begin Awakening by spotting flaws in their own thinking. They see nonsense physics and mind-bending philosophical problems that even smarter Sleepers are too Lie-blind to notice. When nascent Obrimos try to describe these problems in papers, debates, or sermons they come off sounding like cranks.

In one university, a mathematician on the verge of Awakening marshals Big Data to model the fates of nations. She tweaks simulations to map paths to Utopia, but it never works. Improve one indicator and another falls. Why? Correlation isn't causation, but the inexplicable connections keep coming, and the only solution is to postulate some basic field of utility using Vitalism, Platonic forms, and other concepts so far outside her wheelhouse that writing about them would rip her right off the tenure track. Publish and be damned? No — the damnation comes first. They won't renew her contract.



In a faux-Egyptian temple, he calls the archangels of the four directions. He belongs to the 32nd degree of an old society founded by renegade Freemasons and bored aristocrats, but he doesn't feel enlightened or even interested. The secret grips, Kabbalah, and channeled writings of the Mahatmas seem as irrelevant as football trivia. It's time to shake things up and even make shit up to turn this esoteric business into something that makes real statements about how to live. Does he fake a séance, pretend to be possessed? How did the old charlatans do it?

These Obrimos-to-be see a God in the gaps, or a supreme principle made conspicuous by its absence, like a word missing from the sentence that answers life's questions. Awakening is the compulsion to complete the sentence, or hear something like God stake His territory.

The mathematician sneaks into her old department to steal time on a supercomputer. She evades guards, starts coding, and locks herself in when security discovers her at last. The room goes dark and quiet at the verge of completion, but her phone buzzes with a text that says: I AM. It tells her how to evade the guards and where a new Social Security number and name wait for her. She avoids police scanners and former students until she claims her new identity. She checks her phone again. It's blank, and she knows that *she* saw the camera footage, radio waves, and statistical trends that guided her here. She found her answer in the fluid Prime that governs everything, but she has no numbers or words for it. She'll spend the rest of her life inventing them.

The "magus" composes his thoughts and pretends to channel a higher being. His audience of acolytes doubt him at once. They jeer him. He flees through the temple, which has grown so much larger than he remembers, until he enters an enormous vaulted chamber where Thoth and Sutekh regard him with sandstone eyes. He sees a sacrificial fire and knows what he must do, and though he hesitates he feels no pain as he burns. *They'll devour me and I'll devour them*, he thinks, and it is so. He becomes the gods, learns their names, and feels himself vanish — and Awakens where he started, to see acolytes bow in worship, uttering the name of the new god he's become.

The Thyrsus Awakening: The Primal Wild

Shamans don't just crawl before they walk. They fall before they crawl, from the narrow beam of the axis mundi. They can slip over to either side or both at the same time. Living things grow vast, so that a Thyrsus' heart feels like the monster at the heart of an arterial maze. Spirits babble and strike him the moment they know they can reach him.

He doesn't need to be near nature. Even concrete whispers. His office sits in an Art Deco masterpiece, so it sings while he works as an architect. He writes it off to inspiration or the rats — the building's 85 years old, so generations have bred in the walls, becoming a subspecies unto themselves. Nothing helps him work like his office, his soul's womb. He sleeps better in there on his cot than in his apartment.

She's a naturalist, counting snakes and frogs in the field. She maps watersheds. For her, life is a vast library of cross-referenced predator and prey, catalogued by aquifer. Recording what she sees starts to seem redundant. The information's there for anyone to see. They just need to get a little muddy. If they won't do it, they don't deserve to know.

First they babble, then they scream.

He stops sleeping at home. He's a permanent resident of his office; now the rats don't fear him when he walks the halls or examines copper and tin details on the roof. Sometimes the rats lead him to where he needs to go, to shapes and patterns that inspire entire cityscapes. He designs ever-stranger buildings, but he stopped taking contracts months (years!) ago. Rats and work and food are all he needs. The last part's a chore, but the rats will provide. He found a forgotten greenhouse with edible plants, and caught and ate a rat — it told him to in its high-pitched, raspy voice.

She walks into the woods with a week of food, figuring she'll head back to town for supplies. That never happens; she forages and eats the frogs she used to count for a living. The wilderness spreads beyond every step. It simplifies her, removing human artifice. The swamp ruins her clothes. Someone steals her car. A storm takes her tent. It leaves her naked, but still human — *more* human because she experiences night chills, hunger, and exhaustion like she's never felt before. But sun and cleansing rain please her as nothing ever has, and she experiences the ecstasy of survival.

They stand on the edge of the Primal Wild. They've started listening to the Singing Stone, but it's time for them to plunge in and return. One day he looks out the window and sees his cityscape, covered in moss and vines, filled with rats as big as men and women. She walks away from a wave of cold onto a path crushed by the huge hooves of extinct megafauna. She crawls out of the woods onto bare rock. A megaloceros freezes — it sees its predator.

The rats crown him with a copper circlet, covered in flowers. He eats their raw children: their sacrifices. He smears a sigil of rule in their blood. She runs down the beast, stronger and faster than any human, but claims humanity from the bones she turns to spears and the hide that fashions clothes and shelter. Her name is the chop marks of her stone hand-ax on prey bones. They return to the world, but never truly leave the Primal Wild. He'll always be the Rat King. She'll always know the secrets of the forest.

Eyes Wide Open

Although a mage regains awareness of the world when his Awakening ends, he never again sees the world without the Supernal symbols underlying it. This Peripheral Mage Sight cannot be turned off, but a mage soon grows used to the Supernal symbols that outline phenomena closest to his Path. If the mage chooses to concentrate on the symbols — an exercise known as Active Mage Sight — he perceives all the attributes related to those Arcana of which he has at least a rudimentary understanding. Finally, the mage can direct all his attention toward a single subject, blotting out all material distractions to

closely examine the Supernal symbols that surround it. Such Focused Mage Sight can reveal the subject's deepest Mysteries, but it can attract unwanted attention from the Supernal World.

Regardless of her Path, a walk down a crowded sidewalk is never the same for a mage:

To an Acanthus, the world is replete with "trails," odd time effects, and signifiers of fate acting on the world. Witches using Active Mage Sight often experience time dilation or contraction. Under Focused Mage Sight, many Acanthus see the *thorns* — visual metaphors for the branching timelines running behind and ahead of everything, which might appear as shining cracks in surfaces, quicksilver vines, or shimmering lines in the air.

To a Mastigos, the world shows how all thinking minds turn back on themselves, and how illusionary separation and distance is. Warlocks experience warping distance, mirages, and feelings of being lost, watched, or chased. Thinking beings are surrounded by indistinct *auras*, wrapped in their own thoughts and emotions. Under Focused Mage Sight, many Mastigos sense chains, bars, uniforms, or other representations of imposed boundaries.

To a Moros, the world is a quiet, settled place — sounds dampen to the point of whispers, and movement seems to slow. Alchemists often see after-images of destroyed items or corpses, or look on the world through a lens of entropy and decay. Under Focused Mage Sight, Moros looking at places and people symbolizing distraction from the universe or holding on to things beyond their time (everything from a vampire's Touchstone or a ghost's Anchor to a fellow mage's magical tool or a workaholic businessman's office) see them set aside, discarded, or broken. Moros call these impressions *shells* or, when they're locations, *crypts*.

To the Obrimos, the world is bursting with power. Theurgists see the interactions of Forces and Prime within everything, with the sense that the material world is straining at the seams, barely able to hold the power within itself. Under Focused Mage Sight, Obrimos see the *mandalas* — complex, twisting patterns, visual interpretations of all forms of power and authority. Theurgists see the leader of a gang decorated in golden jewelry, hear the sun making its passage through the sky, and perceive halos around the holy.

Thysus experience the world as *ecstasy*, the feeling of transcending the self to connect to the world around you. The world under a Thysus' Mage Sight is alive — some Shamans experience a pulse, a rhythm connecting every creature, or see magic lapping in and out of Hallows like breath. Under Focused Mage Sight, every living being is clearly part of the superorganism, playing its part like an individual cell in a body.

Regardless of the Arcana a mage has studied, her Mage Sight is always colored primarily by her Path. An Acanthus who adds Matter to her Active Mage Sight does not see inanimate objects the same way that a Moros does.

For example, when a Moros examines a knife he sees its physical composition, senses its rate of decay, recognizes how often it has been sharpened, and knows what must be done to reinforce its structure or shatter it. He recognizes a poorly made knife because he can see its physical flaws.

Meanwhile, a Mastigos perceives the knife in terms of its connections. Is it a mass-produced tool spat out by a machine in a miserable sweatshop in Southeast Asia, or was it forged with care by a hobbyist blacksmith new to the craft? Tracing back the connections of sympathy, the Mastigos knows the knife was made with inferior steel because someone involved in the blade's production knowingly gave the factory poor-quality raw materials, or because the factory owner chose to cut corners during production.

The same is true of the other Paths. The Obrimos sees the same knife in terms of all the energy that was put into it, and knows a faulty blade because it diverges too much from its platonic ideal. An Acanthus sees a thousand paths the knife may take and notes that it is fated to break at a critical moment. The Thyrus notes the knife's especially weak and sickly spirit and knows it reflects the poor quality of the blade.

Patterns, Forms, and the Tapestry

Mages describe the aggregate Supernal symbols corresponding to a phenomenon its **Pattern**, and when more clarity is needed call the individual symbols making up a Pattern **Forms**. When a mage speaks of a person's "Life Pattern," she means the total information available to the Life Arcanum about that person — his health, physicality, age, hunger, disease, and any supernatural effects influencing those things.

All of the Patterns — all of the Supernal World — together with the Fallen World giving it substance is called the **Tapestry** (or, in especially ancient Grimoires, the **Tellurian**.)

High Speech

High Speech is the symbolic language of the Supernal Realms that all mages learn to speak during their Awakenings. Statements made in it can alter reality itself, increasing a mage's control over her magic when she invokes it during spellcasting. Because it consists entirely of the symbols of the Supernal Realms, the Lie conceals its true nature from Sleepers. The un-Awakened perceive it an unfamiliar language, glossolalia, or meaningless gibberish.

High Speech is not a real language, but the Supernal platonic ideal of "language." It sounds like gibberish to mages, too, but their Peripheral Mage Sight responds to it and they know the information being imparted despite the sounds themselves being nonsense. A minor key has a different emotional effect than a major key, for example, and red evokes different memories and sensations than blue, but neither expresses something that can be directly translated into ordinary language. High Speech is similarly useless for conveying long messages but very effective at evoking intent or mood. Lies cannot be spoken in High Speech, but it is the only means of fully describing spells.

Magical runes are derived from the shapes Mana makes when mages release it while using Mage Sight. They work in spellcasting like drawing a blueprint works in construction. High Speech as a communication method doesn't have to be written in runes. A mage can use any alphabet to write High Speech down, safe in the knowledge that only Awakened mages will be able to read it.

Awakened mages see and hear High Speech in all sorts of places they weren't expecting it — short messages written in the architecture of buildings, warnings in the shape of a motorway seen from the air, advertisements that contain calls to arms, and the sounds of sacred animals making prayers to the Aether. Some of these messages are the result of mages writing things down, or incorporating High Speech into a design. Most aren't. The Greek Pythias at Delphi were priestesses who, when exposed to certain fumes, ranted in tongues that the priests interpreted into prophecies. A mage would be able to hear what they were actually saying, even if the Pythia didn't know herself. The same goes for certain Christian groups and mediums in the modern day — some of them spout High Speech without knowing it.

Are they the makers' marks of the Exarchs, as so many Seers claim; or are they symbols sent from the Supernal Realms to guide mages to Ascension, as no few Diamond mages believe? Whatever the truth, mages who investigate these inexplicable messages quite often uncover deeper Mysteries behind them.

Mysteries and Mystery Plays

The ubiquity of High Speech in the Fallen World is only one of the many phenomena mages describe as the Mysteries. In essence, the Mysteries are that which begs to be explored and understood. The journey along the paths or symbols that accompany Awakening is only the beginning of the mage's exploration of the Mysteries. He cannot increase his understanding of the Supernal power he wields except by seeking them out and experiencing them. Books and mentors can put a mage on the scent of a Mystery, but they cannot bestow the spiritual epiphany a direct encounter offers.

Old, European magical societies started calling what a mage experiences when chasing magic a "Mystery Play" — a story with a symbolic moral at the end. Every Mystery solved is a miniature reminder of the Awakening, when the mage first saw through the Lie.

Chasing a Mystery is intoxicating to a mage, and the journey itself is in many ways the destination. Even those Mysteries that cannot be easily solved can help a mage grow stronger in her Path, applying her experiences to magic.

The Tapestry is vast and filled with Mysteries great and small. Although many have direct, obvious connections to the Supernal, most do not. Nothing external forces a mage to pursue the Mysteries, but those who do not have a natural curiosity and a willingness to go to great lengths to satisfy it simply do not Awaken. Mages see the world more deeply than Sleepers do, and when they notice something abnormal or out of place they feel an unmistakable impulse to examine it more closely.

The Awakened Will

A mage casts spells by virtue of her Path — a massive, theoretically near-infinite set of magical symbols she can sense and understand. To cast a spell, she imagines the effect she desires, focuses her mind on the symbols of her Path that will create that effect (the **Imago**), and through the medium of her Gnosis makes the world obey. Magical properties that were only theoretical override what's "real," and the universe changes.

Magic is an extraordinarily useful tool for the observation and analysis of the Mysteries. Virtually all phenomena in the Fallen World can be observed and described by one or more Arcana. Mages largely agree that the rare exceptions are subjects that hail from Realms that are completely alien to human thought—including the Abyss. The Wise likewise recognize that not all Mysteries are the result of Awakened magic—no more than the motion of the sea is caused by the existence of thermometers or barometers.

Nimbus

Every mage has a Nimbus—a spiritual signature heavily influenced by her Path and Legacy but as unique to her as her DNA. Whenever a mage casts a spell, her Nimbus flares, revealing her to any mage using his Sight. Even after the mage's spell fades, her Nimbus lingers on the subject like a fingerprint that can be traced to her by other mages. A mage may also deliberately reveal her Nimbus, even to Sleepers, to impress or intimidate, although doing so provokes Quiescence.

Finally, every mage's Nimbus subtly twists the lives of everyone and everything connected to the mage and makes them more closely reflect her Nimbus. In order to isolate their Sleeping families and loved ones from the effects of their Nimbuses, most mages adopt **Shadow Names**.

Shadow Names

A Shadow Name is an expression of who the mage thinks she is in the Supernal World, without the Fallen, mundane person inside it. Most are only used when performing magic or meeting other mages, like a persona that can be adopted at will. Some mages change their voices or body language so much that at first glance they're unrecognizable when out of character.

Mages take their Shadow Names very seriously. They are symbols, and therefore Supernal, influencing their bearers' lives. A mage naming himself after a god, for example, would be able to use items relating to his namesake as magical tools, but might find his magical career influenced to force him into that identity, events eerily paralleling the myth-symbols he made his magical identity from. Not every mage is reenacting her namesake's legend—not even most of them—but a Shadow Name is not something to be chosen lightly.

A Shadow Name serves two functions. First, it helps conceal the mage's sympathetic name from enemy mages who might use that knowledge to cast spells on her sympathetically (see p. 172). More importantly, though, it prevents the mage's Nimbus from affecting those who only know her by her Sleeping identity. So long as the mage practices magic within her Shadow Name, only those things close to her as a mage (her cabal, sanctum, apprentices, Dedicated tools, etc.) are affected by her Nimbus.

A Shadow Name's protection works best, however, if a mage avoids using magic in the presence of the loved ones of his Sleeper life. If he allows too much of a connection to form between his Shadow Name and his un-Awakened family and friends, they may yet fall under the influence of his magic.

Using a mage's sympathetic name to address or refer to him except in the most intimate of friendships is considered offen-

Magical Identity Politics

As a culture based around the rejection of mortal oppression, composed of individuals who almost all construct new identities for magical purposes, the Awakened have always been more enlightened than Sleeping society with regard to acceptance of different genders and sexualities, even if they remain as sadly prone to other prejudices as Sleepers. Many mages appear as different sexes when in the Astral Realms, or use their spells and Legacies to become who they are, without the Lie's constraints. Many Mastigos and Thyrsus deliberately change gender, sex, and orientation temporarily as a means of self-examination and growth.

Historically, Sleeping "magical" practices were a haven for transgender and non-binary people in many cultures; modern mages know that these roles are sometimes just as limiting as outright persecution, but some older Legacies were formed around their symbols and must contend with how their inheritance appears to the modern Orders.

sively rude by the overwhelming majority of magical societies. In some Orders, such as the Silver Ladder, Guardians of the Veil, and the Seers of the Throne, it's a punishable crime.

Mage Society

Mages do not lead ordinary lives. Their fascination with the Mysteries does not translate into polite dinner conversation among their Sleeper friends. Their gaze penetrates the Lie that their families cannot overcome, and that makes it difficult for the Wise to connect intellectually with their un-Awakened loved ones.

A mage's new awareness of the Supernal draws her into new social circles. All Awakened share a fascination with the Mysteries, so if one mage's attention lands on some occult phenomenon the chances are another mage has noticed it as well. While this can occasionally lead to conflict if the mages view one another as competitors, a common interest is much more often the source of a potential friendship. Older, more experienced mages regularly draw the newly initiated into Awakened society by offering assistance to newer mages, and some Orders dangle small Mysteries in densely populated areas to identify new mages who might be lured into the fold.

Sects

Most mages belong to one of three sects—the Diamond, the Free Council, or the Seers of the Throne. The Diamond and the Free Council maintain an alliance (called the Pentacle) against the Seers.

The four Orders of the **Diamond Precept** claim a common origin as spiritual successors of the Awakened of the Time

Before, modeling themselves after what they see as a perfected, Supernal society like a vast, shared, Shadow Name. The evidence they present for their Supernal remit is inconclusive at best, but this shared symbolism has helped hold the sect together over centuries by giving its members a common set of cultural reference points. The four Diamond Orders are the Adamantine Arrow, the Guardians of the Veil, the Mysterium, and the Silver Ladder.

In its current form the **Council of Free Assemblies** is the youngest of the three sects. Once a loose coalition of Nameless Orders in constant conflict with the Diamond for resources and members, it united in common cause with them against the Seers of the Throne and has remained a force to be reckoned with in the Awakened world ever since.

The **Seers of the Throne** serve the Exarchs and enjoy considerable prosperity as the result of their devotion to those Supernal Tyrants. They do not hesitate to use magic to get what they want. In consequence, they have more resources than any of the other sects. These advantages are blunted by the Seers' constant in-fighting and struggles for dominance over other Seers of the Throne, or disputes over control of resources.

A relative handful of mages do not belong to any of the three large sects. They include apostates, Nameless, and members of Nameless Orders.

An **apostate** rejected membership in all the Orders for whatever reason. This is a daunting prospect when even casual membership in an Order grants access to so many resources — thousands of years' worth of accumulated knowledge, Grimoires, rites, Legacies, artifacts, Imbued items, and secrets. Some apostates were once part of an Order and left (voluntarily or not), taking some secrets with them. These latter apostates are distrusted by all the other Orders, who see them as potential traitors or enemy spies.

A **Nameless** mage does not belong to any Order. Some hail from remote regions with few or no other resident Awakened, or haven't attracted the attention of an Order yet. Most of these join an Order once the opportunity presents itself.

A **Nameless Order** is one of any number of small, usually local or regional organizations of mages. Some belong to ancient magical traditions, while others consist of a few cabals who recently joined forces. Although a handful can wield considerable influence within their purview, they lack the global reach of the major Orders.

Cabals

Although mages tend toward individualism, most are intelligent enough to realize they're more likely to achieve their goals if they work with others of their kind. Most mages eventually join a cabal of between two and thirty of their peers. Large or old cabals might include a mixture of mentors and apprentices, but most are made up of peers at the same level of magical development. Cabals can be loose associations sharing nothing more than the communal rent on a few safe houses, tight-knit circles of mages who deliberately choose Shadow Names to take on complimentary roles and enhance their group rituals,

or anything in between. Despite the social pressure to join a cabal, even a loose one, the Orders do accept lone **Solitarics** as members. For the majority, cabals provide many benefits:

Symbolic Function

Mages frequently build cabals around a theme based on their number of members, the quality of their magical practice, their locale, or any other factor that members recognize as a proper magical correspondence. One might be formed along an elemental theme, with each member embodying a different element. Another might use astrological signs, alchemical metals or processes, pantheons of gods, cards of the Tarot, totem animals, or even characters in a Shakespearean play.

A cabal's symbolism is as important as a Shadow Name in most mages' eyes, and the choice of cabal name and theme tends to dominate all its member's destinies to some degree. Furthermore, cabals who perform ritual magic together are capable of better results if they can incorporate their cabal's theme into the casting.

Mutual Protection

At the very least, membership in a cabal means someone will notice if you go missing, and they'll come looking for you. A mage can usually depend on his cabalmates to support him in disputes with other mages and to have his back if one of the Mysteries he is investigating follows him home and tries to kill him. It's considered good manners for a mage to let his cabal know what lines of inquiry he is currently pursuing and what kinds of enemies he might have made along the way, but at the end of the day a cabal is likely to get him out of trouble first and demand explanations later.

Common Cause

While each mage has her own personal obsessions, the mages of a cabal quite frequently pursue Mysteries together. This allows them to pool their resources and cover more ground than they could alone. Each Mystery solved increases the Gnosis of the cabal as a whole, which makes all the members better-equipped to pursue deeper Mysteries.

Collective Bargaining Power

When making deals with other mages, a mage with the backing of a cabal has significantly more bargaining power than a Solitary. First, a cabal acts as a sort of insurance that the mage will uphold her end of the bargain. Cabals value their reputations and will apply social pressure to members who might make other members look untrustworthy. Additionally, if something beyond the mage's control (such as her death) prevents her from keeping her word, her cabal can usually be persuaded to fulfill the obligation in her stead. Second, a cabal acts as a de facto enforcer of any agreements its members make. A Solitary mage can appeal to a Consilium for satisfaction, but a cabal can carry out its justice swiftly and without outside approval.

Consilium

Wherever many mages gather in a region with a compelling long-term Mystery or many smaller Mysteries, the danger of conflict arises. Cabals dispute control of resources and real estate, to say nothing of access to contested Mysteries. The Pentacle manages these pressures by creating a Consilium — a panel of Councilors chaired by a Hierarch, who hear and resolve disputes. Consilium decisions are backed up by social pressure — cabals who don't agree to abide by their local Consilium don't get the protection from other mages it affords. Also, the judges tend to come from the oldest, most powerful cabals and employ Sentinels — enforcers and detectives who levy out the Consilium's punishments. A Consilium's decisions aren't always final — Convocations can act as a court of appeal — and they aren't there to act as a government, except in issues where they make rulings to protect every Pentacle mage in their territory. As long as it doesn't break any local laws, what a cabal gets up to is entirely the business of its members.

Most Consilia have members in the following roles:

Hierarch: The leader of the council. In some jurisdictions the Councilors defer to the Hierarch, acting as her advisors. In others she acts as moderator in hearings but only casts a vote in the event of a tie. Hierarchs usually serve for life unless exceptional circumstances convince them to step down. A Hierarch is usually allowed to name her own successor, unless she leaves the post in disgrace, in which case the Councilors elect the new Hierarch.

Councilor: A member of the council. Traditionally there are four or five Councilors in addition to the Hierarch, and each Path has a single representative. A Councilor usually holds the post until he dies, willingly steps down, retires, or falls out of favor with the rest of the Consilium. The remaining Councilors elect a new member to fill any vacancy.

Provost: Mages tasked with ensuring the council's orders are carried out. Each member of the council usually appoints a Provost to represent him, and so mages in this post often act as proxies for the Councilor (or Hierarch) they serve.

Sentinel: Enforcers appointed by the Hierarch to patrol the Consilium's sancta and Demesnes and carry out its rulings. The council dispatches a Sentinel whenever a mage or cabal has violated Consilium mandates. If Provosts ensure that member cabals adhere to council instructions, a Sentinel provides them with an incentive to cooperate. She may deliver a polite warning, command an immediate tribunal appearance before the council, or mete out a stern punishment — depending on the severity of the transgression and the orders of the Consilium.

Herald: Ambassadors and messengers of the Consilium, appointed by the Hierarch. Heralds deliver news and general announcements to member cabals and represent the Consilium to other Consilia. They frequently welcome new arrivals to the region and ensure they are aware of Consilium rules.

Interfactor: Masked executors of justice who carry out the sentences the Consilium passes. Only a Guardian of the Veil can hold this post, and most Interfactors serve all the Consilia within the local Guardian Caucus.

Lex Magica

For the most part one mage does not tell another how to practice her Art, but a practitioner who uses her magic recklessly enough to endanger the Awakened may run afoul of the Lex Magica. Consilia use this body of magical law to establish limits on the behavior of the Wise and to punish infractions. The hundreds of years of past trials and rulings represent a wide range of precedents, many of which contradict each other, and this grants Consilia considerable latitude in rendering judgments on those they feel have acted unwisely or immorally.

The Lex Magica recognizes four kinds of laws, each layer overruling the ones following it — Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Iron. **Gold Laws** are those the Diamond believes were laws in the Time Before, gathered from Artifacts, from time-lost ruins, and by the agreement of multiple Consilia. Gold Laws are rare, and mostly concern the individual rights of mages to follow their studies unless they conflict with another's, to maintain sancta and Hallows without fear of trespass, and to be recognized for greater skill in the Arcana.

Individual Consilia create local laws — called **Silver Laws** — as part of their charters or by “concord,” where all the Consilia in a Convocation agree to alter their laws in the same way to harmonize the Lex Magica. **Bronze Laws** make up the body of precedent — every ruling by a Consilium or its officers becomes a Bronze Law a later mage can point to. Silver and Bronze together form the bulk of the Lex Magica, and in the millennia since the Diamond Orders were founded, several Precepts are commonplace, found in almost every Consilium. These include:

The Precept of Secrecy: Also called “The Veil.” It is regarded as a serious offense to speak of magic to the unenlightened or to openly practice it in front of Sleeper witnesses.

The Precept of Protectorate: Prohibits cabals from trespassing in, spying on, or attacking another cabal's sanctum.

The Precept of Hubris: Frowns upon mages who use magic to manipulate or harm others without good reason.

The Precept of War: Sets rules of engagement by which mages and cabals may engage in magical warfare. For disputes that cannot be resolved peacefully by the Consilium, the Lex Magica strongly encourages the use of the Duel Arcane, which minimizes bloodshed and the potential for accidental mayhem.

Finally, **Iron Laws** describe all rules, oaths, and treaties ratified by a small group of mages within the Consilium's jurisdiction — such as cabal charters, a mutual protection agreement between two cabals, or a sworn oath by one mage to perform some service for another. Whenever two laws come into conflict, the Gold Laws take precedence over the Silver and Bronze Laws, which in turn hold more weight than any Iron Law, but the Consilium may choose to sit in judgment over any infraction within its jurisdiction.

Consilia also take action against **Left-Handed** mages. While the exact definition varies from Consilium to Consilium, a mage is frequently regarded as Left-Handed if her Obsessions or magical practices involve the abuse or destruction of souls, the destruction of the world's magical potential, routine interference

with a Sleeper's Awakening, the cavalier abuse of Sleepers, Abyssal corruption, contact with the Lower Depths, or the evasion of death by extraordinary and ethically questionable deeds.

When a Consilium finds a mage guilty of a crime against the Lex Magica, it levies one of several punishments. Lesser crimes merit public reprimand, payment of debts, or acts of penance on the behalf of the Consilium or wronged party. Serious crimes result in imprisonment, banishment, death, and for the most terrible crimes, death combined with the destruction of the accused's soul.

Caucuses

Whereas Consilia act as keepers of the peace among the Awakened, a mage's Order influences to what ends he typically directs his magical abilities. The Order provides a philosophical compass with which to resolve ethics puzzles unique to the Wise, and entrusts him with responsibilities to the Order as a way to prove his dedication and advance the Order's goals. In exchange for loyalty and service each Order provides its members in good standing with resources and magical instruction.

Each Order is a global organization. A Guardian of the Veil in China has as much access to the Masques as one in France, for example, and both will share a similar overall power structure or chain of command. However, the Guardians near Beijing will not focus on the same problems or employ the same methods for achieving their goals as the Guardians in and around Paris. These regional groupings of culturally similar mages of the same Order — typically led by a high-status member — are called **Caucuses**.

Caucuses tend to cover larger geographical areas than Consilia. In most cases a single Caucus will wield influence over members of their Order in three to six different Consilia. Two different Orders' Caucuses may wield influence over the same regions, but frequently this overlap is incomplete. The structure of an Order Caucus depends heavily on its Order:

Adamantine Arrow

Arrow Caucuses have clear chains of command. New members of the Order are called **Talons**. Those who have proven themselves competent tacticians and leaders are promoted to **First Talons**. **Thunderbolt Guardians** are senior Arrows who usually serve as instructors in their areas of specialty until their talents are required on the battlefield, at which point they bring their vast knowledge and considerable skills to bear against the enemy. An **Adamant Sage** usually commands an Arrow Caucus and acts as an advisor to local Hierarchs, especially on matters of defending the Consilium against threats. Some Talons receive formal recognition from their superiors as guardians of a particular cabal — called **Banner Wardens** — although not every Talon from a mixed Order cabal is permitted this responsibility, as they become dedicated to that duty above the Orders' other interests.

Guardians of the Veil

Most Guardian activity centers around its several Labyrinths — mystery cults intended to direct Sleeper attention away from real

magic while giving the most dedicated seekers an opportunity to prove themselves worthy of Awakened secrets. Each **Cultor** maintains one such cult, acting either as the cult's leader or as an important member who directs the cult's activities from behind the scenes. **Emissaries** act as messengers to mages of other Orders, delivering anything from intelligence to help a Consilium root out corruption, to dire threats to those who risk the Veil too often. **Susceptors** investigate all the Orders for signs of internal corruption or agents of the enemy, which is as dangerous as any spymaster's job. The **Epop** secretly directs the activities of the Caucus from behind the false identities he wears.

Mysterium

Mysterium Caucuses spring up around a cluster of Athenaea. Mages outside of the Mysterium frequently envision specialized libraries of Grimoires, but an Athenaeum can take many other forms. They can be centers of learning like libraries, schools, and museums (collectively called Archives); or they can be Censoria, where potentially dangerous lore or artifacts are kept in quarantine against the day that their usefulness outweighs the risks.

Low-ranking **Acquisitors** seek out Mysteries to add to the Order's network of Athenaea. **Censors** police the use of dangerous Mysteries to keep them out of reckless hands — including those of mages who have shown poor judgment. **Savants** commit entire fields of arcane and mundane lore to memory to ensure that even the loss of an Athenaeum will not erase the Mysterium's knowledge of any topic contained in it. Each Athenaeum has a **Curator** who determines who may access and/or borrow the Mysterium treasures in his keeping, and the religious aspects of the Caucus are led by its **Hierophant**.

Silver Ladder

Silver Ladder Caucuses make extensive use of **Cryptopolies** — elaborate networks of mystery cults that serve the dual purpose of propagating Silver Ladder ideals (and guiding Sleepers to Awaken) and allowing théarchs to wield social influence against the Lie. Théarchs do not control Cryptopolies directly, instead relying on **Illuminated Retainers** — Sleepers, Sleepwalkers, or Proximi initiated into the Order. Many organizations and laws common to Pentacle mages are Silver Ladder innovations — the Consilium, the Convocation, the Lex Magica, and even the Duel Arcane.

Newly-initiated **Acolytes** run errands, carry messages, and perform a variety of ad hoc duties assigned to them by more senior théarchs. **Lictors** act as itinerant investigators and judges throughout the Caucus. A member of the Silver Ladder who masters the Lex Magica may rise in prestige by becoming a **Factotum** — a lawyer of the Order. **Clavigers** maintain ideological purity among the Silver Ladder and occasionally serve as envoys to other supernatural beings — partially because of their experience and partially because they are more expendable than the Order's Deacons. Most Silver Ladder Caucuses have a single **Deacon** who oversees all the théarchs within his domain. Some populous Caucuses in regions dominated by the Silver Ladder may have an **Archdeacon** who rules over several Deacons with narrowly defined responsibilities within the Caucus.

Assembly

Libertines agree to be governed by the Consilium when their cabals are members, but they prefer to participate in Assemblies. Ideally, an Assembly is a democratic gathering of all the mages in a locality, voting equally on public matters and all abiding by the results. In practice, Assembly is usually the same thing as the Free Council Caucus, except for a handful of younger or less established mages who think they'll get a better result appealing to the Libertines than going to the Hierarchy.

Contrary to popular assumptions, not all members of an Assembly have voting rights — at least not right away. Newly initiated Libertines are granted provisional membership for a year before gaining voting membership (unless they convincingly prove their loyalty to the Assembly before then). Mages who come to Free Council gatherings from other Orders who submit to the Assembly's judgments and participate in their rituals and organization long enough can likewise earn voting membership (becoming a **Voter**). Partially this is to make infiltration and sabotage of an Assembly by the Seers of the Throne more difficult, but it also prevents similar voter abuses by Diamond Order mages who might try to sway the Assembly's policy.

Emissaries serve as contacts with the local Consilium and regional Caucuses and **Minutemen** respond to emergencies. **Letter Carriers** deliver messages hidden in their minds, while **Citizen Agents** serve as watchmen, spies, and covert operatives for the Order. In some areas, a **Strategos** acts as a general, chief executive, or expert who addresses an immediate threat or

concern. A Libertine who has gained enough of a reputation to sway the votes of his constituents is regarded as a **Syndic** — one of the politicians and lobbyists of the Free Council.

Convocation

To prevent Consilia from becoming too isolated from one another, the Silver Ladder works to organize regular Convocations. Mages from many different Consilia send representatives to the host Consilium to exchange information and forge friendships and alliances with Awakened of other regions. The smallest Convocations cover the overlapping territories of one Caucus from each of the five Orders, the largest gather attendees from all over a continent. The Silver Ladder has long spoken of organizing a Grand Convocation open to mages from every Consilium in the world, but this has never materialized.

Convocations tie the Orders together; they're where the leaders of Caucuses confer with one another (even if it's via representatives) and set the agenda for their own parts of the Orders. Convocations also act as courts of appeal for those dissatisfied with the ruling of their local Consilium. These gatherings likewise make excellent opportunities to meet members of Legacies who might be willing to induct a new student. Even the Free Council makes use of Convocation, as the Order's attempts to build national- and international-scale Assemblies have not yet born fruit.

While an inexperienced mage who is nonetheless lauded for her Wisdom can be Hierarchy, and anyone may speak at Assembly, Convocations are run by a committee of **Magisters**. Any



The Greater Ministries

Four Great Ministries exist as servants of the Archgenitors, dominating the Lesser Ministries.

Hegemony: *The State is the soul.* The first true Ministry finds itself embattled by factional conflicts, as globalization nips at the heels of the servants of the Unity, Exarch of control through nationalism. Dominating nations and attracting leaders, the Hegemons did quite well while humanity existed in a collection of nation-states and far-flung empires, but have fallen prey to the subversive power of the merchant class, represented by the Lesser Ministry of Mammon, servants of the Chancellor. As theocracies and corporate interests rise ascendant over political interests, many within the Pyramid whisper that the 21st century will be the last with Hegemony as a Great Ministry.

Panopticon: *Vision is power.* Making extensive use of surveillance technology, the Panopticon styles itself servants of the Eye, Exarch of control through surveillance. With every tracked private message, every law passed to strip a bit more privacy from citizens, the Panopticon gains power. Eyes high in orbit can see every inch of the globe, and the Ministry spends a great deal of time managing Seer conspiracy cults, promoting a culture without privacy, so that the people shackle themselves for fear of retribution.

Paternoster: *Faith is an unbreakable chain.* Resplendent in ceremony and encouraged by the soft certitude of cultured piety, those of the Ministry of Paternoster style themselves priests of the Father, Exarch of control through faith and religion. Champions of all zealotry, the Ministry reinforces dogma and fear while quashing the positive aspects of religion. The Ministries scour Sleeper religions for hints of Supernal insight, that they can be grounded and guttered to promote the pure Exarchal religion.

Praetorian: *The weak fear the strong.* Brutal demagogues and warriors, the soldier-priests of Praetorian serve under the General, Exarch of control through violence. Where their counterparts in the Adamantine Arrow practice combat as a symbol of righteous struggle, Praetorian mages espouse warfare as dehumanizing meat-grinder, through which warlords rise to subjugate others with the fear of violence. As western societies are increasingly militarized by fear of terrorism, and the world bathes in the blood of countless never-ending wars, the Praetorian Ministry seems unassailable in the Iron Pyramid.

Pentacle mage attending Convocation who can prove complete mastery of an Arcanum has the right to be a Magister.

The Iron Pyramid

The Seers organize themselves into an **Iron Pyramid** of prestige and servitude, putting themselves above Sleepers and all other mages, with increasing ranks of fewer and fewer Seers and the Ministers at the top. Each **Minister** is the earthly servant of a particular Exarch, the head of a **Ministry** of Seers dedicated to that form of control over the Fallen World. Many Ministers are archmages, or live in Supernal Verge-fortresses where they're at once imprisoned and served by entities loyal to their Patron Exarch, including Ochemata.

Beneath the Ministers, **Tetrarchs** control a Ministry's activities in a wide geographical region. All the Tetrarchs in a single region make up a single **Tetrarchy**. The Tetrarchies discuss the Seers' goals and pass commands down to their Ministries through higher-ranking local Seers.

Beneath the Tetrarchies are the many **Pylons**. Although Pylons resemble cabals in size, they have a clear pecking order typically absent from Pentacle cabals both within and without their ranks – most Pylons report to another Pylon instead of directly to a Tetrarch. Advancement up the Pyramid comes when a Seer is strong enough to demand it. Most Seers watch their superiors for weakness and undermine their inferiors.

Legacies

Every mage in the world belongs to one of the five Paths, which colors a mage's perception of the world. The major Orders seek to provide general guidelines for how magic ought to be employed. Legacies, however, represent a conscious, narrow view on how an individual mage should wield magic. Ancient Legacies reflect belief structures that have rung true for their members for centuries, and even contemporary ones represent a very specific worldview developed after careful reflection and self-examination.

Those who share a Legacy belong to an elite and highly specialized clique. Some consist of hundreds of members scattered across the world like members of an especially esoteric social club. Others boast only a few dozen mages with a belief system others among the Wise find inexplicable if not outright objectionable. For those within one, a Legacy offers a specialized network of social contacts that understand each other better than any other mages do. Members of the same Legacy share an extraordinary philosophical connection, and the bond between mentor and student of a common Legacy tends to be stronger than that between any Order master and apprentice.

Members of a Legacy develop Attainments, powers so instinctive and often-used that they carve channels into the mage's Gnosis, forcing her soul into a new shape, and are accessible without spellcasting. Some Legacies display physical or mental changes as well.

Adopting a Legacy is seen as a sign of maturity in mage society, marking the mage as a dedicated practitioner of her magical style. A minority of mages don't develop one out of personal reluctance to shape their own souls, or wait to define their own Legacies rather than take the easier route of joining an existing one, but adepts and masters without Legacies or a stated reason to not have one are notably unusual.

While the Awakened accept that each mage will shape her soul to match a Legacy that might be radically different than those of cabalmates, most Consilia keep lists of banned **Left-Handed Legacies** in their Silver Laws. These Legacies practice Attainments deemed abhorrent by the Consilium, or have been interdicted by Convocation as hostile to the Pentacle as a whole.

Lexicon

Note: Italicized words refer to separate entries.

Aether, the: A *Supernal Realm* where the Ruling *Arcana* are *Forces* and *Prime*. Mages who walk the *Obrimos Path* claim a connection to this Realm.

Abbyss, the: The rift of Lies that leaks into the world with each *Paradox*.

Acanthus: A mage whose Path leads to *Arcadia*. Also known as Witches or Enchanters.

Acamoth: An Abyssal entity formed in the *Astral Realms*.

Adamantine Arrow: One of the *Diamond Orders* of the *Pentacle*. Mystical soldiers and warriors.

adept: A mage who has attained the fourth degree (4 dots) of knowledge in an *Arcanum*.

apostate: A mage who has rejected membership in any *Order* or who was once part of an *Order* but no longer is.

apprentice: A mage who has attained the second degree (2 dots) of knowledge in an *Arcanum*.

Arcadia: A *Supernal Realm* where the Ruling *Arcana* are *Fate* and *Time*. Mages who walk the *Acanthus Path* claim a connection to this Realm.

Arcanum (pl. Arcana): The ten elemental principles through which mages understand the *Tapestry*. A mage's *Arcanum* lore is the mechanism by which she draws down the laws of a *Supernal Realm*. Her *Gnosis* provides her connection to that Realm.

archmaster: A mage who has attained the alleged sixth degree (6 dots) or higher of knowledge in an *Arcanum*.

Ars Mysteriorum: Magic. The "Art of the Mysteries."

Assembly: A democratic political body of *Pentacle* mages in areas controlled by the *Free Council*. In areas governed by a *Consilium*, it more commonly refers to the local *Caucus* of the *Free Council*.

Astral Realms: The internal landscape of souls. Consists of four layers: the personal dream plane, the individual soul (an *Oneiros*), the collective human soul (the *Temenos*), and the world soul (*Dreamtime*). Inhabited by mental entities called *Goetia*.

Attainment: A power gained through mastery of an *Arcanum* (simply an *Attainment*) or through crafting one's *Gnosis* by way of a *Legacy* (a *Legacy Attainment*).

cabal: A group of mages, sometimes formed around a symbolic theme.

Caucus: A regional organization consisting of all mages of a particular *Order* who operate within its jurisdiction.

Consilium (pl. Consilia): A body of *Pentacle* mages who help maintain the peace between the Awakened in a local region.

Convocation: A gathering of mages from several different *Consilia* to discuss larger concerns and establish *Order* policies.

Death: The *Arcanum* that governs darkness, decay, ectoplasm, enervation, ghosts, ghostly phenomena in *Twilight*, the *Underworld*, souls, cold, and shadows.

Demesne: A weak *Supernal Verge* created by one or more *soul stones*.

Diamond Orders: Four *Orders* of the *Pentacle* who model themselves after mages' roles in the *Time Before* — *Adamantine Arrow*, *Guardians of the Veil*, *Mysterium*, and *Silver Ladder*.

disciple: A mage who has attained the third degree (3 dots) of knowledge in an *Arcanum*.

Dissonance: The power of a *Sleeping* soul to unravel a spell and cause the *Sleeper* to forget or rationalize away what he witnessed.

ephemera: Spiritual substance of which spirits, ghosts, and *Goetia* are made.

Exarchs: The *Supernal* beings who enforce the *Lie*. Served by the *Seers of the Throne*.

Fallen World, the: The manifest worlds of the *Tapestry*, including the *material world*, *Underworld*, *Astral Realms*, and *Shadow Realm*.

Fate: The *Arcanum* that governs blessings, curses, destiny, fortune, oaths, probability, luck, and intent.

Forces: The *Arcanum* that governs electricity, gravity, movement, light, radiation, sound, weather, and heat.

Free Council: An *Order* of the *Pentacle* made up of many *Nameless Orders* that joined forces against the *Seers of the Throne* and are now allies of the *Diamond Orders*.

Gnosis: A mage's understanding of the *Supernal World* and the means by which he draws down the laws of the *Supernal Realm*.

Gross Arcana: The five *Arcana* that govern the tangible, manifest facets of the *Fallen World*; *Forces*, *Life*, *Matter*, *Space*, and *Time*.

Guardians of the Veil: One of the *Diamond Orders* of the *Pentacle*. Spies and secret police.

Gulmoth: An abyssal entity formed in the *material world*, *Underworld*, or *Shadow*.

Hallow: A place where *Mana* forms and collects.

High Speech: The symbolic language of the *Supernal Realms* that all mages learn to speak during their Awakenings. Statements made in it can alter reality itself.

hubris: The excessive pride that causes mages to sin against *Wisdom* as they suppose that the fundamental laws of the universe are theirs to command.

Imago: The image of a spell in the mind's eye of its caster.

improvised spell: a spell Imago designed and cast in response to a need, the majority of spells, as opposed to a *Praxis* or *Rote*.

initiate: A mage who attains the first degree (1 dot) of knowledge in an *Arcanum*.

Iron Pyramid: The hierarchal social structure of the *Fallen World* as the *Seers of the Throne* understand it, with *Sleepers* at the bottom and the *Exarchs* at the top.

Legacy: A group of mages practicing a magical style so much members shape their *Gnosis* and develop *Legacy Attainments*.

Lex Magica: The body of magical law used by *Consilia* to establish limits on the behavior of the *Wise* and to punish infractions.

Lie, the: The force that tries to hide the truth of the *Supernal Realm* from *Sleepers*. A manifestation of the *Exarchs'* power in the *Fallen World*.

Life: The *Arcanum* that governs disease, poison, evolution, healing, metamorphosis, vigor, health, and growth.

Mana: Magical energy mages use to draw down the perfection of the *Supernal Realms* into the *Fallen World*. The "liquid" form of *tass*.

master: A mage who has attained the fifth degree (5 dots) of knowledge in an *Arcanum*.

Mastigos: A mage whose *Path* leads to *Pandemonium*. Also known as *Warlocks* or *Psychonauts*.

material world: The physical or concrete portion of the *Fallen World*, separated from the *Shadow Realm* by the *Gauntlet*.

Matter: The *Arcanum* that governs base alchemy, air, chemicals, earth, water, shaping, transmutation, tools, machines, and enhanced items.

Mind: The *Arcanum* that governs communication, willpower, training, pain, hallucination, mental projection, mental phenomena in *Twilight*, thoughts, possession, emotion, telepathy, dreams, and *Goetia*.

Moros: A mage whose *Path* leads to *Stygia*. Also known as *Alchemists* or *Necromancers*.

Mysteries, the: Manifestations of the supernatural in the *Fallen World*, which mages study in order to improve their understanding of the *Supernal Realms* (their *Gnosis*) and increase their mastery of *Arcana*.

Mysterium: One of the *Diamond Orders* of the *Pentacle*. Scholars and explorers.

Nameless: A mage who has not joined an *Order*, either because they have not yet chosen one or because she hails from an area with few or no mages of an existing *Order*.

Nameless Order: A small or regional *Order* as opposed to one of the six global *Orders*.

Obrimos: A mage whose *Path* leads to the *Aether*. Also known as *Theurgists* and *Thaumaturges*.

Order: A formal organization of mages that seeks to cultivate the *Ars Mysterionum* among its members and disseminate its goals to other mages.

Pandemonium: A *Supernal Realm* where the *Ruling Arcana* are *Mind* and *Space*. Mages who walk the *Mastigos Path* claim a connection to this *Realm*.

Paradox: An intrusion of *Abyssal* energies into the *Fallen World* caused by a mage's *hubris*.

Path: A mage's personal connection to a *Supernal Realm* by which he can work magic.

Pentacle, the: The loose alliance of the *Diamond Orders* and the *Free Council*.

Practice: One of thirteen general categories of spells universal to all *Arcana*. A mage's acknowledged title (*initiate*, *apprentice*, *disciple*, *adept*, or *master*) depends on which *Practices* she has proven capable of in that *Arcanum*.

Praxis: a spell that a mage has cast so often it is becoming second nature to her, as opposed to *improvised spells* and *rotas*.

Primal Wild: A *Supernal Realm* where the *Ruling Arcana* are *Life* and *Spirit*. Mages who walk the *Thyrus Path* claim a connection to this *Realm*.

Prime: The *Arcanum* that governs *Hallows*, *Supernal Truth*, *Mana*, the *Nimbus*, *tass*, imbued items, *Grimoires*, the *divine*, *Imagos*, and *dispelling*.

Pylon: The equivalent of a *cabal* among the *Seers of the Throne*. Each usually consists of mages from a single *Ministry*. A *Pylon* has an internal chain of command in accordance with the *Iron Pyramid*.

Quiescence: The *Sleeping curse* that prevents most souls from *Awakening* to the truth of the *Supernal World* and causes the *Sleeper* to forget or rationalize away what he witnessed.

Rote: a spell Imago designed by a master and taught to other mages, as opposed to an *improvised spell* or *Praxis*.

sanctum: The place where a mage or *cabal* performs magical studies and practices the *Ars Mysterionum*.

Seers of the Throne, the: An *Order* of mages, opposed to the *Pentacle*, who serve the *Exarchs* and work to sustain the *Lie*. Commonly referred to as "the *Seers*."

Shadow Name: The magical identity and symbolic idealized self a mage uses when performing magic or meeting other mages.

Shadow Realm: The spiritual or ephemeral portion of the *Fallen World*, separated from the *material world* by the *Gauntlet*. Inhabited by spirits.

Silver Ladder: One of the *Diamond Orders* of the *Pentacle*. Leaders and priests among the *Awakened*.

Sleeper: A human who is not *Awake*, which includes the majority of people. As victims of the *Lie*, *Sleepers* suffer *Quiescence*, generate *Dissonance*, and worsen *Paradox* risks.

Sleepwalker: A human who, although not *Awakened*, possesses enough awareness of the *Supernal World* to escape many of the effects of the *Lie*. They do not suffer from *Quiescence*, generate *Dissonance*, or worsen the risk of *Paradox*.

Solitary: A mage who is not a member of a *cabal*, whether because she has not joined one, because she left their former *cabal*, or because all the other members of her *cabal* died or left the *cabal*.

soul stone: An object suffused with a piece of a mage's soul, voluntarily created at the cost of the mage's own magical potential. The necessary foundation of a *Demesne*.

Space: The *Arcanum* that governs conjuration, distance, barriers, scrying, sympathy, wards, teleportation, and mazes.

Spirit: The *Arcanum* that governs exorcism, spirits, the Shadow, spiritual phenomena in Twilight, the Gauntlet, and Essence.

Subtle Arcana: The five *Arcana* that govern intangible, unseen facets of the Fallen World – *Death, Fate, Mind, Prime, and Spirit.*

Supernal Realm: One of five realms whose symbols manifest in the Supernal World – *the Aether, Arcadia, Pandemonium, the Primal Wild, and Stygia.* Each mage calls upon the Supernal Realm associated with her *Path* to use magic.

Supernal World, the: The world of magic as the Awakened see it. The world beneath the *Lie* where concrete and abstract mix.

Stygia: A *Supernal Realm* where the Ruling *Arcana* are *Death* and *Matter.* Mages who walk the *Moros Path* claim a connection to this Realm.

Tapestry, the: A metaphor for the whole of Creation.

tass: Magical substance that commonly forms at *Hallows.* The “solid” form of *Mana.*

Thysus: A mage whose *Path* leads to the *Primal Wild.* Also known as Shamans or Ecstatics.

Time: The *Arcanum* that governs speed, divination, prophecy, the future, the past, progression, and history.

Twilight: The state of existence of most ephemeral beings (including ghosts, Goetia, and spirits) when in the *material world.*

Twilight objects and beings cannot be seen or touched except by magical means.

Underworld: The chthonic world inhabited by human ghosts and the never-born chthonians.

Veil, the: The body of customs used by the Awakened to keep magic hidden from the uninitiated (including *Sleepers*) in order to protect the *Mysteries* from those who might misuse them and to minimize the intrusion of the *Abyss.* Actively enforced by the *Guardians of the Veil.*

Verge: A place where a *Supernal Realm* or the *Abyss* is especially strong, overwriting the laws of reality with those of the originating realm.

Watchtower: A mystical edifice in a *Supernal Realm* that some mages see during their Awakenings.

will: The force of intent someone can bring to bear to accomplish a task. For mages, this has the extra meaning of “the magical will,” the intent to alter reality through magic.

willworker: A mage.

Wisdom: The quality of a mage’s understanding of how to minimize the damage his magic causes by exercising restraint and practicing the *Ars Mysteriorum* ethically. The moral opposite of hubris. Also called “Sophia.”

Wise, the: A collective term for all mages.

Yantra: Symbols that hold the Supernal nature of a concept, helping the mage fasten onto an *Imago.*



The Door

PART IV

Lucretia, you were the one who found the Iris in the squat. You stayed there all night, trying to feel it out. You worked a ritual, refusing to give up until you'd found the heart of the building's woes.

It was at the bottom of a bathtub in one of the apartments. What was left of the toilet had been shattered long ago, the pipes broken and raggedly rusted. The grey dust of time melted away to expose the Iris, closed shut. Bloodstains in the grout and tile around the tub made the door more ominous. Once revealed in my Sight, the door was a mess of black, thorny vines, pressed together so thickly, it may as well have been a solid piece of stone.

"What do we do?" I asked. The sounds of the workers the Caucus brought in to renovate the building echoed all around us.

"I'll look and see if we know where it goes," you said, standing up. "If we don't, I'll consult Locksmith to see what should be done. Considering what we're doing with the building, it could be great that it's here. We can at least keep an eye on it, right?"

"Right," I said, nodding, looking at the door in the bottom of the tub. The stains of blood all around the tub. "Do that."

"I will," you said. Lucretia, did you know then? You hesitated before you left the bathroom. I stood there and looked at the door for a long time. I ran my hand over it, feeling the thrum of energy within the door itself. Cold as ice, dark as night. Where was the hinge the door would swing upon?

Did you know this door would be our undoing?

Weeks passed as we moved everything into the squat, repaired the worst damage, and spread the word. You spent your days organizing and recruiting, finding people in need of our help, laying the groundwork for what we were there to do. Helping the forgotten and abandoned find their place on the Ladder. You threw all your energy into it, while I spent mine on the door.

For days I'd sit in that abandoned bathroom, probing the door with my Sight, tracing its outlying vines. I remembered my training, and knew that the stronger methods of interrogating a Mystery might damage it. The door was a frustrating enigma, but it didn't feel dangerous. And besides - what if it was important? What if it was an opportunity? Horatio had told us all, from our apprenticeships, to keep an eye out for anything that would help the Consilium understand what happened back in 2001, or force the Seers out of the city. I dreamt about opening the door to reveal an Emanation, or a Wending, holding something that would bring the Pentacle back. I woke with the vanishing memory of the dream-me's pride, and the unyielding Mystery of the door.

Weeks turned into months, and the door didn't budge. The vines - half-real, half in my mind's eye - wrapped tight around it, without so much as a crack between them. Gradually, my guilt at you doing more than your share of the work on the Squat overcame my need to know, and I called Locksmith. He was the adept who instructed me on Irises; if anyone could explain the door, it was him.

I paced all afternoon while he cast a ritual to examine the door, unable to concentrate on my work - on our work with the squat. It felt wrong to have someone else in that room, knowing that he could destroy it. Or worse, open it and take the credit for himself.

That should have been my first sign. Those feelings, they weren't from me. They were from the door. You saw them, and you said nothing. I felt them, and I pushed them down.

Locksmith told us that the door led nowhere. He said that it was a leftover from the Folly, a scar in Space, a closed Distortion to nowhere. The reason, he said, that I couldn't find the Key was that it never existed.

"Maybe, in time, a true Iris will form. Best thing to do is leave it alone," he said.

You were relieved. "At least we know it's safe," you said, and I agreed out loud. But I knew.

I knew Locksmith lied. I knew the door led somewhere.

Why didn't I leave it alone?



CHAPTER THREE: SUPERNAL LORE

I've been trying to remember things, CLEARLY remember things, from my past, but the more I try to think back, the more it all starts to unravel. None of it seems real. It's like I've just been dreaming this life, and when I finally wake up, I'll be somebody else.

— Walenski, *Dark City*

In *Mage: The Awakening*, mages are essentially human, with one major difference; they can choose to wield magic. The following rules show how to create your *Mage* characters, and some of the few differences between mages and Sleepers.

Character Creation

Your characters in *Mage: The Awakening* engage with the Fallen World using the Storytelling system game mechanics. To determine how they fit into the world mechanically, you create those characters using the following systems. Every player should have a copy of the character sheet in the back of this book. The character sheet is your map to your Awakened character.

Usually, all players should make their characters together. You're building a story together; it stands to reason that the characters should at least nominally fit together. Even if the Storyteller plans to bring everyone together in the first game session, it's good to consider the dramatic appropriateness of the characters as a group. While enough finagling can bring any group of people together, some combinations may be more trouble than they're worth.

Step One: Character Concept

If the character sheet is the map to your character, character concept is the legend. Character concept is a couple of words that describe your character in a dramatic, literary sense. Is your character a Puckish Rogue? Is she an Itinerant Researcher? Is she a Celebrant Technoshaman?

As you've read through the previous sections, perhaps the Path, Order, or other setting snippets sparked a basic character idea. That idea is a concept.

Next, you'll need three Aspirations. Aspirations are your goals for your character. Note that they might not be goals your character personally holds, but they're goals you have for your character. For example, you might want to see your character lose a friend in the scope of the story. No reasonable person would want to lose a friend, but it's a valid Aspiration because it's something you want to see happen in your character's story.

When choosing Aspirations, look to two short-term Aspirations, and one long-term Aspiration. Short-term in this case means something that could happen to your character in a single game session, and long-term Aspirations are things that take a greater, extended effort to accomplish. Phrase Aspirations in a few words, but no more than a sentence. Keep them on the general and vague side, since more specificity means they're less likely to be fulfilled.

As a Storyteller, you should write down all these Aspirations. Aspirations are a way for players to tell you the kinds of things they want to see happen in your game. Be sure to engage these Aspirations, and give players plenty of chances to bring them into play.

Last, choose a Virtue and a Vice. These traits (explained on p. 211) reflect your character's personality and provide a means to regain Willpower.

Step Two: Select Attributes

Every *Chronicles of Darkness* character possesses nine basic Attributes. These Attributes cover a character's inherent capabilities. They come in three categories, Mental, Social, and Physical. Each

category possesses three Attributes. You can find more about these Attributes on p. 207, including what various dot levels represent. At this stage in character creation, each Attribute receives one free dot (as noted on the character sheet). Then, prioritize categories. Choose which grouping is most important to your character, then second most important, and last. The top category receives five dots to distribute, the second receives four, and the last receives three. You may divide these however you see fit, but no Attribute can go above five dots in total.

Step Three: Select Skills

Next, select Skills. There are 24 Skills, divided into Mental, Physical, and Social categories just like Attributes. Unlike Attributes, Skills receive no free dots. Prioritize categories the same way you did with Attributes, dividing eleven among the top category, seven to the secondary, and four to the final category. You can find more on Skills, including a detailed list of each and actions they contribute to on p.208.

Step Four: Determine Skill Specialties

Now that you have Skills for your character, you get to refine three of them with Specialties. Specialties are single word or short-phrase descriptors that help to narrow down your character's particular area of expertise. For example, your character might have Occult (Witchcraft), Occult (Herbalism), or Occult (Ghosts). Choose three Specialties. You can find examples in the Skill descriptions starting on p. 208.

When choosing Skill Specialties, you can look at them in three major ways. First, you can supplement inferior Skills that you still want your character to use. For example, your character might only have a single dot of Investigation, but if you take the Specialty "Crime Scenes," your character becomes much more effective in that specific field. Second, you can maximize efficiency with a mastered Skill. For example, if you took four dots of Firearms, selecting a "Rifles" Specialty makes your character remarkable with a rifle, and beyond other characters with just four dots. Lastly, you can use Specialties to give your character a little personal flare and flavor. For example, your character might have a Crafts Specialty in "Model Kits." This might not benefit your character directly in the game, but it says something about your character and her priorities.

Step Five: Add Mage Template

Now, add the Mage template in order to take your character from a Sleeper to one of the Awakened. This requires a few sub-steps.

Path

Choose your character's Path: Acanthus, Mastigos, Moros, Obrimos, or Thyrsus. Note your character's two Ruling and one Inferior Arcanum from this choice. You can find detailed explanations of each Path starting on p. 19.

Order

Choose your character's Order. Most characters will be in a Pentacle Order, but your Storyteller might allow Nameless or

Nameless

Some mages are *Nameless*; lacking membership in an Order, or having membership in a minor Order-like organization (a *Nameless Order*) that lacks the global scope and symbolic heft of a true Order. Nameless characters do not receive the benefits of Order membership (including Rote Skills), although larger Nameless Orders grant some of the same training; to represent these in the game, use the *Mystery Cult Initiation Merit* (p. 106). If that Merit is used to build a Nameless Order, it may grant a set of three Rote specialties as its third-dot benefit.

Seer of the Throne characters. Look to the chart on p. 82 to determine her three Rote Skills. Assuming your character has an Order, she receives a free dot in the Order Status Merit, a dot of Occult, and the High Speech Merit.

Nimbus

Describe your character's Nimbus. Use the descriptions on p. 89 and your character's Path to help flavor it. Remember that a Nimbus is subtle for characters with a starting level of Gnosis.

Dedicated Magical Tool

Determine your character's Dedicated Magical Tool. Her Path and Order determine possible magical tools. See p. 121 for descriptions of various tools.

Arcana

Next, determine your character's starting Arcana. Your character starts with six total dots in Arcana. She may only have one Arcanum at three dots at this time. Three to five of her starting dots must be in her Ruling Arcana, and both Ruling Arcana must have at least one dot. None of her starting dots can go to her Inferior Arcana.

The possible combinations are as follows:

Specialist: 3, 2, 1 or 3, 1, 1, 1

Balanced: 2, 2, 2 or 2, 2, 1, 1

Generalist: 2, 1, 1, 1, 1

Rotes

Your character starts play with three rotes. She can only have rotes which she can cast with her Arcana. Look to the Arcana descriptions starting on p. 128 for example rotes.

Gnosis

By default, your character starts with a single dot of Gnosis. For five of her starting Merit dots, your character can start with Gnosis 2. For all ten of her starting Merit dots, she may start with Gnosis 3.

Mana

Your character starts the chronicle with a full Mana pool, as derived from Gnosis.

Obsessions

Obsessions are like long-term Aspirations, but grant Arcane Beats and Mana when you resolve and make major progress toward them. Characters with Gnosis 1 and 2 may have one Obsession. Those with Gnosis 3 may have two.

Praxes

Your character has one Praxis per dot of Gnosis. Look to the Arcana descriptions again and choose spells to be your initial Praxes.

Resistance Attribute

The Awakening is tough on the mind, body, and soul. Every Awakened character begins play with one additional dot of Composure, Resolve, or Stamina, which may not raise the Attribute chosen above five dots. Add this to your character sheet at this time.

Step Six: Choose Merits

Every character begins play with ten Merit dots, unless some of those points were spent on Gnosis (see above). You may choose any combination of Merits from the Awakened list starting on p. 99, or the general list starting on p. 104. Your character must meet all given prerequisites to purchase a Merit. These Merits may affect other traits on the character sheet; be aware of these when calculating Advantages in the next step.

Step Seven: Determine Advantages

All characters have certain derived traits, which depend on their Attributes, Skills, and Merits. Determine the following Advantages and note them on your character sheet. We include basic calculations here. If a Merit modifies your character's Advantages, it'll be noted in the specific Merit.

- **Size:** Characters start at Size 5.
- **Health:** Characters start with Size + Stamina in Health dots.
- **Speed:** 5 + Strength + Dexterity
- **Willpower:** Resolve + Composure
- **Wisdom:** 7
- **Initiative:** Dexterity + Composure
- **Defense:** (Lower of Wits or Dexterity) + Athletics

The Awakening

This section gives rules specific to Awakened characters. Note that outside of Awakened magic, mages are mostly just normal humans. When not actively using magic, they don't use significantly different rules from the average Chronicles of Darkness character.

Character Advancement

Characters in **Mage: The Awakening** advance through a system of "Experiences." Experiences are spent to increase and buy new character traits. Experiences are earned by accruing "Beats," which are small elements of drama in the plot. These Beats come through fulfilling Aspirations, through good and bad things happening to characters, and resolving minor plot hurdles called Conditions.

Beats

Beats are measures of drama in the Storytelling system. Five Beats become one Experience, one significant moment able to advance your character. You receive Beats for multiple things in the course of the story. Aspirations and Conditions are the most common ways to achieve Beats, but numerous others exist. Here are the main ways this occurs:

- Any time you resolve or make significant headway toward an Aspiration, take a Beat.
- At the end of every chapter (game session), take a Beat.
- Any time you resolve a Condition, take a Beat.
- When you fail a roll, you can opt to make it a dramatic failure and take a Beat.
- Any major dramatic event the Storyteller deems appropriate can award a Beat.

You can only receive one Beat from a given category in a given scene. If you resolve three Conditions in a scene, for example, you only receive one Beat. However, if the moment is particularly dramatic, or you've made significant sacrifice to trigger multiple Beats, the Storyteller can rule that multiple Beats are acquired.

Aspirations

When making your character, you choose three Aspirations. These are goals you wish to tackle in your character's story. Primarily, they exist as a way to measure and express advancement. Any time you fulfill an Aspiration, you take a Beat. Any time you make major headway into or change the direction of a long-term Aspiration, you take a Beat.

For this reason, Aspirations should stay general and somewhat vague whenever possible. The more specific they are, the less likely you are to actually fulfill them. As a Storyteller, when it comes to the question of whether or not a player fulfilled an Aspiration, always lean towards allowing it.

Character Creation Quick Reference

Step One: Character Concept

Come up with Concept, Virtue, Vice, and three Aspirations

Step Two: Select Attributes

Prioritize Attributes, distribute 5/4/3 dots

Step Three: Select Skills

Prioritize Skills, distribute 11/7/4 dots

Step Four: Determine Skill Specialties

Choose three Skill Specialties

Step Five: Add Mage template

Choose Path, Order, describe Nimbus, choose a Dedicated Magical Tool

Determine Arcana by Path, six dots, according to rules on **p.80**

Choose three rites

Determine Gnosis, one dot plus one per five Merit dots spent

Determine Obsessions

Choose a Praxis per dot of Gnosis

Determine free Resistance Attribute Dot: Composure, Resolve, or Stamina

If in an Order, add a dot of Occult

Step Six: Merits

Distribute ten Merit dots, less any spent on Gnosis; characters in an Order receive Order Status • and High Speech for free.

Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Calculate the following Advantages:

Size: 5

Health: Stamina + Size

Speed: 5 + Strength + Dexterity

Willpower: Resolve + Composure

Wisdom: 7

Initiative: Dexterity + Composure

Defense: (Lower of Dexterity or Wits) + Athletics

Path Arcana

Path	Ruling Arcana	Inferior Arcanum
Acanthus	Time and Fate	Forces
Mastigos	Space and Mind	Matter
Moros	Matter and Death	Spirit
Obrimos	Forces and Prime	Death
Thysus	Life and Spirit	Mind

Order Rote Skills

Adamantine Arrow	Athletics, Intimidation, Medicine
Free Council	Crafts, Persuasion, Science
Guardians of the Veil	Investigation, Stealth, Subterfuge
Mysterium	Investigation, Occult, Survival
Silver Ladder	Expression, Persuasion, Subterfuge
Seers of the Throne	Investigation, Occult, Persuasion OR by Ministry:
Hegemony	Politics, Persuasion, Empathy
Panopticon	Investigation, Stealth, Subterfuge
Paternoster	Academics, Occult, Expression
Praetorian	Athletics, Larceny, Intimidation

When an Aspiration is fulfilled, after the scene you can swap it out for another one. Usually in resolving an Aspiration, another one becomes a clear choice. However, the new Aspiration doesn't have to be related to the old one. It can just be a different goal or direction for your character, to keep things dynamic and progressing.

Also, between game sessions, you can change out Aspirations, even if they haven't been fulfilled. Sometimes, an Aspiration reveals itself as unlikely to resolve, or just impractical to pursue. This happens. Feel free to change it out for something that makes more sense in the context of the story.

Aspirations also have some other game effects. For example, they can influence Social maneuvering actions (see p. 215).

Conditions

Conditions are minor dramatic effects that occur in the scope of gameplay and the story. They influence the rules in various ways, often adding or removing dice from a pool.

Every Condition has a Resolution term. When that thing occurs in the game (often at your choice as a player), the Condition goes away, and you take a Beat.

Some Conditions are Persistent, which is to say that they last longer than normal Conditions, and offer multiple Beats. These Conditions have a "Beat" entry in their descriptions. When that thing happens, no more than once per Chapter, take a Beat.

Any time a scene calls for a Condition, the Storyteller can impose one. As well, any time a character achieves exceptional success or dramatic failure on an action, a Condition will occur. Exceptional success gives a positive Condition of the player's choosing, and dramatic failure will give a negative Condition of the Storyteller's choosing.

You can find a list of example Conditions in Appendix Three.

Experiences

Whenever you accrue five Beats, those Beats vanish, and you take an Experience. An Experience is a sign of meaningful progress in your character's story, and her personal voyage through the plot. You can expend Experiences at any time to increase your character traits. A single dot of a trait may cost one or more Experiences, depending on what it is. Look to the chart below:

Arcane Beats

Magic comes from experiencing and understanding the universe around you. Mages specifically gain a different type of Beat called "Arcane Beats," which become Arcane Experiences, alongside regular Beats. Arcane Experiences help a mage achieve magical advancement.

Like with normal Beats, a few major criteria allow you to gain them. And like normal Beats, a given category can only net a single Beat per scene.

- Any time you fulfill or make major headway into an Obsession, take an Arcane Beat.
- Any time you resolve a Condition resulting from spellcasting, Paradox, or a magical effect, take an Arcane Beat

Experiences

Trait	Experiences
Attribute	4 per Dot
Skill	2 per Dot
Merit	1 per Dot
Arcanum to Limit	4 per Dot*
Arcanum above Limit	5 per Dot
Gnosis	5 per Dot*
Rote	1
Praxis	1**
Wisdom	2 per Dot**
Willpower	1 per Dot***
Legacy Attainments	1 (tutored) *
Legacy Attainments	1 (no tutor) **
Skill Specialty	1

Note that increasing Gnosis affords a single, free Praxis.

* Can be partially or completely bought with Arcane Experiences

** Must be bought with only Arcane Experiences

*** Willpower increases whenever Composure or Resolve increase, and has a maximum rating of the combined dots in both Attributes. This cost is to rebuy dots of Willpower spent in play, e.g. to relinquish spells.

instead of a normal one. Letting a spell causing a Condition expire does not count as resolving it.

- When failing a spellcasting roll, you may make it a dramatic failure and take an Arcane Beat.
- When your character risks an Act of Hubris against Wisdom (see p. 88), take an Arcane Beat.
- When your character spends a scene being tutored in a Legacy by a mentor or tutoring her own students, take an Arcane Beat.
- When your character has a meaningful and new encounter with the supernatural, at Storyteller discretion, you may take an Arcane Beat.

Obsessions

Obsessions are just like long-term Aspirations, except they relate specifically to a mage's compulsion to explore the mystical in her life. They could be goals to learn or research specific things. They could be player goals for the character to encounter certain strangeness in the world. They could be goals to use magic in new or extreme ways.

Every Awakened character receives one or more Obsessions. This depends on your character's Gnosis dots. A

character with one or two Gnosis dots has only one Obsession. A character with three, four, or five dots of Gnosis has two Obsessions. A character with six, seven, or eight dots of Gnosis has three Obsessions. And a character with nine or ten Gnosis has four Obsessions.

In addition to the Arcane Beat from resolution, resolving an Obsession also gives the character a point of Mana.

Additionally, Obsessions apply any time an Aspiration could apply. For example, they influence Social maneuvering actions. Any time a character uses Focused Mage Sight Scrutiny (see p. 92) and an Obsession applies, the Obsession adds a die to the attempt.

Arcane Experiences

Five Arcane Beats become an Arcane Experience, in the same way five Beats become an Experience. However, Arcane Experiences differ from normal Experiences in that they can only purchase magical traits. In this context, this means Gnosis, Arcana, Praxes, and Legacy Attainments. The costs are the same.

Also, note that Gnosis and Arcana *can* be purchased with mundane Experiences and any combination of mundane and Arcane Experiences.

Legacy Attainments have a prerequisite level of Gnosis, as explained on p. 199. A mage who invents her own Attainments rather than learning from a tutor may only spend Arcane Experiences to buy them.

The Limits of Arcana

Each Path provides two Ruling Arcana, one Inferior Arcanum, and seven Common Arcana. The difference determines the cost of buying dots in the Arcanum, and at what point a character requires a teacher

Arcanum	Maximum Untrained
Ruling	5 dots
Common	4 dots
Inferior	2 dots

Characters can buy up to the above limits for four Experiences per dot, which can be regular or Arcane Experiences. *Exceeding* the limit increases the cost to five Experiences, requires a teacher who already knows the dot-level sought, and can only be bought with regular Experiences.

Gnosis

Have you ever been the expert in a room full of opinionated but uninformed people? Think about the feeling you get when they speak intellectual falsehoods, and others agree. Think about the feeling you get when your voice is shouted down by the raw numbers of other voices. Then, think about the feeling you get when your voice begins to click and resonate with the audience, and you feel you can make a change, to inform, to enlighten. Multiply those feelings one-hundredfold, and you have an idea of what Gnosis is.

The Beat Economy

Particularly in a long-running game, Beat acquisition is a core part of the Storytelling system, and the Storyteller should always be mindful that it exists, and what rate it happens at. On average, most characters should receive somewhere between about three to eight Beats per game session. If they're not, consider why that is. Are you not applying or enforcing Conditions? Are your players not rolling enough to fail sometimes? Are you not engaging their Aspirations or Obsessions? These are all things to keep in mind. If you're playing loose with the rules, you may not see as many Beats. In that case, don't hesitate to hand them out any time something cool happens. If two characters butt heads and it becomes a really tense, driving scene, go ahead and award both players with a Beat. If one character has an emotional breakdown thanks to the strangeness around him, give a Beat.

If you're only playing a single-session game, Beats aren't nearly as useful as in an extended game. In these cases, any time the player would get a Beat, instead give them a token. This token can be cashed in to replenish a Willpower point, to offer 8-Again on a single roll, or to add a single success in a Contested action.

Group Beats

If the players and Storyteller wish, players can "pool" Beats and thus divide Experiences accordingly. This means everyone advances at the same rate, but also means that everyone's advancement is tied to everyone's engagement with the game systems. This can be both a boon and detriment to a shy or non-confrontational player; it can offer an incentive for being involved without the pressure to perform for advancement, but it can also incentivize not being involved, since his character will continue to advance without engagement. Weigh the options, and make the best collective decision for your troupe of players.

Gnosis is the power and understanding that drives Awakened magic. It's not magic, per se, but it's necessary to create, to drive, and to foster magic. Gunpowder is not a gun, after all, but it is necessary to use a gun successfully.

Gnosis is largely a subconscious awareness. It's your character's ability to take a mental leap beyond what others can; she can connect dots others cannot even see. She understands the universe intuitively, and can see the threads she must pull to enact meaningful change. For her, the question is never how to make change, but instead whether she's able and willing to do what is necessary.

Gnosis by Path

Gnosis is different for everyone. Your character's Path flavors her Gnosis, as well as every facet of her identity.

Acanthus see strands of fate in everything. There's no such thing as a true coincidence; the universe follows fractal patterns that are just too hard for the average mind to understand. The Acanthus see a web, a weave, where given enough time and space, threads must all somehow connect. At greater Gnosis, they begin to intuitively know just where and when they'll connect, and thus how to manipulate the variables to bring about their desired outcomes. Classic mythology teaches us that we can't change fate. High-Gnosis Acanthus can. For many, this understanding of what's to come, and what could come, breeds a strong sense of responsibility.

Mastigos see the darkness. They see the stains and sins within every soul, lingering inside every mind. They understand motivations, and they can sense the selfishness all around them. Almost nobody is clean and pure. This typically results in a certain amount of cynicism in potent Mastigos. After all, what's the sense in saving the world, when it's full of such terrible people?

Moros see the way things will end. They see death. They see destruction. They see entropy. Even the most beautiful statue is only beautiful in the moment. Eventually, it'll lose its color and shape to the weather around it, and Moros know this intimately. For this reason, the strongest of the Moros often ignore minor consequences, since they see that everything ends up dust anyway.

Obrimos see the depths, the potential in all things. When they look at a person, a place, or thing, they sense what it *could* be. For many Obrimos, this offers a sharp sense of inspiration and

motivation; they want to see the world improve. For others, it can breed deep pessimism. After all, they see the potential everyone wastes and refuses to embrace. Even the greatest squander some possibility within them.

Thyrus see life in everything. To the Thyrus's wisdom, life will out. To that mind, a nuclear wasteland is but a temporary setback. This breeds a very liberal viewpoint; it's often not worth intervening in all but the most existential of crises, as in the end, everything will be alright. This also highlights the contrary, though. That which is unnatural and threatens that long-term balance is a clear and present danger above anything as mundane as an immediate threat to human life.

Increasing Gnosis

In game terms, Gnosis can be raised by expending five Experiences in any combination of standard Experiences or Arcane Experiences. In the narrative, Gnosis requires knowledge and understanding. It requires moments of epiphany, study, and experience. Gnosis increases when your character has advanced philosophically, mystically, or academically in such a significant way that she'll never see the world the same.

While they're not as influential and life-changing as the Awakening itself, these are moments the character will likely never forget, milestones in her advancement that show clear evolution of thinking, purpose, or identity. Whenever your character increases in Gnosis, consider changing or refining her



Virtue or Vice. Definitely look to Aspirations and Obsessions for potential changes. The character doesn't necessarily become a completely different person, but she'll come out changed.

Effects of Gnosis

Gnosis affects numerous factors in gameplay:

- When ritual casting, Gnosis determines the amount of time a spell takes to cast. At the lowest levels of Gnosis, any ritual casting will take hours at least, and force a mage to stay awake for greater spells. As Gnosis increases, ritual casting becomes quicker.
- Gnosis builds the foundation for spellcasting dice pools. Whereas a mundane action uses an Attribute and a Skill, the "Attribute" in spellcasting is Gnosis, while Arcanum is the "Skill."
- Gnosis determines your character's maximum traits. Normally, a character is limited to five dots in Skills and Attributes. However, at Gnosis 6+, your character can achieve higher Attribute and Skill ratings.
- Upon Awakening, a mage can only use two Yantras in a given spellcasting. At higher Gnosis levels, she becomes able to integrate more Yantras into her casting.
- Gnosis determines how many spells your character can have active before she needs to Reach. This is direct, one-for-one. Every dot equals a spell.
- Gnosis determines the number of Obsessions your character may have at once.
- Legacy Attainments (see p. 199) are limited by Gnosis. As the character's Gnosis increases, the number of potential Attainments does as well; the Arcanum limits of the specific Attainments also increase.
- Gnosis determines the number of Paradox dice that are incurred for each Reach above Arcanum limits.

- Gnosis allows your character to combine multiple spells into a single casting, to get around limitations on numbers of active spells. At Gnosis 3, a mage can combine two spells into one casting. At Gnosis 6, she can combine three. And at Gnosis 9, she can combine four spells.

- Gnosis limits the upper limit of a mage's Arcana. A mage's highest Arcanum can be three dots at Gnosis 1, four dots at Gnosis 3, and five dots at Gnosis 5. That mage's other Arcana are limited to a maximum of two dots at Gnosis 1, three dots at Gnosis 2, four dots at Gnosis 4, and five dots at Gnosis 6.

- Gnosis acts as a mage's "power trait" and adds to Supernatural Tolerance rolls. In contested rolls to resist some supernatural powers, Gnosis adds to the dice pool.

- Gnosis determines how much Mana a mage can contain within her Pattern, and how quickly she can process it. The chart notes a maximum Mana, and how much she can spend in a turn at her level of Gnosis.

- A mage's Nimbus is partially determined by her Gnosis. See Nimbus, on p. 88, for more on this.

- Every dot of Gnosis comes with a free Praxis.

Mana

Mana is the palpable, measurable bleed of the Supernal into the material. It's a Prime energy, a quintessential force that comes from the energy trapped when the Abyss came into existence, or sometimes comes into existence from the glory and greatness of the world. In a Hallow, it can suffuse a physical object, forming tass.

Mages can keep a certain amount of Mana in their Patterns depending on their Gnosis dots. Alternatively, tass can be physically held and carried around in whatever quantities the mage can stockpile.

A Mage's Gnosis determines her Pattern's capacity for Mana storage, but it also determines how quickly she can spend it. Consult the Gnosis chart for these numbers.

Gnosis	Ritual Interval	Trait Max	Yantras	Paradox	Combined Spells	Obsessions	Mana/Per Turn	Highest Arcanum Max	Other Arcana Max
1	3 Hours	5	2	1	1	1	10/1	3	2
2	3 Hours	5	2	1	1	1	11/2	3	3
3	1 Hour	5	3	2	2	2	12/3	4	3
4	1 Hour	5	3	2	2	2	13/4	4	4
5	30 Minutes	5	4	3	2	2	15/5	5	4
6	30 Minutes	6	4	3	3	3	20/6	5	5
7	10 Minutes	7	5	4	3	3	25/7	5	5
8	10 Minutes	8	5	4	3	3	30/8	5	5
9	1 Minute (20 Turns)	9	6	5	4	4	50/10	5	5
10	1 Minute (20 Turns)	10	6	5	4	4	75/15	5	5

Mana can be spent as a reflexive action to:

- Improvise a spell not based on your character's Ruling Arcana. Improvising a spell outside your character's Ruling Arcana requires a point of Mana.
- Reduce Paradox risk on a spell by one die per point of Mana spent.
- Attainments often cost Mana to activate, as noted in their rules.
- Some powerful spells that push the boundaries of natural physics or violate the Lie require Mana, as explained on p. 125.
- Any Legacy Attainments based on spells that would cost 2 or more Mana require one point to use.

Pattern Restoration: as an instant action, a mage can bolster her Pattern and heal mentally or physically. Three Mana points can heal a level of bashing or lethal damage. Alternatively, the mage can remove a Mental Condition (this does not offer a Beat) or a Physical Tilt.

Mages attempting a feat that requires Mana above their Gnosis-derived spending limits may take as many Turns as needed before the action to spend the required Mana. If they are interrupted or change their minds part-way through, Mana spent is still lost.

Gaining Mana

Mages can absorb Mana through numerous methods:

- The most common method is **Oblation**, or targeted meditation at a Hallow. This requires a Gnosis + Composure roll and one hour's time. Each success gives one Mana, up to the limits imposed by the Hallow. As well, a mage with a Legacy can commit a special Oblation even away from a Hallow.
- Mages with three dots of Prime may use the spell "Channel Mana" (p. 168) to absorb Mana from a Hallow without Oblation.
- If Mana is left to accumulate at a Hallow, it'll eventually congeal and crystallize into **tass**, which can be stored and accessed later. If the tass congeals in food, it can be eaten to absorb the Mana. Otherwise, Channel Mana is required to access tass.
- Moments of Supernal **Revelation** can generate Mana. This usually means fulfilling an Obsession.
- A mage can **Scour** her Pattern for Mana, literally tearing apart some of the building blocks that maintain her physical form. This shreds her mortal body, but the resulting release produces Mana. In game terms, she reduces a Physical Attribute (and all traits derived from it, such as Health for Stamina) by one dot for 24 hours, or suffers one resistant lethal wound. This produces three Mana. At Gnosis 1-4, she can Scour

once per day. At 5-6, she can Scour twice. At 7-9, she can Scour three times per day. And at Gnosis 10, she can Scour four times per day.

- Lastly, **Blood Sacrifice** offers Mana. In an Act of Hubris, the mage kills a living being for Mana. Its death releases Mana from its Pattern. A small animal offers one Mana, while human sacrifices offer as much Mana as the person had Integrity dots remaining before the killing blow. The Mana gained from Sacrifice ignores the spend/Turn limits on Mana if the sacrifice is part of a spell's casting.

Wisdom

Wisdom is a mage's ability to judge the value of when, where, why, and how to use magic. Mages commonly call this virtue *sophia*, but Awakened society debates constantly on what constitutes "right" usage of their magic.

Wisdom represents the control a mage has over her magic. A character with low Wisdom runs the risk of her magic spiraling out of control. It sometimes becomes a rampant force, and Paradox follows quickly behind.

Losing Wisdom

Wisdom decays through **Acts of Hubris**, wherein a mage ignores consequence in pursuit of her goals. Every mage and every circumstance is different from a Wisdom standpoint. Two mages in nearly identical circumstances may cast the same spell or commit the same action, but to one, his Wisdom is safe while the other risks degeneration.

Also, different levels of Wisdom handle degeneration differently. As a mage's Wisdom decreases, she becomes inured to loss, and only great Acts of Hubris will risk degeneration. On the other side of the spectrum, a mage with high Wisdom stands in a constant balancing act between Wisdom and hubris, and any minor misstep can send her Wisdom plummeting.

In the Acts of Hubris section below, you'll see example acts for each level of Wisdom. These are only general recommendations. As a Storyteller, assess each action for potential hubris, and compare to the character's Wisdom. If the character's Wisdom is equal to or higher than the level you feel fits the action, the character risks degeneration.

Degeneration risks use a number of dice depending on the relative Wisdom level of the Act of Hubris. Consult the Acts of Hubris list for how many dice each level of Wisdom act use. Note that the dice pool depends on the action; it doesn't depend on the mage's Wisdom. A mage with three dots of Wisdom and a mage with nine dots of Wisdom both use a base pool of 1 die if they commit a Wisdom 1 Act of Hubris.

Following Obsessions *hurts* a mage's chance to maintain Wisdom, as that driving power makes him ignore the implications of his actions. If the Storyteller feels the mage commits an Act of Hubris in pursuit of his Obsessions, remove one die from the dice pool for degeneration.

A character's Virtue can add a die to the pool, if the act embodied hubris, but in defense of that Virtue. The character may

very well understand and see the consequences of her actions, but she stands by them because she truly, fundamentally believes her actions are righteous.

On the other hand, following a Vice as an Act of Hubris is similar to an Obsession; it removes a die from the pool as your character indulges in what she believes is a moral failing.

Roll the resulting dice pool. You may not spend Willpower on this roll. Compare the results below:

Dramatic Failure: Your character not only loses a dot of Wisdom from her complete disregard for the world around her, but she also gains a Persistent Condition pertaining to the hubris. Take Megalomaniacal or Rampant. The normal resolution gives a Beat. Your character may only resolve the Condition permanently by gaining a dot of Wisdom.

Failure: Your character loses a dot of Wisdom, as she fails to see the consequences and ripples from her actions. Take the Megalomaniacal or Rampant Condition.

Success: Your character is able to examine and understand the ramifications of her actions. She does not lose Wisdom.

Exceptional Success: Your character's Wisdom is reinforced by examining the risk and consequences of her actions. Take an additional Arcane Beat from the epiphany.

Any time your character risks Wisdom degeneration, she gains an Arcane Beat. Exploring the depths of hubris can be enlightening.

Additionally, some spells that attack the soul, or powers of other supernatural creatures in the Fallen World, can temporarily reduce Wisdom until their effects wear off.

Acts of Hubris

Acts of Hubris determine when a mage risks Wisdom degeneration. While this list is not exhaustive, it's also only a series of guidelines. Feel free to add, take away, or adjust as you see fit. Mages of greater Wisdom consider lesser acts to be Acts of Hubris. The greatest minds fall the easiest. Wisdom comes in three tiers, Enlightened, Understanding, and Falling. A character within that tier suffers when committing acts within or beneath that tier. The tier of the Act of Hubris also determines the base dice pool to resist degeneration. Note that this is the tier of the act, not the mage. A mage at Wisdom 8 only gets one die to resist a Falling-level act.

Wisdom 8–10, High / Enlightened (5 dice) These highest levels of Wisdom force the mage to walk a careful line. Any minor Act of Hubris risks degeneration. At this level, any time the mage uses a spell to accomplish something she could do through mundane methods with little or no risk poses the chance for degeneration. When innocent bystanders are affected by your character's spells or actions, she is at risk as well.

Wisdom 4–7, Medium / Understanding (3 dice): Most experienced and stable mages fall into this range of Wisdom. Sometimes, Acts of Hubris happen. But by and large, the mage acts with basic Wisdom most of the time. Allowing a Sleeper to witness obvious magic, thus risking greater Paradox, can cause degeneration. Self-mutilating events such as soul stone creation risk degeneration. Not attempting to contain a severe Paradox risks degeneration as well. Forcing a sapient being (whether a

Sleeper, spirit, or anything else) to act counter to its interests, altering its nature long-term, or binding it to a task all risk degeneration, as does deliberate and premeditated murder and violence that leaves its victim with long-term injury.

Wisdom 1–3, Low / Falling (1 die): Hubris of this level concerns all mages. A mage at this precipice could be lost to his magic at any time. Only the darkest, most selfishly destructive acts risk degeneration at this point. Killing someone in a fit of rage, destroying an Awakened soul, allowing a Supernal being to be consumed by the Fallen World, or dealing with the Abyss can force the mage through her final loss of Wisdom.

Wisdom 0: A character with no Wisdom is forever lost. His hubris has overcome him, and he's become one of "The Mad." His magic leaks into the world, letting the Supernal out wherever he goes. He cannot control his magic; it controls him.

Inuring

If a mage suffers Wisdom loss through use of a spell, she can choose to wipe that spell from future Acts of Hubris; any future uses will not incur Wisdom loss no matter the action. If she chooses to do this, to *inure* herself to the spell's hubris, it forever becomes a Paradox risk. From that point forward, every use of the inured spell forces a base two-die Paradox risk. Your character may inure herself to the effects of one spell per dot of her Gnosis.

Raising Wisdom

Through effort, a mage who has become worried about his worsening Paradoxes may turn away from the downward slide of hubris. A mage attempting spiritual self-improvement must assign "Becoming wiser" as one of her Obsessions, working to understand her place in the universe. After at least one story with progress on this Obsession, the player may spend two Arcane Experiences to add a dot of Wisdom.

Nimbus

Most supernatural beings in the Chronicles of Darkness are possessed of an "aura," a spiritual presence that tells those who are sensitive that the being is *something else*. Vampires have a predatory aura; werewolves have a powerful, feral mien about them. Mages' souls are wrapped in the stuff of the Supernal, marking them as glorious and terrifying.

This phenomenon, the Nimbus, is based on numerous factors including a mage's Path, Legacy, and other pieces of personal symbolism. Her Shadow Name and her magical tools can influence its appearance, for example. It's wholly invisible except when spellcasting, and even then only to Mage Sight most of the time.

A Nimbus takes three forms, a Long-Term Nimbus, an Immediate Nimbus, and a Signature Nimbus. Each comes into play in different circumstances.

The **Long-Term Nimbus** is a series of subtle coincidences that surrounds your character. These are purely story-based effects, bits of strangeness that align with your character's Path. For example, around Thyrsus, spirits are more likely to show up, strange pathogens might infect people, and likewise terminal diseases can



vanish. Moros bring ghastly hauntings, decay, rust, and mechanical breakdowns. Obrimos cause religious revelation, extreme weather swings, or blackouts. Acanthus cause strange luck, lost memories to rise up, or visions of possible fates. Mastigos cause people's fears to well up, and sometimes they see their internal devils.

It's important to note that the Long-Term Nimbus is not a controllable force; it's just a matter of strange, fractal geometry in the universe. Patterns converge around your character. However, a character's Gnosis determines its general Potency. While subtle at first, it can become truly obvious at six or more dots of Gnosis. Wisdom determines the range of the Nimbus' effects, as it spreads along your character's sympathetic ties (p. 173). At the Enlightened Wisdom tier, your character's Nimbus is left on Strong connections. At Understanding level, Medium connections. At Falling level, on even Weak connections.

The **Immediate Nimbus** is a powerful aura directly surrounding the mage, wrapping close to her soul and flashing out as the Supernal World ebbs and flows against her. When she casts a spell, her Immediate Nimbus becomes visible to those with any active Mage Sight, regardless of the Arcana she's using to cast. The Immediate Nimbus appears based mostly on the character's Path. It's a force, a halo of raw creation stuff. Sometimes, this is visible — sometimes it's a sensation, a smell, or a muddy, primal emotion. Here are a handful of examples: For Thyrus, this might look like a mist of blood, or might cause a deep rutting instinct. Moros might cause subtle rot around them, or melancholy. Obrimos bask in holy light, or cause remarkable inspiration. Acanthus appear as if time bends around them, or

cause fatalism. Mastigos glow with a sickly green fire, or cause temptation to swell in onlookers.

When the Immediate Nimbus flares, it causes a Nimbus Tilt unique to your character, with a strength depending on what caused the flare. If the Nimbus flared because of a spell, use the spell's Potency as the Nimbus' strength, and the Tilt lasts for the spell's Reach in turns or one turn at a minimum. Alternatively, once per scene a mage can force her immediate Nimbus to flare for a single turn without casting a spell by spending a Mana. In this case, roll the character's Gnosis and use successes as the Nimbus' strength. Deliberate flares like this are visible even in the Fallen World and can therefore affect characters not using Mage Sight, although Sleepers will suffer Quiescence after the Tilt ends.

Compare the Nimbus strength to any witness's Resolve. If a character's Resolve is equal to or lower than the Nimbus strength, the Tilt takes effect. If for whatever reason a character is aware of the effects, she can willingly submit to the Tilt regardless of her Resolve. Mages can pit their own Nimbus against the aura as per the "Interactions with Other Auras" rules, below. While characters without Mage Sight cannot see the aura, the subtle cues still affect them with the Tilt. This is almost always imperceptible, but some particularly clued-in witnesses may note when something's awry.

The **Signature Nimbus** is just that, an identifier your character leaves on the things her Awakened will has touched. When she uses a spell, Praxis, Rote, or Attainment, she leaves little wisps of her identity on that magic. A mage utilizing Focused Mage Sight can recognize those signatures she's seen before. If the signature comes from a particularly great Gnosis (6+), it offers a bonus to Rev-

elation rolls regarding that Pattern. For every dot of Gnosis above five, add one die to relevant dice pools. By default, this lasts for a week. However, the bonus dice afforded by high Gnosis fade one per week instead. Once the last die is gone, it fades one week later.

A Signature Nimbus looks the part of a residue from or remainder of the Immediate Nimbus. If your character has a fiery Immediate Nimbus, her Signature Nimbus might be charring and ash, for example. Or if her Immediate Nimbus causes intoxication, her Signature Nimbus might feel like a hangover.

If a mage wishes, she can imprint her Signature Nimbus on an object, place, or person at the cost of one Mana. In this case, add her Gnosis to any rolls to scrutinize that Nimbus. This fades at one bonus die per week. Spending a Willpower point turns those weeks into months.

Interactions with other auras

Other supernatural creatures tend to have aura effects that force Conditions. Sometimes this is a defense mechanism; sometimes this is a way to assert dominance. However, mages are particularly resistant to this effect. When such an effect targets your character, roll a dice pool comprised of a Resistance Attribute + Gnosis. The Resistance Attribute depends on the monster's dice pool: If it uses Strength, roll Stamina; if Presence, roll Composure; and if Intelligence, roll Resolve. This resistance is automatic, but it does count as flaring your character's Immediate Nimbus. This comes with all effects, both positive and negative. The roll acts as a contested action against whatever the other character throws at yours. Your successes subtract from his; if you net any successes beyond his, he suffers your Nimbus Tilt.

Crafting a Tilt

As part of Nimbus creation, you must come up with a Nimbus Tilt, which comes into play when your character's Immediate Nimbus flares. The Tilt either penalizes or bolsters specific actions the subject undertakes. You get a number of bonus or penalty dice equal to half your character's Gnosis (rounded up). These must be applied to a combination of penalized or benefitting Attributes (or both). Alternatively, you can apply the effect to Skills. A benefitted Skill also gains the 8-Again quality. A penalized Skill loses the 10-Again quality.

So for example, a mage that flares a distracting, wanton, bacchanal Nimbus and Gnosis 7 might give a -1 penalty to both Composure and Wits rolls, but a +2 bonus to Presence rolls until his Nimbus fades.

As your character's Gnosis increases, so does the effect of her Immediate Nimbus Tilt. When Gnosis increases, you can completely rework the Tilt, re-designing it from the ground-up.

High Speech

From the instant of Awakening, all mages can comprehend High Speech, the Supernal symbol of "language" that serves as the platonic ur-tongue. The Orders all teach their students to use High Speech as a Yantra in Spellcasting (the *High Speech Merit*, p. 102) but it is useable in spoken and written form as a crude form of communication. Because it's more the symbol of a language than a real language, though, High Speech has some restrictions – it is very good at communicating facts, but can't be used to deliberately lie (it's possible to be mistaken). It also contains no metaphors or symbols, as it is its own Supernal concept. High Speech may be used for Persuasion and Intimidation rolls, but reduces all Expression and Subterfuge rolls to chance dice.

Sleepers who hear or read High Speech only perceive gibberish, and their memories of it are subject to Quiescence, although it does not provoke a breaking point (see p. 298).

Mage Sight

Once Awakened, a mage can't go back to Sleep. The Lie is exposed, and magic filters and colors everything she sees, to a greater or lesser extent. A mage can intensify her perceptions of magic and glean a great deal of information about the world around her, but doing so has risks.

Mage Sight has three levels: Peripheral, Active, and Focused.

Peripheral Mage Sight

Peripheral Mage Sight is always active. The mage sees – rather, *perceives* – magical occurrences through the lens of her Path and Nimbus. Many mages experience the Periphery through senses other than sight. A sensual Mastigos might feel brushing, light touches on his skin, while an Acanthus might hear mercurial laughter. Many Moros sense the supernatural through their sense of smell, tasting decay and chemicals on the air. Deeper levels of Mage Sight rely on knowledge of the Arcana, but the Periphery responds to *all* supernatural events.

Note, however, that Peripheral Mage Sight notices *only* active supernatural effects. Any supernatural attempt at concealment hides the effect from the mage, without a Clash of Wills or any other mechanical effect. Peripheral Mage Sight, for instance, doesn't detect a ghost lurking quietly in Twilight. If the ghost spends Essence, activates a Numen, or Manifests, however, this attracts the mage's attention.

Nor does Peripheral Mage Sight give any clues as to *what* just happened – only that magic is afoot. If the mage doesn't have the Death Arcanum to use Active Mage Sight with, the ghost will remain a nagging sensation of something out of place at the edge of the mage's perceptions.

Active Mage Sight

Active Mage Sight requires more concentration from the mage, and overlays the mage's perception with the Supernal

World of her Path. It automatically uses the mage's two Path Ruling Arcana, has no cost to add any third Ruling Arcanum, and costs one point of Mana per scene to include a Common or Inferior Arcanum.

Active Mage Sight allows the mage a much greater sensory experience with regards to the Supernal correspondences of the Arcana used, interpreted into the mage's Path. The mage hallucinates, seeing the connections of the Arcana all around her. Mage Sight highlights all phenomena related to the Arcana used, but making sense of the torrent of Patterns is often difficult, and the mage can only determine the symbols related to phenomena within her senses — her Sight won't let her see through walls or perceive entities and objects in a state of Twilight. Unveiling spells and several Attainments allow more specialized analysis of a mage's surroundings, either adding capabilities to Mage Sight or granting extra senses for more information.

Each Arcanum has a minor mechanical effect, relating to the base level of perception granted by Active Sight.

Death Sight allows a mage to detect the presence of the Anchor Condition (p. 258) or manifested ghosts and related phenomena. With a glance, a mage using Mage Sight can tell if someone has a soul, or if a body is, in fact, dead.

Fate Sight highlights anyone the mage watches who experiences a dramatic failure or exceptional success. It reveals the presence and use of a Destiny (see *Merits*, p. 100), but not the details of that destiny.

Forces Sight detects motion and highlights the presence of environmental Tilts, fire, electricity, and other hazards. With a glance, a mage can tell if a device is powered.

Life Sight detects life signs, revealing if a body is still alive, and allows a mage to gauge how injured a character is with a glance. The presence of toxins, diseases, and Personal Tilts is obvious to the mage.

Matter Sight allows the mage to determine the Structure and Durability of anything she looks at, as well as highlighting the value and quality of items (in game terms, telling the player the Availability and Equipment Bonus of any object).

Mind Sight detects the presence of thinking beings and allows the mage to tell with a glance if someone is asleep, comatose, awake, meditating, or projecting out of his body or into the Astral. The mage is also aware when a character she observes gains or spends Willpower.

Prime Sight highlights anything the mage can use as a Yantra, and the presence (if not the composition) of any Awakened spell or Attainment effect. Mages using Prime Sight can recognize tass with a glance, and tell when they are in a Hallow or Node.

Space Sight allows the user to instantly judge distances, range bands, and cover, allowing the player to know what bonuses or penalties would be in effect before the character acts. It also detects spatial warps, scrying windows, and the presence of Irises.

Spirit Sight reveals the strength of the local Gauntlet, detects the presence and nature of the Resonance Condition and other sources of Essence, and highlights manifested spirits and related phenomena.

Time Sight reveals the split-second adjustments of time, allowing the player to know the Initiative ratings of all participants in

combat. When a character is about to act, even with a reflexive action, a mage watching with Time Sight is aware of it (if not what that action will be), and may preempt it if he is able. Time Sight also detects temporal warps, and the tell-tale signs that someone has come back into the past.

In addition to the above, any supernatural effect falling under the purview of the Arcanum that the mage can see is highlighted if she is using the correct Sight. Note that Peripheral Mage Sight

Theory, Practice, and Crossover

How Mage Sight interacts with the concealment powers that other supernatural beings use, and indeed, what information Mage Sight reveals about other supernatural beings, is a complex and potentially fraught topic. For example, Death Sight would, logically, detect vampires — they're undead. That just makes sense. But what about the strange and rare beings known as Prometheans? They aren't undead, after all, but they're made of dead flesh. Should Death Sight register them at all?

One Storyteller might argue that because a Promethean is, in fact, made of dead flesh, Death Sight should reveal that some component of its body is dead. Another might argue that Prometheans are alive and the mysterious Divine Fire that animates them has no Supernal resonance with Death — but they would be visible to Prime.

We're not prepared to publish a full breakdown of the different **Chronicles of Darkness** characters and how they appear to Mage Sight, for two reasons. First, it's simply impractical and we have better uses for the page count. But second and more importantly, the kind of interpretation that such a discussion would entail is a perfect Mystery for a cabal of mages. A Storyteller who says, "you can see with Spirit Sight that she is a werewolf," is making things a bit too easy on her players. "You can see with Spirit Sight that she appears to be composed as much of spirit as flesh — she isn't possessed, since the spirit isn't simply riding her. It looks more like her body — her whole Pattern — is in constant flux between ephemera and material." That's much more evocative, and allows the character (and the player) to make assumptions without providing certainty.

Likewise, this freedom of interpretation means that the same type of creature might look different to two different mages, using the same Arcanum, but filtered through their respective Paths (or Nimbus). Magic is as much a subjective experience as an objective one, and giving descriptions in visceral imagery contributes to the feel of the game much more than flat, out-of-character knowledge.

is triggered by all supernatural events regardless of Arcana, but unless the mage uses an applicable Active Sight she gains no information about the phenomenon — only that it must be related to an Arcanum she didn't use.

Active Mage Sight of any Arcanum also reveals *all* Awakened spells as they are being cast. The mage can see another will-worker's Nimbus flare as he forms the Imago and casts the spell (which, in turn, gives the observant mage a chance to use the Counterspell Attainment if she knows the Arcanum involved).

Concealment magic, of whatever type, can hide a target from Active Mage Sight, but only if the concealment would logically mask the target from the purview of the Arcanum in question. Even then, if the concealment power uses the same magical principles as the detecting Arcanum, the mage still has a chance to see through it. For example, a light-based invisibility spell would conceal a target from Mind Sight, but Life Sight could still detect the living being, with or without the assistance of photons. Likewise, some vampires employ a kind of mental "invisibility" that causes observers to ignore them. This power would conceal a target from Forces Sight (it isn't light-based) or Time Sight, but not Mind Sight (since both the concealment power and the Arcanum are working on the same principles).

System: Entering active Mage Sight is a reflexive action when only using Ruling Arcana, and an instant action otherwise. Leaving it is always reflexive. If the Storyteller determines that a mage's Active Mage Sight could logically pierce a concealment effect, use a Clash of Wills (see p. 117), pitting the observing mage's Gnosis + Arcanum against the defender's dice pool for the concealment power. While a character is using Active Mage Sight, she suffers a -2 modifier to all rolls unrelated to using or perceiving magic. In addition, Mage Sight is draining. A mage can maintain Active Mage Sight for a number of minutes equal to her Gnosis. After that, she must spend a Willpower point to keep it active for the remainder of the scene.

Focused Mage Sight

Focused Mage Sight allows a mage to scrutinize a subject through the lens of the chosen Arcana. Unlike Peripheral or Active Mage Sight, Focused Mage Sight requires that the mage put all her attention on one target — a person, object, or location (roughly the size of a small room). Instead of seeing the subject in the context of the Supernal, she sees the Supernal as filtered through the subject. Magic pours through the subject, shaped by its Fallen-World constraints and correspondences; and by examining that interaction, the mage can learn much about it. Using this principle, a mage can release Mana into the world and watch the patterns it forms, gleaning additional information from them.

Focused Mage Sight has its dangers, however. Looking so deeply into the Supernal isn't a passive, casual observation. The mage is undertaking the magical equivalent of a thorough, persistent, and even invasive investigation, pouring magical energy into the area, and anything with the ability to sense magic (including other mages in the area) can notice this. Otherworldly beings

might observe her inquiry, and some of them would prefer to remain unseen.

A mage must be using Active Mage Sight already to Focus. Focused Mage Sight has two stages: Scrutiny and Revelation. Both pit the perceptive power of the mage against the complexity of the Mystery she is trying to illuminate. This is represented in game terms by a trait called *Opacity* — simply put, an abstract measure of how deep a mage must delve in order to fully understand a Mystery. A mage can attempt *Revelation* at any time. Revelation is the magical equivalent of a glance, a summary, a quick-read through, or a taste test. On its own, it can be useful, even illuminating, but it does not grant the mage depth of knowledge. For that, she needs *Scrutiny*, the in-depth, time-consuming, and sometimes dangerous practice of magically studying a target.

Revelation and Scrutiny are two different actions. They can be attempted in either order; a mage can Reveal a Mystery before Scrutinizing it to gain a baseline understanding, or Scrutinize the Mystery before Revealing it to reduce its Opacity. What a mage *cannot* do, however, is Reveal a Mystery twice without Scrutinizing it. Once a mage has Revealed a Mystery, she has learned all she can without using Scrutiny.

Revelation

Revelation is an instant action. It can be undertaken when a mage first encounters a Mystery, revealing only the surface information (see p. 94), and also when a mage has unraveled some or all of the Mystery's Opacity.

Dice Pool: Gnosis + Arcanum - Opacity

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The player overloads her own perceptions and the subject of her study with Mana, akin to spilling a bottle of ink on a page she was deciphering. No Scrutiny or Revelation of that subject is possible — by *any* mage — for the next 24 hours. The Prime spell "Cleanse Pattern" can dissolve the Mana before then, allowing further Scrutiny.

Failure: The mage is unable to Reveal anything about the subject. She can still attempt to Scrutinize it, however.

Success: The mage discovers the surface information (p. 94) of the Mystery.

Exceptional Success: The mage discovers the surface information of the Mystery and can either lower the Mystery's Opacity rating by 1, or, at the Storyteller's discretion, uncover one piece of deep information.

Scrutiny

The player spends a point of Willpower to activate Scrutiny. While Scrutinizing, the penalty for rolls unrelated to magic increases to -3. The influx of information she receives renders her unable to interact with the Fallen World in any meaningful way. If the mage employs Scrutiny on a subject protected by some kind of magical concealment, the Storyteller should use the same metric as Active Mage Sight for determining whether a Clash of Will is appropriate. If a Clash of Wills

is appropriate, the mage's player receives the rote quality on the roll.

Scrutiny of a subject allows a mage to determine its Mysteries. The number and nature of Mysteries in a subject is up to the Storyteller (see below).

Scrutiny is an extended action (see p. 214), but with a few variations. The time per roll is one turn, meaning that the player can't use an exceptional success to reduce the time per roll. Also, the player doesn't have a target number of successes. Instead, every time she reaches a number of successes equal to the Mystery's Opacity, the Opacity rating falls by one. For instance, if a mage begins Scrutinizing a lingering spell with Opacity 4, after the player accumulates four successes, the Opacity rating drops to three. If the mage continues (and the player accumulates three more successes), the Opacity rating drops to two.

In addition, while most extended actions are limited by the number of dice in the player's unmodified dice pool, Scrutiny does not suffer this limitation. Maintaining Scrutiny does, however, become more dangerous to the mage. After a number of rolls for Scrutinizing a given Mystery equal to the mage's unmodified Gnosis + Arcanum, the character's own magic starts to leak into the Mystery. In game terms, every time the player fails a Scrutiny roll after reaching this limit, add half the mage's Gnosis (round up) to the Mystery's Opacity. Unfortunately, this doesn't apply only to the mage in question; anyone who attempts to Scrutinize this Mystery later has to separate out the clumsy mage's influence on it.

The player can spend Mana during Scrutiny, releasing it and watching the shapes it makes as it sublimates into Fallen reality to gain clues about the Mystery at hand. Each point of Mana spent adds one success to that turn's roll, but only if the roll succeeds. If the roll fails, the Mana spent that turn is lost. The mage cannot spend more Mana per turn than her Gnosis allows (p. 86).

Dice Pool: Gnosis + Arcanum

Action: Extended (each roll equals one turn, total number of successes varies)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The player accrues no successes, and adds two to the Mystery's Opacity. If the player has already made a number of rolls equal to the unmodified dice pool, a Supernal entity of the mage's Path takes note of the mage and may affect him with its powers as long as he maintains his Mage Sight.

Failure: The player accrues no successes, but can continue

Plot-Critical Information

Mage Sight is the primary means mages have to search for clues, and a **Mage** story may hinge on the results. If the information hidden (unless revealed through Mage Sight) is necessary for the plot of your story, refund all but one Mana spent on Scrutiny at the end of the scene.

to Scrutinize. If the player has already made a number of rolls equal to the unmodified dice pool, then a failed roll adds half the mage's Gnosis (round up) to the Mystery's Opacity.

Success: The player accrues successes, and can choose to spend Mana in order to add more, up to the normal per-turn limits of the character's Gnosis. If the player accumulates enough successes to lower the Mystery's Opacity, all successes are reset and the mage can continue (that is, it is not possible to lower a Mystery's Opacity by more than one level in a single turn).

If the mage chooses to break off the Scrutiny, she can reinstate it later, with the Opacity rating at whatever level it was when the mage broke off the attempt.

Exceptional Success: The player accrues successes and reveals mysteries as described above. In addition, since the exceptional success mechanics for normal extended actions (p. 214) do not apply, the player may choose one of the following options: She can apply all successes gained in this roll, even if doing so lowers the Opacity more than once; she can spend a point of Mana to blot out the Mysteries she is seeing so that other mages have a more difficult time scrutinizing them (add the character's Gnosis to the Mystery's Opacity); or she can spend a point of Mana to cover her tracks, obscuring any trace of her Nimbus from the area (anyone magically searching for her Scrutiny suffers a penalty equal to her Gnosis).

Permutations: Arcana

A mage can Scrutinize using multiple Arcana, as long as they are in her Active Sight, but doing so carries risks. Because she is putting her senses through multiple magic filters, she has a more difficult time sorting all of the sensory input. In game terms, for every Arcanum beyond the first that mage adds into Scrutiny, subtract one roll from the maximum number of rolls allowed before a failed roll affects the Opacity rating. The base number of rolls is (Gnosis + highest Arcanum used).

Building Mysteries

Any magical puzzle, any lingering spell, any otherworldly enigma is potentially a Mystery. The Storyteller decides on the particulars of the Mystery, which break down into three parts: Opacity, surface information, and deep information.

Opacity

Setting the Opacity rating for a given Mystery is in the Storyteller's hands. It isn't something that should have a hard-and-fast formula to it, because if the players figure out that having Opacity 4 *always* means a four-dot spell is in effect, it lessens the impact of solving the Mystery. With that said, here are some guidelines for the Storyteller:

- **The higher the Arcana, the higher the Opacity:** A decent rule of thumb is for Opacity to be rated equal to the highest Arcanum used in a spell, *as a base*. This means that a mage should be able to Scrutinize a one-dot spell in a single turn, but that's appropriate; such spells aren't terribly involved. That said...
- **Complexity increases Opacity:** A spell that involves five different Arcana all at one dot would certainly have a

higher Opacity than a single-Arcanum spell. Increase Opacity by one per extra Arcanum used.

- **Remember the Math:** An Opacity 4 Mystery doesn't take four successes to unravel. It takes 10 (four to drop it to Opacity 3, three more to drop it to Opacity 2, and so on). An Opacity 6 Mystery requires 21 successes to fully unravel. Think very carefully before assigning Opacity ratings higher than 5.
- **Mages can cloak their magic:** Hiding a Mystery from Scrutiny is part and parcel to the Awakened. They layer "decoy" spells on top of Mysteries, use Prime to send would-be Scrutinizers down false paths, and set traps for careless investigators. You can represent these things with high Opacity, and set the "truth" at the deeper levels of the Mystery.
- **Non-Supernal Phenomena Are More Opaque:** A mage can Scrutinize the site of a Wasteland created by a Promethean and learn a great deal, but the Opacity rating should be higher (roughly 1.5 times higher, as a suggestion) than a similar effect created by Awakened magic.
- Opacity is assigned for each character, and reduced separately by Scrutiny

Surface Information

Surface information is the basic, concrete truth of a Mystery. This information is available upon a successful Revelation, whether or not the mage has lowered the Mystery's Opacity rating with Scrutiny. In general, surface information should include the following:

- Whether the Mystery is the result of Awakened magic.
- If so, what Arcana were involved and the Signature Nimbus of the caster (unless it was cast using a Rote).
- Roughly how old the Mystery is (hours, days, months, years, centuries).
- Optionally, what Practice created the Mystery (if a non-Supernal Mystery, then what Practice the Mystery most closely resembles).

Deep Information

Deep information is the truth of a Mystery, the intent, the Supernal resonance. This information only presents itself if the mage unravels the Mystery's Opacity and then succeeds in a Revelation. The Storyteller can arrange deep information in a number of ways, depending on the Mystery in question and the needs of the story.

One possibility is for all of the deep information to be available only after all of the Opacity is stripped away. This means that the character cannot learn anything other than surface information without reducing Opacity to 0, at which point the truth becomes clear. This is appropriate for low-Opacity Mysteries that do not have

much in the way of deep information (lingering spells that the caster made no effort to hide) or, conversely, Mysteries that require full context and understanding to truly process. This method requires that the mage perform a successful Revelation after undoing the Mystery's Opacity in order to gain the deep information.

Another method is to parcel out information each time the mage lowers the Mystery's Opacity. This means that even if the mage doesn't have the time or ability to fully understand a Mystery, she can learn something about it, perhaps enough to move the story forward and give her a new avenue of approach. With this method, the mage gains information as Scrutiny progresses, without having to perform a Revelation.

A third method combines the previous two, granting minimal information as the mage unravels Opacity, but still requiring a Revelation for the remainder of the deep information when the Scrutiny is complete.

In any case, the Storyteller controls how to parcel out deep information for Mysteries, and is under no restriction to be consistent. Mysteries do not follow patterns or rubrics; they are, by definition, unique and enigmatic. The Storyteller should make the decision for how to parcel out information for a given Mystery when she designs it, if for no other reason than to make her life easier when the characters actually come in contact with it.

Deep Information may include the following;

- If Awakened magic cast using a Rote, or the effects of an Attainment, the Signature Nimbus of the mage involved.
- For Awakened spells, the spell factors involved (including the remaining duration), whether the spell caused a Paradox (and if so whether that Paradox was released or contained), and whether the spell has been relinquished.
- Identification of a phenomenon as being linked to one the mage has Scrutinized before.
- If not Awakened magic, the power level of the creator relative to the mage's Gnosis (if applicable).
- Whether the Mystery is related to the Supernal Realms or Abyss.
- How the Arcanum used relates to the Mystery – for example, using Death Sight to scrutinize a vampire's ghoul will reveal Deep Information relating to the undead blood in the subject's system, and any powers the ghoul has gained from it. Using Fate Sight to assess a changeling's powers will reveal that they are formed by mystical bargains.

Summoning Supernal Entities

Mages aren't limited to seeing into the Supernal World; they can call forth Supernal entities into Fallen reality. Doing so is time-consuming, difficult, and potentially dangerous, risking Paradox as the mage reaches across the Abyss to call the subject. The act carries rewards, however: A Supernal being can answer almost any magical question or riddle within its purview. Such

beings sometimes carry Artifacts from their home Realms. Some magical acts, too, are beyond the powers of the Awakened — but the denizens of the Supernal can accomplish feats of magic unfettered by the rules of the Fallen World.

Supernal entities fall into one of two categories, depending on whether a Gross or Subtle Arcanum is used to summon them. Beings summoned with Gross magic are called *manifest* beings, while those summoned with Subtle magic are *recondite* beings. In general, manifest beings are more forthright, obvious, and even animalistic, while recondite beings are clever, manipulative, and subtle.

In order to summon a Supernal being, a mage prepares a summoning circle within a ritual space. The best possible place to summon a Supernal being is in a Demesne oriented to the proper Supernal Realm (see p. 243 for more on Demesnes), or a Supernal Verge (p. 243). Even in such a place, the mage runs the risk of Abyssal intrusion the instant she begins the process of summoning. Careful mages shield their ritual spaces against such intrusion, but this adds time and effort to the process.

In order to summon a Supernal entity, the summoner must be of the Path corresponding to the type of entity desired and use one of her two Path Ruling Arcana, which she must have at least three dots in. A Supernal entity is always based around two Arcana, from which it may cast spells of up to its Rank; if the mage has another Arcanum at three or more dots, she may spend a point of Mana to specify that she wishes to summon an entity with that Arcanum as its second. If she does not specify, the second Arcanum of the entity is decided by the Storyteller.

Systems: Summoning a Supernal entity is an extended action, and is subject to the same rules as other such actions (see p. 214).

Dice Pool: Gnosis + Arcanum

Action: Extended (see below for required successes; each roll is one hour)

Cost: 1 Mana, 2 if specifying a second Arcanum

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The summoning fails, and the ritual space is flooded with the energies of the Abyss. The mage and any other mages within 50 feet immediately suffer aggravated damage equal to the summoning mage's Gnosis, and the Abyssal taint lasts for a number of days equal to the summoner's Gnosis. Abyssal entities may form in the area at any time while the taint persists, so the summoner is advised to watch it carefully. Some few failed summonings even develop into full Abyssal Irises and Verges, if one of the dread Annunaki probes the weak spot from the other side.

Failure: The player accrues no successes toward the summoning, and can either break off the attempt or gain a Condition and continue.

Success: The player accrues successes toward the total. If the player reaches the necessary number of successes, the Supernal being appears. What happens next depends on the being in question; see the individual Arcanum notes below for more information. The being can only remain in the Fallen World for a matter of hours.

The Summoning

The mage needs a base of 10 successes to bring the entity through into the Fallen World. The number of successes required to summon a Supernal being is calculated as follows:

- Add five successes per Rank of the entity past 1. Mages may only summon up to Rank 5 beings.
- Add one success to extend the duration for which the being can remain in the Fallen World without suffering damage. Each success adds 30 minutes. If the mage allocates no successes to this duration, the being begins taking damage immediately.
- Protect the area from Abyssal intrusion. Every success thus allocated allows the player to make one additional roll without the Storyteller checking for the Abyss corrupting the process.
- Add one success per Sleeper present. Sleeper witnesses suffer breaking points and Quiescence as per p. 298.
- Add one success per mage of a different Path present.
- Add one success if the summoning is taking place in a Demesne oriented to a Realm *other* than the one in question.
- Add one success if the mage has caused a Paradox (even if he contained it) within the last week.
- Subtract three successes if the summoning is taking place in a Demesne oriented to the Realm in question.
- Subtract successes if the character incorporates items and conditions into the summoning that correspond to the Realm in question. Use the descriptions of the Paths in Chapter One for guidance, but the character must still weave these correspondences into the ritual gracefully enough to ease the summoning. The Storyteller can either adjudicate the number of successes shaved off the total based on the player's descriptions of his character's actions, or the player can roll Intelligence + Occult. Every *two* successes on this roll removes *one* success from the target number of the summoning spell.

Abyssal Intrusion

Supernal summoning reaches across the Abyss into the Supernal Realms, and the Abyss takes note. Once the summoning has begun, the mage must take care not to attract Abyssal attention; but if the summoning goes on too long, such attention is all but inevitable. The player can make a number of rolls equal to the character's Resolve + Composure + any successes allocated to avoid Abyssal intrusion. After that point, the Storyteller rolls the character's unmodified Gnosis for every roll that the character makes. If the Storyteller accrues a number of successes equal to the mage's Gnosis + the primary Arcanum in the summoning, the Abyss breaks into the Fallen World, and the creature that arrives is not a Supernal being but an Abyssal one. The Storyteller should by no means reveal how many successes he accrues on the intrusion rolls.



Lifespan

When a Supernal denizen arrives in the Fallen World, it enjoys the protection of the summoning circle for a brief period of time (how long depends on the mage; see above). After this period is over, the denizen suffers one point of Corpus damage for each hour that it stays in the circle. If it leaves the circle, it suffers this damage every half-hour. If it comes into contact with Sleepers, it suffers this damage every 15 minutes. Finally, if a mage causes a Paradox within 50 feet of the being, even if she contains it, the being suffers one point of resistant (p. 223) Lethal damage for every success on the Paradox roll. Every time the being suffers damage, the Storyteller rolls the entity's Power, Finesse, and Resistance. For every roll that fails, the relevant trait falls by one point.

Once the being runs out of Corpus, it vanishes. The denizens can sense when their time is running out, and usually attempt to get back into the summoning circle, so that they can go directly home. If, however, the creature “dies” outside of the summoning circle, or is killed by a deliberate magical attack, it cannot use the path laid down by the mage to reach its home again. Instead, it vanishes into the Abyss. This is obvious to anyone watching — black tendrils may extend from the walls and rip it to shreds, or an Abyssal being might manifest to collect it. In any event, directly contributing to the death of a Supernal entity in this way is an Act of Hubris for Falling Wisdom.

The Trial

All Supernal beings have a test, a condition, or an action that they demand of mages who summon them. This action is in some ways similar to a spirit's ban; if the mage doesn't take the appropriate action, the Supernal entity *cannot* help. In some cases, it might even attack. Powerful Supernal beings tend to have complex and esoteric Trials, while weaker beings might simply demand that the mage be honest and respectful (or, conversely, command that he forcefully to show his dominion over magic).

Researching Supernal beings usually reveals information about the Trials in an indirect way. For instance, a mage researching the denizens of the Primal Wild might learn that they respect summoners who will do what it takes to survive. Whether the mage can extrapolate from that when he summons an Atavism is another matter, but the Storyteller should allow players to roll Intelligence + Occult to gain hints about what a given denizen might expect.

Death

The recondite Shades of Stygia are called *Specters*. Mages call them up for advice on matters of mortality (or, conversely, immortality), loss, grief, the wisdom of the dead, lost civilizations, and the Underworld. They often resemble beings tradi-

tionally associated with death – spectral, robed figures, black dogs, crows, maggots, or obviously dead people. Sometimes they take the form of deities of death (Hades, Baron Samedi, Mrtyu-Mara, etc.).

Fate

The recondite Fae of Arcadia are called *Moirae*. These beings manifest in a myriad of different ways – human beings, balls of energy, or simply a palpable sense of *potential* with no visual component at all. Mages call *Moirae* up to ask about their own destinies, to make deals to change their fortunes, or to try to cheat fate. *Moirae* very often turn the tables on such hubris, however.

Forces

The manifest Angels are called *Seraphim*. Many resemble their splendid and terrifying namesakes, complete with shining swords and magnificent wings. Others appear as pillars of fire, roiling pools of water, cascades of light, or other elemental phenomena. Mages call them up for assistance with matters of elemental magic, advice on making war, or questions of virtue and morality.

Life

The manifest Beasts of the Primal Wild are called *Atavisms*. These monsters are always primal, brutal, and operating according to animal instinct. They can provide mages with material components for spells and magical items that can't be found anywhere on Earth, as well as advice or information about animals and plants that haven't existed in the Fallen World for millions of years (or ever). They can also provide knowledge and inspiration for ways to use the Life Arcanum to change shape, techniques that the mage never would have considered on her own.

Matter

The manifest Shades of Stygia are *Apeirons*, drawing the name from the theoretical substance from which all matter is derived. These beings sometimes take human form, generally that of a craftsman, alchemist, or scientist. Just as often, they appear as something in between states of matter – ice melting to liquid, a luminous cloud of gas, or a humanoid figure made of quicksilver. Mages consult them about magical materials and how best to work them, the secrets of alchemy, and where to find lost Artifacts.

Mind

The recondite Demons of Pandemonium are called *Wraiths*. These creatures are terrifying and dangerous – they take the form of an image plucked from the mage's mind, commonly one that elicits trauma or fear. *Wraiths* aren't necessarily malicious, but they do insist on making their Trials as exacting on the mage's psyche as possible. Mages call them up for purposes of self-discovery, often to remember details about their lives that they can't access any other way. The mage might also summon a *Wraith* to learn some secret of the Astral Realms.

Prime

The recondite Angels of the Aether are called *Cherubim*. These beings understand the raw power and potential of magic better than any other Supernal entities, and understand nuance better than their Seraphim cousins. They appear in a variety of forms, but they usually glow with Mana and often have multiple eyes. Some of them appear in animal forms like their Biblical namesakes. Mages summon *Cherubim* for advice on crafting Grimoires, Imbued Items, Demesnes, and other magical workings, as well as how to counter or alter longstanding spells.

Space

The manifest Demons of Pandemonium are called *Imps*. *Imps* are terrifying – the principle of Space made flesh, filtered through the horror and adversity of the Abode of Demons. Some appear to be immense monsters, while others skitter out of sight as soon as they are summoned. *Imps* possess unparalleled knowledge of scrying and magical sympathy, and can often advise a mage on where to look for appropriate sympathetic Yantras. Sometimes an *Imp* will simply open a magical portal for a mage and send her to the person she wishes to find, but usually the *Imp* makes the mage do her own dirty work.

Spirit

The recondite Beasts of the Primal Wild are the *Totems*. They resemble spirits in most ways – they take the forms of animals and other natural phenomena. But unlike spirits from the Shadow, they have autonomy and choice. A spirit cannot be other than what it is, and that makes it predictable. A Totem is a Supernal being, not a spirit, and that means it cannot be taken for granted. Totems can advise mages on matters of spirits, including bans, banes, appropriate offerings, and how best to avoid offending the denizens of the Shadow.

Time

The manifest Fae of Arcadia are called *Anachronisms*, so named because they are, by their very nature, unstuck from time. *Anachronisms* appear in a number of forms relating to the passage of time; they might appear to be young, old, or speeding through the life cycle over and over again. Some appear in forms related to timekeeping and chronology – clocks, calendars, and so forth. Mages call up *Anachronisms* for questions about the past, the future, and how to correct one and change the other. *Anachronisms* have knowledge and control of the timestream that no mage can hope to equal, but they are loathe to allow mages to affect the past (which has terrible consequences) or the future (which is in flux) too greatly.

Matters of the Soul

The Awakened know what countless Sleeper religions have debated for millennia; the human soul exists, and with magic it can be removed, restored, measured, and *destroyed*.

A person's soul is not her mind, spirit, or the source of her morality. The role it plays in her psychological makeup is more

The Origin of Souls

Souls bear one last Mystery even to the Awakened; mages can destroy and manipulate souls with the Arcana, but no mage has ever successfully created one. In theory, it would require the Making Practice with all five subtle Arcana. Fifth-degree masters are vanishingly rare anyway, and all such luminaries to attempt soul creation have failed. Many mages believe that souls originate in the Supernal, and earthly magic can't replicate the process.

akin to the supports in a building's construction. Remove it, and the victim's sense of self begins to collapse until she eventually reaches a state of shuffling near-catatonia.

Souls are insubstantial constructs, wholly invisible except to Death Sight when properly integrated into a person, and visible as vague humanoid auras in the Mage Sight of the five subtle Arcana when removed from a host. They are clearest when viewed under magic that reveals subjects in Twilight resonating with Death (such as the Death 2 Attainment), but are not made of ephemera, so remain insubstantial to ephemeral beings unless they have Numina or Influences allowing them to manipulate souls. All Supernal beings may spend one Mana to physically interact with unattached souls. Mages must use spells to manipulate them.

The origin and destination of souls remains a Mystery even to the Awakened – they appear at birth and vanish completely at the moment of death.

Souls, however, have *value*, and a number of uses;

- Destroying a soul is a universally-applicable sacrament Yantra for a Death, Fate, Mind, Prime, or Spirit spell.
- Mages may study the marks left on the souls of mages by their Legacies, to determine membership in Legacies they have seen the Patterns of before, or to copy in an attempt to join those Legacies themselves.
- Even when integrated into a host, the Death 1 spell "Soul Marks" allows mages to determine a wealth of information about the inner wellbeing of a person from their soul.
- Many Left-Handed Legacies denounced as "Reapers" by the Orders consume or manipulate souls to fuel strange powers.

If a character loses her soul through magic or the powers of terrible entities, she immediately suffers the Soulless Condition, representing a drive to affirm her identity through increasingly desperate acts. Once she has reached Wisdom or Integrity 1, she gains the Enervated Condition as her attempts to reassure herself fail and her Gnosis and Willpower decays. Once her permanent Willpower is reduced to 0, she gains the Thrall Condition. Unless she gets her soul back somehow, she will live the rest of her life in a miserable, barely conscious half-state, unable to care for herself or muster any defense.

While soulless, all spells cast by a mage risk Paradox, adding one Paradox die and the rote quality to the Paradox roll. Soulless mages cannot attempt to contain Paradoxes, or enter the Astral Realms. Once mages reach the Thrall Condition, they may no longer cast spells.

If a character suffering from soul loss regains a soul (usually, but not necessarily, her own), the Conditions brought on by the soul's absence rapidly reverse themselves. She immediately sheds the Soulless, Enervated, and Thrall Conditions. If she'd dropped to Willpower 0 she immediately gains Willpower 1. Willpower comes back first – every time she regains a point of Willpower through rest or fulfilling her Virtue, her permanent Willpower increases by one until it returns to the rating she had before losing her soul. Lost Gnosis returns to mages at a rate of one dot per scene if the new soul came from a mage, or per chapter if it came from a Sleeper. Legacy Attainments return once Gnosis is sufficient to meet their prerequisites.

Once Willpower has returned to normal, one Integrity or Wisdom dot lost to the Soulless Condition returns every time she regains Willpower through rest. Conditions caused by the breaking points or Acts of Hubris directly resulting from soullessness are removed when the dot they are associated with returns.

Soul Stones

A mage can place a small portion of her Awakened soul within an object, called a soul stone. These objects represent their owner's Gnosis, and have several purposes;

- Soul stones may be used to create Demesnes, as described below.
- Soul stones proxy for their creators for purposes of sympathy, having Connected sympathetic ties to their creators and *vice versa* (p. 173).
- When used by another mage as a tool Yantra, soul stones offer a +2 die bonus, or +3 if the creator's Gnosis is higher than the user's. The stone's form must still be useable for the spell.
- When used by its creator as a tool Yantra, a soul stone also counts as a Dedicated tool.
- The creator's peripheral Mage Sight alerts him to magic cast around, at, or using his soul stone.
- Mages may study the creator's soul stone to determine or learn his Legacy.
- The Orders (even the Seers) have a simple method for resolving conflicts when one mage has possession of another's soul stone against his will. The stone must be returned after the creator performs three services for the holder.

Soul stones are simple to make. The mage handles an object of up to Size 2 and imprints her Signature Nimbus onto it (p. 89); then the player spends a Willpower dot, and the object

becomes a soul stone. Creating a soul stone, however, reduces a mage's potential Gnosis by one dot. So, if a mage has three soul stones, her Gnosis may not rise above seven dots, ever. The effects of making a soul stone don't wear off unless the object is destroyed, in which case the creator is immediately aware of the change and the lost potential Gnosis is restored.

Creating a soul stone is an Act of Hubris against Enlightened and Understanding Wisdom.

Creating Demesnes

A mage can create a Demesne using one or more soul stones. The mage doesn't have to use her own soul stone. Rules and full descriptions for Demesnes can be found on p. 243.

System: A Demesne is built on the foundation of one or more soul stones. The size of a Demesne is determined by the number of soul stones involved in its creation (or in other words, by the number of mages who contribute to its creation). Each mage who contributes a soul stone increases its size, as follows:

# of Soul Stones	Area
1	A small apartment or underground chamber; 1-2 rooms
2	A large apartment or small family home; 3-4 rooms
3	A warehouse, church or large home; 5-8 rooms or large enclosure
4	An abandoned mansion or network of subway tunnels; equivalent of 9-15 rooms or chambers
5	A sprawling estate or vast network of tunnels; countless rooms or chambers

No more than five stones can be combined for a single Demesne, although two separate Demesnes can be placed next to one another to extend a magical area.

Once soul stones are gathered together, they must be enchanted to create a Demesne. All soul stones involved must be kept within the Demesne's premises. They can be kept together or scattered throughout. If a soul stone is destroyed, the Demesne's area drops by one rank. The soul stone's creator can create a new one to replace the lost one (using the same procedure he used to create the first), restoring the lost area without the need to use the Attainment. If he is unwilling or unable, another mage can provide a soul stone, but the Demesne must be entirely removed then reenchanted.

Dice Pool: Gnosis + Arcanum

Action: Extended (successes required = 3 for each soul stone used, one hour per roll)

Cost: 1 Mana per soul stone used

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt fails, and every soul stone involved shatters, the soul shards rejoining with their respective mages. Each of these mages suffers one point of aggravated damage.

Failure: The player accrues no successes. The mage can either quit the attempt, or take a Condition to continue.

Success: The player accrues successes toward the total. If she reaches the target number of successes, she creates the Demesne.

Exceptional Success: The player accrues successes, and can pick one of the effects for exceptional successes in extended actions listed on p. 214.

Merits

Mage characters can take the following Merits. Unless otherwise noted, all these Merits have an additional prerequisite of "Awakened." However, at Storyteller discretion, other characters may take these. For example, in your chronicle, you may decide that the Sanctum Merit should be available to Sleepwalkers affiliated with the cabal.

Sanctity of Merits

Merits reflect aspects of your character but are an out-of-game resource. For example, your character may have friends, but you can choose to spend Experiences or Merit dots to purchase the Allies Merit. This gives those friends a direct effect in the game. If something happens to a character's friends, specifically supporting cast not represented by Merit dots, the story goes on and nothing happens in terms of game mechanics. If something happens to Allies, however, those points are not lost. The Allies dots disappear but you receive Experiences equal to the dots lost. This is called the **Sanctity of Merits** rule.

If your character loses a Merit, you may repurchase it in the next chapter of your chronicle. You can't just say, "All right, my Allies died. I'm buying new Allies to call." You'd have to wait until the next chapter. Alternatively, you can spend those Experiences on other traits that are relevant to the situation. Maybe losing those Allies inspired a few trips to the firing range to let off steam, so you spend those points on a dot of Firearms.

Adamant Hand (●●)

Prerequisite: Adamantine Arrow Status ●, (Athletics, Brawl, or Weaponry ●●, Special)

Effect: Your character has studied extensively in the Adamantine Arrow martial arts. This allows her to use combat techniques as Yantras for instant spells. When taking this Merit, choose Athletics, Weaponry, or Brawl, which your character must have three or more dots in. This Merit allows use of that Skill in combat as a reflexive Order tool Yantra, adding dice to a spell cast on subsequent turns, or to a spell cast reflexively in the same turn as the combat action. You may purchase this Merit multiple times to reflect the other styles.

Artifact (●●●+ Special)

Effect: Your character possesses an Artifact, an item from the Supernal World which is both a physical symbol of magic and a unique item independently empowered to create sorcerous effects. These items possess their own Mana stores, and have their own effective Gnosis and Arcana with which to generate effects. They can cast these effects when harnessed by an Awakened

owner who has researched (or divined through Prime) the manner in which the item works. In general, this takes successes on an extended research action equal to twice the Artifact's Merit dots.

To calculate the cost of an Artifact, look to its single greatest effect, and map it to a spell effect. The base cost is equal to the highest Arcanum used, or three, whichever is higher. Each additional effect adds to the cost, but only half the highest Arcanum used (rounded up). Including a Utility Attainment in a spell effect (for example, an Artifact that can cast at Sympathetic Range) increases the cost by one dot for each Attainment included. The Merit is not limited to five dots.

The item can store Mana equal to twice the dot rating. The item's effective Gnosis is equal to half the dot rating, rounded up. An owner can access and refill the item's Mana as if it were her own, or can use it to fuel the Artifact's abilities. The Artifact can also use its Mana as part of its own activation. The Artifact has effective Arcana equal to the highest Arcanum used in its various effects. Artifacts cannot Reach beyond the "free" Reach for their Arcana ratings on their own. If an Artifact risks Paradox, the user can spend Mana to mitigate Paradox (in any combination of her own or the Artifact's Mana pool, up to her Gnosis-derived limits) and may choose to contain the Paradox herself. Otherwise, the Artifact automatically releases it.

Every Artifact will use its effects under different circumstances, determined when you create the Artifact. For example, an Artifact might cast its effect the moment it is first seen by human eyes, or whenever it's dropped on the ground.

If an owner accesses the Artifact's effects, she may use her own Gnosis and Arcana, the Artifact's, or any combination thereof. Every Artifact is also a Path tool Yantra worth +1 dice for mages of the Path of the Artifacts' highest Arcanum.

Astral Adept (●●●)

Prerequisites: Awakened or Sleepwalker

Effect: Your character is deeply in tune with her own soul, and may enter the Astral Realms without a place of power. In addition to the access methods listed on p. 249, your character may perform a ceremony to attune herself to the astral, then spend a Willpower point to allow her to meditate into the realms. Decide what form your ceremony takes when buying this Merit; many mages use a Legacy Oblation, while Sleepwalkers might require special drugs, exercises, or chants.

Between the Ticks (●●)

Prerequisites: Wits ●●, Time ●

Effect: Your character has perceived the depths of Time, and thus can act with the utmost precision, performing an action perfectly for ideal timing, or ideal efficiency. With this Merit, once per scene you can subtract -1 from your character's Initiative for the turn to add a die to her action for the turn, or subtract a die from her action to add +1 to her Initiative.

Cabal Theme (●)

Prerequisites: In a Cabal, all members must have this Merit

Effect: Your character is part of a deeply themed cabal. All members of the cabal are counted as having one dot higher in the Shadow Name Merit for purposes of persona Yantras, even if they do not possess the Merit at all, or if it would take Shadow Name above three dots.

Consilium/Order Status (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: This Merit grants all the advantages of the Status Merit (see p. 107), except it applies to the city's Consilium or your character's local Order Caucus. This affords certain protections and advantages under the Lex Magica.

Your character's position affords her certain access to her Caucus or Consilium's stores. She can access Artifacts, Imbued Items, mentors, libraries, Grimoires, and other magical resources. The Storyteller should assign an Availability rating to the item your character seeks, related to the power level or regular Merit rating. Consider your character's Status dots as Resources for the purpose of procuring these magical resources (see *Acquiring Services*, p. 228). Availability ratings assume the service or Merit will be assigned on a temporary basis (for a single story); add ●● for permanent requisitions. The group assumes she'll return it when done with it, or make amends if it's destroyed or lost. Merits suitable for requisition include Alternate Identity, Retainer, Imbued Item, Artifact, Grimoire, Mentor, Hallow, Sanctum, Library, Advanced Library, Safe Place, Familiar, and Resources, all with Availability equal to their dot rating. The Storyteller decides if your character's group has access to a particular magical resource; rank doesn't summon magical storehouses into being.

Order Status unlocks certain Merits and advantages unique to that group. As well, certain spells are taught to Order members; learning them outside the Order can be difficult at best, dangerous at worst. Usually, Order Status comes with a position of responsibility. This varies from city to city by Order.

Finally, Seers of the Throne Status adds to the character's Resources for acquiring mundane items and services.

Sleepwalkers may only buy the first dot of a single version of this Merit. A character may normally have Status in a single Order. If a character works closely with a second Order, however, she may buy the first dot of their Status but no more, and may not use them for requisitions.

The Orders are both global organizations and locally compartmentalized. If a character uses Order Status in a Caucus other than her home one, reduce her effective rating in this Merit by -1 if the Caucus is a member of the same Consilium or Assembly, -2 if it is a member of the same Convocation, and -3 if it is unrelated.

Destiny (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character's thread stands out in the skein of Fate. Like the hero of an epic she is destined for great triumphs, but she also has a Doom that hangs over her head and threatens to turn her tale into a tragedy.

Each chapter, you have a pool of Destiny equal to your dots in this Merit. Each time you use a point of Destiny you may either gain the rote quality on a single mundane roll chosen before you roll the dice or reroll a single mundane action after you see the result of the roll (although you must take the second

result). You may spend a point of Willpower when invoking your Destiny to affect a spellcasting roll.

Drawback: Your character has a Doom. This is the means by which destiny brings her life as she knows it to a tragic end—such as addicted, betrayed, crippled, devoured, enslaved, imprisoned, maddened, murdered, ostracized, possessed, ruined, or turned. This either kills her, or leaves her alive and suffering. Whenever you spend Willpower to avoid the Doom, you add two dice instead of three (or +1 to a static value). However, whenever you spend Willpower on an action that will further the Doom but the roll fails, you immediately regain the spent Willpower. The Storyteller is the arbiter of which actions delay or hasten your character's Doom.

Dream (● to ●●●●●)

Prerequisites: Composure ●●●, Wits ●●●

Effect: Once per chapter, your character can dig within her dreams for prophetic answers to primordial truths. She may enter her own dreams without a meditation roll when she sleeps, and if she has a basic understanding of something she wishes to divine from her dreams, you may use this Merit. Your character must sleep or meditate for at least four hours. Then, ask the Storyteller a yes or no question about the topic at hand. He must answer accurately, but can use “maybe” if the answer is truly neither yes nor no. Depending on the answer, you may ask additional questions, until you have asked questions equal to your Dream Merit dots.

Eggregore (● to ●●●●●)

Prerequisites: Mysterium Status ●

Effect: This Merit reflects a deeper inclusion into Mysterium secrets than the Mysterium Status Merit normally grants. Mystery Initiation opens the doors to the communal experience of living magic the Mysterium calls the *eggregore*. Access to the *eggregore* opens certain techniques for use within Mysterium rituals.

Each level of this Merit allows an additional ability.

Mysteriorum Arche (●): In a teamwork spellcasting roll (see p. 119) in which the character is participating, she does not suffer the -3 penalty to contribute without the necessary Arcanum rating, and adds an automatic success if a full participant. All members of the ritual team must possess this Merit.

Mysteriorum Anima (●●): At this level, your character's full Mysterium Status applies to *all* Mysterium Caucuses, not just her local one.

Mysteriorum Barathrum (●●●): Your character is initiated sufficiently as to be part of the knowledge base. She does not require physical access to any Library held by her cabal or Mysterium Caucus, and once per chapter may gain the Informed Condition regarding the local Mysterium's membership, specialties, Merits, Obsessions, and Arcana.

Mysteriorum Calamitas (●●●●): Your character has been granted secrets of techniques which decouple physical objects from magic. The first magical tool your character uses in a spell counts as a Dedicated Magical Tool.

Mysteriorum Focus (●●●●●): Your character connects with the Order's fundamental ethos, on a level beyond most any other

members. When she's in an Order Sanctum, she's considered to have a Medium sympathetic connection to all members of the Order.

Enhanced Item (● to Special)

Effect: Your character owns an item enhanced by indefinite Duration spells, which permanently modify the item's properties.

Each dot purchased reflects one dot worth of spells the item contains. This Merit is not limited to the normal five dots. However, any purchased dots beyond the fifth count as a half-dot of spells. So, an Enhanced Item with nine dots actually contains up to seven dots' worth of spells. If a spell uses multiple Arcana, use the highest to determine the cost for this Merit.

Additionally, dots can be spent to directly enhance the item. A dot can provide +1 to the item's bonus as a tool, a point of Structure, or a point of Durability.

This Merit can be combined with the Imbued Item Merit, but it cannot be combined with the Artifact Merit.

Familiar (●● or ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character has been bonded to a Familiar, an ephemeral entity (a ghost, spirit, or Goetia) that has agreed to partner her in exchange for safety from bleeding Essence. Design your familiar with the rules for ephemeral entities in Chapter Six; it may be wholly in Twilight or Fettered to an item or animal. Two dots in this Merit indicate a Rank 1 entity. Four dots indicate a Rank 2 entity.

Fast Spells (●●)

Prerequisites: Firearms ●●, Time ●

Effect: Your character's Aimed spells streak out with the speed of bullets. Subjects may not apply their Defense against your Aimed Spell rolls unless they use a Supernatural power that allows them to use Defense against firearms.

Grimoire (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character has discovered a Grimoire. If she is capable of casting the spells described, she may use the Grimoire to learn those rites with Experiences, or cast following the Grimoire's instructions to gain the rote quality (see p. 214).

Each dot in this Merit allows for the Grimoire to contain two rites of any Arcanum rating.

Hallow (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character has secured a Hallow, a nexus of magical energies that seeps Mana into the world. A Hallow produces one Mana per dot in the Merit per day. When choosing this Merit, determine how the Hallow leaks Mana into the world. Mana that is not harvested congeals quickly into tass. Left to its devices, the Hallow can store three times its dot rating in tass before it becomes “dormant” and stops producing Mana until all of the tass is harvested. As with Sanctum and Safe Place, a Hallow can be shared between a cabal.

High Speech (●)

Effect: The character can use High Speech as a Yantra in spellcasting (see p. 120).

Imbued Item (● to Special)

Effect: An Imbued Item is an item storing a spell that does not have an indefinite duration, and Mana with which to cast that spell. When creating an Imbued Item for your game, choose a spell. The item contains that spell, and a user (even a Sleeper) may trigger the spell if she knows the method of triggering. The method is usually a simple word or gesture, but the creator can make it as complex as he wishes. The spell always requires at least one point of Mana; if the spell would require Mana, use that amount. If it would normally not require Mana, it requires one point. When a user triggers the spell, the player rolls to cast it with a dice pool of the spell's Arcanum rating plus the user's Gnosis (if Awakened).

Each dot purchased reflects one dot worth of the spell the item contains. If a spell uses multiple Arcana, use the highest to determine the cost for this Merit. Including a Utility Attainment in a spell effect (for example, an Imbued Item that can cast at Sympathetic Range) increases the cost by one dot for each Attainment included. Only Attainments that affect the imbued spell can be imbued.

By default, an Imbued Item has a single point of Mana. Points in this Merit (in excess of those required by the imbued spell) purchase a "battery" of two additional Mana each. This Mana can only be used to cast the spell within the item. Recharging the Mana reserves requires Mana and one hour per point. While an Imbued Item may only possess one triggered spell, the Merit is not limited to the normal five dots, because of this battery effect.

Imbued Items can be used to cast spells that risk Paradox, with the base Paradox dice per Reach of their user's Gnosis (1 for unAwakened users.) Awakened users can spend the item's Mana instead of their own to mitigate Paradox, but only up to the limit imposed by their Gnosis. Paradoxes from an Imbued Item cannot be contained, instead automatically releasing.

This Merit can be combined with the Enhanced Item Merit, but it cannot be combined with the Artifact Merit.

Infamous Mentor (● to ●●●●●)

Prerequisite: Mentor (equal or higher-level)

Effect: Your character's Mentor is of particularly strong repute. This may be negative or positive. When taking this Merit, determine the Mentor's Order and Consilium Status. They should be close to the Mentor dot rating. As well, choose Social Merits equal to twice the Infamous Mentor dots. Your character can access these Merits and Status, so long as she's willing to name-drop her Mentor and live with the consequences.

Most characters will grudgingly acquiesce to a Mentor's Status, but will later look down upon the student for leaning on the Mentor's reputation.

Lex Magica (●●)

Prerequisites: Silver Ladder Status ●

Effect: The laws of the Pentacle are symbolic concepts designed by people who make symbols real. A théarch acting in an official, titled capacity (such as Herald, Sentinel, Factotum, Deacon, Hierarchy, or Magister) gains certain advantages with this Merit:

First, add her Silver Ladder Status or Consilium Status (whichever she's acting with) to her Doors when a character attempts to outmaneuver her socially (see p. 215).

Second, characters cannot use Willpower to increase dice pools on Social actions or magic which would influence her behavior.

Lastly, your character may use her Silver Ladder Status or Consilium Status (whichever is higher) as a Yantra in spells directly enforcing the Lex Magica's laws. This includes spells to investigate potential crimes, to pursue offenders, to use the law to defend innocence, and any other spell to help the rule of law work more thoroughly. The dice bonus for the Yantra is half the Merit dots used, rounded up.

Mana Sensitivity (●)

Prerequisites: Prime ●, Wits ●●●

Effect: Your character's awakened eye has sensed Mana enough that her mundane senses have begun picking up the cues of its presence.

Hallows and stored Mana trigger her Peripheral Mage Sight, even without an active magical effect.

Masque (● to ●●●●●, Style)

Prerequisites: Guardians of the Veil Status ●

Effect: The Guardians must adopt Masques, personas, in order to detach from the grim necessities of their work and stay in cover. Their ancient practices allow these Masques to become different people almost entirely; they have different abilities and even ethical codes to suit the role. At each level of Masque, the persona gains different abilities that are only available to the character upon donning the Masque. Adopting a Masque requires spending a point of Willpower, which cannot be replenished so long as the character maintains the identity. Shedding a Masque requires a full minute to get "out of character."

To take additional Masques, purchase them as single, two-dot Merits. This gives the additional Masques at the same level as the primary Masque.

Identity (●): Choose a Virtue and Vice different than that of your character. While in the Masque, your character benefits from those traits instead of her own.

Competency (●●): Choose Skill Specialties equal to the Masque Merit dots. Your character uses those Specialties instead of her own while in the Masque.

Diffusion (●●●): Choose a new Signature Nimbus (see p. 89). While in the Masque, your character uses that Nimbus instead of her own.

The Code (●●●●): Choose two Acts of Hubris your character would normally suffer. While in the Masque, your character does not risk Wisdom for those acts.

Immersion (•••••): Choose up to five Merit dots. When your character dons her Masque, she gains access to these Merits. These Merits must be logical parts of the identity, at Storyteller discretion, and cannot include further Masques.

Mystery Cult Influence

(••••, •••••, or ••••••)

Effect: Your character has influence over a Mystery Cult (see p. 106) without actually being a subordinate member. Perhaps your character is a “power behind the throne” or even worshiped as a deity. Your character benefits from the same level of Mystery Cult Initiation, without having to be tied to the cult. This means fewer responsibilities to the cult, plausible deniability if they’re revealed, and the ability to step away at any time.

Occultation (• to ••••)

Effect: Your character is unnoticeable and inoffensive on a mystical level. Any time a character tries to read your character’s aura, or otherwise use magic to discern bits of truth within her, subtract your Merit dots from their pool.

Normally, a mage’s spells carry with them a hint of his Nimbus. This Merit allows a mage to hide that, to metaphysically sweep that under a rug. Your character’s Signature Nimbus is faint, vague, and couched in more symbolism and oblique references than other mages’. When someone attempts to scrutinize her Nimbus to identify her or track her, subtract your Merit dots from their rolls. The Withstanding level of sympathy for spells targeting the character has a minimum of her Occultation dots.

Drawback: If your character ever gains the Fame Merit, or becomes noticed by the public at large, you can lose this Merit.

Potent Nimbus (• or ••)

Effect: Your character’s Nimbus has distinct and powerful effects on witnesses. At one dot, add two to your character’s effective Gnosis when determining her Nimbus Tilt (see p. 90). At two dots, add four to her effective Gnosis for that purpose. Additionally, add your dots in this Merit to any rolls to flare your character’s Nimbus.

Potent Resonance (••)

Prerequisite: Gnosis 3+

Effect: Your character’s Signature Nimbus is particularly overbearing. Whenever a character scrutinizes her Signature Nimbus with Mage Sight, he’s subject to the effects of her Immediate Nimbus and its corresponding Tilt.

Prelacy (Style, • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Seers of the Throne Status •••

Effect: A successful Seer who has served her patron Exarch well can cast spells in his name. She hears the Tyrants’ voices in her sleep. She understands their demands directly. A black iron portal forms deep within her Oneiros, and her daimon, the Goetia representing her drive to further herself, becomes twisted by the Exarch’s agenda.

Crown Attainments of the Greater Ministries

The four Archigenitors, patrons of the largest Seer Ministries, bestow the following Attainments on their Prelates.

The Eye (Panopticon) grants the **Crown of Vision**. When using the Sympathetic Range Attainment, the character counts as having a weak sympathetic connection to any subject she has no connection for. She reduces the effects of Occultation and similar powers by her Space dots.

The Father (Paternoster) grants the **Crown of Doctrine**. The character adds her Prime dots to her Gnosis to determine her Mana pool (every effective dot above 10 grants 10 extra Mana), and may heal resistant damage by Pattern restoration.

The General (Praetorian) grants the **Crown of Fury**. When attacked by a character using one or more Merits, the Seer may reduce each of her opponent’s combat Merits by her Forces dots, denying the use of any techniques “lost” by instinctively countering them. Also, she does not spend Mana to raise or change her Mage Armor.

The Unity (Hegemony) grants the **Crown of Obligation**. The character gains an additional Vice, and regains one point of Mana every time she gains Willpower through either Vice. Also, she reduces her opponent’s Doors in Social maneuvering by her Mind dots.

Other Exarchs’ Crown Attainments may be designed by the Storyteller.

She gains the following effects, at each rank of this Merit:

Chosen Vessel (•): your character gains the Persistent Mystery Commands Condition.

Sword (••): The character may use the patron Exarch’s symbolism as a patron Yantra in spellcasting, worth half her Prelacy dots in dice (round up).

Crown (•••): The character gains an Attainment based on her Exarch’s symbolism.

Temple (••••): If one of your character’s soul stones is incorporated into a Demesne, the Demesne becomes a Supernal Verge keyed to her Exarch, inhabited by Supernal Entities loyal to the Throne. Including soul stones from Seers with Prelacy linked to a different Exarch causes the Temple to collapse and immediately destroys all soul stones involved.

Drawback: Once the Exarchs have given a command, they expect it to be carried out without delay. The character may only earn Arcane Beats from their other Obsessions in a chapter when they have already earned one for following the one granted by Mystery Commands.



Sanctum (● to ●●●●●)

Prerequisites: Safe Place

Effect: Your character has a Sanctum, in which she can safely practice her art away from prying eyes. This might be a dark cave, an apartment, a pocket dimension, or any other secure location she can claim. This Merit must be tied to a Safe Place Merit, and similarly can be shared within a cabal.

Add her Merit dots to her Gnosis within the Sanctum for determining spell control. She can leave the Sanctum and retain those benefits on previously cast spells. But if she's exceeded her Gnosis and adds any additional, controlled spells, the benefit goes away and she must Reach as if she'd cast each of those spells without the benefit.

For an additional three dots (which do not count toward the 1-5 limit), your character's Sanctum includes a Demesne.

Shadow Name (● to ●●●)

Effect: Your character has a particularly developed magical persona, and is almost a different person when acting as a mage than in her mundane life. When purchasing this Merit, determine the Shadow Name and its symbolism. The character may use those symbols as a persona tool in spellcasting, worth this Merit's dots. Additionally, apply dots in this Merit as a Withstand rating to spells that attempt to identify her or cast on her using the Sympathetic Range Attainment when in her mundane persona, to spells using the Temporal Sympathy Attainment targeting a time when she was in her mundane persona, and as a dice penalty to mundane skill rolls relating to identifying her as the same person as her magical self.

Techné (●●)

Prerequisites: Free Council Status ●

Effect: Your character uses Libertine practices in order to use cultural-magical styles, sciences, and art forms as magical tools. Pick a focus for your character – for example, computer networking. Your character treats the focus as an Order tool for the Free Council as long as she includes it during spellcasting, and may further treat the presence of Sleepers engaging in the focus as a separate Order tool, as long as the spell is not obvious. If all mages casting a spell under the teamwork rules have this Merit representing the same focus, the leader's spellcasting roll gains 8-Again. This Merit may be bought multiple times to represent different fields of study.

Mundane Merits

Any mage can possess these Merits, but they're also available to and common choices for players portraying Sleepers, Sleepwalkers, or Proximi characters.

For additional Merits available to all characters, see **The Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

Allies (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Allies help your character. They might be friends, employees, associates, or people your character has blackmailed.

Each instance of this Merit represents one type of ally. This could be in an organization, a society, a clique, or an individual. You can take this Merit multiple times to represent different Allies. For example, your character may possess Allies (Police) ●●●, Allies (Organized Crime) ●●, and Allies (Church) ●.

Dots in this Merit reflect greater relationships and access. Work with the Storyteller to determine just what your character's dots mean, and what she can request from her Allies reasonably.

When requesting help from Allies, the Storyteller assigns a rating between 1 and 5 to the favor. A character can ask for favors that add up to her Allies rating without penalty in one chapter. If she extends her influence beyond that, her player must roll Manipulation + Persuasion + Allies with a penalty equal to the favor's rating. If the roll is successful, the group does as requested. Failed or successful, the character loses a dot of Allies (but Sanctity of Merits applies).

Alternate Identity (●, ●●, or ●●●)

Effect: Your character has established an alternate mundane identity; not a Shadow Name, but a second identity she can use among Sleepers and to lessen the risk of her real sympathetic name being uncovered by enemies. The level of this Merit determines the amount of scrutiny the identity can withstand. At one dot, the identity is superficial and unofficial: a simple but consistent costume, alias, and accent. It won't hold up to any kind of official scrutiny, but it's also easy to replace. At two dots, she's supported her identity with paperwork and identification. It's not liable to stand up to extensive research or Federal investigation, but it'll turn away private investigators and internet hobbyists. At three dots, the identity can pass thorough inspection. The identity has been deeply entrenched in relevant databases.

The Merit also reflects the time the character has spent honing the persona. At 1 or 2 dots, she adds 1 die to all Subterfuge rolls to defend the identity. At 3 dots, she adds 2.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times, with each time representing an additional identity.

Contacts (●)

Effect: Contacts provide your character with information. This Merit represents a sphere or organization within which the character can garner information. Contacts do not provide services, only information. This may be face-to-face, email, by telephone, or even by séance in some strange instances.

Garnering information via Contacts requires a Manipulation + Social Skill roll, depending on the method the character uses and the relationship between the characters. The Storyteller should give a bonus or penalty depending on how relevant the information is to that particular Contact, whether accessing the information is dangerous, and if the character has maintained good relations or done favors for the Contact. These modifiers should range from -3 to +3 in most cases. If successful, the Contact provides the information.

You may purchase this Merit multiple times to reflect different sources.

Defensive Combat (●)

Prerequisite: Brawl ● or Weaponry ●; choose one when this Merit is selected

Effect: You are trained in avoiding damage in combat. Use your Brawl or Weaponry to calculate Defense rather than Athletics. You can learn both versions of this Merit, allowing you to use any of the three Skills to calculate Defense. You cannot use Weaponry to calculate Defense, however, unless you actually have a weapon in hand.

Fame (● to ●●●)

Effect: Your character is recognized within a certain sphere, for a certain skill, or because of some past action or stroke of luck. This can mean favors and attention; it can also mean negative attention and scrutiny. When choosing the Merit, define what your character is known for. As a rule of thumb, one dot means local recognition, or reputation within a confined subculture. Two dots means regional recognition by a wide swath of people. Three dots means worldwide recognition to anyone that might have been exposed to the source of the fame. Each dot adds a die to any Social rolls among those who are impressed by your character's celebrity. Fame also scatters sympathetic links; the Withstanding level of sympathy for spells targeting the character has a minimum of her Fame dots.

Drawback: Any rolls to find or identify the character by mundane means enjoy a +1 bonus per dot of the Merit. A character with Fame cannot have the Occultation Merit.

Language (●)

Effect: Your character is skilled with an additional language beyond her native tongue. Choose a language each time you buy this Merit. Your character can speak, read, and write in that language.

Library (● to ●●●)

Effect: Your character has access to a plethora of information about a given topic. When purchasing this Merit, choose a Mental Skill. The Library covers that purview. On any extended roll involving the Skill in question, add the dots in this Merit.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times to reflect different Skills. Its benefits can also be shared by various characters, with permission.

Library, Advanced (● to ●●●●)

Prerequisites: Library ●●, Safe Place (special)

Effect: Your character not only possesses a massive, credible library, but she also hoards thorough information about highly secretive supernatural topics. For each dot in this Merit, choose a topic. This could be "vampires," "mages," or any other supernatural force in the Fallen World. When your character consults her library on one of those topics, take the Informed Condition relating to the topic. You can do this once per story, per topic.

Advanced Library has a special prerequisite; your character requires a Safe Place equal to its dot rating. As with Library, your characters can share a library location (and the players split the cost in dots).

Mentor (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: This Merit gives your character a teacher who provides advice and guidance. He acts on your character's behalf, often in the background and sometimes without your character's knowledge. While Mentors can be highly competent, they almost always want something in return for their services. The dot rating determines the Mentor's capabilities, and to what extent he'll aid your character.

When establishing a Mentor, determine what the Mentor wants from your character. This should be personally important to him, and it should reflect on the dot rating chosen. A one-dot Mentor might just be an old bookworm interested in the occasional coffee chat about academic topics. A five-dot Mentor would want something astronomical, such as an oath to procure an ancient, cursed artifact that may or may not exist, in order to prevent a prophesized death.

Choose three Skills the Mentor possesses. You can substitute Resources for one of these Skills. Once per session, the character may ask her Mentor for a favor. The favor must involve one of those Skills or be within the scope of his Resources. The Mentor commits to the favor (often asking for a commensurate favor in return); if a roll is required, the Mentor is automatically considered to have successes equal to his dot rating. Alternately, the player may ask the Storyteller to have the Mentor act on her character's behalf, without her character knowing or initiating the request.

As a guideline, Mentors who are Awakened mages bought for Mage characters should have Gnosis and Arcana higher than the character — at least half their dot rating higher Gnosis than the character, and twice the dot rating in Arcanum dots above the number of Arcanum dots the character has, while still obeying the rules for how high Arcana may rise with Gnosis (p. 86). Most Mentors will have an Order or Consilium Status of their own as well.

Mystery Cult Initiation (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character is a member of a secret society, which can represent anything from a fraternity house or scholarly group to an organization directly controlled by an Awakened Order such as a Cryptopoly or the Labyrinth. This Merit may also represent membership of a Nameless Order for mage not in one of the six main Orders.

Dots in this Merit act as Status for other members, as well as additional benefits defined when the Merit is first purchased. The following are guidelines; use them to craft your own cults:

- A Skill Specialty or one-dot Merit pertaining to the lessons taught to initiates.
- A one-dot Merit
- A Skill dot or a two-dot Merit
- A three-dot Merit
- A three-dot Merit or a major advantage not reflected in game traits

When this Merit would grant a character a Merit she does not qualify for (such as Awakened-only Merits or Sleepwalker-only ones), she gains the value of the reward in Merit dots instead.

Professional Training (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character has extensive training in a particular profession, which offers distinct advantages in a handful of fields. When choosing this Merit, define a Profession for your character and choose two Skills to be Asset Skills, which the advantages of the Merit will affect.

Networking (●): At the first level of Professional Training, your character builds connections within her chosen field. Take two dots of Contacts relating to that field.

Continuing Education (●●): With repeated efforts in her field of choice, your character tends toward greater successes. When making a roll with her Asset Skills, she benefits from the 9-Again quality.

Breadth of Knowledge (●●●): Due to advancement in her field, she's picked up a number of particular bits of information and skill unique to her work. Choose a third Asset Skill and take two Specialties in your character's Asset Skills.

On the Job Training (●●●●): With the resources at her disposal, your character has access to extensive educational tools and mentorship available. Take a Skill dot in an Asset Skill. Whenever you purchase a new Asset Skill dot, take a Beat.

The Routine (●●●●●): With such extensive experience in her field, her Asset Skills have been honed to a fine edge and she's almost guaranteed at least a marginal success. Before rolling, spend a Willpower point to apply the rote action quality to an Asset Skill. This allows you to reroll all the failed dice on the first roll.

Resources (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: This Merit reflects your character's disposable income. She might live in an upscale condo, but if her income is tied up in the mortgage and in child support payments, she might have little money to throw around. Characters are assumed to have basic necessities without Resources.

The dot rating determines the relative amount of disposable funding the character has available, depending on your particular chronicle's setting. The same amount of money means completely different things in a game set in Silicon Valley, compared to one set in the Detroit slums. One dot is a little spending money here and there. Two is a comfortable, middle-class wage. Three is a nicer, upper-middle-class life. Four is moderately wealthy. Five is filthy rich.

Every item has an Availability rating. Once per chapter, your character can procure an item at her Resources level or lower, without issue. Obtaining an item one Availability above her Resources reduces her effective Resources by one dot for a full month, since she has to rapidly liquidate funds. She can procure items two Availability below her Resources without limit (within reason). For example, a character with Resources ●●●● can procure as many Availability ●● disposable cellphones as she needs.

Retainer (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character has an assistant, sycophant, servant, or follower on whom she can rely. Establish who this companion

is and how he was acquired. It may be as simple as a paycheck. He might owe your character his life. However it happened, your character has a hold on him.

A Retainer is more reliable than a Mentor and more loyal than an Ally. On the other hand, a Retainer is a lone person, less capable and influential than the broader Merits.

The Merit's dot rating determines the relative competency of the Retainer. A one-dot Retainer is mildly useful, mostly for reliably taking on menial tasks; sometimes you don't need to be wowed, you just need to get a thing from point A to point B. A three-dot Retainer is a professional in his field, someone capable in his line of work. A five-dot Retainer is one of the best in her class. If a Retainer needs to make a roll, if it's within her field, double the dot rating of the Merit and use it as a dice pool. For anything else, use the dot rating as a dice pool.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times to represent multiple Retainers.

Safe Place (• to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character has somewhere she can go where she can feel secure. While she may have enemies that could attack her there, she's prepared and has the upper hand. The dot rating reflects the security of the place. A one-dot Safe Place might be equipped with basic security systems or a booby trap at the windows and door. A five-dot hideaway could have a security crew, infrared scanners at every entrance, or trained dogs. Each place could be an apartment, a mansion, or a hidey-hole.

Unlike most Merits, multiple characters can contribute dots to a single Safe Place, combining their points into something greater. A Safe Place gives an Initiative bonus equal to the Merit dots. This only applies to characters with dots invested in the Safe Place.

Any efforts to breach the Safe Place suffer a penalty equal to the Merit dots invested. If the character desires, the Safe Place can include traps that cause lethal damage (up to a maximum of the Merit rating) to intruders; it is the player's choice as to how much damage a given trap inflicts. This requires that the character have at least a dot in Crafts. The traps may be avoided with a Dexterity + Larceny roll, penalized by the Safe Place dots.

Status (• to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your character has standing, membership, authority, control over, or respect from a group or organization. This may reflect official standing, or informal respect. No matter the source, your character enjoys certain privileges within that structure.

Each instance of this Merit reflects standing in a different group or organization. Each affords its own unique benefits. As you increase your dot ratings, your character rises in prominence in the relevant group.

Status only allows advantages within the confines of the group reflected in the Merit. Status (Organized Crime) won't help if your character wants an official concealed carry firearms permit, for example.

Status provides two major advantages: First, your character can add her Status to any Social roll involving those over whom she has authority or sway. Second, she has access to group facilities, resources, and funding. Dependent on the group, this could be limited by red tape and requisitioning processes. It's also dependent on the resources the particular group has available.

Drawback: Status requires upkeep, and often regular duties are required. If these duties are not upheld, the Status may be lost. The dots will not be accessible until the character re-establishes her standing. In our Organized Crime example, your character may be expected to pay protection money, offer tribute to a higher authority, or undertake felonious activities.

Striking Looks (• or ●●)

Effect: Your character is stunning, alarming, commanding, repulsing, threatening, charming, or otherwise worthy of attention. Determine how your character looks and how people react to that. For one dot, your character gets a +1 bonus on any Social rolls that would be influenced by her looks. For two dots, the benefit increases to +2. Depending on the particulars, this might influence Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion, Subterfuge, or other rolls.

Drawback: Attention is a double-edged sword. Any rolls to spot, notice, or remember your character gain the same dice bonus. Sometimes, your character will draw unwanted attention in social situations. This could cause further complications.

Trained Observer (•, or ●●●)

Prerequisite: Wits ●● or Composure ●●●

Effect: Your character has spent years in the field, catching tiny details and digging for secrets. She might not have a better chance of finding things, but she has a better chance of finding *important* things. Any time you make a Perception roll (usually Wits + Composure), you benefit from the 9-Again quality. With the three-dot version, you get 8-Again.

True Friend (●●●)

Effect: Your character has a true friend. While that friend may have specific functions covered by other Merits (Allies, Contacts, Retainer, Mentor, etc.), True Friend represents a deeper, truly trusting relationship that cannot be breached. Unless your character does something egregious to cause it, her True Friend will not betray her. As well, the Storyteller cannot kill her True Friend as part of a plot without your express permission. Any rolls to influence a True Friend against your character suffer a -5 penalty. As well, once per story, your character can regain 1 spent Will-power by having a meaningful interaction with her True Friend.

The Door

PART V

The Squat became a lovely community center, and the center became our Cryptopoly. All the connections and amassed abilities of the Order aided us in our quest to reach out to Sleepers. We ran an afterschool program for children where we told the stories of ruins even we didn't understand, stories we ourselves argued over into the night. We grew a garden on the roof with herbs for food and rituals. We went on field trips to Hallows, in the off chance any of those who went might Awaken. There were always the politics and the doings of other mages, but the Squat was mine. It was ours. We took a thing everyone had said was a useless skeleton of a building and turned it into a vibrant refuge for many.

We lived at the Squat, named it our new sanctum. We kept all the top floor apartments and lived there with some of the other Acolytes. We still went back to the 13th Street sanctum for training, and you often went back to meditate. We would lie in bed and look over the schedule, texting back and forth with Horatio, coordinating our small party with the Clavigers.

The bathroom the Iris was in was used as a storage room. Locksmith said the door was better left closed, and although I knew better I deferred to his expertise.

I know they talked about it behind our backs, when we weren't listening. They knew and didn't tell us anything about it. Deacon Horatio commended us on our work within the community and our ability to balance our own work and studies with the running of the Squat.

I used to tell myself I was guarding the door from anyone who might try to access it. That if someone came to try to kick it open, I would have guarded the door. I would tell myself this at night, while we lay in our bed, while you slept peacefully next to me, my own eyes open and staring through the wall that separated our room from the storage room.

In time, Horatio asked me to spearhead another community center, this one in a rundown building in Queens. I remember asking, "Can I still live at the Squat?"

"I'd think you would want to save yourself the commute, Gee," Horatio said with a chuckle. "Metrocards aren't cheap."

"I just really like it there," I said, hands behind my back, rocking back and forth on my heels. "I'd rather commute than have Lucretia do it."

"I thought Lucretia wanted to move back here to concentrate on her own Mysteries?" Horatio asked. "She says it's often loud at the Squat, and internal studies are often difficult to process there."

"Well, we're working out ESL classes for some people who are showing interest. It's kind of her thing, you know?" I said. I thought about the door in the bathtub and the stains. Someone had since cleaned it, but I still saw the shape of the ruddy stains and their hue against the dusty off-white.

"Sounds like her," Horatio said with a smile. "I'll send you over the specs for the building. Get me a proposal by the end of the week, Gee." He turned back to the dusty tome on his desk, already dismissing me.

Paperwork. It should have been distracting. I should have been able to forget the door as I downloaded the files and wrote up the proposal, citing the grants we'd be eligible for, the different things we'd use the space for.

The door. I looked at the notepad I was working on. I had drawn it in black ink, its vine-work and thorns represented perfectly on the yellow, lined paper. I should have told someone how it weighed on my mind. Instead, I ripped the paper from the pad and crumpled it, burning it in my hand with a spell. I told myself I'd do the same to any more thoughts of the door from here on out. I'd set them ablaze and watch them float away like ash on the wind of my mind. I'd do it.

That's what I told myself.

Lucretia, you said you would -

My spell ends. Gee's confession had cut off with those words. She was too exhausted to face whatever memory came next.

I sip my coffee, grimacing as I realize it went cold while I was looking into the past. The sounds of the house around me indicate movement — my presence calmed matters last night, but the locals are now waking, and finding in waking that they're still angry. That Lucretia is still dead. And that Gee hasn't yet paid to their satisfaction.

I alone have the right to commit murder. I will not tolerate vigilantes.

The sun is up, and I have much to do.



CHAPTER FOUR: MAGIC

No man is born into the World a Master, and for that reason are we obliged to learn. He who applieth himself thereunto, and studieth, learneth; and a man can have no more shameful and evil title than that of being an Ignorant person.

— Grimoire of Abremelin the Mage

Mages sometimes call magic “the Art,” and it’s an apt description. Magic is born of the imagination of the caster and shaped by her skill. It can be daring, tested, technical, precise, and vulgar. A skilled sorcerer displays a deftness with her magic beyond simple brute force, making dozens of tiny adjustments to even “simple” spells.

Spellcasting

Mages channel what they know of reality and the Mysteries into the world to disrupt the Lie. These new realities take the form of spells, and crafting them into being is casting, or spellcasting. The mage imagines each part of the spell in her mind before she casts it, envisioning the **Imago** of the spell. The Imago is the mental representation of the end result of the spell including all its effects and factors. Without the Imago, the mage is incapable of fully envisioning what she wants to impart into the world, her will incapable of imprinting the truth without a defined Pattern.

Improvised Spells

In the most simple form of spellcasting, a mage builds an Imago on the fly, responding to a need by drawing on her knowledge of the Arcana and the symbols of her Path. This kind of spell — **improvised magic** — is the most common form, as opposed to the personal specialties of a **Praxis** or the formalized learning of a **Rote**.

When casting the spell, the mage creates a dice pool based on her Gnosis and her dots in the highest Arcanum included in the spell. The mage must decide what she wants her spell to achieve before rolling, and a single success means the spell is cast to her specifications. The character must have all Arcanum dots used in the spell.

Spellcasting results in the following general effects, but each of these can be increased through changing spell factors or risking Paradox.

- The spell grants a one-die bonus or penalty, deals one point of weapon damage, or heals one wound.
- The spell lasts for one turn.
- The spell hits one subject of Size 5 or less, or an area equal to an arm’s-length circle around a point.
- The mage must be touching the subject of the spell, or be casting on herself.
- The spell takes an amount of time to cast based on Gnosis.

The magic casting dice pool is modified by Yantras and spell factors. The penalties to spellcasting can exceed the normal -5 penalty cap to dice pools. In cases where the penalty would reduce the dice pool beyond 0 — and thereby a chance die — by an additional -5 even after including bonuses from Yantras, the spell is too complex for the mage to cast and it automatically fails.

The mage may need to spend Mana as part of spellcasting. **Improvising a spell using a Common or Inferior Arcanum costs one point of Mana**, in addition to any other Mana the spell may require.

Reaching

The mage can utilize different techniques to get more out of her base spell after she determines the spell effects and the level of each Arcanum involved. Most changes affect the dice pool as either bonus or penalty dice, but other, more profound

Common Reach Effects

Most spells list Reach effects, and several Attainments that modify spellcasting require Reach to use. In addition to these, one Reach may:

- Move the spell from Ritual to Instant Casting Time
- Change the primary spell factor
- Move the spell from Standard to Advanced Potency
- Move the spell from Standard to Advanced Duration
- If at Advanced Duration, allow the spell to reach indefinite Duration (cost: 1 Mana)
- Move the spell from touch/self to sensory range
- If at sensory range, allow the mage to cast on a subject she is viewing remotely
- Move the spell from Standard to Advanced Scale
- Cast a spell when the mage has no spell control slots remaining (costs an extra Reach per spell already over)

effects require the mage to risk incurring a Paradox by **Reaching**. Mages can Reach to move from a Standard to an Advanced spell factor chart, or create specialized effects in certain spells such as increasing damage type on attack spells. Each time she Reaches, she adds dice to the Paradox dice pool based on her Gnosis.

A character receives a *free* Reach — which does *not* add Paradox dice — per dot of her highest-rated Arcanum that meets or exceeds the spell's requirement. For example a mage with four dots of the Mind Arcanum gains two free Reaches when casting a spell that requires Mind 3.

Yantras

Yantras are a form of magical shorthand which a mage uses to help her focus on casting a spell. She can use nearly anything — an object, a place, a type of environment, or even a specific set of actions — to focus her will and recall her Imago. Using such tools grants a bonus to the spellcasting dice pool, up to +5 after penalties depending on the specific Yantra and how many she uses while casting her spell. See p. 119 for more information on Yantras.

Praxes

Through dedicated practice or repetitive use of certain spells, a mage may develop a Praxis. Praxes are spell Imagos the mage has gained special insight into, learning the symbols of the spell by heart. She is more adept at casting these spells, and they shape her growing Gnosis.

When casting a Praxis spell, the mage gains an exceptional success with three successes instead of five. Praxes do not require a point of Mana to cast from Inferior or Common Arcana, but any other Mana costs still apply.

A mage gains one free Praxis for every dot of Gnosis, and may purchase more for one Arcane Experience each. The character must be capable of casting the Praxis as an improvised spell.

Rotes

Experienced mages perfect their grasp of spell Imagos over time, learning the complexity of the spell and developing skills to recall and cast it with ease. Masters call these specialized Imagos **Rotes**, codifying and recording their methods to later teach less experienced mages. Orders teach Rotes to their members using a set of mnemonic techniques — *mudras* — to compress, memorize, recall, and cast the spell as quickly and efficiently as improvised spells.

Rotes copied onto physical media using the Prime Arcanum are called Grimoires. Anyone able to cast the improvised version of a spell can use a Grimoire to cast the Rote by following the instructions, though the caster may not use Reach to cast instantly when casting out of a Grimoire, and the ritual casting time is doubled. Casting a Rote from a Grimoire rather than from memory, or casting a Rote she designed herself, gives the mage's spellcasting dice pool the rote quality.

When casting a Rote from memory, using an Order's recall techniques, the character may use dots in the associated Skill as a Yantra. The character must be free to make the mnemonic gestures to recall the Rote in order to benefit from the Skill bonus.

The caster of a Rote is considered to have five dots in the highest Arcanum used for purposes of how much free Reach she has. In addition, the Signature Nimbus of the caster is indistinct, hiding the caster's identity unless another mage fully Scrutinizes the spell.

Rotes do not require a point of Mana to cast from Inferior or Common Arcana, but any other Mana costs still apply.

The benefits of Rotes do not stack with the benefits of Praxes. If a mage has the same spell as both a Rote and a Praxis, she must decide at casting which she uses. Rotes may be purchased for one Experience each, and the character must be capable of casting the spell as an improvised spell before purchasing the Rote.

Spell Factors

The previous rules assume the most basic spellcasting aspects; that a spell's subject is a single, touched individual, and the spell lasts for a short amount of time. A mage can create an Imago, though, for a spell that affects an entire group of people, or an enchantment that lasts an entire day. The elements of a spell — the size or number of subjects — are called **spell factors**, and the mage can increase them with increasingly difficult spell Imagos.

Potency is a measure of the spell's power. It determines the extent of the effect of a spell. For example, attack spells use Potency for how much damage is applied.

Duration is how long a spell lasts. Once the spell's Duration elapses, the spell ends.

Scale is a measure of how large a spell is. It determines how many subjects the spell can affect, the size of an area the spell encompasses, and the size of the largest subject.

Range is how far the spell can be cast. Spells either require the mage to touch her subject, or be in sensory Range of her subject to cast. Mages with two dots in Time or Space may use Attainments to cast on a subject's past existence, or across the world via sympathetic ties.

Casting Time is how long it takes the mage to cast the spell. Mages may gain bonuses for taking longer to cast spells.

A mage can increase her spell's various factors, though she does so at the cost of dice penalties. She can change a spell factor's chart from Standard to Advanced with a Reach. All spells have a **primary spell factor** of either Potency or Duration. After penalties have been applied for the desired spell factors, the player may move the primary factor up its chart a number of steps equal to the character's rating in the spell's highest Arcanum minus one. For example, a Forces spell with a primary spell factor of Duration would last for 5 turns when cast by a mage with her Forces Arcanum rated at 3 and a -2 penalty to her casting roll. This advancement is voluntary — mages don't always choose to cast at full power. The primary spell factor can be changed with a Reach.

Some spells may use a spell factor more than once — for example, a spell transforming a truck into an elephant must account for the Size of both. In these cases, use the largest penalty for each factor.

Potency

Potency matters for spells that grant bonuses, impose penalties, or provide graduated levels of effects, such as dealing damage or increasing dot-ratings of traits. The effect of a spell's Potency is described in the individual spell write-up — each level of Potency increases the spell's main effect. Each level of Potency beyond the first imposes a -2 penalty to the casting roll. Mages may spend Reach to gain Advanced Potency, which increases the spell's Withstand ability against dispellation by +2.

Duration

Duration is simply how long a spell lasts once cast. Standard spell Durations are measured in turns, while using a Reach to use the Advanced Duration chart makes the spell last much longer. If a spell

Lasting

Many spells specify that some effects are *Lasting*, or give the option to create Lasting effects with Reach. Lasting isn't a Duration, but instead the system term for the persisting after-effects of magic. A fire controlled with a Forces spell continues to burn after the spell ceases to act upon it. Wounds healed with magic do not reopen when the spell's Duration ends. When a spell ends, look at what it changed, if anything, in the environment. Those are its Lasting qualities.

Standard Duration - Transitory

Duration	Dice Penalty
1 turn	None (basic success)
2 turns	-2
3 turns	-4
5 turns	-6
10 turns	-8*

*Add an additional -2 dice penalty per extra +10 turns.

Advanced Duration - Prolonged

Duration	Dice Penalty
One scene/hour	None (basic success)
One Day	-2
One Week	-4
One Month	-6
One Year	-8
Indefinite	-10 (requires a Reach and 1 Mana)

would logically have an immediate effect but is cast with Advanced Duration, the effect recurs at every multiple of the character's Gnosis-based ritual casting time, until the Duration runs out. For example, a Gnosis 1 character's healing spell with a Duration of a day heals its Potency in Health boxes every three hours. The highest level of the Advanced Duration chart is "indefinite," meaning the spell lasts until dispelled or the caster cancels it. Moving to indefinite requires a second Reach, and the caster must also spend a point of Mana.

Scale

The scale of a spell is how large the spell is. Mages must decide when casting whether they are targeting specific subjects or a blanket area of effect. Aimed spells (see below) must use area of effect, centered on wherever the mage aims.

If the mage uses Number of Subjects for Scale, the factor determines how many subjects may be affected and the Size of the largest subject. Once decided, a mage can affect fewer subjects than the scale of her spell permits.

If using Area of Effect for Scale, the factor instead determines how large the area covered by the spell is, applying the spell effect to anyone or anything within. A mage cannot single out specific subjects in the declared space unless she uses the spell Warding Gesture (see "Fate," p. 136).

Range

Range determines if the spell requires the mage to touch her subject, or simply be in sensory range to create an effect. Range does

Scale

Standard Scale

Number of Subjects	Size of largest Subject	Area of Effect	Dice Penalty
One Subject	5	Arm's reach from a central point	None (basic success)
Two Subjects	6	A small room	-2
Four Subjects	7	A large room	-4
Eight Subjects	8	Several rooms, or a single floor of a house	-6
16 Subjects	9	A ballroom or small house	-8

Advanced Scale

Number of Subjects	Size of Largest Subject	Area of Effect	Dice Penalty
5 Subjects	5	A large house or building	None (basic success)
10 Subjects	10	A small warehouse or parking lot	-2
20 Subjects	15	A large warehouse or supermarket	-4
40 Subjects	20	A small factory, or a shopping mall	-6
80 Subjects	25	A large factory, or a city block	-8
160 Subjects*	30*	A campus, or a small neighborhood	-10

*Add an additional -2 penalty for each extra 2 x subjects or +5 increase in Size of the subject. For example, a spell targeting 320 subjects, each up to Size 35 subject would levy a -12 penalty. Area of effect cannot be increased further.

not increase incrementally with penalties like other factors. The standard Range factor for all spells is **touch/self**, meaning that the mage can cast the spell on herself or a subject she touches without any penalties. A mage can target an individual she cannot touch with a self/touch spell by succeeding on an Aimed Spell roll (see below). The Advanced Range factor is **sensory**, meaning that the mage must be able to directly see, hear, or sense her subject. Viewing a subject remotely but in real-time, whether by security camera or magic scrying window, requires an additional Reach. A spell cast with sensory range cannot be dodged by the subject, and does not require an Aimed Spell roll. If the mage has the Space Attainment Sympathetic Range or the Time Attainment Temporal Sympathy, she can cast spells without the need to sense her subject. For more details, see those Attainments on p. 193.

Casting Time

Casting time determines how long the mage takes to create her effect. Standard casting takes time, and all spells are ritually cast. The time it takes to cast a ritual spell is determined by the

Ritual Casting

Though ritual casting takes time, the act of casting a ritual spell is not an extended action. The player makes a single roll to cast the spell once all penalties and bonuses are factored in, regardless of how long the character takes to cast the spell.

caster's Gnosis. By taking extra time and extending his ritual, the caster may gain bonus dice — each full interval of casting time grants a die, to a maximum of +5 dice.

By using a Reach, a caster may instead cast immediately, in a single turn. Immediate spells cannot gain extra dice from taking extra time, but may take several turns of preparation to use all the Yantras the caster wishes to include. Ritual spells can benefit from teamwork, while an immediate spell cannot.

Withstanding Magic

Before dice are rolled for spellcasting, the caster must consider if her subject can **Withstand** her magic, as it could affect the dice pool and outcome of the casting. The subject of a spell can always choose not to Withstand a spell, but she must consciously choose to do so as a reflexive action.

Withstanding

If a spell must overcome some aspect of its subject to take full effect, it will list a Withstand rating in its description (usually a Resistance Attribute, but spells themselves Withstand dispellation using the Arcanum rating of the caster's highest Arcanum used in the spell). Withstood spells reduce their Potency by levels equal to the Withstand rating. If this leaves the spell with no levels in Potency, it still counts as an active spell against spell control but has no further effect. Spells with multiple subjects apply their Potency against the Withstand rating of each individual subject, so may take effect against some of them. Each spell in a combined spell is Withstood separately. If a spell has multiple Withstand ratings (for example, a Withstood spell cast

with the Sympathetic Range Attainment) it uses the highest rating, +1 for every additional rating.

Characters may only spend Willpower to increase a Resistance Attribute used for Withstanding if they are aware of a spell being cast upon them.

Aimed Spells

A mage can attempt to throw or fire her spell at her subject instead of touching him when casting at standard range. Aimed spells appear as bolts of energy or projections coming from the casting mage, as opposed to spells cast at sensory range which materialize at the point of the subject. The player rolls Gnosis + (highest of Athletics or Firearms) – subject’s Defense. The subject may gain the benefits of cover, and range bands apply; an Aimed spell’s short range is Gnosis x 10, medium is Gnosis x 20, and long is Gnosis x 40. A success means the spell hits her subject as intended, a failure means the spell effect misses its subject. Aimed spell rolls happen after spellcasting rolls and Paradox roll results have been determined, but are reflexive – they happen on the same turn as the spellcasting roll.

Casting the Spell

Once all dice penalties and bonuses are calculated, including any penalties from Paradox, the player rolls dice. A single success on the casting means the spell effect takes place.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The magic does not work. The caster gains a Condition based on the intended outcome of the spell.

Failure: The magic does not work, the mage’s imagination is not made real.

Success: The spell’s effect takes place as imagined.

Exceptional Success: The spell’s effect takes place better than imagined. The character regains one spent point of Willpower, and the player may choose one of the following results;

- A bonus step in the primary spell factor.
- A Reach in the primary spell factor.
- A Condition which will give Arcane Beats when resolved, on either the mage or her subject.
- All Mana spent on the spell is refunded, and the mage receives one more point of Mana.
- The spell ignores any Withstand levels and takes effect at full Potency.

Paradox

As a mage envisions her spell’s Imago and determines spell factors, she runs the risk of complicating her spell to the point of warping it into a Paradox. Once a spell’s factors have been determined, but before the spell is actually cast, the Storyteller determines if a Paradox occurs. Paradox dice are commonly added by Reaching further than the free Reach granted by skill

in the Arcanum used for the spell – each Reach beyond those adds Paradox dice according to Gnosis.

Once a single Paradox die is added to the Paradox dice pool, the Storyteller must check for the possibility of a Paradox, even if other factors reduce the Paradox dice pool to a chance die. The dice pool can be modified by certain factors.

Dice Modifier Situation

Dice Modifier	Situation
Special	The mage has Reached beyond the free Reach granted by Arcanum. This adds the dice amount listed for the character’s Gnosis for every Reach over the limit.
+2	The mage has become inured to the spell, so that it no longer risks Wisdom loss.
+1	Each Paradox roll after the first made for the same caster within the same scene. This bonus accumulates with each roll, so the third roll made for a mage within a scene has a +2 modifier.
+1	One or more Sleepers witness an obvious casting of magic.
-2	The mage uses a dedicated magical tool during the casting.
-1	The mage spends a point of Mana (see below.)

Certain Conditions affecting the mage may also modify the Paradox dice pool. A mage may reflexively spend Mana to mitigate the chance of a Paradox, removing one Paradox die per Mana spent in this manner. The mage cannot spend more Mana than she is normally allowed to spend per turn – including the amount of Mana that is spent for the spellcasting itself – though she can spend the Mana over multiple turns prior to casting the spell.

Multiple Sleeper witnesses do not add Paradox dice, but increase the chances of a Paradox occurring. If a few Sleepers witness the magic casting, the Paradox roll gains the 9-Again quality, a large group grants the Paradox roll the 8-Again quality, and a full crowd grants the Paradox roll the rote quality.

Before the Paradox dice pool is rolled, the mage must decide whether to **contain** the Paradox within her own soul or **release** it and hope for the best. If she attempts to contain it, she will potentially suffer pain and injury – or worse effects – as the Abyss warps her very being. If she does not contain it, she will be safer, but the Paradox may warp her spell. Containing a Paradox is completely voluntary, and a mage cannot be forced to do so.

Releasing Paradox

If the mage does not attempt to contain the Paradox, the Storyteller rolls the Paradox pool:

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The mage does not invoke a Paradox, regains a point of Willpower, and the next Paradox roll made for her in the same scene does not suffer the usual, cumulative +1 dice modifier.

Failure: The mage does not invoke a Paradox.

Anomalies

Paradox	Effect
1 Reach	Undo or apply a single Reach from the Common Reach Effects list on p. 112 except Casting Time.
1 Reach	Impose a Condition on the subject of the spell.
2 Reach	Change the subject of the spell.
3 Reach	Create an Abyssal Environmental Tilt.
5 Reach	Summon an Abyssal entity of Rank 2. Further Reach may increase the Rank of the entity by 1 / Reach

Success: A Paradox occurs, regardless of the spellcasting's success or failure.

Exceptional Success: The mage gains a Paradox Condition and a Paradox occurs.

If a single success is rolled on the Paradox dice, a Paradox occurs. The Abyss taints the spell and, potentially, the area around the spell's subject. The Paradox imposes a dice penalty to the spellcasting roll equal to its successes. Whether or not this makes the spell fail, a Paradox anomaly occurs. If the spellcasting results in a dramatic failure, the mage incurs a Paradox Condition as well.

To create an anomaly, the Storyteller utilizes the number of successes gained on the Paradox roll as Reach on a one to one basis to affect the spell. The Storyteller can use Paradox Reach to change the spell factors of the spell, to create Abyssal taint on the environment, or to summon an Abyssal entity.

Storytellers can spend Reach however they like to affect the spell, using up all the Reach to warp the spell into something very different from what the mage intended, or leaving the spell as-is and instead producing Abyssal wastelands around the spell's subject. The Paradox effect should reflect the type of spell being cast. Attack spells may rebound and hit an innocent subject, or split and hit multiple subjects. Healing spells may heal the subject, but create a blighted patch on the ground nearby. A mage may succeed in making herself invisible, but summon a Gulmoth in her wake. A Paradox anomaly's duration depends on the Wisdom tier of the caster who invokes it.

Wisdom	Paradox
Enlightened	One Scene
Understanding	One Chapter/Day
Falling	One Story/Month
Mad One	One Chronicle/Year

Containing Paradoxes

If the mage decides to contain the Paradox within her soul, the player contests the Paradox roll by rolling the character's Wisdom dots as a dice pool, contesting the Paradox roll. This dice

pool may not be modified by Willpower, magic, or other means. Each success on the Wisdom roll cancels out one success on the Paradox roll. Each Paradox success canceled out in this way deals one resistant bashing wound to the mage. If the Paradox roll still succeeds, the spell is not penalized and does not create an anomaly as with released Paradoxes. Instead, the character gains a Paradox Condition. The severity of the Paradox Condition is based on the number of remaining successes gained on the Paradox roll.

Paradox Conditions

Paradox Conditions can only be gained in one of the following ways—obtaining a dramatic failure when casting a spell after incurring a Paradox, netting an exceptional success on a released Paradox roll, or failing to fully contain a Paradox. Each one has two resolution mechanics. The first requires the character to actively accept the negative consequence of the Paradox, and the other is to allow the Paradox to lapse. A Paradox Condition lapses after an amount of time determined by the character's Wisdom if she does not take action to resolve the Condition. Until the Condition is resolved or lapses, the mage cannot use magic to mitigate the effects of the Paradox.

Wisdom	Duration of Paradox Condition
Enlightened	One Story/Month
Understanding	One Chapter/Day
Falling	One Scene
Mad One	One Turn

If the Paradox Condition is allowed to lapse, the Abyss enters the mage's Pattern. While the Abyss is part of the mage's Pattern, it appears in her Nimbus. Every spell she casts is tainted by the Abyss and gains a Paradox die even if she does not attempt to Reach as part of the spell. Conditions that resolve this way grant an Arcane Beat. At this point, the only way for the mage to remove the taint from her Pattern is to Scour it out, similar to Pattern Scouring for Mana as described on p. 87. Removing a Paradox Condition in this manner deals a single point of lethal damage to the mage, but she does not gain Mana from the Scouring.

The following example Paradox Conditions are not exhaustive. The Storyteller is encouraged to invent his own.

Abyssal Nimbus

The mage's Nimbus is disfigured by the Abyss, the corruption cascading through her sympathetic links. The mage, and any subjects affected by her Nimbus (including sympathetic ties influenced by her Long-Term Nimbus, anyone affected by her Nimbus Tilt, and anything imprinted with her Signature Nimbus), gain the Resonant Condition applicable to Abyssal entities. If the Paradox roll that inflicted this Condition rolled an exceptional success, she gains the Open Condition instead.

In addition, the Abyssal corruption is readily apparent to anyone who scrutinizes her Signature Nimbus, and her Long-Term Nimbus effects become twisted by the unreality of the Abyss. A Moros' Long-Term Nimbus might cause bizarre materials with impossible atomic properties to appear, while the religious revelations of an Obrimos' Nimbus take on a nihilistic tone.

Resolution: An Abyssal Entity uses the Condition to Manifest, the mage Scours the Condition from her Pattern, or the mage allows the Condition to lapse after the specified time.

Arcane Beat: Gain an Arcane Beat when this Condition lapses.

Abyssal Imago

The Abyss has warped the mage's ability to clearly envision her Supernal will. Whenever the mage casts a spell, she *must* spend additional Reach equal to the successes earned on the Paradox roll that inflicted this condition. If she does not, the spell automatically fails and adds dice equal to the caster's spellcasting dice pool to the Paradox roll.

Resolution: The mage successfully casts a spell that does not risk Paradox, the mage Scours the Condition from her Pattern, or the mage allows the Condition to lapse after the specified time.

Arcane Beat: Gain an Arcane Beat when this Condition lapses.

Abyssal Backlash

The mage has drawn the attention of a vast Abyssal intelligence called an Annunaki, which seeks to corrupt the mage's spells further. The next time the mage casts a spell that risks Paradox, add dice to the Paradox pool equal to the number of successes earned on the Paradox roll that inflicted this condition.

Resolution: The mage fully contains a Paradox, the mage Scours the Condition from her Pattern, or the mage allows the Condition to lapse after the specified time.

Arcane Beat: Gain an Arcane Beat when this Condition lapses.

Down and Dirty Spellcasting

Sometimes characters desire to cast spells or create effects that should be easy and require little risk or effort from the mage. Often these spells are effects that the mage creates on a regular basis, and the risk of failure is small and has little to no impact on the drama of the story. Determining spell factor penalties and Yantra bonuses for these kinds of spells is cumbersome. In these cases, just have players roll Gnosis + Arcanum. Success on the roll equals a successful casting. If the player wanted to affect multiple subjects, or create a large effect with the spellcasting, then the number of success may determine the number of subjects or the size of an area affected by the spell effect. For example, if a mage wanted to revive all the dead roses in a garden, she could roll Gnosis + Life and each success would equal a 5 meter radius of revived roses.

General Spell Considerations

Some general rules that apply to all spells.

Clash of Wills

Sometimes, two supernatural powers clearly oppose one another. If the normal systems for the powers fail to resolve this, such as when a mage attempts to observe an effect with his Mage Sight that another has placed under a protective veil, there is a Clash of Wills.



All characters using conflicting powers enter a contested roll-off, each using a pool of Gnosis + Arcanum. Other supernatural beings have Clash of Wills dice pools specified in their own rules. Ties reroll until one player has accrued more success than all others. The effect invoked by that player's character wins out and resolves as usual, while all others fail. Victory of one power in a clash does not mean the immediate cancellation of the others, save in cases where only one power can possibly endure. If the winning spell in a Clash between two spells runs out of Duration before the other does, the losing spell will take effect when the winner is removed.

Mages may spend Willpower to bolster the contested roll, and are always aware when their spells are clashing. Spells with Advanced Durations and Potency are more enduring in a Clash. Day-long spells add +1 die to the Clash roll, weeklong spells add +2, month-long +3, and year-long and indefinite effects add +4. Advanced Potency adds +1 die.

Dispellation

Sometimes mages encounter spell effects that remain in the world long after the caster is gone and wish to remove them with their own magic. Dispellation is itself a spell, with the target spell as its subject, as described on p. 165.

Countermagic

Mages may wish to prevent spellcasting when they witness it, instead of waiting to dispel the effect later. Countering a spell is described on p.192.

Casting During Combat

A mage casting a spell at standard range must successfully touch her subject. See "Touching an Opponent" in Chapter Five. Mages taking multiple turns to cast a spell (usually because they are utilizing Yantras or spending more Mana than their Gnosis allows) still apply Defense against attacks but may not make combat actions unless another rule such as the Adamant Hand Merit allows it.

Casting During a Grapple

Mages can cast spells in a single turn without making any outward sign. A mage in a grapple (whether he initiated it or not) can cast a spell whether he wins the grapple check for the turn or not, but suffers a -3 penalty to the spellcasting roll if he lost. Mages in a grapple cannot employ any Yantras involving movement, but if the grapple was initiated part-way through casting a spell, any Yantras the caster has already spent turns incorporating into the spell have their full effect.

Spell Stacking

When multiple spells affect the same aspect of a character the effects of the spells do not stack, and instead the spell with the highest Potency takes effect. For example, a character benefitting from a spell that grants her +1 Strength casts a spell that grants her +3 Strength. The original spell with +1 Strength is suppressed

for the Duration of the new spell. Both spell's Durations continue to lapse, though only the highest Potency spell is active.

Spell Control

Once a spell is cast, the mage can do very little to alter it. She cannot increase the spell factors short of canceling the spell and recasting it, though she can restrict its effects by reducing factors such as Potency, Duration, or Scale. As an instant action, the mage can reduce the factors of one of her spells in any way she chooses, but although she can reduce the number of subjects if the spell used that form of Scale, all spell factors must still apply equally to all subjects - she can't weaken a spell for a specific individual without further magic. A mage may cancel any of her active spells as a reflexive action.

A mage can have as many active spells as she has dots in Gnosis. Each additional spell requires a Reach, plus another Reach per spell already over the limit.

A mage may **relinquish** a spell, removing it from the spells counting against her Gnosis without canceling it. The player can spend a Willpower point to leave the spell as though cast by another mage. Without maintenance from the caster, the spell may go awry if left for very long periods. At the beginning of every chapter, the Storyteller rolls one die for every Reach the spell used above the caster's free Reach, or a chance die if it was within her limits. A dramatic failure means the spell skips the roll for the next chapter; success grants the Storyteller a Reach as though the spell had gained a Paradox; and an exceptional success ends the spell, canceling its remaining Duration.

Instead of risking the spell going wrong, the player may spend a Willpower dot to relinquish the spell safely. In this case, the spell continues until its Duration runs down or it is dispelled. Most mages only relinquish indefinite spells, as relinquishing safely is extremely taxing. Relinquishing unsafely is illegal in many Consilia, or at least seen as grossly negligent.

When a mage dies, all of her spells are immediately relinquished as though the player spent a Willpower point.

Combined Spells

The Arcanum descriptions explain discrete spells and their effects. Sometimes, a mage wants more than one of these spell effects to take place in a single casting. The result is called a **combined spell**. The main advantage of a combined spell is that it counts as a single spell toward the total spells a mage can have active, and all its effects activate simultaneously. Mages can combine a number of spells determined by Gnosis (two at Gnosis 3, three at Gnosis 6, and four at Gnosis 9) together into a single casting.

Rotes cannot be combined, but Praxes can if the caster has all of the spells being combined as Praxes.

To cast a combined spell, the mage's base dice pool is her Gnosis + lowest Arcanum of the spells cast; this pool suffers a -2 penalty for each additional spell over the first. For example, a mage with Gnosis 4 would cast a combined Mind 3, Forces 4 spell at Gnosis 4 + Mind 3 - 2. Spell modifications such as Yantras and spell factors affect the entire spellcasting pool and spell effects. Free Reach is determined as normal. Reach to alter spell factors applies to all spells, but additional Reach effects in a spell's listing must be

bought separately. Multiple spell effects must use the same scale unless the mage uses a Reach to separate the effects. Roll results are the same as single-cast spells. Spell stacking still applies if the constituent spells affect the same thing.

Teamwork

Mages may work together towards a common goal for spellcasting. This is handled like any other action where characters combine their efforts (see “Teamwork,” p. 214). The mages involved in the spellcasting must all have at least one dot in the Arcanum required to cast the spell, while the leader must have the required Arcanum rating to cast it himself. If the leader knows the spell as a Praxis or Rote, the spell gains the benefits of those methods. Any secondary caster who meets the Arcanum requirements rolls her own casting and adds her successes as bonus dice to the leader. If a secondary caster does not meet the Arcanum requirements, she rolls Gnosis (no Arcanum) with a -3 penalty, and provides any successes as bonus dice to the leader. Each participant must roll for Paradox separately; if any one of the casters releases a Paradox instead of containing it, it affects the entire spell. Mages without the Arcanum used at all, Sleepwalkers, and Proximi may also assist in the casting, but do not roll. Instead, the casters may use their participation in the ritual as an environment Yantra.

Yantras

Magic is the act of transforming will to power. A mage needs no more than that — just the ability to think clearly enough to form an Imago is enough to work magic. But mages are also human, and humans find that the focus necessary to form and maintain all but the simplest Imago at the drop of a hat is elusive at best. Instead, mages do what all humans do: They use semiotic shortcuts. Just as a first-grader may learn “Roy G. Biv” as a mnemonic for the colors of the rainbow, so a mage uses symbolic times, places, words, items, and movements as a key to forming an Imago. The Diamond calls these keys “Yantras,” after the Sanskrit word for a mystical design or apparatus. The Free Council prefers the more prosaic “Instruments,” focusing on their grounding in humanity’s acts of creation. The Seers know them as “Chains,” mystic signatures burned into the Fallen World by the hands of the Exarchs.

Sleepwalkers and Sleepers alike often mistake the medium for the message, believing that the Yantras associated with a given working are in and of themselves sources of power. This belief — that anyone can work Supernal magic with the right combination of items, motions, and words — is sadly mistaken. To a mage, they are aids to concentration and keys that unlock parts of an Imago held in memories.

Semiotics

Each Yantra has a meaning above and beyond the Yantra itself — to the mage who wields it, a crystal rod is a tool of clarity and a means of action at a distance, of touching beyond one’s grasp. To some mages, it is a symbol of male sexuality. Others

see it as a means of channeling power and removing illusions. Still others see it as a tool of command. All of these things are true — *this* crystal wand is a reflection of the Crystal Wand that casts a shadow on the wall of Plato’s cave.

In order to use a Yantra, a willworker has to recognize a specific symbolism in the tool. That reflection then factors into her arcane understanding, enabling her to use that symbol as the foundation for an Imago. Rather than drawing a picture of what she wants freehand, she instead has a stock image she can trace or use as inspiration. The more Yantras she uses — whether different interpretations of the same tool or different tools altogether — the more basis she has for her Imago, making it easier to form.

Naturally, using Yantras in this way has its limits — if the mage can’t fit any of the symbols associated with the Yantra into her working, she can’t use it to bolster her magic. A Guardian might set up a Chamber of Veils that she uses to hide truths and reveal secrets, but unless she can connect her Supernal understanding of the Chamber of Veils to a place of healing, it won’t help her when a cabal mate stumbles through her door holding his intestines in place.

Unlocking the Imago

When a mage uses a Yantra in the working of a spell, she adds bonus dice to her spellcasting dice pool. The number of dice varies by the Yantra that she uses. These bonus dice can help eliminate penalties to her spellcasting pool, or provide bonuses. A mage can only get so much help from Yantras — **after offsetting any penalties, the maximum bonus from all her Yantras combined cannot exceed +5 dice.**

A mage may want to use as many Yantras as possible in her spellcasting, especially for powerful acts of magic. She can, however, only access so many pieces of Supernal knowledge at once. To reflect this, the number of Yantras she can apply to a given spellcasting pool is limited by her Gnosis. If she uses one ritual item in many ways, each individual use counts as one Yantra for this limit.

It takes time to draw upon the Supernal sympathy of objects and actions. A mage can draw upon one Yantra as a reflexive action when casting a spell; each further Yantra extends the casting time of instant spells by a turn. Ritual spells already take long enough to incorporate as many Yantras as the mage is able and willing to use. Someone who wants to interrupt an involved casting thus has plentiful opportunities to snatch away mystic items, block out the light of the full moon, or just shoot the mage in the head.

Place

Mages seek out — or create — locations that border the Supernal in the hope of using that proximity to enforce Supernal laws on the Fallen World. Others find places or times where the Lie reflects the Supernal without any specific proximity.

Demesne

A willworker might enhance her ritual space with a soul stone, turning it into a weak form of Verge. Mages most often decorate

their ritual spaces according to their Orders – a Mystagogue’s ritual space may be a storehouse of knowledge that reflects the Order’s Tarsi Archive, while a given Libertine may fit hers out as a machine shop or embed the soul stone in a sacred tree.

A Demesne is of most use in ritual casting. It provides a prepared, sacred space where the mystic can work without the interruptions of the Lie; only a few (such as a dojo used by an Adamantine Arrow to practice sacred weapon forms) are of any use with instant spells and then only in defense of the Demesne. Beyond that, the construction and sacred tools within a Demesne determine what magics it can apply to. A Libertine’s machine shop helps with spells that build, repair, or dismantle. An Arrow’s training room helps with spells involving duels, preparation for battle, and self-mastery. A Guardian’s Veiled Room helps with spells of disguise, misdirection, and uncovering truths.

Effect: Demesnes provide a 2-die bonus. More information on Demesnes is on p. 99 and p. 242.

Environment

Places and times in the Fallen World can bring about the Supernal if they reflect the spell a mage is using. An Acanthus may use the sun at noon to see through falsehoods, while a Mastigos might use the light of the full moon reflected in a pool of water to scry across vast distances. Location is just as important – many Obrimos seek out churches to perform spells of persuasion, command, and stewardship. Some wizards prepare ritual spaces that contain multiple Yantras – combining a favorable environment with Atlantean runes and magical tools into a summoning circle. Such a location combines three Yantras in one place – but inexperienced mystics must take their time, and a mage’s enemies will soon learn where best to strike.

An environment has to link to the spell itself, not just the mage. The Obrimos in a church cannot use it as a Yantra to magically charge her cellphone. The magic must link to what Sleepers know about a place or time, not because their perceptions cause Supernal notice but because their actions unconsciously reflect the Supernal attributes of a place.

Effect: Casting in an appropriate location grants a 1-die bonus.

Supernal Verges

In places where the Supernal touches the Fallen World, willworkers find it much easier to draw power through an Imago. Such places are natural Yantras, lending their power to those within. Each Supernal Verge teems with the power of one of the Supernal Realms, and lends its power to the Ruling Arcana of that Realm.

Supernal Verges are thus as valuable for their versatility as their power. In a Pandemonic Verge, any spells that use the Mind or Space Arcana can draw upon the Verge’s power, be that a long ritual to superimpose two locations or a simple spell to fuddle an opponent’s senses. A mage in the appropriate Supernal Verge can use his mystic connection to the Watchtower to use it as a Yantra on any ritual spell that doesn’t involve the Path’s Inferior Arcanum but does use one of the Ruling Arcana.

Effect: Verges provide a 2-die bonus. More information on Supernal Verges is on p. 242.

Actions

Everything a willworker does can be magic. Orders teach ritual gestures that bring the Imago of a Rote to mind through conditioning and muscle-memory. High Speech allows a mage to intone or write her spell not in the imperfect tongues of the Fallen World but the sacred glossolalia that is what it describes. A mage can even hold her spell’s Imago in her mind, focusing on it beyond the point of creation in order to maintain Supernal truth upon the world.

Some mages use actions as Yantras to get out of a bind – even stripped naked and chained in a cannibal killer’s dungeon, a thearch can speak words of High Speech and focus upon the Imago of a spell. It takes a little practice to get used to, but given a little time to breathe he can work magic far easier than if he formed an Imago from whole cloth.

Concentration

Many spells finish when the willworker forces the Lie to change. Some hold on for as long as the mage can impose her will. It’s a draining task, but worth it. Most common is a mage who holds her Imago in her mind. If she’s particularly skilled in the High Speech, she may find it easier to keep the spell in mind by slowly translating her Imago into runes and back again, focusing on them. In either case, she must focus on the spell and only the spell. If she wavers, the effect is lost.

On a basic level, concentration is a mage exerting her will over even her own mind, forcing herself not to weaken. As such, it’s a symbol of ongoing action – and a means to have a spell last longer than it should. The vast majority of mages focus on a spell over time in order to bolster its Duration. A few mages instead see concentration like a lens, focusing Supernal truth. While this interpretation can bolster a spell, it also leaves the mage open to disruption until she completes her spell.

Effect: Concentrating on an spell with a Duration greater than a turn provides +2 extra dice. If the mage is hurt or takes a non-reflexive action while the spell is active, it ends immediately.

Mantras

A trained mage can use High Speech to intone her Imago, describing the change that she wills and thus making that change real. As a means of changing the world it is flexible – it requires no external props nor ongoing concentration – but it requires her to speak the words out loud.

As a Yantra, High Speech is very versatile. Many mages know enough to declaim control or dominance, or to repeat the words over and over again to build up a defense. It is, however, not subtle. She cannot work words of High Speech into a normal sentence to compel a listener to her will. The meta-language of the Supernal cannot hide in the shallow grammars and inflections of the Lie.

Effect: If the mage has the High Speech Merit, vocally intoning her Imago confers a 2-die bonus. As it takes time to speak the words, she cannot use this Yantra reflexively – it always increases the casting time.

Mudras

Mudras are Supernal mnemonics taught by the Orders that draw on skills and knowledge of the Fallen World, cast through the Order's philosophy. Creating mudras is part of defining a Rote, codifying the structure of magic in the symbols of the Lie. Mudras come in many forms — Buddhist Libertines may use zazen, while the Arrow may tense specific muscles in a set pattern, and Guardians use specific rhythms of walking and representative hand gestures. Each Rote is unique to the mage who created it — some encode specific symbolism into the positioning of individual fingers to allow a student to form his own mnemonic; far more present a paternalistic approach that teaches the mudra and the magic without an intervening step to consider the actions' meaning.

Effect: Using a Rote's mudra adds the user's rating in the Rote's encoded Skill to her dice pool up to +5. If the Skill is one of her Order's specialized Rote Skills, she adds an extra die. Mudras do not require the mage to actually use the Skill beyond remembering the gestures of the mudra; a mage cannot spend a turn hacking in order to then claim a Computers mudra for a spell.

Runes

An intersection between incanting in High Speech and concentrating on an Imago, some mages use runic High Speech to enhance the power of a spell. Most use the boost from a runic Yantra to boost a spell's Duration; the need to scribe the runes onto the spell's subject makes them less useful for most other castings. Anything that disrupts the careful shape and arrangement of the runes makes them an imperfect description of the spell's Imago, ending the effect.

Some mages inscribe the runes of a healing spell onto their cabalmates in the form of mystic tattoos that heal injuries, while others paint or carve them into solid objects to make them harder than diamond. When using runes on a person, a mage may paint her subject, scribe the runes with a tattooing gun, or brand them right into the subject's flesh. Properly drawing runes takes time equal to the mage's ritual interval.

Effect: Runic casting adds +2 dice to the mage's spellcasting pool. If anything damages or disrupts the runes while the spell is active — whitewashing runes painted on a wall, or slicing through a runic tattoo — it ends immediately.

Tools

Each mage maintains at least a handful of magical tools, mundane items that have a symbolic link to specific kinds of magic. Almost no mages rely on just a single tool. Even if she only uses magic appropriate to its symbol, it's too easy to take the tool away from her.

Effect: Each item used as a Yantra adds +1 die to the spellcasting pool.

Path Tools

Each Supernal Realm has its reflections in the Fallen World, and a mage knows the Tools of magic that align closely to her

Path. While mages with a background in Sleeper occultism recognize that the Path tools show up in several traditions, their direct elemental or Tarot symbolism is the Lie's corruption of the Supernal Realms' truth.

Each Path has five Tools, each of which has a specific magical function:

- **Coins** or other symbols of material wealth, which represent construction, repair, and inanimate or intangible things that last beyond mere human lifespans. It is the Tool closest to the Fallen World, and so is often used to manipulate it directly, for money or other resources.
- **Cups** or other drinking vessels can invoke healing, intuition, perceptual magic, and gathering together. Drinking from a shared cup is a common way to spread a spell among a group. It's often seen as a symbol of female sexuality, though what that means depends on the mage.
- **Mirrors** may be actual mirrors, polished plates, or reflecting pools held in containers of the appropriate material. They represent sight, soul, and the self, and are the Magical Tool most commonly used when the mage would work a spell upon herself.
- **Rods**, wands, or staves are symbols of control — the ability to point and have a thing happen. Pointing a rod is a way of singling out a specific victim, while holding one is a symbol of rulership and command. It's also used as a symbol of male sexuality.
- **Weapons**, most normally knives, are symbols of thought made action — any spell that takes direct, decisive action on the world (or a person) can benefit from a weapon. While often used to harm, weapons also represent the mastery of intellect and will over the world.

Materials

Each Path has specific materials that elevate a Magical Tool from merely an object to something resonant with a Supernal Realm, as well as weapons that can replace the traditional knife.

- **Acanthus:** Glass, crystal, silver, reflective materials; Rapier, bow, precision weapons
- **Mastigos:** Iron, brass, leather, worked materials; Curved sword, whip, cruel weapons
- **Moros:** Lead, bone, gems, buried materials; Hammer, mace, crushing weapons
- **Obrimos:** Steel, petrified wood, gold, perfected materials; Double-edged sword, spear, noble weapons
- **Thysus:** Wood, copper, stone, natural materials; Axe, sling, hunting weapons

Order Tools

An Order's Magical Tools draw upon that Order's symbols rather than those of the Supernal world directly, focusing magic in a way that matches their teachings. The formal magical style of the Diamond Orders and the Seers of the Throne all resonate through the same tools — the Arrow uses martial Tools as symbols of conflict; the Guardians use cloaks, masks, and veils as symbols of things hidden and revealed; the Mysterium teaches books, writing, and language as Tools of knowledge and communication; and the Silver Ladder uses signs of authority to as Tools of status and persuasion. The Seers of the Throne each choose a sigil or word that they must display to use it as a Tool.

The Free Council are an oddity among all the other Orders. While every Libertine may use complex mechanisms and systems as Order Tools, the Techné Merit allows a Libertine to focus on a personal style of magic based on Sleeper culture, using it as an additional Tool in her magic.

Patron Tools

The Seers of the Throne do not work their magic alone. Ascending through the priesthood of the Lie drives a Seer to serve her patron Exarch. Once she gains an Exarch's notice, it tests her. If she succeeds, she becomes a Prelate, and she can use her patron Exarch's symbols to draw on its power. Each Exarch has its own symbols — its own strings that it uses to puppet the Fallen World like a broken marionette. A Prelate can use her Exarch's strings as Yantras for her own magic, but each individual Exarch has its own symbolic resonance that limits what Prelates can do with its blessing as a tool. For more information, see the Prelacy Merit on p. 103. Other mages, such as the Scelesti, sometimes bargain for Patron Tools of their own.

Sympathy

Rather than defining the “what” of a spell, sympathetic tools define the “who” — the person, place, creature, or institution upon which the mage forces her will. She may have a person's sympathetic name or a lock of his hair, a ghost's Anchor, a chunk of concrete taken from a building, or a company's articles of incorporation. Whatever the case, the Yantra represents the subject of the spell, allowing the mage to build it into the Imago or access an Attainment to use her own sympathetic connection to the subject in order to cast across Space or Time.

- Material sympathy represents the subject as he is now, or at the time the mage wants to affect him. It could be a piece of the target's physical substance, or a recent photograph or recording; an item the subject created within a month is also acceptable.
- Representational sympathy is something that represents the subject though she has changed since — an old lock of hair or photo of the subject as a child, for example.
- Symbolic sympathy includes indirect representations of the subject — a person's sympathetic name, drawings, caricatures, or posed and costumed photographs.

Effects: Material sympathy gives a 2-die bonus to the spellcasting pool, while representational sympathy adds +1 die. Symbolic sympathy is not close enough to the subject to give a bonus. A mage **must** use a sympathetic Yantra in order to cast a spell using the Sympathetic Range or Temporal Sympathy Attainments; it does not give any bonus dice when doing so.

Sacrament

A sacrament is any Magical Tool symbolic of the spell in question that the mage destroys during casting. Many times — though by no means always — it also provides a sympathetic link to the subject of her spell. She may infuse bread with herbs and spices to make those who share the loaf work together smoothly. She may burn a man's driver's license and passport for a spell that removes him from government records. She may fire a male figure out of clay then crush it to powder when changing her body to match her gender. If she can find one of her enemy's Magical Tools, she has both a sympathetic link and a sacrament for any spell that would hurt him.

Some mages go further than finding or creating things to sacrifice during casting. Some engage in quests into the other realms of the Fallen World, leaving the flesh behind to uncover items with magical properties of their own. Destroying them during casting can make a spell flare with power. Particularly twisted mages kill animals and murder humans for the magical power. The surest way to kill a powerful enemy with magic is to sacrifice something close to him — a beloved pet, or a family member.

Effect: Most sacraments grant a +1 bonus. If the mage has to spend significant effort to find the right item or component, the bonus increases to +2, or +3 if the item comes from somewhere other than the material realm.

Persona

Some mages invest in their cabals and in their Shadow Names, coming up with whole new personas as willworkers, independent — or at least, significantly divergent — from who they were as Sleepers. A persona binds a mage's magical style, her personal mysteries, and her Shadow Name into an identity that, over time, leaves its mark on the Fallen World. By playing to this fictional persona, she can tap in to a level of Supernal sympathy. Her actions must play in to her personal story, however — a fortune-teller or faith healer can't use her persona as a Yantra to harm another. By contrast, the faith healer could use his persona not just for healing, but to bolster his reputation and give his words greater gravitas, making people more likely to believe him.

Effect: A persona Yantra keys in to the mage's Shadow Name and Cabal Theme Merits, providing +1 to +4 dice. Mana charged by ley resonance also allows a +1 Persona Yantra.

Dedicated Tools

Each mage has a Dedicated Magical Tool — an item that synchronizes with her Nimbus and that feeds in to her understanding of magic. A Thyrsus who trusts to nature to provide may not have much by way of possessions, but his walking stick is his staff, and he uses it even for spells that do not benefit from

its symbolism. A Botswanan Libertine who learned the magic of the Sangoma may tap a rhythm on her drum even when the noise has no bearing on her spells, as the drumming is part of her Nimbus.

The Dedicated tool is often the first Path tool that the mage used, or something that she grabbed at the moment of her Awakening. If it gets destroyed or lost, she can replace it — but at a price. She must use her chosen tool as a Yantra in every spell she casts for a month (counting against her limit), regardless of whether doing so gives any benefit.

Effect: Using a Dedicated tool as a Yantra penalizes any Paradox dice pool by -2; the mage can also use it as a Path or Order tool.

Practices

Mages divide the art of magic into thirteen Practices of increasing complexity. Demonstrating their expertise with these methodologies is how mages claim rank and privilege: A Thyrus who has demonstrated the ability to cast Spirit Unmaking spells has earned the right to call herself a *Master*, for example. When they require further gradation, mages specify the number of Arcana they have achieved their highest rank in: if the same Thyrus also successfully casts a Life Making spell she may call herself a *second-degree Master*.

Initiate (●)

- **Compelling** spells nudge a preferred but possible outcome into reality. A coin toss can be made to come up tails (Fate), a bored worker can be made to take that coffee break now (Mind), or a spirit can be forced to avoid its bane (Spirit). Making the coin hover and spin in midair, making the worker walk into her boss's office and quit, or making the spirit ignore its favorite prey are beyond the bounds of a Compelling spell.
- **Knowing** spells deliver knowledge about something directly to the mage (or to another target). A mage can divine the cause of a corpse's death (Death), sense whether someone has a powerful destiny (Fate), or unerringly know which way is north (Space). This knowledge is a direct awareness of Supernal truth; the mage doesn't have to interpret evidence based on her senses or try to divine the truth out of cryptic riddles.
- **Unveiling** spells expose hidden things to the mage's senses. She might gain the ability to hear radio waves (Forces), peer across the Gauntlet or perceive things in Twilight (Spirit), or see the flow of Mana across the landscape (Prime).

Apprentice (●●)

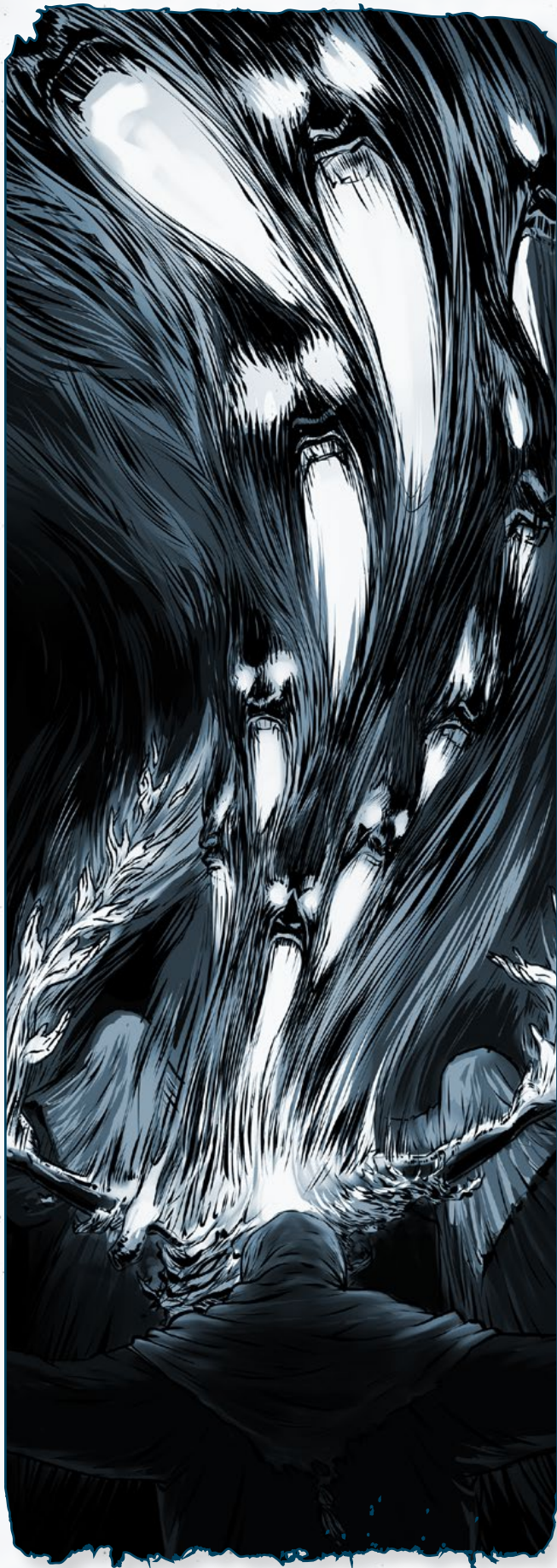
- **Ruling** spells grant fuller control over phenomena than a mere Compelling spell. Water can be made to flow uphill or into unnatural shapes (Matter), animals (or even human

beings) can be commanded (Life or Mind), or time can be momentarily made to accelerate or slow down (Time). A Ruling spell can't fundamentally alter its target's abilities: Water can be directed, but not turned solid or gaseous. Time can be altered, but not overwritten. An animal can be commanded, but not made stronger or fiercer.

- **Shielding** spells, sometimes called Warding spells, offer protection against phenomena under the Arcanum's purview. A Shielding spell might protect against a ghost's Numina (Death), make the mage immune to fire (Forces) or disease (Life), or allow her to survive in a caustic atmosphere (Matter). Mages protect themselves from general harm through the power of their Arcana with the Mage Armor Attainment rather than Shielding spells.
- **Veiling** spells are twofold: Firstly, they can conceal things under the Arcanum's purview from detection: A target can be made to lose all sense of time (Time), a fire's heat and light can be hidden from view (Forces), or a building made all but impossible to notice (Matter). Secondly, they can conceal a target *from* concrete phenomena under the Arcanum's purview: a mage can render herself invisible to ghosts (Death), or ward a powerful Locus from detection by spirits (Spirit), or walk unnoticed through a crowd (Life or Mind), or past a camera (Forces). Short of archmastery, it's impossible to Veil something against an abstract concept or force: a mage can't Veil herself against death or hide from time, for example.

Disciple (●●●)

- **Fraying** spells degrade things, weakening them and enhancing their flaws. Fraying spells can weaken targets under the Arcanum's purview: damping a fire (Forces), sapping Strength (Life), or eroding the barrier between worlds (Death, Spirit, or others, depending on the worlds in question). They can also directly attack targets using the energies of the Arcanum: inflicting damage via the chill of the grave (Death), psychic overload (Mind), or a blast of electricity (Forces). Damage inflicted by a direct-attack Fraying spell is always bashing.
- **Perfecting** spells are the opposite of Fraying spells in many ways: they bolster, strengthen, and improve rather than weakening and eroding. A Perfecting spell might repair damage to an object or a person (Matter or Life), allow a machine to function perfectly with no wear and tear (Matter), or make a modest destiny into an earth-shaking one (Fate).
- **Weaving** spells can alter nearly any property of a target without transforming it into something completely different. Solid steel can be transmuted to liquid (Matter), a sword can be enchanted to damage beings in Twilight (Death or Spirit), or a few seconds of time can be rewritten (Time).



Adept (●●●●)

- **Patterning** spells allow a mage to completely transform a target into something else that falls under the Arcanum's purview. A memory can be replaced wholesale (Mind), the mage can turn herself (or a target) into an animal (Life), or she can teleport by "rewriting" her own location (Space). A spell that transforms the target into something that falls within the Purview of another Arcanum, like transforming into a living pillar of fire (Life and Forces), requires a mage to know the Practice of Patterning for the destination Arcanum.
- **Unraveling** spells can significantly impair or damage phenomena under the Arcanum's purview, or directly inflict severe damage using the forces of an Arcanum. A raging storm might become a calm summer's day (Forces), or solid iron reduced to dust (Matter); even spells can be torn asunder (Prime). Mages can hurl fire (Forces) at their enemies, or cause aneurysms and heart attacks with a glance (Mind or Life). Damage inflicted by a direct Unraveling attack is lethal, but can be upgraded to aggravated by spending a point of Mana and one Reach.

Master (●●●●●)

- **Making** spells allow for the creation of whole new phenomena *ex nihilo*. The mage can conjure gamma rays (Forces), birth new spirits (Spirit), or create a doorway to the Underworld (Death). Time can be dilated by creating more seconds, hours, or even days (Time).

Many Roads

Astute players will likely figure out a multitude of ways to accomplish similar effects with different Arcana, sometimes at different dot levels. *This is okay.* Just because a Fate ●●● spell can do a thing doesn't mean a Forces ● spell that does a similar thing is "broken" or should be disallowed.

Take for example influencing the outcome of a coin toss. A simple Compelling of Fate can easily tip the odds toward either heads or tails, but it's theoretically possible to use a Forces Fraying spell to alter the kinetic energy imparted to the coin, causing it to spin slower, or use a Matter Weaving spell to change the coin's center of mass. Both are perhaps more complicated than the Fate approach, but they're valid within the purview of their respective Arcana. Similarly, a Mind Weaving spell could force a target to feel love, while a Life Ruling spell could cause the target's brain to release dopamine and other hormones that create a similar effect.

- **Unmaking** spells annihilate subjects under the Arcanum’s purview entirely. Life can be snuffed like a candle (Life), two locations can be forced into each other by destroying the distance between them (Space), even Hal- lows and Verges can be wiped from the Earth (Prime). Unmaking spells are beyond inflicting direct damage with attacks; a successful Unmaking destroys the target altogether.

Creative Thaumaturgy

The Wise aren’t limited to the example spells described with the ten Arcana starting on p. 128. Within the bounds of their power, mages can conjure nearly any effect they can imagine. This section provides step by step guidelines for creating your own spells.

Step One: Declare Intent

First and foremost, decide exactly what you’re trying to accomplish with your spell. Don’t focus on *how* the magic will do what you want for now, just focus on *what* you want it to do.

Step Two:

Determine Arcanum and Practice

Using the descriptions of the ten Arcana beginning on p. 128 and the descriptions of the thirteen Practices beginning

on p. 123, determine which Arcanum and which Practice the spell falls under. Depending on the intent of the spell, this might be obvious, or there might be several ways you could go about accomplishing your intent. Don’t worry about whether the effect seems “too powerful” for its dot level or “unbalanced” compared to a similar effect under a different Arcanum; part of the fun of playing **Mage** is coming up with clever, unexpectedly-useful applications of magic.

Step Three:

Determine Effect and Cost

The effects of a spell can be incredibly broad, and it’s impossible to categorize every conceivable thing a mage might want to do with a spell, but this section will highlight some of the more common effects, how to adjudicate them, and what they should cost.

Don’t think of this section as a “menu”; any individual spell should have a single, clear effect. If you start designing a spell that deals damage *and* grants bonus dice *and* imposes a Condition, you’re probably creating a combined spell (see p. 118), not a single spell.

All Mana costs are cumulative. A mage attempting a feat that requires Mana above her Gnosis-derived spending limit may take as many turns as needed before the action to spend the required Mana. If she is interrupted or changes her mind part-way through, Mana spent is still lost.

Damage

A spell can deal damage directly, as in the case of a thunderbolt or an enervating touch, or indirectly, as in the case of rotting out a support beam to drop a house on someone.

- Direct damage spells can use many Practices depending on Arcanum, but always inflict damage equal to Potency.
- ●●● spells inflict bashing damage, while ●●●● spells inflict lethal damage.
- A lethal damage spell may be upgraded to aggravated damage for the cost of a point of Mana and one Reach.

Spells that deal damage indirectly aren’t subject to these limits: A spell that causes a roaring bonfire to spread and consume the victim inflicts the standard damage for exposure to fire.

Healing

Healing spells are usually Perfecting (●●●) or Patterning (●●●●) spells. A Ruling (●●) spell can boost a subject’s natural healing time.

- A Ruling spell can halve the subject’s normal recovery time for its Duration, or quarter it with a Reach.
- Perfecting spells heal bashing damage, repair inanimate objects, or heal lethal damage with a Reach.

Mana Costs

While this section discusses a variety of effects that require Mana costs, here’s a convenient, collected reminder of all spellcasting effects that cost Mana:

- Each improvised spell (not Praxes or Rotes) outside Ruling Arcana costs a point of Mana.
- Many Attainments require Mana or are more efficient with its use.
- Spells that directly call upon the perfection of the Supernal Realms require a point of Mana.

This includes the following effects:

- Indefinite Duration
- Inflicting aggravated damage
- Healing aggravated damage
- Granting the Rote Action Quality
- Granting automatic success or failure
- Boosting Traits beyond the subject’s maximum rating or altering that rating

- Patterning spells heal lethal damage. If an inanimate object is completely destroyed rather than merely broken, it may require a Patterning spell to fix.
- A Patterning healing spell can repair aggravated damage instead of lethal at the cost of one point of Mana and a Reach.

Conditions & Tilts

As pre-packaged blocks of rules already designed to fit into a lot of different systems, Conditions are an excellent source of inspiration for long-lasting spells.

Because the effects of Conditions and Tilts are so broad, it's difficult to assign hard-and-fast rules for Practices that inflict them. Use the Practice descriptions and the following list as a guideline:

- Compelling (●) spells can't create Conditions out of whole cloth, but can intensify phenomena that already exist to inflict Conditions. A Compelling spell can make someone who's already nervous Spooked, for example, but can't make someone who's uninterested in the mage romantically Swooning.
- Ruling (●●) spells can create most non-Persistent, mundane Conditions. Supernatural Conditions, such as the Soulless Condition and its sequelae or Manifestation Conditions, generally require a Weaving (●●●) spell.
- Creating a Persistent Condition is almost always a Patterning (●●●●) or Unraveling (●●●●) effect.
- Spells most often inflict Conditions that harm, hinder, or inconvenience characters. Spells can mimic the effects of a helpful Condition, but using magic to gain a benefit *and* a Beat is double-dipping. Beneficial Conditions created by magic don't grant Beats unless they're the result of an exceptional success.
- Tilts are usually created by applying a Reach to an attack spell, but if you want to create one on its own, it's usually a Fraying (●●●) or Patterning (●●●●) spell.

The Beat Goes On...

At this point, you may be wondering what's stopping you from loading up on Condition-causing spells in a relatively safe environment, resolving them all, and earning Beats by the bucketload? The honest answer is "nothing, mages do it all the time." Mastigos force their apprentices to face terrifying fears in order to better themselves. Thyrsus challenge their own bodies with horrible diseases. The only limits are the rule that a character may only earn one Beat per scene from resolving Conditions, and the limits of her own Wisdom (see p. 87). Remember, though, that letting a Condition-causing spell's Duration expire doesn't resolve the Condition.

Conditions created with magic only last as long as the Duration factor of the spell. If the target resolves the Condition before the Duration expires, the spell ends early and the target gains a Beat as normal. (It's the Storyteller's call whether the Beat is normal or Arcane.) If the Duration runs out, the Condition goes away; but that doesn't count as resolving the Condition.

Removing a condition with magic is always at least a Ruling (●●) spell, but otherwise follows the same guidelines as creating one.

Bonuses/Penalties

Spells that grant bonus dots to traits can belong to nearly any Practice, depending on what the Trait represents. Obvious examples include Perfecting for directly increasing the Attributes and Skills of a target, but a Ruling spell to make a corpse rise up and serve you can be modeled as a spell that grants you Retainer dots.

- Increasing a Merit is typically a Ruling (●●) spell. Attributes and Skills can be increased by a Perfecting (●●●) spell. Gaining a Skill that has no dots is a Patterning (●●●●) spell.
- Spells that grant or increase equipment bonuses count as Trait bonuses. This also applies to spells that simply increase a dice pool.
- A spell can grant a total number of Trait dots equal to its Potency. Advantages, such as Gnosis or a vampire's Blood Potency, cannot be granted by spells, nor can supernatural abilities like Arcana or Disciplines.
- Any spell that increases a Trait beyond the target's natural maximum costs a point of Mana. Remember that high-Gnosis mages and other supernatural creatures may have Trait maximums higher than 5. The "Trait maximum" for an equipment bonus is always +5.
- Trait dots granted by magic last only as long as the spell's Duration, and are not subject to the Sanctity of Merits rule.

Dice Effects

- A Ruling (●●) spell can grant the 9-Again rule to a dice pool of relevant actions, or 8-Again with one Reach.
- A Perfecting (●●●) spell can grant the rote action quality at the cost of one point of Mana.
- The spell affects one roll per point of Potency. If the spell's Duration expires before the Potency is used up, any excess Potency is lost.

Protection

Most commonly with the Practice of Shielding (●●), a spell may grant protection from forces under the Arcanum's purview. These spells usually provide blanket immunity to natural or mundane phenomena, while protecting against a number of

“] Turn Him Into a Frog!”

You may have noticed with this system that it's much easier for a mage to incapacitate an enemy by, say, putting him to sleep or charming him into ignoring the caster than by fighting him. That's intentional – but what about when it comes to directly killing someone with magic? Surely a Master of Death can snuff out a life with a glance, and if an Adept of Life can't turn someone into a frog, what good is she?

Patterning (••••) spells can transform a living target into something harmless (or even inanimate), but such magic is never Lasting. It can be pushed up to Indefinite Duration, but there's always a chance the spell can be broken.

Certain Unmaking (•••••) spells can slay a target with a single casting, or neutralize them permanently, but even then, the spell is *always* Withstood by the target's relevant Resistance Attribute.

supernatural attacks equal to the spell's Potency. Such attacks must win a Clash of Wills to affect the target.

Hiding

Veiling (••) spells render the target undetectable to certain phenomena or types of beings. This stealth is fully effective against ordinary senses, and provokes a Clash of Wills against mystical detection attempts.

Narrative Effects

This is a catch-all category for spell effects that influence the fiction of the game but don't interact directly with the mechanics. Things like walking through walls, shaping clay into a statue, or transmuting one substance into another fall under this category.

- Most narrative effects will care less for Potency than for Scale, Range, and other spell factors. However, if the effect could have varying degrees of success (consider trying to calm a hurricane: There's a whole range of possibilities between “nothing happens” and “a dead calm”), the Storyteller should establish Potency requirements. The guidelines for determining the number of successes required on an extended action provide a good rule of thumb.

- Making a spell Lasting always costs +2 Reach, but you should think carefully before allowing it – only spells without any way to revert them should have the option.

Step Four:

Determine Withstand Trait

Spells that directly target a subject's body, mind, or soul are usually Withstood (see p. 114) by one of the subject's Resistance Attributes. Spells that cross the Gauntlet are Withstood by the local Gauntlet Strength. Other spells might be Withstood by more esoteric values.

Look at the intended subject of your spell. Is it something that could “fight back” against the magic, or is there something that seems like it would require the mage to put more effort than usual into the spell? If so, that's the value that Withstands it. Living (or undead) subjects usually Withstand spells with Stamina (for physical transformations or afflictions), Resolve (for attempted mind control or other mental effects), or Composure (for emotional manipulation or effects that target sanity, perception, or the soul). Ephemeral entities Withstand spells with their Rank.

Supernatural beings like mages, vampires, or demons *do not* add their Supernatural Tolerance trait to Withstand a spell.

Spells are only resisted or contested if some supernatural power would interfere with the mage's ability to form an Imago, such as Countermagic (p. 192).

Spells that inflict direct damage with the Practices of Fraying and Unraveling are never Withstood; the subject's Stamina is already factored in by virtue of the subject's Health.

Step Five: Primary Factor

Determine which Factor is the Primary Factor. This is either Potency or Duration, with the rule of thumb of “whichever Factor you immediately think of when you think of a more powerful version of the spell.” The Primary Factor of a given spell effect is always the same; you can't make a creative thaumaturgy spell that's identical to another spell except with a different Primary Factor.

Step Six: Cast the Spell

At this point you're done creating your new spell; refer to the spellcasting rules on p. 111 to cast it.

DEATH

Purview: Darkness, decay, ectoplasm, ghosts, the Underworld, souls, cold, absence, enervation, endings.

Death is the Subtle Arcanum governing souls, absence, and the cessation of things. Those who study Death find themselves deeply involved in matters of endings, decay, and darkness. This tends to make practitioners seem morbid, though few are. Mages who delve into the mysteries of Death find solace and understanding in the fact that all things come to an end. While such thoughts may look fatalistic on the surface, a mage who sees past the Lie realizes she has the power to not only create these states, but to control, manipulate, and even prevent them. She can bolster a soul, restore pleasure to a ghost, and reverse the effects of aging just as well as she can destroy souls, rip ghosts from anchors, and steal the life from another.

• Initiate of Death

Ectoplasmic Shaping (Death •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Larceny

The mage may shape and mold an ectoplasmic manifestation, either conjured by another mage or from a Materialized ghost, though the person or ghost that controls the ectoplasm may Withstand the shaping. After a successful casting, the mage shapes the ectoplasm into any shape he desires. The ectoplasm remains in the new shape for the Duration of the spell. He can use it to craft a mirror that reflects ghosts and other structures in ghostly Twilight in a given area.

Also, the mage can use the ectoplasm to create the Open Condition on an object or location for a ghost to Manifest through. Ghosts lose the Manifested Condition once the spell's Duration ends.

Deepen Shadows (Death •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Intimidation, Expression

The mage can influence the shadows in the spell's area of effect, deepening darkness and making the area nearly completely pitch black. The area is affected by the Poor Light Environmental Tilt for the Duration of the spell.

+1 Reach: The mage is able to cause even greater darkness, applying the Blinded Tilt to anyone within the spell's area of effect for the Duration of the spell.

Forensic Gaze (Death •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Investigation, Expression

The mage can determine the state of a corpse. She determines the exact method of its demise as well as exactly when it died. For each level of Potency, the mage reveals contributing factors to the cause of death. For example, a man found burned in a car might have died from asphyxiation, but might have gotten that way because he was unconscious due to a head wound from crashing his car into a tree while driving drunk.

+1 Reach: The mage can witness the final moments of the corpse's life just leading up to death as though seeing through the corpse's eyes. Each rank of Potency reveals a minute of time prior to the corpse's demise.

Shadow Sculpting (Death •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Science, Expression

The mage can mold and shape the shadows in the area of effect. He can shape the shadows into any likeness of his choosing. The area must have shadows present for the mage to shape them.

+1 Reach: The caster can both change the shape of the shadows as well as animate them. Shadows move and flow at the mage's direction, at the same speed as the caster.

Soul Marks (Death •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Occult, Empathy

The mage can determine the health of a person's soul. She can determine one soul mark per Potency of the spell cast. She can discern the presence of Persistent Conditions, if the subject is Awakened, if the subject is a supernatural being, if the subject has created a soul stone (see "Soul Stones" p. 98), if the subject has had her soul tampered with, if the subject is Possessed, the presence of any Gnosis 5+ Legacy Attainments, if the subject has eaten or otherwise consumed another's soul, or if the subject is suffering from a Paradox Condition.

+1 Reach: The mage can perform this spell on an unattached soul. Free of its host, a soul may also reveal if its former host had any Legacy Attainments at Gnosis 1-4.

Speak with the Dead (Death •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Socialize, Expression, Investigation

The mage is able to sense and communicate with ghosts within Twilight. She can sense all ghosts within the area of effect, and is capable of communicating with them by simply talking, as long as the ghost is capable of understanding a language she speaks. She may sense Anchors within the area without using Death Mage Sight. She can concentrate on a single ghost within

the area and determine its Rank, if it has an Anchor, and how many Anchors it has.

+1 Reach: The caster can determine if any of the Anchors she perceives are temporary (items in which the Anchor Condition has been placed temporarily through some kind of summoning) or permanent.

+1 Reach: The caster can make herself understood by ghosts of Rank 2+ even if they do not speak the same language as her.

•• Apprentice of Death

Corpse Mask (Death ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Subterfuge, Crafts, Medicine

The mage alters the appearance of a body to make it look different even under scrutiny. She can cast the spell on a corpse, modifying its wounds and apparent time and cause of death completely. She can make a charred corpse look as though it instead died of a heart attack, or a person who died in a car crash look as though he is the victim of a stab wound.

+1 Reach: The mage may cast Corpse Mask on a living subject which has at least one Health box filled with damage to alter the appearance of his injuries, making stab wounds look like bruises, or abrasions look like third-degree burns.

+1 Reach: The mage may completely change a corpses' appearance, even allowing her to change its apparent age and sex.

Decay (Death ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Subterfuge, Science, Occult

The mage degrades a material object, causing it to age in a matter of moments. The object's Durability is lowered by -1 for each Potency of the spell's casting.

+1 Reach: The mage can decrease the object's Structure for each point of Potency, possibly destroying the object outright.

Ectoplasm (Death ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Expression, Academics

The mage can create ectoplasm (see Ectoplasmic Shaping, above) from one of his own orifices, or the orifice of a corpse — normally the nose or mouth, but sometimes the tear ducts or ears. The mage can shape the ectoplasm into any shape he wishes. The ectoplasm retains its shape for the Duration of the spell.

Ghost Shield (Death ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Streetwise, Subterfuge, Survival

The caster creates a shield that protects her subject from ghostly Numina, Influences, Manifestations, Death spells, and any

death-related powers of other supernatural creatures. Any power attempting to pierce the shield provokes a Clash of Wills roll.

+1 Reach: The protection afforded by this spell extends to ghosts' physical attacks.

Shape Ephemera (Death ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Science

The caster may reshape Death-attuned ephemera from one object into a new object entirely. This ephemera can be from a ghost or other entity in Twilight, but they have the ability to Withstand the spell, and being reshaped does not damage the entity's Corpus.

The object gains a Durability of 2. If it is a weapon it gains a weapon rating of 2; if it is armor it gains an armor rating of 2. Objects made of ephemera are only useful against other objects or beings made of ephemera or within Twilight. Objects made this way can be used by any ephemeral entity in Twilight, including ghosts or a mage who has transformed himself into ephemera (See "Ghost Gate" p. 130).

Soul Armor (Death ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Occult, Survival

This spell armors the subject's soul against all who would profane it. Any spell or effect that would remove, manipulate, or injure the subject's soul must first win a Clash of Wills.

Soul Jar (Death ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Persuasion

The mage creates a receptacle for a displaced soul. The soul jar can be anything designed to hold and seal a liquid, from a paint can to a water bottle. A soul placed into the soul jar cannot escape and is protected from outside attack. If the jar is opened or broken before the Duration of the spell ends, the soul is released.

+1 Reach: The mage may bind the soul to herself or to another person. To bind the soul to a person, the recipient must be suffering from the Soulless, Enervated, or Thrall Condition. Once the soul is in the body, it becomes the person's soul for the Duration of the spell. An unwilling person Withstands the spell's effect.

+2 Reach: By spending a point of Mana, the effects of this spell are Lasting, and the soul remains bound or attached even when the Duration ends.

Suppress Aura (Death ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Subterfuge, Intimidation, Medicine

The mage suppresses the personal aura of her subject. The subject's Nimbus disappears and magical resonances around her are dampened, including the resonances of spells currently affecting her. She appears as a Sleeper to Mage Sight. She is harder to read in general, imposing a -2 penalty on Empathy checks, and supernatural attempts to discern her emotional or mental state. Magical attempts to see through the disguise provoke a Clash of Wills.

Suppress Life (Death ●●)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Subterfuge, Medicine, Academics

The mage can suppress the subject's life signs; the subject appears for all intents and purposes as though she is dead. All physical symptoms of death appear to set in and the soul appears absent from the body to magical senses.

+2 Reach: By spending a point of Mana, the mage may cast the spell reflexively in response to something that would reasonably cause the subject's death.

Touch of the Grave (Death ●●)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Survival, Crafts, Persuasion

The mage can physically interact with ghosts and other things in Death-attuned Twilight. She can "pull" items from Twilight, making them visible and solid; these items have a Durability of 1 and dissipate into ephemera if broken, or after the spell's Duration ends. Items pulled from Twilight function as their material counterparts bestowing the same equipment bonuses.

Without a Trace (Death ●●)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Science, Stealth, Subterfuge

People constantly shed dead skin, hair, and other small evidences of themselves as they pass through the world. The mage conceals all physical evidence from casual observation. For the Duration of the spell, the subject leaves no fingerprints, footprints, traces of blood, or any other forensic type evidence of herself behind. Using Death Mage Sight to search for such signs provokes a Clash of Wills.

●●● Disciple of Death

Cold Snap (Death ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Survival, Intimidation, Science

The mage dissipates the heat in the spell's area of effect, causing frost and ice to form on the floor and exposed surfaces.

For the Duration of the spell, all surfaces in the area are under the effects of the Ice Tilt (p. 321).

+1 Reach: The cold of the area is so terrible and biting that in addition to the Ice Tilt, the area is under the effects of the Extreme Cold Tilt (p. 320).

Damage Ghost (Death ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Intimidation, Brawl

The mage can cause pain to a ghost. She deals one bashing wound to the ghost's Corpus per Potency of the spell.

Devouring the Slain (Death ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Medicine, Persuasion

The mage may pull the energy from his subject's suffering into himself. The mage chooses at the time of casting to either harvest Willpower or to scourge the subject's Pattern for Mana. The subject must have at least one Health box filled with either lethal or aggravated damage. For each level of Potency, the mage may take one point of Willpower (up to the subject's remaining Willpower points), or he may Scour the subject's Pattern for one point of Mana, dealing one lethal damage in the process, causing existing wounds to open and fester. Using this spell counts towards the limit of times per day a mage can gain Mana through Scouring.

+1 Reach: The mage may affect a healthy subject with this spell instead of one who has recently taken damage.

+1 Reach: The spell does not count toward the limit of times per day a mage can gain Mana through Scouring.

+1 Reach: The mage may affect a ghost with this spell, damaging its Corpus to gain either Willpower or Mana on a one for one basis. The mage must choose when casting the spell to take either Willpower or Mana, and cannot take a mix of the two from the ghost.

Ghost Gate (Death ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Academics, Expression

The mage creates a two-dimensional plane that acts as a gateway, converting anything that moves through it into Twilight. While in Twilight, the person can interact with and see Death-attuned ephemeral objects and beings. Items can be carried through the gate, but doing so destroys their material forms, though they may be retrieved later with "Touch of the Grave."

+1 Reach: The mage is able to transform her subject into the Twilight state without the use of the gate. All of her clothes and personal possessions turn into ephemera as she makes the transition.



Ghost Summons (Death ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Spell Factor: Duration

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Persuasion, Socialize, Occult

The mage sends out a call to the nearest ghost within her sensory range. Alternately, she can summon ghosts she knows personally. She may send a general call and the nearest ghost will answer, or she can specify the type of ghost, such as a child or a female. The ghost cannot travel farther than allowed by its Anchor. The spell does not work on ghosts above Rank 5.

+1 Reach: The spell also creates the Open Condition on the area, even if the ghost's Anchor is not within the immediate vicinity, and the ghost Manifests as part of responding to the summons.

+1 Reach: The mage may give the ghost a single, one-word command to follow. The ghost is not compelled to complete a task if it cannot finish the command before the Duration of the spell elapses.

+1 Reach: In the vicinity of an open Iris to the Underworld (p. 243), the mage can summon ghosts from the Underworld vicinity of that Iris.

+2 Reach: The mage may give the ghost a complex command to follow. The command must be a single task, but the mage can describe the task within a sentence or two.

Quicken Corpse (Death ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Crafts, Persuasion

The caster can animate a corpse, creating a loyal zombie servant. A zombie has limited mental capacity, and can understand simple one- or two-word commands and nothing more. It is a mindless, soulless construct immune to fear, pain, exhaustion, intimidation, or coercion, and follows the creator's orders with no regard to self. The corpse's physical capabilities are impaired, making them slow and clumsy compared to a living person. The constructs are not suited for combat (and have no Defense), but count as Retainers worth dots equal to the spell's Potency with a "field" relating to the mage's commands. Zombies have as much Health as the living creature their corpse came from had, but suffer damage as though they are under the effects of Death Mage Armor. They do not fall unconscious through damage, or bleed when filled with lethal damage, and are only destroyed when their last Health box is filled with aggravated damage.

+1 Reach: The mage may create a zombie suitable for combat. It uses its dot-rating as a dice pool for attacks, and has a Defense 3, Initiative 1, and Speed 6.

+2 Reach: The mage may spend a point of Mana to imbue the zombie with exceptional physical prowess. zombie has Defense 5, Initiative 3, and Speed 8.

Quicken Ghost (Death ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: One Mana (Optional)

Suggested Rote Skills: Persuasion, Socialize, Medicine

The mage bolsters a ghost, making low-Ranked ghosts more powerful and aware than they once were. Each level of Potency raises one of the ghost's three Attributes by one, not to exceed its Rank maximum. The mage can instead use the spell to heal a ghost's Corpus at a rate of one point per Potency of the spell.

+2 Reach: The mage may spend one Mana to increase the ghost's Rank by 1, increasing its maximum Attribute levels and Essence pool, as well as awarding it one new Numen.

Rotting Flesh (Death ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Empathy

The mage's touch rots away at her subject, causing his flesh and bones to wither and decay. Each level of Potency deals one point of bashing damage to the subject.

+1 Reach: In addition, the subject suffers a -1 penalty to Social rolls for the Duration of the spell for each level of Potency of the spell (with a maximum penalty of -3) due to his horrific appearance.

Sever Soul (Death ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Athletics, Expression

The mage rips the soul from a Sleeper, casting it into Twilight. While without a soul, the subject suffers from the Soulless Condition (p. 318). When the spell's Duration ends, the Sleeper's soul returns to him, unless otherwise prevented from escape, such as the case of being trapped in a soul jar or inside another body (see "Soul Jar" p. 129). If this spell is cast on a subject who is already under the effects of the Soulless Condition, he is stepped up to the Enervated Condition (p. 315) – though the mage does not gain immediate access to his soul, since it is already missing.

+1 Reach: The subject's soul leaves his body and enters Twilight, but he is instead under the effects of the Enervated Condition immediately, skipping the Soulless Condition. With an additional Reach, the subject can be placed under the effects of the Thrall Condition (p. 318).

Shadow Crafting (Death ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Intimidation, Occult

The caster can shape and harden shadows into solid, three-dimensional forms. The object gains a Durability of 2. If it is a weapon it gains a weapon rating of 2; if it is armor it gains an armor rating of 2; otherwise the object gains a +2 equipment bonus. Objects made of shadow retain a shadowy appearance and cast no shadow of their own.

●●●● Adept of Death

Enervation (Death ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Intimidation, Subterfuge

The mage causes her subject's muscles to stop working, breaking down connections between muscles, ligaments, and tendons. The spell imposes either the Leg Wrack Tilt or the Arm Wrack Tilt on the subject while the spell remains active.

+1 Reach: The mage causes the subject's entire body to seize up. For the Duration of the spell, the subject suffers from the Immobilized Tilt.

Exorcism (Death ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Expression, Occult

This spell rips a ghost's grip on the world away. This spell strips a number of Manifestation Conditions from the ghost (or its host) equal to the spell's Potency. The effect is Lasting, but the spirit may use its Influences and Manifestations to reestablish the Conditions as normal.

Add Mind or Spirit ●●●●: The spell's effects extend to Goetia or Spirits.

+1 Reach: The target cannot attempt to recreate the destroyed Conditions on the same victim or location until the spell's Duration elapses.

Revenant (Death ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Brawl, Intimidation

The mage may grant a ghost a Manifestation Condition (see p. 258). The mage may grant a number of Conditions equal to the spell's Potency, and must create any prerequisite Conditions as well, if they aren't already present. The entity immediately enters the Manifestation of the mage's choice, and may not leave it while the spell remains in effect. Mages often use this spell to allow ghosts to Possess their own corpses, creating undead beings called revenants.

Add Mind or Spirit ●●●●: The spell's effects extend to Goetia or Spirits.

Shadow Flesh (Death ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Medicine, Subterfuge

The mage transforms the subject's body and all her personal possessions into a mass of moving and animated shadows. The mage may choose to make the subject a three-dimensional or a two-dimensional shadow. Three-dimensional shadows still have no apparent mass or substance, and cannot interact with physical objects. Two-dimensional shadows may move through cracks and crevices, though are still bound by the laws of gravity and must remain touching the floor, even if moving on walls.

The subject retains all of her Attributes and Skills, but may not take physical actions other than to move, though she can still cast spells. She is immune to attacks or damage, but not Supernal magic, while in her shadowy form. She is effectively invisible in natural or supernatural darkness, though she can see in them herself.

Withering (Death ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Medicine, Science

The mage causes the subject's body to wither and atrophy within moments, dealing one point of lethal damage per level of Potency of the spell.

+1 Reach: By spending one Mana, the mage can instead inflict aggravated damage on her subject.

●●●● Master of Death

Create Anchor (Death ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Persuasion

The mage applies a universally-applicable version of the Anchor Condition to a subject, usable by any ghosts. If the mage also has a ghost as an additional subject, that ghost becomes anchored to the new Anchor as well as its own.

Create Avernian Gate (Death ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Crafts, Persuasion

The mage rips open the material world to the Underworld, creating an Iris between the material world and the upper layers of the Underworld within the area of effect. Opening the gate causes the area to gain a Death Resonance and the Gateway Condition for the Duration of the spell.

+1 Reach: The mage can create an Iris leading to anywhere she has been before in the Underworld.

Create Ghost (Death ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Expression, Academics

The mage creates a ghost within Twilight. She can fashion the ghost as an echo of another person, either alive or dead, though the ghost is not the actual person. The ghost is created at Rank 1 and remains for the Duration of the spell as the mage's loyal servant, and she is able to direct it to take actions without the use of any additional spells.

+1 Reach: For one Mana, the ghost created is Rank 2.

Deny the Reaper (Death ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Occult, Subterfuge

The mage is able to reverse the effects of entropy on her subject, even returning the dead back to life. The mage reverses the effects of decay, restoring the subject to its physical state of being from before up to one month per Potency of the spell. On a living subject, the spell can restore eyesight, the use of limbs, reversing irreparable damage, and restoring all bodily functions. On inanimate subjects the spell can restore time-ravaged photos, make old books pristine, or return old electronics to working order.

+1 Reach: The mage may return the recently dead to life. No matter how long the subject has been dead, minutes or hours, the person's soul has already moved on, and the subject immediately suffers soul loss. When the spell's Duration ends, the subject dies again.

Empty Presence (Death ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Duration

Cost: One Mana

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Subterfuge, Persuasion, Stealth

The mage destroys the subject's presence in the world, removing any evidence of her life or existence. Any attempts to see the subject through mundane means of detection or observation fail completely. Not only is she invisible to the naked eye, but evidence of her life is scrubbed. All Doors she may have opened during social interactions with others, either on herself or on the other person, are removed. All her Conditions, and all Conditions applying to her (except for Paradox Conditions), resolve without granting Beats. While invisible, the subject cannot make violent, overt actions without breaking the spell's illusion. Physically damaging or breaking objects, or attacking someone, causes the spell to end immediately.

Mages using Active Mage Sight make a Clash of Wills test against the subject, and the use of Focused Mage Sight reveals her to the mage using it. Conditions do not return when the spell ends, but Doors return to their previous states.

Sever the Awakened Soul (Death ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Intimidation, Medicine

The soul of a mage cannot be removed with Fraying alone; Awakened Gnosis holds it tight, requiring mastery to prise lose. This spell Unmakes the protective metaphysical layers of a mage's soul, ripping it free and placing it into a container. That container can either be a specially prepared vessel such as one created with "Soul Jar," or the caster can take the soul into her own body. While without a soul, the subject suffers from the Soulless Condition. If this spell is cast on a subject who is

already under the effects of the Soulless Condition, he is stepped up to the Enervated Condition – though the mage does not gain immediate access to his soul, since it is already missing.

If the mage chooses not to capture her subject's soul immediately, it goes into Twilight where it waits to return to its owner.

+1 Reach The subject falls immediately under the effects of the Enervated Condition. With an additional Reach, the subject can be placed under the effects of the Thrall Condition.

FATE

Purview: Blessings, hexes, probability, fortune, oaths, promises, intentions, destiny.

Arcadia's ruling Arcana are Time and Fate, and Fate is the subtle expression of that pair. Fate describes what *should* or *must* happen, but not precisely when or how that result will come about (those are the province of Time). Fate governs blessings, curses, destiny, fortune, oaths, probability, luck, and intent. Those who master it may seem lucky or carefree, but in reality they deal in the inevitable and learn to anticipate it – whether to accept the dictates of destiny or redirect the road they walk.

Hexes

Many Fate spells hex the subject imposing one of the following effects:

- Impose a dice penalty equal to Potency to all mundane actions the subject takes for a number of rolls equal to the Potency of the hex, or until the Duration expires. With +2 Reach, this can include spellcasting rolls and the use of other supernatural powers.
- Impose a number of the following Tilts equal to the Potency of the hex: Arm Wrack, Blinded, Deafened, Insane, Knocked Down, Leg Wrack, Poisoned, or Sick. This lasts for the Duration of the hex unless the subject resolves the Tilt sooner.
- Impose a number of custom Tilts equal to the Potency of the hex for the Duration of the hex. These can be built using the rules for Generic Conditions (see p. 289).

The mage may also mix and match the above effects using Potency. So, a Potency 4 hex allows the mage to levy a penalty on the subject's next two actions, as well as apply the Blinded and Leg Wrack Tilts.

Duplicate penalties and Tilts from hexes aren't added together. Only the worst has any effect, although a subject may labor under a penalty to all actions in addition to a penalty to specific actions due to a Tilt. Arm Wrack, Blinded, Deafened, and Leg Wrack are exceptions to this, each of which can be applied twice for the more severe version of the Tilt (representing both arms, eyes, ears, or legs being affected).

Boons

Many Fate spells bestow a boon on the subject, bestowing one of the following benefits:

- Grant 9-Again quality on a number of mundane dice rolls equal to Potency for the Duration of the spell. The subject's player can choose which of his rolls are affected by this boon (declared before the dice are rolled). If used on a chance roll, the subject does not gain the 9-Again quality, but the chance die is treated as a single die instead of as a chance die. By adding +1 Reach this becomes 8-Again, instead. The boon may also affect spellcasting rolls and other powers at the cost of +2 Reach.
- Grant a dice bonus equal to Potency on certain actions (usually a single Skill) for a number of rolls equal to the Potency of the spell during its Duration. Multiple boons cannot grant their bonus to the same action; only the highest bonus counts. The subject's player chooses which of his rolls are affected by this boon before rolling the dice.
- Grant a number of beneficial Conditions (such as Charmed, Informed, Inspired, or Steadfast) equal to Potency for the Duration of the spell. None of these Conditions grant Beats when the subject resolves them (unless the caster achieved an exceptional success in the casting).

As with hexes, Potency can be used to mix and match the above effects, boons that affect the same Skill do not combine their effects (only the highest bonus counts), and no character can have multiple instances of a Condition unless they apply to two different and specific things.

• Initiate of Fate

Interconnections (Fate •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Investigation, Medicine

This spell reveals the marks of Fate on people, places, and things the mage observes (up to one subject per turn). In addition to allowing the mage to detect any sympathetic connections between the subjects, the mage can also identify those who have violated a magical oath, and the presence of spells with conditional Durations (see p. 192).

+1 Reach: The mage can also detect possession, supernatural mind control, and alterations of destiny.

+2 Reach: The mage can also discern specific information about a subject's destiny – such as the Doom of a subject with the Destiny Merit or the parameters of a conditional Duration.

Oaths Fulfilled (Fate •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Politics, Investigation

In folktales, witches always seem to know when their subjects fulfill (or violate) the terms of an agreement. This spell notifies the mage when a specified fate befalls its subject – whether the subject is the victim or the actor. This triggering event must be something the mage could perceive if he were present (e.g. the subject suffers an injury, goes to the restroom, breaks her word, speaks the mage's name, etc.).

+1 Reach: The mage receives a brief vision of the subject when the oath is fulfilled.

+1 Reach: The mage can track the subject until the spell's Duration elapses. This doesn't provide knowledge of the subject's location, only of a path to the subject that is sure and swift.

+1 Reach: The trigger event may be something the mage could only perceive using Mage Sight.

Quantum Flux (Fate •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Firearms, Occult

The mage reads probability and compensates for deleterious factors, attracting small turns of good fortune to negate unfortunate obstacles that stand in her way. This negates penalties to any of the subject's actions equal to Potency for a number of actions during the Duration equal to Potency.

Additionally, the subject can spend a turn during the spell's Duration aiming an action. The subject loses any Defense and must remain still while aiming. A turn spent aiming grants a bonus to the next action equal to Potency.

These effects can only be applied to mundane instant actions; extended actions and spellcasting rolls do not benefit.

Reading the Outmost Eddies (Fate •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Computer, Persuasion, Subterfuge

This spell bestows a small blessing or curse that attracts good or bad fortune to its subject. As long as the spell remains active the subject experiences an event within the next 24 hours, such as finding \$20 or dropping his wallet in a puddle. The mage can exert limited control over the nature of the fortune (or misfortune), but ultimately fate decides the detail.

Hostile applications of this spell are Withstood by Composure.

+1 Reach: The twist of fate occurs within one hour.

Serendipity (Fate •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Crafts, Survival

This spell grants the mage a momentary glimpse of all the potential roads her destiny may follow to her desired destination, which allows the mage to identify the next step she must take to accomplish a stated objective. Upon casting, the mage receives a clear omen that suggests a course of action that will lead her closer to her goal. This seldom guarantees immediate success, especially if the task before her is complicated, but can provide an important breakthrough.

+1 Reach: When the mage's player makes a roll to achieve her stated goal she may substitute any Skill of the same type (Mental, Physical, or Social) as the one that the task calls for. Through some twist of fate Streetwise turns out to be just as useful in a specific social situation as Empathy, for example. This affects a number of rolls no greater than the Potency of the spell.

+2 Reach: As above, but the mage's player may substitute any Skill. The mage's street sense (Streetwise) so impresses a punk-at-heart librarian that she helpfully answers all his questions about Greek history (Academics), for example.

•• Apprentice of Fate

Exceptional Luck (Fate ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Socialize

The mage blesses the subject's endeavors or curses them with misfortune. Whether good or bad, the subject's luck is truly exceptional. This spell bestows a boon or inflicts a hex on the subject (see p. 134). The subject may Withstand a hex with Composure.

+2 Reach: The boon or hex can affect spellcasting rolls.

+2 Reach: Spend a point of Mana. The mage can cast this spell as a reflexive action.

Fabricate Fortune (Fate ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Larceny, Occult, Subterfuge

Sometimes a mage wishes to hide a child of destiny from those who would abuse her gift. Other times he wishes to convince observers that a subject has a fate that she does not. This spell conceals or falsifies fates and Destiny.

It can be used to “trick” conditional Durations or spells with conditional triggers into ignoring an event that meets the defined condition or into acting as though the stipulated event has come to pass. It can create false omens regarding the subject when she is scrutinized by Fate magic. All such deceptions provoke a Clash of Wills against those attempting to overcome its protections.

Fools Rush In (Fate ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Socialize, Streetwise

According to old wisdom Fate favors children and fools, and this spell makes the old adage true. So long as the subject has little or no detailed knowledge about a situation before he enters it, the spell allows him to act with perfect grace and timing. A turn or two of studying the scene before acting is acceptable, but extensive reconnaissance or a detailed briefing does not permit the necessary degree of randomness this spell requires.

The subject does not suffer untrained penalties during the spell’s Duration. If entering an unfamiliar social situation, the subject’s impression level also improves by one.

+1 Reach: The subject receives a dice bonus equal to Potency on a number of dice rolls (not including spellcasting rolls) equal to Potency during the Duration. The subject’s player chooses which rolls are affected (before the dice are rolled), and they can include any action or task, so long as they are instant or reflexive actions taken “in the moment” and not arranged ahead of time.

+3 Reach: As the first Reach effect, but this bonus can also affect spellcasting rolls.

Lucky Number (Fate ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Larceny, Science

The probability of correctly guessing a phone number, a password, or lock combination on the first try is minute but not impossible. This spell allows the mage to do just that simply by entering data into an appropriate device (a password field, a telephone, a safe combination, etc.). In addition to any story benefits, the mage gains the Informed Condition on next relevant roll that benefits from knowledge gained through this spell.

This spell uses the input device as its subject, and the mage concentrates on what she is attempting to accomplish. It does not require sympathy even for applications such as guessing

the phone number for a particular person; the magic applies to the probabilities of random input, rather than locating a target. Although it will call the nearest available phone to the person the mage is trying to reach, the spell doesn’t tell the caster where that phone is.

Shifting the Odds (Fate ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Politics, Subterfuge

An Apprentice of Fate always has access to what she needs at the moment. The mage focuses on locating a particular kind of person, place, or thing, and this spell directs her steps to it unerringly as soon as possible within the next 24 hours as long as the spell remains active. Casting the spell looking for a kind of person in a crowd or an item anywhere it *could* appear is usually enough to immediately succeed.

The spell can find someone with a specific Trait, occupation, or context-specific quality (e.g. “corrupt cop”), but it only locates the nearest or most available subject matching the description the mage provides, never a specific person or object (although destiny sometimes draws familiar faces together).

Alternatively, the mage gains temporary access to certain Social Merits (Ally, Contacts, Mentor, Resources, or Retainer) with a rating no greater than Potency. Fate guides her to dropped cash, unattended mundane items, or useful strangers she can easily convince to do her a quick favor. The mage may benefit from this Merit a number of times no greater than Potency, after which the money runs out or the ally of convenience goes his own way unless the mage’s character spends Experiences to purchase the Merit.

+1 Reach: The mage locates the desired object within one hour.

Warding Gesture (Fate ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Occult, Subterfuge

The mage creates a ward protecting the subject against supernatural effects that manipulate her fate – a geas, a supernatural compulsion to act against her will, or having her fate manipulated by Fate magic or similar supernatural effects. Each attempt to change the subject’s destiny provokes a Clash of Wills with the mage. This spell has no effect on pre-existing alterations to the subject’s destiny.

Additionally, the mage may selectively exclude the subject from any area-effect spell he casts. If cast on multiple subjects, this spell allows the mage to exclude each valid subject on a case-by-case basis.

+1 Reach: The mage can selectively exclude the subject from any spell she casts or any Attainment she uses.

+2 Reach: The mage may selectively grant protection from supernatural effects that target an area instead of individuals. This provokes a Clash of Wills to exclude the subject from the

effect, which the mage may automatically pass if protecting subjects from his own spells.

••• Disciple of Fate

Grave Misfortune (Fate •••)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Weaponry

This spell attracts misfortune to the subject or makes an already injurious situation considerably worse.

The next time the subject suffers at least one point of damage during this spell's Duration, increase the damage he suffers by the spell's Potency. A glancing blow instead crushes a bone, for example. The damage type is the same as that of the original source of harm. This affects a maximum number of attacks equal to Potency during the spell's Duration.

Monkey's Paw (Fate •••)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Drive, Crafts, Science

The mage interacts with a lifeless object, bringing fortune to bear on it and making it a tool of destiny. The mage either blesses or curses the object.

The object's equipment bonus is increased or decreased by the spell's Potency, which may cause it to become a dice penalty if moved below zero. The spell may not cause the bonus or penalty to exceed five dice.

+1 Reach: If the object is blessed, anyone who carries, touches, or uses it also receives the benefits of a boon (see p. 134). If the object is cursed, this user suffers a hex (see p. 134).

+1 Reach: By spending a point of Mana, the bonus or penalty may exceed five dice.

Shared Fate (Fate •••)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Persuasion, Politics

Fate is an instrument of both justice and punishment. This spell braids the fates of two subjects together. Whatever befalls one subject affects the other.

Whenever one subject suffers damage, a Tilt, or an unwanted Condition, any others suffer it as well. If Scale is not increased when casting this spell, the mage herself is treated as a subject.

+1 Reach: The link instead only works one way for one of the subjects – such that the subject suffers harm inflicted on the others but not the reverse.

+2 Reach: The subject is not linked to the mage or any other specific subject. Instead, she suffers any damage, Tilt, or unwanted Condition she inflicts, regardless of whom she harms.

Superlative Luck (Fate •••)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Cost: 1 Mana

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Crafts, Occult

The mage can ensure success at virtually any task he sets out to accomplish.

The subject gains the rote quality on a number of mundane dice rolls equal to Potency. The subject's player can choose which of his rolls are affected (declared before the dice are rolled).

+2 Reach: The subject's player may apply the spell's effects to ritual spellcasting rolls, which doubles the Gnosis-derived casting time of those spells.

Sworn Oaths (Fate •••)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Occult, Politics

The mage can witness a sworn oath and ensure that Fate itself enforces the subject's adherence to her vow. The subject makes a promise and states the consequences for herself if she violates the agreement. No one can be forced to take such an oath, although a subject may be placed under oath unwittingly if he voluntarily makes a vow and verbally agrees to a specified consequence, even if he doesn't realize the mage can enforce the oath supernaturally.

So long as the subject adheres to the oath she receives a boon (see p. 134). If a supernatural power would force the subject to violate her oath – either by action or inaction – the mage may make a Clash of Wills against the effect. If the subject breaks the oath (whether intentionally or not), she suffers the hex (see p. 134) she agreed to at the time she took the oath. A subject who declares "I will guard your secrets or may I be struck blind," will suffer the Blinded Tilt for the remaining Duration of the spell if he fails to guard those secrets, for example. Once the subject has broken an oath, further violations of its terms do not levy additional hexes.

If cast on multiple subjects, each subject may swear his own oath; this is often used to create contracts between two or more parties.

+1 Reach: As long as she maintains spell control, the mage is aware whether the spell remains a boon or has shifted to being a hex.

•••• Adept of Fate

Atonement (Fate ••••)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Subject effect's Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Empathy, Survival

A powerful Witch can aid a hero who labors under a curse, but her remedies often demand strange rituals or arduous quests. This spell can dispel a supernatural effect enforced by the dictates of destiny, including Awakened spells, by Patterning Fate to provide a means by which the subject can escape his curse. While the subject remains under the effects of Atonement, she must complete a task determined by the caster.

- Minor curses (1-2 dots) require a minor quest (bathing in a nearby river, donating a small sum to charity, etc.).
- Moderate curses (3-4 dots) require a medial quest (reading a rare book available in another city's library, removing all the graffiti in a neighborhood, etc.).
- Major curses (5+ dots) demand major quests (undertaking a months-long pilgrimage, recovering an artifact that has been missing for centuries, etc.).

Especially powerful curses, such as those levied by ephemeral entities of Rank 6 or more, will often demand more elaborate tasks to break.

+1 Reach: The quest can be undertaken on the subject's behalf by another person who wishes to champion her. If the subject is unwilling, this spell is Withstood with Resolve.

Chaos Mastery (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Occult, Science

The mage can Pattern Fate to manipulate complex probabilities within the spell's subject or area of effect. This spell allows the mage to dictate any physically possible outcome within the bounds of the spell's subject, no matter how unlikely.

The spell cannot create supernatural effects, but within the bounds of improbability the mage can cause a number of effects equal to Potency, such as:

- Create a narrative effect such as controlling how vehicles behave in a multiple-car crash.
- By directing once-random biochemical changes within a subject, cause seizures, hallucinations, and physical events, imposing suitable Conditions such as Blind or Disabled.
- The mage reduces a subject's next action to a chance die.
- Attack a subject by directing chance around them, or protect a subject from dangerous circumstances; this is not a direct-attack spell, and should use any rules for the hazard.

Divine Intervention (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Subterfuge

The mage casts a powerful curse that either encourages the subject to achieve a goal specified by the mage when he casts this spell, or that thwarts the subject's every attempt to pursue such a goal. The subject must, however, be aware of the goal, and the mage cannot levy impossible tasks.

One of the subject's Aspirations is replaced by the goal. As a goal, the subject suffers ill luck except when taking constructive action to bring her closer to achieving the stated goal. If the subject has not pursued the spell's objective in a meaningful way within the last 24 hours, she suffers a hex (see p. 134).

As a ban, the subject suffers ill luck whenever he attempts to achieve the forbidden goal. For the Duration of the spell, the subject suffers a hex if she actively strives toward it.

Strings of Fate (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Persuasion, Stealth

The roads of destiny fork and converge, governing the probability of events. An adept of Fate can re-weave the strings of Fate on a subject, encouraging (if not ensuring) that a specified event will happen as long as the spell remains active.

The mage specifies an event that she wishes to happen to the subject. If the event would be possible without magic or any effort on the subject's part, it occurs as soon as circumstances allow as long as the spell's Duration is in effect. If the event requires the subject's participation or cannot take place without a change in circumstances, the spell introduces opportunities to work towards the event, at least once per week while the spell remains on the subject. If the event is simply impossible, the spell has no effect.

For example, if a mage casts the spell on herself and specifies that she will meet with her mentor while they are both in the same city, they will "randomly" cross paths at first opportunity. If she casts it on a Sleepwalker ally and specifies that he will recover a stolen artifact (when, unknown to her, it has been moved) he will find travel tickets for the artifact's new location, clues pointing there, or reasons to travel there. If she cast it on a student and specifies that he will become a doctor, circumstances will hint at a transfer to pre-med.

The spell cannot deal damage directly, though it can put subjects in harm's way. For example, a mage could curse a victim with this spell specifying that she will be in a car wreck, or exposed to a disease.

+1 Reach: The spell presents opportunities to work toward the specified event once per day.

Sever Oaths (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Subterfuge, Weaponry

To an Adept of Fate, all fetters on a being's free will are ultimately breakable, and oaths can be renegotiated. The mage may apply a number of the following effects equal to Potency:

- Free a bound ephemeral entity, or soul.
- Change the effects of an active boon or hex.
- Modify or negate an oath or other supernatural agreement reinforced by the dictates of Fate.
- Change or dispel a conditional trigger.
- Modify the Doom of a subject with the Destiny Merit.

+2 Reach: The spell's effects are Lasting.

●●●● Master of Fate

Forge Destiny (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Persuasion

If a Master of Fate does not have a hero of destiny handy, he can simply make one. He has several means of accomplishing this at his disposal, and may apply one of the following effects:

- The mage grants the subject a Supernatural Merit for which she qualifies with a maximum rating equal to the spell's Potency. Sanctity of Merits (see p. 99) doesn't apply to the loss of this Merit.
- The mage increases or decreases the subject's rating in a Supernatural Merit by dots equal to Potency.
- The mage imposes Aspirations and Obsessions on the subject equal to Potency, replacing ones chosen by the Storyteller.
- The mage chooses the subject's Doom (p. 100). This can affect subjects who don't have the Destiny Merit.

Pariah (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Medicine, Politics

One of the most terrifying curses in the arsenal of a Master of Fate, this spell turns the world against the victim.

- Anyone who encounters the subject instinctively feels uncomfortable around him, intuitively sensing the curse. Most people treat him indifferently at best — if not with open hostility. If the subject is using the Social maneuvering system (see p. 215), the impression level drops by one (from good to average, for instance). If not, the subject takes a



penalty equal to Potency to any Social actions to persuade others to aid him or treat him with kindness.

- Any actions aimed at helping the subject or offering aid suffer the effects of a hex (see p. 134). This includes everything from an attempt to lift the curse to providing the subject with directions to the nearest bus stop.
- Any actions aimed at harming the subject enjoy the effects of a boon (see p. 134). This includes all forms of harm – from outright murder, to theft, to lies that cause the subject inconvenience.

The caster must account for any Reach involved in the boon and hex separately.

+1 Reach: The mage can adjust the sensitivity of the curse. She could bless only attempts to injure the subject but not to murder him, for example.

Miracle (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Persuasion, Subterfuge

This spell causes events to unfold according to the mage's dictates. The mage receives a number of Intercessions equal to Potency, which she may use as a reflexive action during the spell's Duration. Spending one Intercession can achieve the following, affecting a single subject within sensory range:

- Increase the number of successes on a roll by one after the dice are rolled.

- Decrease the number of successes on a roll by one after the dice are rolled. If this reduces the number of successes to less than zero, a dramatic failure results.

- Cause a reasonably likely event to happen immediately and conveniently for the mage. An old man suffers a heart attack. A car hits a pedestrian on the sidewalk.

+1 Reach: Spend one Intercession and one Willpower to bring about a low-probability event. Lightning hits someone standing on the roof during a storm. Doctors bring a patient back from the edge of death using an experimental medical procedure.

+2 Reach: Spend one Intercession, one Willpower, and one Mana to achieve the incredible. This doesn't make the impossible possible, but virtually any event with a mundane, real-world precedent is fair game. A spark causes a car to explode at a gas station. A man falls out of a plane and survives without any major injuries.

Swarm of Locusts (Fate ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Science

The mage creates chaotic conditions: rains of frogs, swarms of locusts, unscheduled total solar eclipses, and other similarly "Fortean" occurrences. This terrifying and obviously supernatural event wreaks havoc in the area, creating Environmental Tilts of the player's choosing.

Most Sleepers suffer an immediate Breaking Point when they witness this spell.

FORCES

Purview: Electricity, gravity, radiation, sound, light, heat, fire, weather, movement

The gross Arcanum of the Aether governs the mightiest energies of the Fallen World. Countless legends of wizards conjuring lightning to smite their foes, dancing among pillars of unnatural flame, flying, and directing storms against their foes speak to the presence of raw power Forces represents. With it a mage can alter and control light, sound, fire, and electricity – even gravity, radiation, and weather patterns. Forces is rarely subtle, but clever wizards find ways to use it so: hearing a sound from across a room, deadening the noise spellcasting makes, or seeing great distances. Skilled practitioners of Forces can also unleash tornadoes, earthquakes, and devastating blasts of fire when subtlety gives way to quick anger.

• Initiate of Forces

Influence Electricity (Forces ●)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Computers, Crafts, Science

The mage can operate or shut down electrical devices with magic. With this spell she can only cause existing devices to work as they normally would when powered on, or when the power is shut off. For example, she could "hotwire" a car without actually needing to touch any wires, turn lights off and on, and cause industrial machinery to power up or turn off. This spell does not give her further control over these devices, but does allow her to engage or shut down devices that might otherwise require passwords or electronic keys.

Influence Fire (Forces ●)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Science, Survival

Legends of mages controlling fire begin with this spell, which allows a mage to guide the path of existing flames. This lets her cause flames to arc or stretch, command them to burn along a particular path (or prevent them from another), or even form particular fiery shapes. At this level the mage cannot increase

Playing With Fire

Many Forces effects are just as harmful to the mage herself as they are to any potential victims. If the mage does not Reach to cast them at sensory range, she could just as easily electrocute or incinerate herself in the process. Some effects are beneficial enough that the mage need not worry about harming herself, such as warming a cold area or lighting a dark room, but proper caution is advised when conjuring fire, explosions, electricity, and other such destructive forces.

the flames in size or intensity, though she could direct them into a source of fuel.

+1 Reach: By efficient use of fuel and direction, the mage can increase or decrease the size of a fire by one level (see Transform Energy, below).

Kinetic Efficiency (Forces •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Science, Survival

With a simple spell, the mage can “nudge” kinetic forces, enhancing a subject’s motion. This spell allows the subject to run a little faster, jump a little further, or lift a little more, not by altering forces but by maximizing the subject’s kinetic energy use. This has the following benefits:

- The subject gains a bonus on rolls to resist fatigue equal to Potency. Actions are less strenuous when moving so efficiently.
- Add the caster’s Forces dots to the total distance (in yards) covered on a jump, to the subject’s swimming and running Speed, and to any climbing rolls.

Influence Heat (Forces •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Science, Survival

Initiates can guide the direction of existing forces. With this spell, the mage can control the flow of heat in the area. While she cannot increase or create heat, the mage can direct heat from a radiator across the room to her, or pull any ambient warmth shed by car engines, human bodies, or environmental sources. This can keep her warm in cold weather or cool in hot weather, preventing heat- or cold-related damage and Conditions caused by Extreme Environments up to Level 2 (see *Extreme Environments*, p. 224).

+1 Reach: The mage can safely control the flow of heat enough to keep safe in environments up to Level 3.

+2 Reach: At this level, the mage can protect herself and others in the spell’s area from hot or cold environments up to Level 4.

Nightvision (Forces •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Science, Stealth

Despite its name, the Nightvision spell enhances ambient light, fine-tunes the mage’s sense for vibrations and thermal changes, and grants her the power to see into the infrared and ultraviolet spectra. She becomes able to intuitively feel as well as see forms of electromagnetic radiation, sound, and kinetic energies, allowing her to navigate without penalty in complete darkness. She can still see and make out details, even in the dark, although colors are somewhat muted. This spell has the side effect of making the caster much more vulnerable to light; while in effect, she suffers no penalties from dim or even no lighting, but suffers penalties from bright lights as she normally would from darkness. Bright lights and extremely loud sounds can disorient or even inflict the Blind Condition on her for the spell’s Duration.

+1 Reach: The spell automatically compensates for and allows the mage to ignore the deleterious effects of sudden extreme stimulus.

Receiver (Forces •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Spell Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Investigation, Science

Casting this spell allows the mage to hear infrasound and ultrasound frequencies beyond what human ears can normally perceive. While active, she can hear sounds outside the normal frequency, from high-frequency (dog whistles, sonar) to low-frequency (the distant rumble of diesel engines, industrial sounds normally lost to humans in the noise). Apply the spell’s Potency as a dice bonus to relevant dice pools, such as rolls to avoid ambush.

Tune In (Forces •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Computers, Empathy, Science

A mage with this spell can listen to free-floating data transmissions, such as those broadcast by radios, cell phones, wireless modems, and more. The magic translates this electromagnetic noise into something she can understand, although it preserves the original transmission language. With this spell, the mage needs no receiver to listen or even see signals. Transmitting cables glow before her eyes with streams of data, while she might see a shimmer or even fleeting glimpses of images in the air. Satellite internet and TV programming, closed walkie-talkies, CB broadcasts, and radio transmissions all become open to her senses, as well as wireless communications.

•• Apprentice of Forces

Control Electricity (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Computers, Science

The mage may alter the flow of electricity as well as diminish its current. She cannot increase the current without some device capable of generating it, since she cannot create electricity from nothing. For example, the mage can direct the electricity in a building to single or multiple outlets, cut the power, or divide power going to one outlet to many other sources. This requires a method of conduction, like existing wiring or metal. She can also cause existing electrical currents to arc (such as striking a target near a wall outlet), or redirect it away from a particular device. Causing a short or using the electrical current to attack a target usually burns out the breakers or shorts out a device afterward, unless it's made to withstand the stresses of power fluctuations. Damage caused by this spell uses the electrical damage rules on p. 224. By directing the flow away from a subject, she subtracts the spell's Potency from the damage of an electrical source.

Each level of Potency in the spell allows the mage to control one line of power. If she diverts it somewhere else, the Storyteller determines what occurs — a socket or device could overload, or if the mage is careful she can avoid damaging components and simply change the course of power. If instead she wants to diminish the power, it drops by one level for each point of Potency; a Potency of 4 reduces a subway line's current to that of an ordinary wall socket, for example, or Potency 5 cuts it completely. (See the table below under Transform Energy.)

Control Fire (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Science, Survival

The mage can exert control over a fire, fueling it to increase its size and intensity or depriving it of fuel to snuff it out. She can only control existing flames at this level, but can change a small campfire into a roaring inferno or bring even an out-of-control fire down to manageable levels.

For each level of Potency, the mage chooses one of the following effects (see Transform Energy, below):

- Increase or decrease the heat of the fire by one level.
- Increase or decrease the size of the fire by one level.

If the fire's heat or size are reduced to less than one, it is extinguished. Unless extinguished, once the spell's Duration ends a diminished fire will eventually spread back out along available fuel.

Control Gravity (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Occult, Science

The mage can redirect the force of gravity in an area. She can alter the direction of its pull, causing affected objects to “fall” upwards or horizontally. She can't do more than change its direction at this level, but she can make it nearly impossible to approach a specific object or area without some means of overcoming gravity, like flight or climbing gear.

Anyone and anything affected by the spell that is not secured “falls” in the direction chosen by the caster. Victims may suffer damage if they collide with objects. Someone trapped in an area where gravity propels him upward might be stuck falling to the edge of the spell's radius, then back down again as normal gravity takes over, only to fall upward again as he enters the spell's area. A person or creature capable of action can make a roll to escape, at the Storyteller's discretion, by grabbing onto a nearby object or otherwise finding the means to control her position.

Control Heat (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Science, Survival

The mage can now increase or decrease the temperature of an area. Each level of Potency allows a change of 1 level of Extreme Environment to produce heat or cold, counting a temperate room temperature as “zero.” For example, with Potency 3, a mage could transform a Level 1 Extreme Environment based on cold into a Level 2 Environment based on heat.

Control Light (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Investigation, Science

The mage can dim or intensify existing light the spell's area of effect, whether from an artificial or natural source. This can cause a 40-watt bulb to shine as brightly as a floodlight or make the sunlight on an overcast day like that of a clear summer morning. The magic modifies the light emitted by the source, and not the source or the emission itself, so this won't cause a bulb to burn itself out or increase the heat of sunlight without other spells. Each level of Potency in the spell doubles or halves the light's candescence.

The spell allows the mage to focus or disperse light, and even alter its wavelength on the spectrum. She could turn a torch into a blacklight, focus a lamp's rays into a laser, split its lights into a rainbow spectrum as though viewed through a prism, or cause a refraction effect like looking upon something in shallow water. These effects cause the Poor Light Tilt in the affected area.

+1 Reach: The spell can create a mirroring effect or complete black-out by turning all light in the area back on itself or away from onlookers. The spell imposes the Blinded Tilt in the affected area, or provides substantial cover, although as the effect is only visual the cover has no Durability.

Control Sound (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Stealth, Science

This spell allows a mage to amplify or weaken the volume of sound in the spell's area of effect. She can make a loudspeaker into a thunderous blast or a barely audible squeak. Each level of Potency doubles or halves the volume of sound in the targeted area, creating a zone of altered sound. For example, casting this spell on a podium at the front of the room affects the sounds of anyone standing at the podium. The mage can also influence the direction of existing sounds. She can focus sound waves from across the room to hear a whispered conversation, ensure her own voice does not reach anyone but her intended target, or cause noises to emanate from nearby locations instead of their original sources. The Scale factor determines the area she can affect.

Loud enough sounds can cause the Deafened Tilt in combat. By directing her sound away from a subject that might possibly notice her, the mage inflicts a penalty equal to her Arcanum dots to the subject's Perception rolls to hear her approach.

- Focusing sound waves to a specific point means that anyone outside of the chosen target (as determined by the Size of Target table) cannot hear the chosen sounds.
- Listening to sounds across an area uses the Area of Effect Scale factor, determining the distance at which the mage can listen in on something. Doing so does not rob the source of its sound. To do that requires focusing the sound completely away from the source (above).

This spell can also be used to alter the tone of a given sound, including modifying a target's voice to sound like another. Emulating a specific voice might require an Expression + Subterfuge roll to get it right.

+1 Reach: The mage can create an echoing effect by "nudging" sound waves into nearby obstacles. This imposes a penalty to Stealth rolls in the affected area equal to the spell's Potency, to a maximum of -5.

+1 Reach: The caster gains a bonus to hearing-based Perception rolls within the affected area equal to the Potency of the spell, to a maximum of +5.

Control Weather (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Science, Survival

The mage can control existing weather patterns. She can force a light shower to become a thunderstorm, summon up fog on a clear morning, make a warm day into an unbearably hot one or conjure a cooling breeze. Drastic changes from existing weather require Reach, as noted below. The weather begins to change immediately upon casting the spell, with new systems taking shape within minutes. This spell allows the mage to change or create weather-based Extreme Environments up to Level 4, as well as cause a wide variety of environmental Tilts. Potency determines the maximum amount by which an Extreme Environment can change, up to a maximum of Level 4 (and a minimum of level 0). Listed below is an example set

of Tilts possible for weather patterns, but it is by no means exhaustive. Note that without further spells, the mage is not immune to weather tilts she creates.

- Blizzard
- Extreme Cold
- Extreme Heat
- Heavy Rain
- Heavy Winds

+1 Reach: The weather changes more gradually, over the next few hours, giving the caster time to prepare or making the weather seem more natural.

+2 Reach: Required for more drastic changes. Examples:

- Creating thick fog out of a sunny morning
- Making a hot summer day turn to freezing rain
- Clearing a blizzard into a cool but clear evening

Environmental Shield (Forces ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Science, Survival

The mage can shield herself against harmful environmental conditions. This spell provides complete resistance to any Conditions or Tilts caused by environments, up to an Extreme Environment level of the spell's Potency. The spell only protects against indirect damage, like heat and cold and minor hazards like hail. The mage can still drown or be crushed by crashing waves. While the spell wouldn't protect her against lightning if something forced it to strike her, she wouldn't naturally attract the bolt. The spell requires a Clash of Wills to work against magical weather effects.

Invisibility (Forces ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Larceny, Science, Stealth

This spell can render its subject completely invisible, masking it from all forms of light. Even cameras cannot detect the object, no matter what type of filter or lenses they use. This spell does not mask the sounds an object makes, although when Combined with "Control Sound" (see above), the target can be made invisible *and* soundless.

Kinetic Blow (Forces ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Science

The mage focuses the kinetic force of bludgeoning attacks to such a pinpoint that they cause damage like piercing weapons.

This only works on the subject's unarmed attacks and not any held weapons, though body-hugging objects like gloves and shoes benefit from the spell's effect. Unarmed attacks (including those made in grapples) gain a weapon bonus equal to Potency, to a maximum of 5, and inflict lethal damage.

+1 Reach: The spell applies the Knocked Down Tilt.

+1 Reach: The spell applies the Stunned Tilt.

+1 Reach: This spell affects held weapons.

+2 Reach: The spell affects thrown weapons. Alternately, the spell affects firearms, granting them greater penetrative ability. Bullets gain Armor Piercing equal to the spell's Potency.

Transmission (Forces ●●)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Science

The mage can hijack existing signals and change the transmitted data or its destination. She can shorten or lengthen the transmission, and even change frequency, such as turning a wifi broadcast into a television signal. At this level, she must still work with a signal already present. Mimicking specific sounds or information requires a Skill roll or access to the data to be transmitted.

+1 Reach: The signal sent can be "encrypted" so that only certain actions, like specific keystrokes or frequencies, can receive them properly. Otherwise, they simply turn up as unintelligible "noise."

Zoom In (Forces ●●)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Science, Survival

The mage focuses light entering her subject's senses, greatly magnifying vision. Without an Unveiling spell like "Nightvision" (p.141), the spell can only affect visible wavelengths. For example, a mage using this spell on herself could look closely at a bird circling high above, or zoom in to great detail to examine a layer of dust on an object, but she couldn't see things that would only appear under a blacklight.

If a character magnifies vision to focus on small-scale occurrences, the Storyteller may call for Intelligence + Science rolls to make sense of what she's seeing. Every level of Potency doubles the distance the mage can see clearly before suffering penalties, although atmospheric conditions can still cloud her view. Add Potency to dice rolls to notice small details.

+1 Reach: The subject can see clearly out to a distance of 1 mile per dot of Forces.

+1 Reach: The subject can clearly discern dust-sized particles.

+1 Reach: The subject no longer suffers penalties from atmospheric conditions.

+2 Reach: The subject can see microscopic particles, even the molecular bonds between objects.

●●● Disciple of Forces

Call Lightning (Forces ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Firearms, Science

With a gesture the mage can conjure lightning down from a stormy sky to strike her foes. She must use this spell with an existing storm or one she sets into motion with "Control Weather" (see p. 143), since she cannot create lightning from nothing at this level.

While the lightning bolt itself is all but unavoidable, the crackling build-up of energy gives a target warning. The bolt can only strike a target it could actually reach, so the target must be exposed in some way. With multiple subjects, the lightning forks, striking each simultaneously. It does damage according to the Electricity rules on p. 224.

Gravitic Supremacy (Forces ●●●)

Practice: Fraying or Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Science, Survival

The mage may increase or decrease gravity. If increasing it, each level of Potency subtracts 3 Speed from all subjects, as well as penalizing jumping rolls, subtracting a distance equal to Potency from success rolled. If Potency exceeds the Strength of an animal caught in the area, the subject suffers -1 to all Physical dice pools for each point of difference. Flying creatures must succeed on a Strength + Athletics roll each turn or plummet downward at a Speed equal to the Potency.

Nullifying gravity increases the Speed of anyone within the area of effect by the spell's Potency. Increase jumping distance per success rolled by the spell's Potency. Additionally, the mage can cause objects to fall in any direction she chooses when she creates the spell.

Telekinesis (Forces ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Science

The mage can conjure telekinetic force to lift or manipulate an object remotely. Apply the spell's Potency to one of the force's Strength (raw lifting/pushing power), Dexterity (fine manipulation), or Speed. The other two default to 1. Moving objects using Telekinesis requires concentration as an instant action each turn; if the mage fails to concentrate on moving the force, it simply hangs suspended, holding any objects it held before but no longer pushing or pulling (or manipulating objects, if used for that). The mage may then resume directing the telekinetic force until the spell's Duration expires.

+1 Reach: The player may divide Potency among two of Strength, Dexterity, and Speed. This Reach may be performed twice.

Telekinetic Strike (Forces ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Firearms, Science

The mage manipulates kinetic forces to crush subjects or form a “ball” of highly pressurized air and kinetic energy that she can hurl at foes. The spell inflicts bashing damage equal to its Potency.

+1 **Reach:** The spell inflicts the Knocked Down or Stunned Tilt.

Turn Momentum (Forces ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Firearms, Science

This spell allows the mage to redirect a target’s momentum. Usually this forms a shield against projectiles, but it can be used on larger objects, as well. When a mage could use her Defense against an object, she may use this spell instead to redirect it as an instant action. If cast with a prolonged Duration, the mage may take a Dodge action each turn and use this spell instead of receiving the normal benefits for Dodging.

The spell allows the mage to turn a number of moving objects up to Potency. She does not have fine control over where each object is deflected, and the spell cannot make objects reverse direction entirely, only veer off target. The maximum Size of a redirected object is determined by the spell’s Scale factor. Because the spell acts upon an object’s momentum and not the object itself, the weight and speed are irrelevant to this spell’s effect; if the mage can use the spell, the magic will thwart any object within its parameters. The redirected object maintains all its original momentum. By default, the Storyteller determines a random direction for the object to travel when redirected.

+1 **Reach:** The mage can use Turn Momentum’s effect as a reflexive action instead.

+1 **Reach:** The mage may control where the object is redirected to, as long as it is within 90 degrees of the original arc in any direction.

+2 **Reach:** The object’s momentum can be fully reversed. Thrown and Ranged weapons strike their users.

Add Time •: With Time 1 and a Reach, the mage can turn objects too fast for her to gain Defense against them.

Velocity Control (Forces ●●●)

Practice: Fraying or Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Drive, Science

The mage can greatly increase or decrease an object’s velocity. Its speed doubles or halves for each level of the spell’s Potency. For example, a car traveling 50 MPH is increased to 200 MPH with Potency 2, or an incredible 800 MPH with Potency 4. Likewise, if the mage reduces its speed, the same car would slow to about 13 MPH at Potency 2, or about 4 MPH with Potency 4. The mage must be able to affect the target’s entire Size to

affect it with this spell; she cannot target only the front tire of an 18-wheeler with its trailer (Size 30) and bring it to a stop.

The velocity change affects damage based on collisions. It also adds or subtracts one point of damage from projectile attacks and can reduce them to 0. The spell cannot reduce a moving object’s speed to 0 (that would require an Unmaking spell).

●●●● Adept of Forces

Electromagnetic Pulse (Forces ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Computers, Science

The mage degrades electromagnetic energy within the spell’s subject, wrecking electronic devices. The spell is capable of snuffing out mundane electrical devices, although some military-grade devices are shielded, requiring Potency equal to their level of hardening. Shorting out magical devices requires a Clash of Wills. When used against a living being, the damage to their nervous system acts as a direct damage spell, inflicting Potency in lethal damage.

Levitation (Forces ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Science, Survival

The subject floats through the air using telekinetic force. Its air speed equals the spell’s Potency. Subjects may use their Defense against attacks, if applicable. Unwilling subjects Withstand the spell with Stamina.

The mage may direct the subject’s levitation each turn as an instant action. If she fails to do so, the object simply remains afloat in midair, coming to a stop wherever it was when she stopped moving it.

+1 **Reach:** The subject retains momentum from turn to turn, floating slowly in whatever direction the mage initially directed it.

+1 **Reach:** The subject flies fluid and free. She instinctively creates the telekinetic force as she maneuvers in midair, granting her incredible speed and maneuverability. The subject gains an air Speed equal to the mage’s Gnosis + the spell’s Potency. While airborne she can make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to avoid obstacles, gains her normal Defense against attacks, and can fly without exhausting herself as she would by running.

Rend Friction (Forces ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Drive, Science

The mage alters the level of friction upon a target. She can increase it to the point where simple air friction shears the target to pieces, or lower it so much that an object can continue moving almost indefinitely.

Transform Energy

Level	Light	Sound	Heat (Celsius)	Electricity	Fire
1	Flashlight	Casual talk	Room temp. (22)	Car battery	Lighter
2	Ambient sunlight	Scream	Body temp. (37)	Wall socket	Torch
3	Car headlight	Electric guitar	Kills bacteria (71)	Electric fence	Bonfire
4	Floodlight	Gunshot	Boiling (100)	Junction box	Inferno
5	Stadium lights	Industrial	Books burn (233)	Main line	Forest fire

If the spell increases friction, every 3 yards that the target moves in a given turn (round down) causes it one point of lethal damage to a maximum of Potency damage. The target must be exposed to open air, and non-magical armor is only half as effective. Conversely, if the mage decreases friction, an object doubles the length it moves before slowing down per point of Potency, even after it has stopped accelerating or maintaining its speed. This also doubles weapon ranges in the same way. Vehicles suffer a penalty to their Handling equal to the spell's Potency, as the vehicle fails to stop or react in a way the operator can fully control.

Thunderbolt (Forces ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Firearms, Science

The mage channels ambient energies as a weapon, pouring them into her subject. This spell deals lethal damage equal to its Potency.

+1 Reach: The spell deals aggravated damage. Cost: 1 Mana.

Transform Energy (Forces ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Science

All energy shares sympathy, born perhaps from the same cosmic source in the same instant. An Adept of Forces can use that sympathy to transform one energy type into another. The table below serves as a rough equivalency chart for different energy types. She can change a room full of light into heat, at once turning it into a pitch-black oven. She might also change the thunderous roar of a waterfall into electricity, far more efficient than any hydroelectric dam. The spell may affect energy of a level equal to Potency.

+1 Reach: the mage may decrease the level of the energy transformed by one. This Reach may be applied multiple times.

+1 Reach: the mage may split a source of energy into two different kinds or leave part of the original source behind – for example, turning an inferno into light equivalent to daylight and sound equivalent to a scream.

+1 Reach: For one Mana, the mage may increase the level of the energy transformed by one.

●●●●● Master of Forces

Adverse Weather (Forces ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Science

The mage summons a major weather system as severe as a tornado, tsunami, monsoon, or hurricane. The weather effects take hold in minutes and dissipate immediately once the spell expires. This allows the mage to create Extreme Environments of nearly any kind up to Level 4, as per Control Weather (see above) but without the limitations. She does not have to call up disasters; she can make a rainstorm appear in a cloudless blue sky if she desires.

+1 Reach: The mage can create weather drastically different from the local conditions, such as a monsoon during the savannah's dry season.

Create Energy (Forces ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Science

The mage creates energy from nothing within a subject or area of effect. She can create light (including sunlight), fire, radiation, sound, and electricity. Use the chart under Transform Energy above as an example of the levels she can create within the affected area. For fire, assume the heat is +1 for Potency 1–2, +2 for Potency 3–4 and +3 for Potency 5+. After creating the energy, she can modify it with Control spells. Creating radiation also creates an Extreme Environment hazardous to living beings.

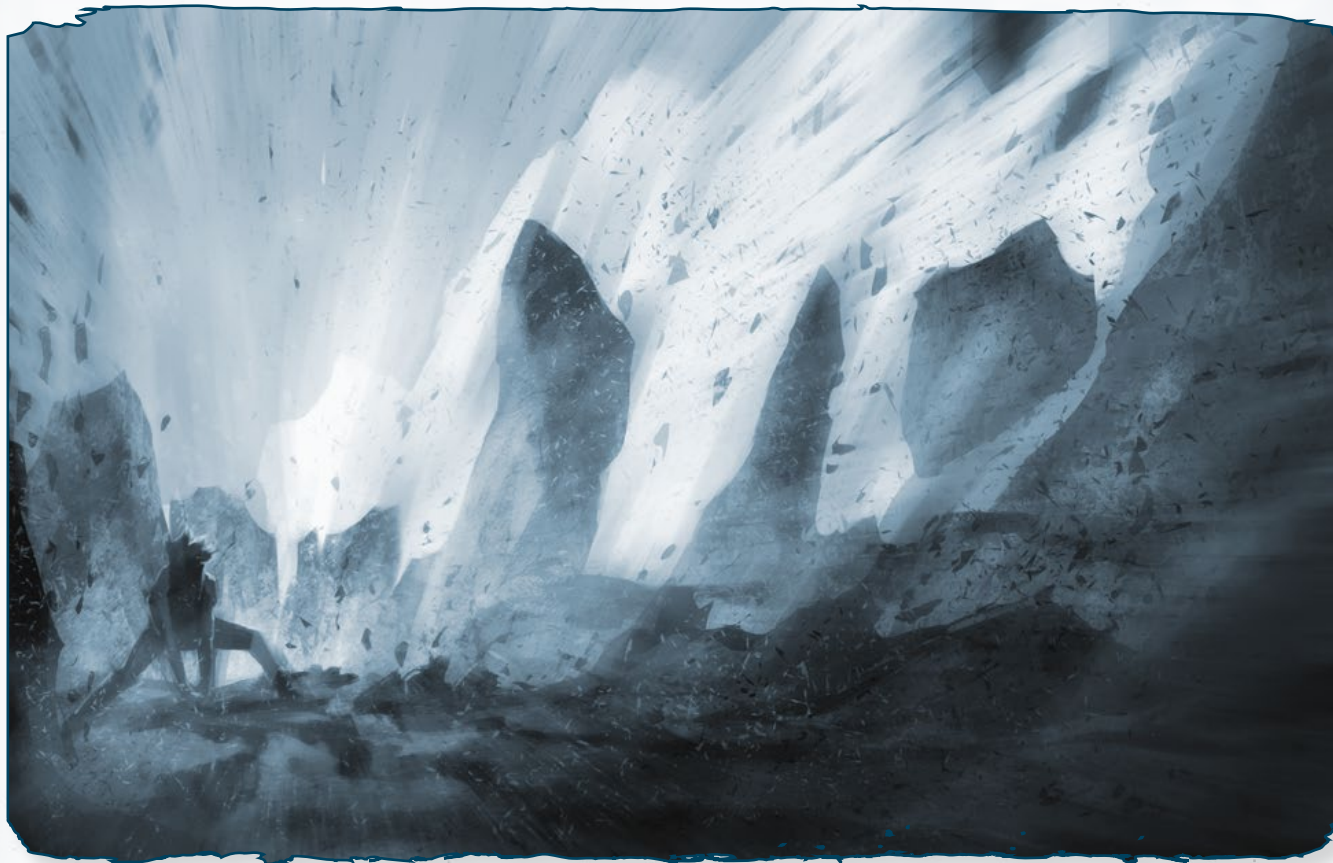
Eradicate Energy (Forces ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Science, Survival

Rather than create energy, the mage snuffs out energies within a subject or area (see the chart "Transform Energy," above, for the Potency required by different levels of energy.) The destruction is spectacular, explosively scattering the affected energies into particles. If used on a creature, this spell is instantly fatal but Withstood by Stamina.



Earthquake (Forces ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Science, Survival

The mage unleashes an earthquake to crack the ground. This spell inflicts damage equal to its Potency to all structures within the affected area. Most modern buildings are built to endure

earthquakes well and subtract their Durability from the damage as normal. Smaller or flimsier structures do not apply Durability to the damage at all. Living beings may make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to maintain their balance as the ground pitches and heaves beneath them. Failure means the character suffers bashing damage as she falls to the ground and is thrown about wildly, unless the fall sends her tumbling down stairs or over a ledge. Collapsing buildings can cause much more catastrophic damage or leave victims trapped under tons of debris.



LIFE

Purview: Healing, disease, food, animals, plants, evolution, metamorphosis, physicality, vigor

Life and Spirit rule the Primal Wild. Life is the gross Arcanum of the pair, a term made literal by some of its more visceral spells. Life magic governs all living things, in fact, from viruses to titanic whales, even the nerve cells that allow thoughts to form Imagos. Life is tenacious in the extreme, capable of surviving anywhere, developing any trait to weather environmental stresses, and Life mages are comparably tough. By harnessing the endless adaptability of living forms, mages can gain perspectives on the world otherwise lost even to Awakened senses.

• Initiate of Life

Analyze Life (Life •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Spell Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Medicine, Survival

By observing a creature and casting this spell, the mage can discern details such as the species, age, sex, and overall health of a plant or animal, including humans. She may identify how many dots in Physical Attributes the subject has. Any illnesses or injuries, including Personal Tilts and Conditions, suffered by the creature become obvious to her sight. This spell identifies supernatural (but still living) creatures as unknown species, even if they take a human form, unless the mage has studied their kind before. Undead beings do not register to this spell.

+1 Reach: The player may learn a specific Physical Attribute rating of the subject, rather than the total number of dots.

Cleanse the Body (Life •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Medicine, Survival

The mage can use this spell to help the subject's body fight the effects of any toxin in her system, or even purge them completely. Its magic allows her a bonus equal to Potency to her next roll to resist the toxin's effects.

+1 Reach: The subject may make her next resistance roll immediately, in addition to the one she would receive at its regular interval.

Heightened Senses (Life •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Investigation, Survival

While this spell cannot grant a mage new senses, it can heighten her existing ones, including touch. This is a popular spell among hedonistic mages as a result, as well as those who want to revitalize senses dulled by city life. A mage's strength

lies in her preparation and knowledge, after all, and keen senses impart greater information about the world.

The spell grants a bonus to Perception rolls equal to its Potency.

+1 Reach: The mage instinctively knows how to track by scent while this spell is active, making use of her increased olfactory powers.

Speak With Beasts (Life •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Empathy, Survival

The subject gains the ability to "speak" to any specimens of an animal specified by the mage during casting. She usually speaks to it by making noises similar to its own sounds, but this is not necessary; the subject can speak in her own language and the magic "translates" her words for her. This does not grant her any capability to control a creature, only to understand and be understood by it. Animals have limited ability to understand things that transpire around them, especially as pertains to humans, but the subject gains a bonus to any Animal Ken rolls made with that animal equal to the spell's Potency. A bird may not understand just why the people went into the house across the street last night, for example, but it could give a general estimate of their number and unusual features like being covered in tattoos ("skin patterns").

+1 Reach: The subject may communicate with all animals, instead of only a single species.

Web of Life (Life •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Medicine, Survival

By tapping into the pulse of the living world, the mage becomes keenly aware of any living things nearby. She feels their presence by the weight they exert upon the Tapestry, a gravity of the life-force that connects all creatures to the same great cycle. Because the unfiltered sensing of all life might provide a sensory overload, most mages specify certain types of life to detect, such as "humans, insects, and birds" or "only dogs."

After successfully casting this spell, the mage can detect all the specified types of organisms within the spell's area Scale, or that enter the spell's area while it remains in effect. By casting on an individual subject or subjects, the spell may be used to scan them for parasites, bacteria, or pregnancy.

•• Apprentice of Life

Body Control (Life ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Medicine, Survival

With this spell a mage can control her subject's bodily functions to a degree that would make even the most inwardly-focused monks envious. She can do far more than slow heart rate; she can control her subject's metabolism, heighten reflexes, and consume less oxygen. For the spell's Duration, each level of Potency gives one rank in each of the following:

Breathing: Each rank slows down the subject's breathing, halving the amount of oxygen she needs to function normally.

Heartbeat: By slowing down the subject's heartbeat, she can double the interval at which a toxin affects her.

Metabolism: Regulating the subject's metabolism allows her to subsist on half as much food, and doubles the amount of time between checks for deprivation or fatigue.

Reflexes: Add +1 to the subject's Initiative.

Scent: The mage can change the subject's scent to any that her body could naturally produce, eliminating (or increasing) body odors, controlling pheromone release.

Each level of Potency also halves the healing time of bashing wounds by controlling internal bleeding, preventing bruises or helping them to heal quickly. With Potency 3, for example, she would recover one bashing wound per minute.

+1 Reach: The subject also gains 1/0 armor for the spell's Duration as her body becomes much more resistant to minor injuries.

+2 Reach: The subject also halves the healing time for lethal damage for each level of Potency.

Control Instincts (Life ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Intimidation, Persuasion

For all their intellectual powers, humans are animals, too, and animals are governed by instincts. An Apprentice of Life can control these instinctual responses like a puppeteer pulling strings. In so doing she can make any animal or plant behave in any fashion natural to its type. She need not do so in the presence of circumstances that would provoke such behavior normally. A raging bear can be made to flee by manipulating its fight-or-flight response, a fish to leap, a rat to feast on something, or a snake made to secrete venom from its fangs, even in the absence of prey. A human may be made tired, hungry, or pumped with adrenaline. This spell works on any mundane life-form the mage can perceive. Humans with Supernatural Merits count as "mundane" enough for this spell to affect them.

Subjects suffer a Condition appropriate to the desired instinctive response. Use the guidelines for creating a Condition in the section on Creative Thaumaturgy (p. 126) and the Storytelling chapter (p.289).

+1 Reach: Control Instincts can affect living supernatural creatures.

Lure and Repel (Life ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Persuasion, Survival

The mage can create a magical lure or repellent for specific types of organisms. While the mage could in theory specify any type of organism, she is likely to be quickly overwhelmed by numbers. When casting this spell as a lure, a smart mage will specify only certain types of organisms (not microscopic ones, if she's smarter still) to draw to her. Plants and microorganisms have Resolve 0 for purposes of Withstanding the spell. Organisms drawn in are not necessarily friendly and will remain cautious or even hostile if it is within their nature to do so, but will not openly attack the subject unless cornered. People affected by the spell find the subject irresistible or repugnant, but can't pinpoint just what it is that provokes the reaction.

Repelling a type of organism means that such creatures must Withstand the spell's effect to enter the area of effect Scale factor. The spell doesn't so much physically repel the creature as trigger an instinctive aversion to the area, like animals fleeing a region before disaster strikes.

+1 Reach: The lured creatures prove benign toward the subject and will offer food or small favors as appropriate.

+1 Reach: Lured intelligent creatures treat the subject as having a good (lure) or bad (repel) first impression for purposes of Social maneuvering.

Mutable Mask (Life ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Stealth, Subterfuge

The mage may alter her subject's apparent features, albeit only cosmetically and temporarily. She can change skin pigments, phenotypical features, apparent sex, or hair color and texture; add or subtract small fat deposits; or change the sound of the subject's voice. Distinguishing features like scars and moles can be added or removed. Even at its most extreme, the changes wrought by this spell still leave the subject somewhat resembling her original form. If someone were to compare the masked and regular appearances side by side, they might notice an almost familial resemblance (even if the two are of obviously different races), but the changes are enough to fool facial recognition devices, sketch artists, or even change the subject's scent enough to throw off tracking animals. Some biometric devices, such as fingerprint scanners, will still detect the difference. She cannot mimic specific people with this basic spell.

The changes brought on by this spell are illusionary, and some supernatural powers (including Life Mage Sight) may see through them with a successful Clash of Wills.

+2 Reach: The mage can duplicate the appearance of a specific person, including scars and fingerprints.

Purge Illness (Life ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Medicine, Survival

A mage with this spell can purge her subject's body of diseases. Compare Potency to the severity level of the infirmity (p. 223). If Potency is less than the illness' rating, reduce it by the difference, and if greater, the spell eliminates the illness from the subject entirely.

••• Disciple of Life

Bruise Flesh (Life •••)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Intimidation, Medicine

A mage can use Life magic to simply bruise and batter a living creature. This is an attack spell, inflicting bashing damage equal to the spell's Potency.

+1 Reach: The spell also inflicts an additional -1 wound penalty on top of any suffered by the target as the mage triggers nerves and blocks endorphins.

Degrading the Form (Life •••)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Medicine, Survival

Living things grow feeble when wracked with injury, disease, or genetic defect. This spell replicates those effects, crippling the subject's Physical Attributes. Each level of Potency reduces Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina by one, chosen when the spell is cast, to a minimum of 1.

+1 Reach: The spell affects an additional Attribute, dividing the spell's Potency between both. This effect may be applied twice to affect all three Attributes.

Honing the Form (Life •••)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Medicine, Survival

The mage may improve the subject's Physical Attributes. The spell increases Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina (chosen when the spell is cast) by its Potency. This increase affects any Advantages or other traits derived from the Attribute's level. The effects are subtle in appearance; the affected target doesn't grow or gain any obvious muscle mass, but observers can detect even subtle hints of changes to balance, strength, or stamina. The affected Attribute cannot be raised above the subject's maximum Attribute dots (5 for normal human beings).

+1 Reach: The spell affects an additional Attribute, dividing the spell's Potency between both. This effect may be applied twice to affect all three Attributes.

+1 Reach: By spending a point of Mana, the mage may raise an Attribute above the maximum rating for the subject.

Knit (Life •••)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Medicine, Survival

The mage can heal her subject's body of injuries it would be capable of healing itself given time, and repair damage done by toxins or deprivation (though such damage will continue to accrue as normal unless prevented by other means). Each level of Potency heals two boxes of bashing damage.

+1 Reach: the spell heals one lethal damage per Potency instead of two bashing.

+1 Reach: The mage may heal Personal Tilts such as Arm Wrack, forcing broken bones back into shape.

+1 Reach: The spell heals damage done by deprivation and charges the subject's system as though she had received a full meal and plenty of water.

+1 Reach: The spell reproduces the effects of a full night's rest in the subject, including regaining a point of Willpower if applicable.

Many Faces (Life •••)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Stealth, Subterfuge

The mage may alter her subject's body in any way, within the confines of species and age. Rather than an illusion as with "Mutable Mask," the transformation caused by this spell is entirely physical and functional – subjects can be made fertile in their new forms, be granted radically altered weight and fitness, and have poor vision or other senses corrected. If the subject is missing organs or limbs, however, they remain gone in the new form, and injuries carry over from one form to the next. The mage may rearrange up to the spell's Potency in Physical Attribute dots, for example moving a dot of Strength to Stamina, but cannot change the total number of dots, bring any to 0, or raise them above the subject's limit.

Add Time •••: The mage may change the subject's physical age as well.

Transform Life (Life •••)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Science, Survival

The mage can transform life by giving it features normally exhibited by other organisms. She can grant herself claws or gills, change a harmless herbivore into a venom-spitting killer, or impart limbs and air-breathing lungs to a shark, among other changes. She may grant one feature per level of Potency. A transformed target instinctively knows how to use its new aspects to the best of its ability. The magic is capable of affecting even microscopic organisms, if the mage can perceive them, but for

obvious reasons most microbes cannot benefit from aspects like armor, limbs, or senses. The mage can grant viruses and bacteria increased Toxicity, or the ability to replicate or survive in environments that might otherwise kill them.

Because of the sheer variety of adaptations displayed by the world's flora and fauna, the following is not an exhaustive list, but serves as an example for possible traits:

Claws: The subject gains savage claws, granting her a +1 weapon bonus.

Environmental Adaptation: Like creatures adapted for life deep underwater or inhospitable deserts, the subject gains the ability to survive pressure, extreme heat or cold (up to level 4 environments), and arid or moisture-heavy environments.

Gills/Lungs: The subject may breathe underwater (or in air, if normally aquatic) freely.

Immunities: The mage may grant resistance to toxins or poisonous materials, like a rat's ability to devour even rotten food unharmed or herbivores' ability to fully digest plant matter.

Leaping: Gaining powerful legs like a frog's or kangaroo's, the target gains a bonus to jumping rolls, increasing the distance leaped by each success on the Athletics roll.

Prehensile Tail: Gain a bonus to rolls related to balance or climbing equal to Potency.

Scaly Armor/Thick Hide: The subject gains 2/1 armor (must be at least Size 2).

Senses: The subject gains a new sense, such as echolocation, primitive infravision, or a keen sense for vibrations, granting a bonus to Perception rolls and the ability to perceive phenomena outside the human senses.

Tentacles: The subject may make grappling attempts against targets up to her Size in feet away.

Venom: The subject gains fangs or small stingers (damage bonus 0) capable of injecting venom with a Toxicity equal to the spell's Potency. Must grapple first unless a second level of this adaptation is taken. If taken with Tentacles, the Venom may be delivered automatically by any successful move during a grapple.

Wall-Crawling: The subject (which can be no larger than Size 7) gains the ability to climb on surfaces without equipment or even handholds, provided the surface can bear her weight.

+2 Reach: The bestowed traits, if made indefinite, can be passed on to the creature's descendants.

•••• Adept of Life

Accelerate Growth (Life ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Medicine, Science

With this spell a mage can greatly accelerate the growth of a living being. The subject's growth rate doubles for each level of Potency. At Potency 5, the subject grows 32 times faster than normal — a human infant would reach adulthood in a little over

half a year, if the spell's Duration lasts long enough. When the spell expires, the subject returns to its actual age. The targets gain no life experience beyond that which they undergo during the spell's Duration, so a human child made into an adult by means of this spell will likely behave as a child unless other magic helps him learn quickly, and the mage or someone else sees fit to teach him. If the subject exceeds its natural lifespan, it dies of old age.

+1 Reach: When the spell's Duration lapses, its effects wear off at an even greater rate than they took hold, rapidly de-aging the subject within a matter of minutes. This places great stress on the mind and body of the target, requiring a Stamina roll to avoid falling into an induced coma for a number of days equal to Potency. Subjects that have been aged to death do not return to life when they de-age, instead appearing to be their original age and yet having died of natural causes.

Animal Minion (Life ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Science, Survival

Rather than triggering instincts and directing an animal along a course it might normally take, an Adept can take full bodily control. She does so with raw domination, a puppetmaster commanding a marionette. While she can't force the creature to do something outside its physical capabilities, she can make it do anything of which its body is capable. This isn't full mind control and she doesn't have

Swarms

Some mages shapechange into swarms of small creatures, Size 1 (rats) or Size 0 (insects). The Scale factor of the spell covers the total size of the swarm, chosen when the spell is cast. The swarm moves at the mage's normal Speed, modified by the creatures' Size, and also makes use of any special movement abilities the creatures may possess, like flight or wall-crawling.

All individuals caught in the swarm, whether allies or enemies, suffer from panic and limited visibility and hearing. Victims suffer the persistent Distracted Condition until they escape the swarm.

Swarms are difficult to harm. After rolling attacks against the swarm as normal, factoring in armor and other modifiers, the swarm takes one point of damage of the appropriate type, two points with an exceptional success on the attack. Fire, explosions, chemical sprays, and other area effects cause normal damage.

Swarms aren't capable of conventional combat against human-sized opponents, but may, depending on their composition, apply an extreme environment hazard to creatures they envelop.

access to the creature's thoughts. The mage *can* force an human subject to talk, but can't prompt it to divulge specific information, or even anything intelligible (unless the mage herself demands that it speak certain words). Subjects often move differently from their usual gait in ways noticeable to those familiar with them.

Using this spell renders the mage's own body inert for the Duration, as she concentrates everything on controlling another's every bodily function. Her body continues to breathe, tire, and age as normal, but she loses her Defense and remains only semi-aware of what transpires around her body. Damage inflicted on her body will immediately alert her to the threat and she may choose to end control of her puppet-body in order to regain full control of her own.

Unlike Control Instincts (Life ••, p. 149), this spell allows the mage to command the subject completely. It is not simple instinctive responses and triggered urges, but a total bodily takeover that allows her to do anything the possessed body could normally do.

+1 Reach: The target behaves more normally as the mage gains an understanding of its normal movements, bodily tics, and habits.

Life-Force Assault (Life ••••)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Intimidation, Medicine

The mage attacks the very life energies that sustain a living Pattern. This involves rending that Pattern, causing horribly painful internal wounds and unspecific tissue damage. This is an attack spell, inflicting lethal damage equal to its Potency.

+1 Reach: The mage can damage and destroy nerves, leaving some affected body parts numb and others crippled with incredible pain. Increase wound penalties suffered by the target by 2.

+1 Reach: The spell's damage is aggravated (cost: 1 Mana.)

Mend (Life ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Medicine, Survival

Adepts of Life can heal even the most grievous wounds, rewriting the subject's body to seal injuries shut. Each level of Potency heals two lethal damage.

+1 Reach: The mage can erase scars left by previous injuries or the wounds healed by this spell.

+1 Reach: The spell heals damage done by deprivation and charges the subject's system as though she had received a full meal and plenty of water.

+1 Reach: The spell reproduces the effects of a full night's rest in the subject, including regaining a point of Willpower if applicable.

+1 Reach: The spell heals aggravated damage. Cost: 1 Mana.

Regeneration (Life ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Cost: 1 Mana

Regeneration

Body Part	Potency
Digits, skin (patch)	1
Eyes, ears, nose, tongue	2
Hand, foot	3
Arm, leg	4
Genitals, internal organs	5
Heart, skin (most)	6
Brain	7

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Medicine, Survival

Life magic can regenerate lost organs, limbs, repair fire-scarred tissue, and restore function to dead tissues, provided the subject is still alive when the spell is cast. This spell can even cure brain damage, infertility, and birth defects. Potency determines the extent of the organs that may be regenerated. Affected body parts regenerate (growing from nothing if the limb or organ has been completely removed) at a rate of about one minute per level of Potency required.

Most mages cast this spell with a Duration of Indefinite, but some either can't or don't — keeping a target dependent upon her magic for brain function or a healthy, fully-functional body is a powerful bargaining chip. When the spell expires, the regenerated tissues wither away in less than a minute.

Shapechanging (Life ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Athletics, Science

The mage (or her subject) can fully take on the form of another creature. While the spell can greatly transform its subject's Size, changing into much larger forms is difficult. The Scale factor of the spell must cover the larger of the Size traits, before and after the transformation.

The subject's clothes and gear do not change, and she must also contend with powerful instincts in the animal form. When confronted by circumstances that would trigger a strong instinctive response, such as a male lion's need to kill all competitors' cubs, or if the subject is hungry in bear form and faced with a prey animal, she must roll Composure + Resolve reflexively to avoid acting on these impulses. Failure means that she gives in to the primal urges until they're satisfied. Mages add Gnosis to this roll, and other supernatural beings add their own Tolerance Traits.

Add Matter ••••: The subject's gear changes to fit her new form.

+1 Reach (with Matter ●●●●): The subject's gear becomes part of her new form, taking on appearance as odd scars, fur, or scales.

+1 Reach: The subject takes on a swarm form and maintains control of hundreds or thousands of tiny creatures. See the sidebar on p. 151.

+1 Reach: The subject retains full control of her reason and doesn't have to fight instinctive urges.

●●●●● Master of Life

Create Life (Life ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Spell Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Science, Survival

A Master of Life may create a new living organism of nearly any variety: plant, fungus, animal, even complex organisms like humans and cetaceans. The created being is mindless without the conjunctive use of the Mind Arcanum to give it intelligence, acting purely upon instinct. It will be a simple creature, even for its kind, but otherwise fully functional and even capable of procreation.

What a mage can create is limited by little other than her imagination, though truly fantastical creatures are beyond the scope of this spell. She cannot create a winged dragon, for instance, and expect it to fly in defiance of physics. The Size of Target Scale factor determines the maximum Size of the created organism. The creation has all the basic characteristics of an organism of its type; the mage need not impart the ability to breed or move in ways normal to that species.

When the spell's Duration expires, so does the created organism, which may count as an Act of Hubris against Enlightened Wisdom. Simply creating the living creature knowing this may also count as an Act of Hubris. Some mages use this spell to create bodies they can possess or alter with other Life magic, use to bribe spirits looking for a host body, or create a companion (often done with an Indefinite Duration). Created human bodies are soulless and thus immediately gain the Soulless Condition (see p. 318).

Add Mind ●●●●●: The caster gives her creation a true mind as appropriate for the organism's type.

+1 Reach: The organism may be created with additional features for every level of Potency above the base required, as per Transform Life (see p. 150).

Contagion (Life ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Occult, Science

Life Masters can unleash horrific plagues on their foes. The mage can create minor sicknesses or life-threatening diseases. The Severity of the disease is equal to Potency. If the mage has something in which she can store the disease, she can create it within that equipment, or else she must target some form of carrier, depending on the disease's transmission methods (water, food, living hosts). It's contagious as soon as the mage creates it, requiring a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll, modified by the Severity, to resist contracting it. Failure means the victim contracts the disease and suffers its normal effects.

+1 Reach: The caster may create a new disease with new characteristics and loose it upon the world. This is almost always an Act of Hubris. Because no living creature could have possibly encountered the disease and developed any resistance to it, all contested rolls to resist contracting it or fight its effects suffer a -5 penalty.

Salt the Earth (Life ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Science, Survival

This destructive spell rips the very life-force from an area or an individual, rendering it incapable of sustaining life. Plants, animals, and even fungi in the area die. The use of this spell even temporarily halts decomposition in an area based upon microbial breakdown of dead cells, as it kills all microscopic organisms as well. Finally, the spell prevents anything affected from becoming fertilized, though existing pregnancies stay if the organism survives. The spell creates an Extreme Environment effect equal to Potency.

+1 Reach: Individual living things that survive the assault on their vitality will find themselves unable to grow or heal naturally, and suffer an additional -1 from any wound penalties they currently bear.



MATTER

Purview: alchemy, gases, solids, liquids, shaping, crafting, transmutation, stasis

The gross Arcanum of Stygia, Matter is a study in contradictions. It is at once the Arcanum of stasis and transformation, creating objects that will last a thousand years and reshaping objects at a whim. Matter's purview is all the inert, lifeless things of the world: iron and steel, air and water, and all the riches of the earth. Things which were once alive but are no longer, as well as substances derived from life but which are not themselves alive, are also governed by this Arcanum. A Matter spell can rot and warp the boards of a wooden house, or turn a glass of water into wine. Matter is seen as the most base of the Arcana by many mages, closest to the profane Lje, but the Stygian Masters know that the crude Matter of the Fallen World is but an echo of the perfected material of the Supernal.

• Initiate of Matter

Craftsman's Eye (Matter •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Investigation, Science

Under the craftsman's eye, no tool is mysterious. By studying an object for one turn, the subject gains a complete understanding of the object's intended function. From a tool as simple as a hammer to an intricate puzzle box, the item's intended purpose is plain to see. If the object has no purpose (for example, a simple rock), the spell reveals that too. Likewise, if something prevents the object from fulfilling its purpose (for example, a car missing its spark plugs can't drive), the spell reveals the nature of the problem.

+1 Reach: The subject's senses expand to an understanding of *how* to use the examined object. Not only does this reveal things like the combination to a safe or the solution to a puzzle, it grants the subject 8-Again on all actions made using the studied object for its intended purpose. Only the most recently studied object gains this benefit.

+2 Reach: As above, plus the spell reveals *all* potential uses of an object, fanned out in a vast array of Supernal symbols around the object. Focusing on a particular use might require a reflexive Wits + Composure roll for especially complex items.

Add Fate •: The mage names a particular task when casting the spell (e.g. "get leverage on Carruthers," "translate the Codex Afire"). Any object that might help with that task seem to loom larger, to be more physically *present*, and are immediately obvious to the subject as soon as she lays eyes on them.

Detect Substance (Matter •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Investigation, Science

The mage chooses a number of substances or objects that fall under Matter's purview equal to the spell's Potency. As long

as this spell is active, the subject is automatically aware of the presence and location of the chosen substance within the area of effect. The chosen substance can be as broad or as specific as the mage likes ("ferrous metal," "stainless steel," "a knife," and "my hunting knife" are all valid options).

Add Time •: The subject can detect whether the chosen substance *has been* in the area within an amount of time equal to the spell's Duration.

Add Forces •: The subject can search for specific types of electronic information, such as digital audio, photographs, or text documents. Not only will the spell reveal which devices have the chosen file type on board, if she's actually using the device the mage knows where on the device the files are stored.

Discern Composition (Matter •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Investigation, Science

The subject becomes aware of the precise composition of an object: its weight and density, as well as the precise elements that make it up.

+1 Reach: The subject also becomes aware of any objects concealed within the object: a gold relic hidden in a secret compartment in a stone statue, for example.

+1 Reach: The subject instinctively knows the object's structural weak point. Attempts to damage the object reduce its Durability by -1 per point of the spell's Potency. This benefit lasts until the object is destroyed or fully repaired.

Add Space ••: The subject is aware not only of what the object is made of, but of precisely where the material came from (e.g. where the ore was mined, where the tree that made the board was felled, or where the circuit board was manufactured). Casting this spell on a Supernal Artifact strikes the subject with an overwhelming rush of images and symbols: Roll the Artifact's dot rating, contested by the subject's Gnosis. If the Artifact earns more successes, the subject gains the Shaken Condition. Resolving the Condition grants an Arcane Beat.

Lodestone (Matter •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Larceny, Science

The mage chooses a substance or type of object. As long as the spell remains active, those objects within the spell's Area are drawn to the spell's subject: Dropped coins bounce toward her, water flows in her direction as long as she's standing downstream, and so on. Unless the object is capable of moving under its own power, this spell can only nudge the object when an external force is imparted on it: a ball might roll across the floor, but a heavy book won't fly off a table into the subject's hand. (It might, however, tip and fall off a shelf if it was precariously balanced to begin with.)



Alternately, the mage can *repel* objects from the subject in the same fashion. This spell isn't strong enough to deflect a weapon swung or fired with intent to harm, but it can certainly keep the mage dry in a rainstorm or keep a cloud of tear gas at bay.

Remote Control (Matter •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Drive, Intimidate

With the commanding power of Stygia, the subject can control any mechanical object, making it fulfill its function. She might flip a light switch, cause an industrial press to slam downward, or shift a car into gear. Anything that's within the bounds of a single instant action, and which the subject device is capable of performing, is fair game. Should the action require a Skill roll, treat the spell's Potency as its successes.

+1 Reach: The subject can perform more complex tasks while controlling the object, including extended actions or maintaining continuous control of the object as long as the spell's Duration lasts.

•• Apprentice of Matter

Alchemist's Touch (Matter ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Survival, Persuasion

Draped in the leaden shrouds of Stygia, the subject may handle even the most dangerous of substances without fear. When the spell is cast, the mage chooses a particular form of matter: The subject is largely immune to its deleterious effects. The material cannot inflict bashing damage on her at all, and she reduces the damage from lethal sources of harm by the spell's Potency. The spell has no effect on aggravated damage.

This spell only protects the mage from harm that comes due to an intrinsic property of the material. The damage from a gun or a sword, for example, comes from the force behind the impact and thus isn't reduced by this spell. However, a mage under the protection of this spell can handle radioactive or caustic substances or walk through a cloud of chlorine gas with no ill effects.

+1 Reach: The mage chooses another form of matter the spell protects against.

+2 Reach: The mage is immune to bashing *and* lethal damage from the material, and reduces any aggravated damage by the spell's Potency.

Add Forces ••: The subject is protected from extreme temperatures caused by the substance's state. She can walk across lava, scoop up a handful of molten steel without being burned, or dip a finger in liquid nitrogen without it freezing.

Find the Balance (Matter ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Persuasion, Science

Those initiated into the Stygian Mysteries know that understanding a tool is only the first step toward perfecting it. By subtly manipulating the density and purity of a tool, the mage improves its balance and heft. The tool grants its user the 9-Again quality for the Duration of the spell, so long as it's a tool that can benefit from balance or weight distribution.

+1 **Reach:** The tool grants the 8-Again quality instead.

Hidden Hoard (Matter ●●)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Larceny, Occult, Subterfuge

This spell renders Matter difficult to detect. It isn't invisibility, precisely; rather, the spell veils the subject's connection to the Supernal truths, making it seem insignificant and beneath notice. Mundane attempts to detect the subject fail automatically. Spells and powers that would detect the veiled object are subject to a Clash of Wills.

Machine Invisibility (Matter ●●)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Larceny, Science, Stealth

By means of this spell, the mage blinds the eyes and ears of inert matter to her subject's presence: cameras refuse to see her, microphones refuse to hear her voice, and so on. Supernatural objects (such as remote-viewing Artifacts or perhaps a ghost-haunted camera) provoke a Clash of Wills.

+1 **Reach:** This spell also applies to unliving constructs animated with magic, including zombies and golems. Such beings always provoke a Clash of Wills.

Shaping (Matter ●●)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Durability

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Persuasion

Liquids, gases, and amorphous solids are the mage's playthings with this spell. She can shape them into any form she desires, manipulating them in defiance of gravity, for as long as the spell lasts. This spell cannot change the state of matter (e.g. from solid to liquid), but substances that have been temporarily transformed into shapeable states by magic may be affected. Particularly intricate shapes may require a reflexive Wits + Crafts roll, at the Storyteller's discretion.

+1 **Reach:** The mage can alter the shape of solid substances as well. If used to warp a tool or weapon, each point of Potency reduces the subject's equipment bonus or damage by -1. If the equipment bonus or damage is reduced to 0, the object is useless.

+1 **Reach:** If the mage is creating or repairing an object using this spell, reduce the number of successes required on the

extended action by one per point of Potency. This can't reduce the number of required successes below one.

+2 **Reach:** The mage can create an appropriate Environmental Tilt, such as Earthquake, Flooded, or Heavy Winds.

●●● Disciple of Matter

Aegis (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Crafts, Science

By adjusting the properties of matter, the mage may make silk shirts bullet-proof, or tear through bulky riot suits with her bare hands. The spell is cast upon a wearable object (giving living beings Armor is a function of Life). For each level of Potency, the player chooses one of the following effects:

- Raise or lower ballistic Armor rating by 1
- Raise or lower general Armor rating by 1
- Raise or lower Defense penalty by 1

+1 **Reach:** The armor becomes immune to the Armor-Piercing effect.

Alter Conductivity (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Computers, Science, Subterfuge

With this spell, the mage alters a subject's base properties, changing the manner in which it conducts electricity. This spell can automatically shut down any electrical device whose power isn't great enough to inflict damage, or it can increase or decrease the amount of electricity that can flow through the object. For each level of Potency, the spell allows the object to conduct two points worth of electrical damage, or reduces electrical damage by two. The object must still be in contact with an appropriate source of electricity to deal this damage; even a Potency 6 spell won't let the power from a household wall outlet inflict more than four points of bashing damage (see [Electricity](#) on p. 224). Reducing electrical damage to zero also shuts electrical devices down – for example, completely snuffing a subway rail's conductivity shuts the trains down.

+1 **Reach:** The mage can alter the subject's ability to transmit other forms of energy, such as heat, sound, or even light. Each additional form of energy is an extra Reach.

Alter Integrity (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Fraying or Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Durability

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Medicine, Subterfuge

By rotating an object's resonance into or out of alignment with Stygian truths, the mage can strengthen or weaken its material.

Every level of Potency either increases or decreases the object's Durability by 1. This does not increase the object's Structure, but see below.

+1 Reach: In lieu of increasing Durability, one level of Potency may be "spent" to give the object 2 additional points of Structure. If the spell wears off and the object has taken more damage than it has Structure, it crumbles to dust.

+2 Reach: The effect is Lasting

Crucible (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Science.

With this spell, an object takes on a glimmer of Supernal purity. If its primary purpose is as a tool, it grants 8-Again on a number of rolls equal to the spell's Potency. Valuable objects, such as gold or diamonds, become incredibly pure and beautiful. Add the spell's Potency to the object's Availability rating to determine its increased value. This spell cannot increase an object's Availability to more than twice its original rating.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the object grants the rote action quality on a number of rolls equal to the spell's Potency. As long as the spell's Duration lasts, its wielder may spend one point of Mana at any time to "recharge" this effect, granting the rote action quality on an additional number of rolls equal to the spell's Potency.

+1 Reach: The spell may increase the object's Availability to three times its original rating.

Nigredo and Albedo (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Fraying or Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Brawl, Medicine

All matter contains within itself the Supernal Truth of its own perfection – or its annihilation. This spell allows the mage to repair or destroy objects, restoring lost Structure or inflicting damage equal to the spell's Potency.

+1 Reach: When inflicting damage, ignore the object's Durability.

Shrink and Grow (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Durability

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Science

By means of this spell, the mage may bring an object's Supernal reflection closer to the world or push it farther away. This in turn causes the Supernal to cast a larger or smaller shadow into the Fallen World, effectively making the object grow or shrink. Each level of Potency either adds or subtracts one from the subject's Size. Size 0 objects can be shrunk down to roughly the size of a dime.

Add Life ●●●: The spell can affect living subjects. Unwilling subjects may Withstand with Stamina.

State Change (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Durability

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Persuasion, Science

The mage can transmute any inorganic material one "step" along the path from solid to liquid to gas. This magically-induced state change does not change the material's temperature: liquefied steel remains as cool to the touch as if it were solid, and vaporized ice is still freezing cold. Transforming a liquid or gas into a solid gives the new object a Durability equal to the spell's Potency; Structure is determined as Durability + Size.

When the Duration wears off, the substance returns to its natural state, but keeps the form it held during its altered state. (In the case of materials turned to gas, this often means a fine rain or snow of unusual composition.)

Add Forces ●●●: The mage may transmute matter into plasma.

+1 Reach: The mage may transform a solid directly into a gas, or a gas directly into a solid.

Windstrike (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Crafts

The very air (or other fluid matter) strikes out against the mage's enemies. The wind buffets and strikes like a fist, or water lashes out like a whip. This is an attack spell; its damage rating is equal to the spell's Potency, and it inflicts bashing damage.

+1 Reach: The warped matter of this spell sticks around after casting, creating an Environmental Tilt like Flooded or Heavy Winds in the immediate vicinity.

Wonderful Machine (Matter ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Politics, Science

This spell allows a mage to swiftly superimpose pieces of various objects into one another in such a way as to produce a desired result. With this spell, a mage could, for example, integrate a nail-gun and shotgun together to produce a weapon that fires a barrage of nails with each pull of the trigger.

For each level of Potency, the mage may transpose one quality (such as a rotisserie's generation of heat or its ability to rotate another object within it) from a given mechanical object onto another mechanical object. In the case of combining firearms with other firearms, one weapon characteristic can be swapped out for another (creating a pistol, for example, that uses shotgun shells for ammunition). A firearm can also be incorporated fully into another device, effectively disguising the weapon until it is first used (or it undergoes close mystic or mundane inspection).

Add Life (•••): The machine properties can be grafted onto a living thing, or vice versa. The mage might, for example, make a bird that can breathe fire or a butane torch that can fly.

•••• Adept of Matter

Ghostwall (Matter ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Occult, Stealth

All Fallen Matter is merely a shadow of Supernal truth, and this spell reveals the truth of that axiom. The mage renders a volume of inert matter wholly or partly insubstantial, no more “real” than an illusion. Insubstantial objects remain where they were when transfigured (that is, they don’t fall to the center of the Earth or fly off into space). Objects made insubstantial by this spell aren’t in Twilight, they simply don’t register as “real.”

Add Death •••, Mind •••, or Spirit •••: The insubstantial object may be shifted into Twilight, attuned to the used Arcanum.

Golem (Matter ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Occult

This spell animates a statue or other object, allowing it to move and act almost as if it were alive. Each level of Potency effectively grants the mage a dot of the Retainer Merit. The Golem’s “field” includes simple physical labor, combat, and other uncomplicated tasks.

The golem is completely mindless, and can only execute whatever order the caster gave it last. Orders must be very simple. If attacked, the golem has no Defense, but has Durability appropriate to its makeup (see *Objects* on p. 223) and Structure equal to Durability + Size.

Add Death •••• or Spirit ••••: Bind a ghost or spirit into the golem to serve as an animating intelligence. The golem still uses its Retainer rating to determine dice pools, but the ephemeral being can use any of its powers, and the golem’s “field” is whatever the entity is capable of.

Add Mind •••••: Create an intelligence from nothing that will guide the golem and inform its “field.” See “Psychic Genesis” on p. 165 for creating a mind from scratch.

Piercing Earth (Matter ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Crafts

Much like Windstrike (see p. 157), this spell causes inanimate matter to lash out at the subject. But where Windstrike lashes out with air and water, this spell causes the Earth itself to rise up and crush the subject. This is an attack spell; its damage rating is equal to the spell’s Potency, and it inflicts lethal damage.

+1 Reach: The warped matter of this spell sticks around after casting, creating an Environmental Tilt like Earthquake in the immediate vicinity.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the spell inflicts aggravated damage.

Transubstantiation (Matter ••••)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Empathy, Science

The mage can transmute any inert matter into any other form of inert matter: lead into gold, water into wine, wood into chlorine gas, etc. The purity and quality of the transmuted matter is determined by the spell’s Potency: treat Potency as an equipment bonus or equivalent Resource Merit dots for a single purchase, whichever is appropriate. Both the initial substance and the transubstantiated substance must be relatively pure: Wood can be transformed into gold, but not into gold chased with silver. (The Stygian Mysteries teach that “purity” is a perceptual concept – so, for example, even though “wine” and “steel” are made up of numerous compounds, they are concrete enough as concepts to be transmuted).

Add Life ••••: Transform matter into living things, or transform a living being into inert matter (but see p.127 for rules on permanently transforming someone with magic). Unless the mage also adds Mind •••••, any organism created is mindless, driven purely by instinct.

+1 Reach: The mage may transmute multiple substances into a single substance or vice versa.

••••• Master of Matter

Annihilate Matter (Matter •••••)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Durability

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Intimidation, Science

The mage can destroy inert matter, reducing it to nothingness and utterly dissolving its atomic lattice. In effect, he makes it cease to be. Whereas objects destroyed by Nigredo and Albedo (see p. 157) shatter or crumble as appropriate, matter destroyed by this spell is annihilated; nothing remains of it.

Magical objects and materials, such as tass or Artifacts, cannot normally be destroyed with this spell.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the spell can destroy magical objects as well. In this case, the spell is Withstood by the Supernatural Tolerance of the subject or its maker, as appropriate (e.g. the Rank of the spirit bound to a fetish, the Blood Potency of a vampire whose Vitae the mage is trying to destroy, or the Gnosis of the mage who crafted the object). If no such trait applies, use the object’s Durability.

Ex Nihilo (Matter •••••)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Science

The mage creates an object out of nothing. The object may be any simple tool or relatively uncomplicated machine (a revolver qualifies, but an automatic handgun is too complex). The object's size is determined by the Scale factor. The spell's Potency may be allocated as the mage wishes between Durability or equipment bonus.

+1 Reach: Create a complex machine or electronic device, like a car or a smartphone. The device must still be something that operates according to known physical principles: no teleporters or warp drives.

Self-Repairing Machine (Matter ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Medicine, Occult

This spell imbues an object with a small semblance of life — specifically, the ability to repair itself. As long as the spell lasts, the object heals (Potency) Structure every day.

+1 Reach: The machine heals (Potency) Structure every hour.

+2 Reach: The machine heals (Potency) Structure every 15 minutes.

MIND

Purview: Communication, language, hallucination, Goetia, thought, memory, mental projection, the Astral Realms

The subtle Arcanum of Pandemonium, Mind is concerned with the collective consciousness that is formed from all creatures capable of thought. The Arcanum encompasses all mental realms from simple concepts and emotions, to complex communications and higher states of mental awareness. Initiates of the Mind tend to explore social interactions and the core concepts that make up language, communication, and shared experiences. Those who explore its depths further find themselves embroiled in a dichotomy of introspection and social extroversion centered on the need to examine all aspects of the mind's capacity for emotion, thought, and aspirations. Other mages tend to enjoy the Mind mage's company insofar as she retains her grounding. Many an unwary mage has found himself pulled into conversations far too cerebral and esoteric for his liking without even knowing how he ended up there.

• Initiate of Mind

Know Nature (Mind ●)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Science, Subterfuge

By observing her subject, the mage can determine his Virtue, Vice, and how many dots in Mental and Social Attributes he has.

+1 Reach: The mage can also determine her subject's Aspirations and Obsessions.

+1 Reach: The player may learn a specific Social or Mental Attribute rating of the subject, rather than the total number of dots.

Mental Scan (Mind ●)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Investigation, Occult

By quickly scanning the very surface of a subject's thoughts, the mage is capable of discerning his mental and emotional state. For each level of Potency, the mage may ask the Storyteller a single question to

gain information about the subject's mental or emotional state. This information comes as flashes of insight from the subject's thoughts, so the Storyteller should be sure to represent her answers as such.

Sample Questions

- What is the subject's current mood? *Flashes of being stuck in traffic, or waiting in a long line outside a store. The thought of a serene sunset at the beach.*
- How intelligent is the subject? *Simple flashes of seemingly unrelated images. An image of a complex mathematical theory, or a quote from a piece of well-known literature.*
- Is the subject supernatural? *Thoughts of drinking the life-force from others. The basic shapes of Imagos flashing past. Thoughts that flicker between animalistic and human.*
- What does the subject most desire? *Images of money, a person's face flashing by, or a flashy car.*
- What, if any, psychosis does the subject suffer? *Thoughts that seem to stem from many sources. Paralyzing fear associated with a specific thought.*

+1 Reach: The mage is capable of reading through the surface thoughts of her subject, reading snippets of ideas and catching the words and phrases before he says them. The mage cannot scan deeper than whatever the subject is thinking of right at this moment, but through conversation she can direct the subject's thoughts to specific topics.

One Mind, Two Thoughts (Mind ●)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Science

The subject may hold two individual and wholly distinct trains of thought at once, as long as neither is physically demanding. She can perform two separate Mental or Social extended tasks at the same time. Neither task can be a purely Physical task, but the subject can carry on a conversation while composing a sonnet, or write a poem while researching scientific discoveries.

The subject is incapable of multitasking spells, as they are more than just an exercise of consciousness.

+1 Reach: The subject may perform two separate Mental instant tasks at the same time.

+2 Reach: When in the Astral Realms, one of the actions may be purely “Physical.”

Perfect Recall (Mind •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Spell Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Investigation

The subject is able to recall things from her past with vivid detail. For each level of Potency of the spell, the subject can recall one memory with perfect accuracy. She can remember the exact size, smell, weight, and words written on a piece of paper. She can recall the exact details of a conversation, including bits that she wasn't consciously concentrating on, such as what kind of suit someone was wearing, or the smell of his cologne.

•• Apprentice of Mind

Alter Mental Pattern (Mind ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Science, Stealth, Subterfuge

The mage can alter the subject's basic mental flow, changing her subconscious thoughts and surface emanations to reflect any mental or emotional state the mage wishes. The spell does not actually alter the subject's state of mind, but instead alters how she projects herself, shielding her from supernatural powers that would read her thoughts, or attempt to pierce her normal veil of lies and misdirection. Add the spell's Potency to relevant Subterfuge rolls. Supernatural powers that read the surface thoughts or emotions of the subject provoke a Clash of Wills.

Dream Reaching (Mind ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Medicine, Persuasion

The mage may enter and share the dreams of a sleeping subject. The mage witnesses the dream, and can influence its direction, though she is not directly a part of the dream. Casting this spell on herself ensures the mage remembers her dreams.

+1 Reach: the mage becomes an active part of the dream, able to take action inside as described on p. 248. Casting the spell on herself induces lucid dreaming if she sleeps during the spell's Duration, without need for meditation.

Emotional Urging (Mind ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Intimidation, Subterfuge

The mage can project an emotional state at her subject, instilling emotions that grease social wheels or create barriers between people. The mage chooses at casting to project a positive or negative emotion at her subject, which allows her to open or close one Door. Opening a Door usually occurs before an attempted Social maneuver, and the influence of the Door opening does not have to benefit the mage, but can benefit anyone dealing with the subject during the Duration of the spell. The mage may close Doors previously opened with the subject, making it harder for others to accomplish goals.

First Impressions (Mind ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Socialize, Subterfuge

The mage can dictate how a subject will react to a social interaction, making her more or less inclined to listen to an argument. The spell affects the next Social maneuvering attempt made against the subject, raising or lowering the first impression by levels equal to Potency.

Incognito Presence (Mind ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Cost: 1 Mana

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Stealth, Subterfuge

The mage hides the subject's psychic presence, causing on-lookers to ignore her. When people look at her, they want to avert their eyes, or barely notice her. People cannot remember seeing her when they are no longer looking her way. Beings using supernatural abilities to concentrate on her, including Active Mage Sight, provoke a Clash of Wills.

Memory Hole (Mind ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Medicine, Subterfuge

The mage compartmentalizes the subject's thoughts, placing memories into areas that she cannot access or remember. The mage can compartmentalize one memory per Potency, making the subject forget them completely for the Duration of the spell.

Mental Shield (Mind ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Intimidation, Survival

The mage erects a mental shield that protects the subject from mental attack. The shield provokes a Clash of Wills against any Goetia Numina, Influences, or Manifestations targeting the

subject, any Mind spells, and any other supernatural creature's mind-affecting abilities.

+1 Reach: The protection afforded by this spell extends to Goetia's physical attacks.

Psychic Domination (Mind ●●)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Intimidation, Subterfuge

The mage employs limited telepathic projections. She can send simple commands through thoughts and emotions to her subject through a mental link, but not full sentences or complex ideas. The ideas form urges and desires within the subject that he is compelled to act upon even against his will as long as the spell remains active. The commands must be simple, one-word orders — such as to sleep, eat, sit, or defend. The intention of the command is sent to the subject along with the thoughts and emotions.

The subject knows that the ideas are not originating from himself, though he does not necessarily know where they are coming from. These communications can be used to project emotions with “Emotional Urging” p. 160.

+1 Reach: The mage is capable of taking control of her subject, forcing him to take actions against his will. The mage can force the subject to perform one task. The task can be as complex or simple as the mage desires, giving the subject detailed mental instructions on how to go about completing the task. She cannot force the subject to act in a way that would put him in serious danger, or to commit suicidal acts.

+2 Reach: The mage must spend one Mana when casting the spell. As with +1 Reach above, but the mage can force her subject to take any kind of action without limitations. For example, the mage could direct her victim to shoot himself in the head, or to run into a burning building.

Telepathy (Mind ●●)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Empathy, Socialize

The mage synchronizes the surface thoughts of her subjects, making the surface thoughts of one play out in the mind of the others. Apply the spell's Potency as a bonus or penalty to relevant Skill rolls (such as Empathy or Subterfuge) between the subjects. Subjects who carefully think of a message may use the effect to communicate telepathically along the link; this may require a Composure + Empathy roll for subjects unused to the sensation.

+1 Reach: Only thoughts the originating subject wishes to send are transmitted.

+1 Reach: All subjects of the spell are capable of both sending and receiving thoughts. If the spell has several subjects unused to telepathy, it may impose a -2 penalty to Mental actions through sheer mental “noise.”

●●● Disciple of Mind

Augment Mind (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Survival

The mage is capable of increasing the subject's mental or social capacity. The mage can increase one of either the subject's Mental or Social Attributes by one dot per level of Potency of the spell. This increase affects any Advantages or other traits derived from the Attribute's level. The spell cannot increase the subject's Attribute above her normal maximum allowed by her Gnosis. The benefits of this spell are not obvious to a casual observer, but those who know the subject may notice an increase in her intellect or charismatic nature.

+1 Reach The mage may increase an additional Attribute with the spell for each additional Reach, dividing the spell's Potency among them. For example, the mage may spend +2 Reach with a Potency 4 spell and increase the subject's Intelligence by +1, Resolve by +2, and Wits by +1.

+2 Reach By spending a point of Mana, the mage may increase her subject's Mental or Social Attributes above the normal maximum allowed.

Befuddle (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure or Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Persuasion, Science

The mage lowers one of her subject's Mental or Social Attributes. Each level of Potency reduces one of the subject's Social or Mental Attributes by one dot, to a minimum of 1. Lowering Attributes also reduces any derived Advantages, such as Willpower or Initiative.

+1 Reach: The mage may decrease an additional Mental or Social Attribute for each additional Reach spent, dividing the Potency of the spell among them.

Clear Thoughts (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Intimidation, Persuasion

The mage smoothes troubled thoughts and deadens emotions, making the subject think clearly. The spell suppresses one Mental Condition or Tilt per level of Potency for its Duration. While the spell is often used to treat mental illness, it may also be used against positive Conditions, suppressing elation and inspiration just as easily as despair and fugue. The spell may not affect Conditions created by Paradox, and those imposed by supernatural means provoke a Clash of Wills.

+1 Reach: The subject regains a point of Willpower.

+2 **Reach**: The spell's effect is Lasting, resolving targeted Conditions. This does not grant Beats.

Enhance Skill (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Survival

The mage is capable of temporarily increasing one of her subject's Skills. She can increase one Skill that the subject already has at least one rank in by one dot per level of Potency of the spell. The spell cannot increase the subject's Skill above the normal maximum.

+1 **Reach**: The mage may increase an additional Skill with the spell per additional Reach spent, dividing the spell's Potency among them. The Skill must still be one that the subject already has at least one rank in. For example, a mage can spend +2 Reach with a Potency 3 spell to increase the subject's Subterfuge by +1, Stealth by +1 and Medicine by +1.

+2 **Reach**: By spending a point of Mana, the mage may increase her subject's Skills above the normal maximum allowed.

Goetic Summons (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Spell Factor: Duration

Cost: Variable

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Persuasion, Socialize, Occult

The mage sends out a call to the nearest Goetia within her sensory range. Conversely she can summon Goetia she knows personally. She may send a general call and the nearest Goetia will answer, or she can specify the type of entity by its Resonance. The spell does not work on Goetia above Rank 5.

Add Spirit ●● or Death ●●: The entity gains the Materialized Condition for the Duration of the spell.

+1 **Reach**: The spell also creates the Open Condition on the area, even if it does not match the Goetia's Resonance.

+1 **Reach**: The mage may give the Goetia a single, one-word command to follow. The Goetia is not compelled to complete a task if it cannot finish the command before the Duration of the spell elapses.

+1 **Reach**: If in a place from which she could meditate into the Astral, the mage can summon Goetia from her own Oneiros, or the Oneiros of another subject. Summoning aspects of one's own soul is dangerous, but rewarding — the subject loses the part of his personality the Goetia represents while it is in the material world. The mage must pay as much Mana as she would need to enter the Astral Realms from her current location.

+2 **Reach**: As above, but the mage can summon Goetia from the Temenos.

+3 **Reach**: As above, but the mage can summon Goetia from the Anima Mundi.

+2 **Reach**: The mage may give the Goetia a complex command to follow. The command must be a single task, but the mage can describe the task within a sentence or two.

Imposter (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Persuasion, Stealth, Subterfuge

The mage confuses her subject's senses, making him believe she is someone else. She can invent an appearance, or mimic the exact look, sound, and smell of any individual she knows. Unless the mage has interacted extensively with the person she is impersonating, she must make a Manipulation + Subterfuge roll when she first begins interacting with her subject, and every minute she continues interacting with him. The spell cannot mimic specific Social Merits that grant dice bonuses to Social rolls.

If the mage opens any Doors, or makes any new first impressions, the progress benefit goes to the person she is impersonating, not herself.

Psychic Assault (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Intimidation, Medicine

A living mind is a delicate thing, easily broken. This spell forces the subject's brain into a dangerously overactive state, mimicking the effects of a stroke. The subject takes bashing damage equal to Potency.

+1 **Reach**: The subject also suffers a -1 penalty to Mental rolls for the Duration of the spell due to the mental trauma. This effect may be applied up to three times, for a maximum penalty of -3 for three Reach.

Sleep of the Just (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Athletics, Occult

The mage controls the subject's sleep cycle, allowing her to remain awake without ill effects or asleep without being roused for the spell's Duration. The mage may also control what she dreams about, or create a lucid dreaming state where the subject has control. Anything attempting to enter or influence the dream state provokes a Clash of Wills.

Read the Depths (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Investigation, Medicine

The mage may telepathically enter her subject's subconscious. She may pull memories and ideas out of the subject's subconscious, instead of just reading surface thoughts (see "Telepathy").

+1 **Reach**: As above, but now the mage is capable of modifying a single memory she has read from the subject's subconscious

mind. She may add to, delete, or change the memory to suit her needs; and the changes last until the spell's Duration ends. For example, the mage could make someone forget where she parked her car, remember having met the mage at her wedding, or think her favorite ice-cream flavor is vanilla instead of strawberry.

Universal Language (Mind ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Investigation, Persuasion

The spell's subject is capable of understanding and translating any language. This is true for the spoken word, written language, symbols, encoded signals, body language, hand symbols, and concepts that only exist as thought. She must be able to perceive the language to understand it (for example, using telepathy for thoughts in another's mind). This spell does not allow non-Awakened characters to understand High Speech.

●●●● Adept of Mind

Gain Skill (Mind ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Science

The mage is capable of temporarily granting the subject a Skill, granting a number of dots in one Skill per level of Potency of the spell. The spell cannot increase the subject's Skill above the normal maximum.

+1 Reach The mage may grant an additional Skill with the spell for each additional Reach spent, dividing the spell's Potency among them. For example, a mage can spend +2 Reach with a Potency 4 spell to gain the Subterfuge Skill at one dot, the Intimidate Skill at two dots, and the Empathy Skill at one dot.

+1 Reach: By spending one Mana, the mage may increase one of the subject's new Skills above the normal maximum.

Hallucination (Mind ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Persuasion, Subterfuge

The mage creates false sensory input in her subject, tricking his senses and creating a hallucination. The mage creates a single illusion that seems completely real to her subject. She affects sound, smell, taste, and sight with the illusion, though she is unable to make the illusion tactile to the subject.

+1 Reach: As above, but the mage can make the hallucination tactile to the subject. The illusion cannot attack or harm the subject in any way, but when he interacts with it, the subject



believes he can feel the illusion. This may mean that a large illusion, such as a wall or other barrier, may make the subject believe he is incapable of passing through, barring his way.

Mind Flay (Mind ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Intimidation, Science

The mage pulls apart her subject's conscious and subconscious mind, dealing damage as she does so. The subject suffers one point of lethal damage for each level of Potency of the spell.

+1 Reach: The subject of the spell also gains the Insane Tilt.

+2 Reach: For one point of Mana, the spell inflicts aggravated damage.

Possession (Mind ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Persuasion, Subterfuge

The mage can send her consciousness into the subject and take possession of his body. The mage takes control of the subject, imposing the Possessed Condition (see p. 261). While possessing the subject, the mage uses the rules for possession as an ephemeral entity, with the following changes. She may use any of her Mind spells on the subject to read his mind, and she may spend a point of Mana to use her own Mental and Social Attributes instead of the host's Attributes. She must always use her subject's Physical Attributes, but may spend a point of Mana to reduce the -3 penalty on Physical actions to 0. While possessing the subject, her body is comatose as with "Psychic Projection", below.

Psychic Projection (Mind ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Occult, Socialize

The mage can project the subject's consciousness into a state of Twilight or into another's dreams. The mental projection uses the rules for Dream Forms in Chapter Six (p. 249). It has no ephemeral body, but is instead an incorporeal, intangible mental image. While in Twilight, the subject cannot interact physically with her surroundings, and must use magic to affect anything. She is immune to physical attacks, but she is still susceptible to mind-affecting supernatural abilities. While mentally projected, her body lies in a comatose state, and she has no way of knowing its health or state without returning or the use of other magic. If her projection dies, she returns to her body with the Soul Shocked Condition.

Add Spirit ●●: The mage may project the subject's consciousness beyond the Gauntlet into the Shadow Realm. The spell is also Withstood by the Gauntlet rating (p. 179).

Psychic Reprogramming (Mind ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Medicine, Persuasion

The mage rewrites the subject's personality, changing the very essence of who she is. The mage may change one of the following aspects of the subject for each Potency of the spell: Virtue, Vice, Short-Term Aspiration, Long-Term Aspiration, Obsession, a non-Physical Persistent Condition, or may move one dot between two Social Skills, or between two Mental Skills.

+1 Reach: The mage may also move dots between two Social Attributes, or two Mental Attributes per Potency of the spell.

Terrorize (Mind ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Intimidation, Medicine

The spell provokes an overwhelming sense of fear and dread in its subject, draining his strength and will to live. The subject suffers from the Insensate Tilt for the Duration of the spell, or until the Tilt is resolved (for instance, by being attacked).

+1 Reach: The mage inflicts the Broken Condition instead.

●●●●● Master of Mind

Amorality (Mind ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Empathy, Expression

The mage severs her subject's ties to his guiding impulses, either completely removing his Virtue or his Vice. While without a Virtue, the subject is more prone to indulging his Vice and gains two points of Willpower whenever he would normally gain one. While without a Vice, the character acts in a manner completely consistent with his Virtue, and is incapable of actively engaging in activities that would constitute a breaking point or Act of Hubris. Witnessing heinous or horrifying deeds still causes breaking points for Sleeper characters.

No Exit (Mind ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Persuasion, Science

The mage creates a mental thought loop for her subject, trapping him within his own mind. For the Duration of the spell,

the subject is unable to do anything but play through a single continuous loop in his mind. Thoughts cannot enter or exit the subject's mind, and he appears nearly catatonic to outside observers. Attempts to read the subject's mind or memories reveal the thought loop. Supernatural attempts to force new thoughts provoke a Clash of Wills.

Mind Wipe (Mind ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Intimidation, Occult

The mage removes a large portion of the subject's memories. The victim suffers from the Amnesia Condition for the Duration of the spell, unable to recall one month of time per level of Potency. The mage may specify which portion of the subject's life is forgotten.

+1 Reach: The mage may choose the memories erased rather than wiping a single continuous span.

+2 Reach: The effect is Lasting.

Psychic Genesis (Mind ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Science

The mage creates a consciousness as a self-aware intelligence with a Twilight presence. The consciousness gains traits as a Rank 1 Goetia. The consciousness remains for the Duration of the spell as the mage's loyal servant, and she is able to direct it to complete tasks without the use of any additional spells.

+1 Reach: The consciousness works as a Sleepwalker for purposes of assisting in ritual casting.

+1 Reach: For one Mana, the consciousness gains Rank 2.

Social Networking (Mind ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Persuasion, Politics, Socialize

The mage creates social networks where none existed before. For each level of Potency, the subject gains one dot in one of the following Merits: Allies, Contacts, or Status.

PRIME

Purview: Magic, the Supernal World, Nimbus, truth, Yantras, Mana, Hallows, tass, resonance, revelation

Just as a language must have words to describe itself, so too must the Supernal have an Arcanum that defines it. Prime, the subtle Arcanum that rules the Aether, is that Arcanum. Its purview is the manipulation of magic itself: Mana and tass, the Nimbus and Hallows, High Speech and the runes of the ancient masters. Through Prime, a mage becomes attuned to the Supernal Truth, capable of piercing illusions and calling forth perfected images of the symbol-beings of the Aether. Arrogant Obrimos sometimes claim that this makes Prime the greatest of the Arcana, but that is an oversimplification. Prime is the Arcanum through which the Supernal knows itself, but without the other Arcana, it is as empty as a language whose only vocabulary is parts of speech.

• Initiate of Prime

Dispel Magic (Prime ●)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Arcanum rating of the subject spell's caster

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Intimidation, Occult

All Awakened magic contains the capacity to end, to allow the Fallen World's laws to reassert themselves. By Compelling these flaws in an extant spell, the mage may temporarily suppress it — or even destroy it entirely. This spell is not potent enough to dispel an archmage's spells, and only works against Awakened

magic. In addition, the mage must include *all* Arcana involved in the casting of the subject spell at one dot.

A successful casting suppresses the spell for the Duration of Dispel Magic.

Add Fate ●: The mage may suppress the subject spell selectively, for a number of subjects equal to Dispel Magic's Scale factor.

+2 Reach: For one point of Mana, the effect is Lasting. If the spell's original caster is still alive and has not relinquished the spell, she knows one of her spells was destroyed.

Pierce Deception (Prime ●)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Medicine, Occult

Prime is the Arcanum of pure Truth, and no falsehood may stand before it. By means of this spell, the subject sees illusions, phantasms, and lies for what they are. The spell sees through mundane falsehoods the subject perceives automatically; magical illusion or deception automatically provokes a Clash of Wills.

This spell only reveals "active" untruths: the subject would see that someone with dyed hair isn't really a blonde, or recognize a lie when she heard it, but she wouldn't know that a Wall Street executive has been committing tax fraud for years just by looking at him. If she got a look at his tax return, however, she would see that it was a falsehood.

+1 Reach: In addition to sensing falsehoods, the subject gets some symbolic sense of what the actual truth is, veiled in Supernal symbolism and metaphor.

Supernal Vision (Prime •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Occult, Survival

By opening her subject's third eye, the mage reveals her fellows as the wells of Supernal power they are. By studying a person, place, or location for one turn, the subject automatically knows whether it is connected to the Supernal (e.g. if a person is a mage, a Sleepwalker, a Proximus, or a Sleeper; if a place is a Demesne or Verge; if an object is Imbued, Enhanced, or an Artifact), and may ask a number of the following questions equal to the spell's Potency:

- How much Mana does the target have in her Pattern?
- To which Supernal World is the target most closely aligned?
- What is the target's highest-rated Arcanum?*
- How adept is the target at their highest-rated Arcanum?
- How many Arcana does the subject know?
- What is the target's Nimbus?
- What is the target's Gnosis?

* Subsequent asking of this question reveals the target's second, third, etc. highest Arcana.

The subject perceives the answers as Supernal symbols and visions unfolding around the target. If the subject desires more information about a particular phenomenon, she may study it for multiple turns, as long as the spell's Duration lasts. Effects that would cloak the target's nature provoke a Clash of Wills as normal.

+1 Reach: The spell reveals the nature of supernatural beings and effects other than Supernal phenomena — though there's no guarantee the mage knows what the aura of, for example, a Promethean looks like, and most of the questions will return nonsensical imagery that best translates as “not applicable.”

Sacred Geometry (Prime •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Occult, Survival

While her senses are open to this spell, the subject can clearly perceive ley lines and nodes. Depending on the caster's Path and Nimbus, she might see them as beams of golden light meeting at shining Platonic solids, electric-blue rivers pooling into lakes, or strains of music building into a mighty symphony. If there are no ley lines or nodes within sensory range, the subject feels a tugging sensation toward the nearest ley or node.

+1 Reach: The mage's perceptions expand to tell her when a node sits atop a Hallow.

Add Death • or Spirit •: The mage's senses are also attuned to the presence of Avernian Gates or Loci, respectively. Other Arcana may reveal stranger sacred spaces, as well.

Scribe Grimoire (Prime •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: 1 Mana

Withstand: Total Arcanum dots of all Arcana used in the spell being scribed.

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Occult

By means of this spell, the mage gives physical form to the mudras of a particular Rote, creating a Grimoire (see p. 101). This spell has two slightly different, albeit related, applications: The mage may either inscribe a Rote she knows, or she may copy a Rote from another Grimoire she has on hand.

Only a single Rote can be inscribed per casting of this spell, but a given Grimoire may hold multiple Rotes at a time: A large book can hold anywhere from 10–15 Rotes, while a fist-sized carved stone might only hold one or two, and a computer database could hold a theoretically unlimited number.

When the spell's Duration expires, the inscribed Rotes fade and cannot be recovered.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the spell's Duration is Lasting.

Word of Command (Prime •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: Variable

Suggested Rote Skills: Craft, Occult, Persuasion

Enchanted objects and long-lasting spells often have specific triggers or conditions that must be fulfilled before they will release their magic. With this spell, a mage can bypass those conditions, freeing the magic to do that which it would. The object or spell immediately activates, exactly as though it were triggered by whatever normally triggers the effect. If an activation roll is normally required, treat the spell's Potency as rolled successes.

If the subject spell requires Mana to activate, the mage must spend it from her own pool.

Without additional Arcana, this spell can only trigger Supernal spells and objects tied to the Supernal World such as Artifacts and Imbued Items.

Add Any Other Arcanum •: By adding the relevant Arcanum, a mage can activate magical effects and objects created by other sources of power — Spirit to activate a fetish, Fate to trigger a faerie's curse, and so on. If this object requires mystical energy (Essence or stranger substances) to activate, the mage may spend Mana in lieu of the normal power source.

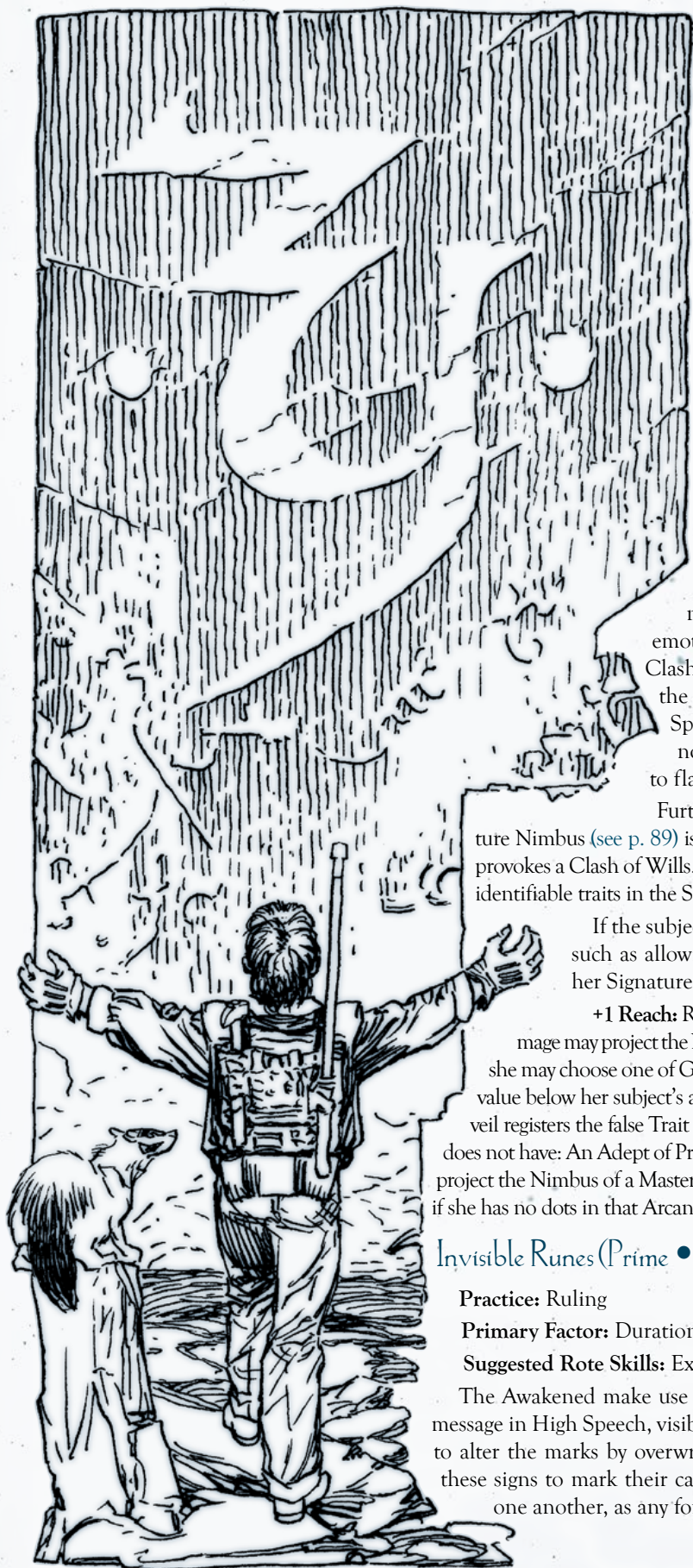
•• Apprentice of Prime

As Above, So Below (Prime ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Occult, Politics



A mage's tools are sacred, her every word and deed a reflection of the Realms Above. By means of this spell, the mage imbues the tools of her Art with holy meaning, allowing her to draw down power with greater facility. For every level of Potency, she chooses a single Yantra (and it must be a specific example of a Yantra, not just a category: "the Crypt of the Mariner," not just "Environment"). Any spell cast that incorporates that Yantra gains the 9-Again effect on the spellcasting roll.

+1 Reach: The Yantra instead grants the 8-Again effect on spellcasting rolls.

Cloak Nimbus (Prime ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Politics, Stealth, Subterfuge

This spell cloaks the subject's Nimbus from spells and effects that would read it, such as Supernatural Vision or the ability of certain psychics to read emotional states in auras. Any such effect is subject to a Clash of Wills (see p. 117). Any effect that fails to pierce the veil registers the subject as an ordinary Sleeper. Spells cast while under the influence of this spell do not cause the caster's Immediate Nimbus (see p. 89) to flare unless she chooses to.

Furthermore, while this spell is active the subject's Signature Nimbus (see p. 89) is muted; any attempt to scrutinize it with Mage Sight provokes a Clash of Wills. If the scrutinizing mage fails, he is unable to find any identifiable traits in the Signature Nimbus.

If the subject takes any action that causes her Nimbus to flare, such as allowing it to do so when casting a spell or imprinting her Signature Nimbus on an object, this spell ends immediately.

+1 Reach: Rather than veiling her subject's abilities completely, the mage may project the Nimbus of a lesser magician. For each Reach she applies, she may choose one of Gnosis, Mana, or any Arcanum she knows, and specify a value below her subject's actual Trait rating. Any effect that fails to penetrate her veil registers the false Trait value. The mage cannot pretend to powers the subject does not have: An Adept of Prime can be masked to seem a mere Initiate, but cannot project the Nimbus of a Master, nor can she be made to seem an Apprentice of Space if she has no dots in that Arcanum.

Invisible Runes (Prime ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion

The Awakened make use of signs others can't see. This spell draws a short message in High Speech, visible only to Mage Sight, onto its subject. Attempting to alter the marks by overwriting them provokes a Clash of Wills. Mages use these signs to mark their cabal's property and territory, or leave warnings for one another, as any form of Active Mage Sight reveals them.

Supernal Veil (Prime ●●)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Subterfuge, Survival

Sometimes even the greatest magician must hide her light under a bushel. This spell wards its subject, which can be a spell, object, mage, supernatural creature, or any other active magical phenomenon, from detection. Passive abilities (such as Peripheral Mage Sight) automatically fail to detect the veiled phenomenon, while active attempts provoke a Clash of Wills.

Wards and Signs (Prime ●●)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Survival

By cloaking her subject in Aetheric symbols of victory and indomitability, the mage shields the subject from the effects of hostile magic. When the subject is the target of a spell, that spell is Withstood with the Potency of Wards and Signs.

Only spells that directly target the subject can be Withstood; a spell that turns the air around her into fire cannot be Withstood. Likewise, if the subject is one of many subjects, Wards and Signs only Withstands the spell with regards to her. Other subjects suffer the full effects.

Words of Truth (Prime ●●)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion

The mage speaks with tongues of fire, and the world listens. So long as the words the mage speaks are objectively true and the mage herself knows them to be true, all subjects of this spell can hear her and understand her clearly, regardless of distance, noise, or language barriers. Moreover, all subjects *know*, on a soul-deep level, that what the mage says is true. The spell only works on statements the mage knows to be true: She can't use it to confirm or reject theories. It also doesn't necessarily compel the targets to act on the information in any particular way, but ignoring or refuting this Supernal truth may be grounds for a breaking point. In a Social maneuvering action, this spell may remove one Door or improve the impression level by one step per point of Potency.

+1 Reach: The mage's words don't merely ring with truth, they call to action. If a listener goes along with what the mage said, he gains the Inspired Condition. If, however, he ignores the mage's words, he gains the Guilty Condition.

●●● Disciple of Prime

Aetheric Winds (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Expression, Occult

The mage calls forth a bare fraction of the howling fury of the Aether, scouring her subject with shrieking winds. This is an attack spell, inflicting bashing damage equal to Potency.

+1 Reach: The winds of this spell stick around after casting, creating a Heavy Winds Environmental Tilt in the immediate vicinity.

+1 Reach: In lieu of damage, the mage may assign Potency to instead destroy the target's Mana. One level of Potency so assigned destroys one point of Mana, and Potency may be freely split between Mana destruction and damage.

Channel Mana (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure (or Rank for Supernal entities)

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Politics, Socialize

The flows of Supernal energy are the mage's to manipulate. This spell allows the mage to move a quantity of Mana equal to the spell's Potency between one or more vessels she can touch, including other mages, herself, Hallows, Artifacts, and others. She must, however, respect her Gnosis-derived Mana per turn limit.

+1 Reach: The mage may ignore her Mana per turn limit, channeling as much Mana as she desires as an instant action.

Cleanse Pattern (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Occult, Stealth

The Forms making up a subject's Supernal Pattern are marked by the touch of magic. With this spell, a mage removes the tell-tale signs of Awakened interference. The spell removes the dramatic failure effect of a Focused Mage Sight Revelation (p. 92) from a subject. If the spell's subject bears a mage's Signature Nimbus, the spell removes it.

Display of Power (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Occult, Socialize

Magic itself falls under the purview of Prime, even its most private functions. By using this spell, a mage stirs the Supernal World, making it respond to mages within the spell's area. Rather than being wholly internal, Imagos formed by mages within the spell's effect become visible in the Supernal World to all forms of Active Mage Sight, displayed as magical runes and flashes of symbols hovering around the mage. Mages use this spell as a

teaching aid, forming Imagos to display to their students without actually casting. The spell has another role in mage society, though; it is the basis for the Duel Arcane (see p. 294), in which two rival mages display what they *could* do to one another.

+2 Reach: For one Mana, any attempt to Counterspell (p. 192) a spell cast within the area gains the rote action quality, as the plainly visible Imago makes the spell easy to decipher. (In many duels, seconds are appointed to stand ready to Counterspell attempts at cheating.)

Ephemeral Enchantment (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Weaponry

The symbol-forms of the Aether are real enough to cut through all layers of reality. This spell enchants the subject to be as solid to Twilight entities as to physical matter. This spell is equally effective against all forms of Twilight; the subject may interact with ghosts, spirits, angels, and stranger things with equal facility.

+2 Reach: If the enchanted object is a weapon, it may be enchanted to act as the bane of a specified being in Twilight for one Mana. Extra subjects may be added with the Scale spell factor, but each costs one extra point of Mana.

Geomancy (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Occult

By imposing her will upon the earth's natural flow of energy, the mage may redirect ley lines within the area of effect, reshaping Nodes and altering Resonance freely. She may move ley lines, and therefore the Nodes created where ley lines cross, "pinning" a line to a point within the area of effect of the spell. She may also change the Resonance Keyword of a Node to whatever she wishes.

Platonic Form (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: 1+ Mana

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Crafts, Expression

The mage may pattern Mana into behaving as it does within tass, creating a magical object formed of pure Mana. The object must be a simple object or tool (swords and gemstones are allowable, guns and cars are not). It is obviously magical to onlookers, has a default Durability of 1 and consists of one point of Mana (which the mage must pay as part of the casting). Potency may be allocated to the following effects:

- Increase Durability by +1
- Increase Mana capacity by +1 (the mage may fill this Mana capacity by spending Mana as part of the casting or leave the object partially empty)

- If the object can be used as a tool or weapon, add +1 equipment bonus or weapon damage. Each action using the construct as a tool or weapon uses up 1 Mana from its supply.

When all Mana is withdrawn from the object, it crumbles to nothing. A mage may "refill" it with the Channel Mana spell or similar effects. When the spell's Duration runs out, any unused Mana sublimates back into the world and is lost.

Add Forces ●●●: The object is not obviously magical.

+1 Reach: If the object is a tool, it is a perfected ideal of that tool. It grants 8-Again.

+2 Reach: The Mana construct can be a complex device.

Stealing Fire (Prime ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Larceny, Persuasion

Prometheus brought fire from Olympus to the mortal realm. By means of this spell, the mage brings a tiny fragment of Supernal fire to the sleeping masses, if only for a time. The subject of this spell, who must be a Sleeper, temporarily becomes a Sleepwalker (see p. 303) with all that entails. Any breaking points due to witnessing magic and Quiescence effects the subject would normally suffer are held in abeyance until the spell's Duration expires, only to come crashing down all at once when the spell ends.

●●●● Adept of Prime

Apocalypse (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Persuasion, Socialize

The subject of this spell has the scales of the Lie removed from his eyes. Anyone subject to this spell – mage, Sleeper, or other supernatural being – gains Mage Sight attuned to the Path of the caster. Along with this gift comes temporary immunity to the Quiescence curse. It does not, however, prepare the target for how to *interpret* the visions received under Mage Sight, and the uninitiated are likely to face breaking points due to the trauma of the Sight. While Awakened subjects may control the new Sight as though it were their own, focusing it and pushing it back to the Periphery like their own, other subjects gain Active Mage Sight and cannot shut the Sight off – it lasts until the spell's Duration expires, but still applies dice pool penalties and Willpower costs as per Mage Sight (see p. 90). If the subject runs out of Willpower points and the spell is still active, he gains the Blind Condition as the Supernal vision burns out his eyes. (At the Storyteller's discretion, this might be replaced with Deafened or a similar Condition if the subject experiences Mage Sight with other senses).

+1 Reach and Add Any Other Arcanum •: The mage may add an Arcanum to the granted Sight, but must pay Mana to add Common or Inferior Arcana as though she were activating Mage Sight herself.

Celestial Fire (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Expression, Occult

The mage summons the Supernal fires of the Aether to smite her enemies. This is not base, Fallen flame, but rather the pure expression of Awakened will. This is an attack spell; its damage rating is equal to the spell's Potency, and it inflicts lethal damage. The spell affects Twilight entities.

+1 Reach: The celestial fires of this spell ignite flammable objects in the scene.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the spell inflicts aggravated damage.

+1 Reach: In lieu of damage, the mage may assign Potency to instead destroy the target's Mana. One level of Potency so assigned destroys one point of Mana, and Potency may be freely split between Mana destruction and damage.

Destroy Tass (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Durability

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Intimidation, Occult

At the mage's whim, constructs of Mana are swept away on the winds of Aether. A successful casting destroys the tass. The Mana held within it is not destroyed, but sublimates into the world and likely returns to the nearest Hallow.

Hallow Dance (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Hallow Rating

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Occult, Survival

The tides of Aether ebb and flow, awakening sacred places and sending them to sleep once more in the cycle of ages. This spell allows the mage to bend that cycle to her will. The mage may suppress an active Hallow or awaken a dormant one with this spell. Rousing a slumbering Hallow requires a Potency equal to the Hallow's rating, while damping a Hallow reduces its effective dot rating by one per point of Potency. If the Hallow is suppressed to zero dots or fewer, it falls dormant. See p. 241 for more information on Hallows.

+2 Reach: For one point of Mana, the effect is Lasting.

Supernal Dispellation (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Arcanum rating of the subject spell's caster

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Intimidation, Occult

Supernal truths can never truly be unmade, but with this spell the mage may cast them back across the Abyss, effectively erasing any spell she comes across. This spell is not potent enough to dispel archmages' spells.

A successful casting suppresses the spell for the Duration of Supernal Dispellation.

Add Fate •: The mage may suppress the subject spell selectively, for a number of subjects equal to the Dispel's Scale factor.

+2 Reach: For one point of Mana, the effect is Lasting. If the spell's original caster is still alive and has not relinquished the spell, she knows one of her spells was destroyed.

●●●●● Master of Prime

Blasphemy (Prime ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Hallow Rating, if applicable

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Occult, Survival

By defining all truths, the Supernal includes the means of its own erasure. This spell severs the world's connection with the Supernal, creating a "dead zone" in which the energies of life simply cease to be. The spell has the following effects:

- Ley lines within the area dry up and die. Nodes similarly cease to function.

- Hallows whose rating is less than the spell's Potency fall dormant.

- Sleepers who spend more than a day within the area gain the Enervated condition (though this is not soul loss and the victims do not progress to the Thrall Condition, see p. 315).

- Any attempt to reawaken a Hallow within the area adds the Potency of this spell to the Hallow's dot rating for purposes of Withstanding the effect.

+2 Reach: The effects are Lasting, though without major geomantic workings to maintain the barren state, within a month or so natural rhythms will reassert themselves and ley lines, nodes, and the health of the Sleepers will return. Hallows, however, remain dormant.

Create Truth (Prime ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Cost: 5 Mana per Potency

Withstand: Hallow Rating of desired Hallow

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Occult, Persuasion

The Awakened speaks, and the heavens reshape themselves. This spell overwrites the conditions of Fallen Reality within the area, creating a Hallow with a dot rating equal to the spell's Potency. This Hallow has Resonance appropriate to its location

and to the caster's Path and Nimbus (see p. 242). The sudden emergence of such a mystically potent site causes massive ripples and aftershocks through the local network of ley lines, which almost certainly creates new Mysteries.

Hallows "cap out" at a rating of ●●●●; any Potency in excess has no effect.

+2 **Reach:** For 5 Mana, the effect becomes Lasting.

Eidolon (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: 1+ Mana

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Crafts, Occult

Where adepts of Prime can create platonic objects by forcing Mana into the pattern it wears within tass, a master can create the complex Prime patterns within living beings and the environment. When fuelled with Mana, this spell creates an obviously-magical construct much like Platonic Form, except that the construct is not limited to single physical objects. Eidolons may imitate fire, fog, and even entire environments, but most masters use it to create "living" constructs. Eidolons are still made of solidified Mana, and have Durability and Structure instead of Health, and when mimicking environmental hazards do not inflict damage as they do (Eidolon fire does not burn, for example.) They follow the Potency rules for Platonic Form (p.169) but Potency may also be allocated to grant dots of the Retainer Merit.

Though animate, the construct is mindless. If used as a Retainer, the Eidolon's "field" includes simple physical labor, combat, and other uncomplicated tasks. The Eidolon can only execute whatever order the caster gave it last. Orders must be very simple. If attacked, the Eidolon has no Defense.

Unlike Platonic forms, Eidolons do not crumble when all Mana is withdrawn. A mage may "refill" the construct with the Channel Mana spell (p. 168) or similar effects. When the spell's Duration runs out, any unused Mana sublimates back into the world and is lost.

Add Forces ●●●: The construct is not obviously magical.

Add Mind ●●●●: The tass may be given a mind of its own. See p. 165 for details.

Forge Purpose (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Expression, Medicine

The mage imparts a holy mission upon her subject. For the Duration of the spell, the subject gains one of the mage's Obsessions as his own. If the subject is a mage who already has the maximum number of Obsessions allowed by her Gnosis, this spell triggers a Clash of Wills. If the caster is successful, she replaces the subject's most recently acquired Obsession with her own.

Even Sleepers, who normally only have Aspirations, gain an Obsession. Though they can't generally spend Arcane Experiences, they still accrue them and may spend the Experiences if they ever Awaken. Some mages believe Sleepers who have experienced the Mysteries are more likely to Awaken – empirical evidence, however, suggests that mental illness is more likely.

+1 **Reach:** The mage may create a wholly new Obsession rather than copy one of her own.

Word of Unmaking (Prime ●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

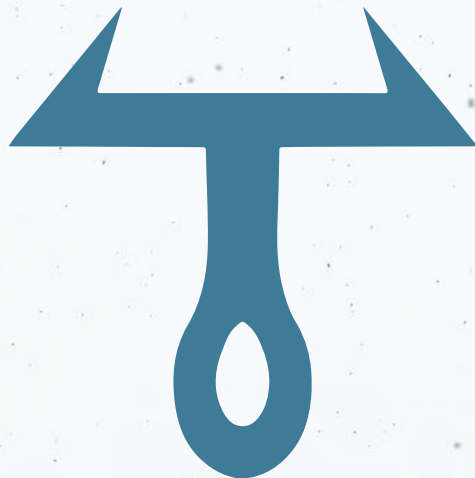
Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Merit rating of the targeted magical object, or Durability if not measured in Merit dots

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Occult, Weaponry

The Aetheric storms scour and destroy as much as they revitalize. With this spell, the mage calls down the destructive power of the Supernal to destroy a magical item. Supernal Artifacts cannot be destroyed by this spell.

+2 **Reach:** The item explodes violently when destroyed. Roll the object's Merit rating (or Durability) as a dice pool: Anyone within 1 yard per dot suffers a point of lethal damage per success.



SPACE

Purview: Distance, separation, sympathy, conjuration, scrying, warding

The gross Arcanum of Pandemonium expresses that physical separation is as much a lie as the isolation of the soul. Through this Arcanum, the mage can magnify or collapse the distance between places and objects, conjure things from distant locales, and twist the topography of space into strange and unnatural shapes. Space also allows a mage to manipulate the sympathetic connection between subjects.

Keys

Since the Space Arcanum's purview includes portals, doors, and similar liminal spaces, it's only natural that many Space spells allow the mage to specify a **Key** – a particular item carried, password spoken, or other criterion that either activates a spell or bypasses its effects. For example, a portal might only open on the summer solstice, or a hidden path might be visible to anyone of the mage's bloodline.

Spells that can be Keyed are called out below, usually at the cost of a Reach. The Key may have a number of requirements equal to the spell's Potency.

Sympathy

Space allows a mage to manipulate, destroy, and create from nothing the occult bonds of sympathy. The concept of sympathy is a complex one, and the libraries of the Orders contain volumes on the subject, but briefly: Two subjects may become sympathetically **linked** when they share a strong emotional, physical, or mystical connection. Naturally-occurring links are sometimes permanent, but just as often fade over time: a brief but passionate love affair's link might fade within a few weeks of the breakup, while a murder weapon retains links to both killer and victim for years.

Sympathetic links manipulated with the Space Arcanum echo from the Supernal to the Fallen, wreaking subtle but long-standing changes in the subjects. Sever a man's link to his husband and the relationship cools and grows distant. Create a bond between a woman and a gun, and she'll find herself thinking about it, dreaming about it – and left to their own devices odds are good woman and gun will cross paths.

This isn't precisely mind control, or even an expression of Fate magic: all Space can do is manipulate the connections, not control reactions or guarantee outcomes. Maybe the chilled couple seeks counseling and repairs their relationship. Maybe the woman tells herself she's being crazy and deliberately ignores thoughts of firearms. The point is that playing with people's sympathetic links has a real, tangible effect on their lives. The Wise look askance on those mages who endeavor to cull their own sympathetic "vulnerabilities" with good reason.

Most spells dealing with sympathy use the connections themselves as the spells' subjects, and are Withstood by the

links' relative strength – deeper bonds are more difficult to affect. Mages with Space 2 or more can also use links to cast other spells on subjects not within sensory range, by routing their magic along the lines of sympathy using an Attainment. In these cases, the spell is Withstood by Space itself; weaker connections are more difficult to use.

When affecting links with magic, each connection is treated as a subject for purposes of spell factors. For example, a spell that dampens a sympathetic connection can dampen multiple connections by increasing the Scale factor

• Initiate of Space

Correspondence (Space •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Empathy, Medicine

We are all of us defined by our connections, and through this spell a mage learns those definitions. For every level of Potency, the mage learns one of the subject's sympathetic links. The spell reveals the subject's oldest and strongest links first. She understands these connections in the same manner the subject thinks of them (e.g. "my childhood home," not "1414 Willowbrook Drive, Columbus, OH"). If the other half of the

Sympathetic Names

In the womb, a human being has only a **Connected** link to her mother and a **Strong** one to her genetic father. At birth, this shifts to a **Strong** link to both parents and other primary caregivers, whether related or not, but babies don't otherwise form sympathetic links until the sense of self develops. Once the Lie sets in that the world is separate from the self, a child begins to form her own links. Even in adulthood, everyone's sympathetic links bear a permanent reminder of that early time – the name that those with links to a baby think of her as becomes indelibly marked in her Pattern as her **sympathetic name**.

No matter how many times a person changes her name through childhood and adulthood, once she forms links of her own the sympathetic name is set, and is both weakness and protection – speaking a person's sympathetic name counts as a Yantra as per **p. 122**, but not knowing it makes affecting her at range more difficult, increasing the Withstand level against the Sympathetic Range Attainment by one.

Sympathy

Sympathetic Strength	Description	Withstand (Connection)	Withstand (Sympathetic Range)
Connected	The two subjects are metaphysically one e.g. a mage and her familiar or soul stone. The connection is unassailable without Unmaking magic and casting using the connection is not Withstood.	5*	0
Strong	The two subjects are closely metaphysically linked; a woman and her lifelong spouse, a mage and his dedicated magical tool or an item she has imbued, a Legacy mentor and her student, best friends, parents, children, bodily samples (blood, locks of hair,) murder weapons.	3	1
Medium	The two subjects are linked; a mage and her own spells, items marked with a mage's Signature nimbus, friends, siblings, lovers, items of emotional significance like medals, wedding rings, a soldier's weapon, or a sports-woman's bat.	2	2
Weak	The two subjects have barely touched one another metaphysically; the subjects of a mage's spells, or items she has used as Yantras. Casual acquaintances, coworkers, replaceable belongings.	1	3

* "Connected" sympathy may only be removed with Unmaking spells.

When affecting links with magic, each connection is treated as a subject for purposes of spell factors. For example, a spell that dampens a sympathetic connection can dampen multiple connections by increasing the Scale factor.

sympathetic link is within the mage's sensory range, she knows that and knows its exact location.

+1 Reach: The mage can "follow" a trail of sympathetic links. When she learns of one of her initial subject's sympathetic connections, she may choose to learn one of that subject's connections, and so on. For example, she might follow a wedding ring to its owner, then its owner's spouse, then the spouse's place of employment.

+1 Reach: The mage understands the emotional character of the connection in broad terms. "My childhood home" might carry notes of comfort and safety or fear and loathing, depending on the subject's upbringing.

+2 Reach: The mage may specify the connections she wishes to uncover in general terms ("an object with a strong link to his childhood") or ("those she hates"). Again, the knowledge is contextualized based on the subject's perceptions.

+2 Reach: If the subject is a Keyed spell or Iris (p. 243), the mage may use one level of Potency to discover the Key instead of a link.

Ground-Eater (Space •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Science, Survival

Space is more flexible than many believe. By subtly pinching or stretching the space around her subject, the mage allows her to cover far more ground with each step than is readily apparent. The mage adds the spell's Potency to the subject's Speed. Watching someone under the influence of this spell is alarming: It's hard for the eye to track her, as each step carries her farther than it should, and in every blink or momentary

glance away she seems to leap farther than should be possible in such a short time.

This spell can also *reduce* a subject's Speed by its Potency (though not below 1). Those who have experienced this effect liken it to a nightmare wherein no matter how fast you run, you never get closer to your goal.

Isolation (Space •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Intimidation, Subterfuge

Boundaries and barriers are a lie, but it is sometimes useful to lie. This spell subtly warps space and distance around the subject, making empty spaces seem larger and more foreboding. Crowds of people seem tightly packed together, an impenetrable wall of humanity.

Any attempt the subject makes to interact with other people costs 1 Willpower. Even then, any dice pools are penalized by the spell's Potency. Prolonged exposure to this spell (roughly a day per dot of the subject's Composure) may provoke breaking points or adverse Conditions like Shaken or Spooked.

Locate Object (Space •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Occult, Science

All distance is an illusion. Once this truth is understood, all things are in the same place as the mage, and how can one lose track of herself? As long as the subject of this spell is within

the Area of the spell, she knows its precise location. Short of concealing magic (which provokes a Clash of Wills), no attempt to hide the subject can fool her unerring senses.

+1 Reach: The caster can continue tracking the subject even if it leaves the Area.

The Outward and Inward Eye (Space •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Firearms, Investigation, Occult

If all locations are one, it must follow that all directions are one as well. While this spell is active, the subject can see and hear in all directions and from all points within her sensory range simultaneously. She can see what's happening behind her, on the far side of a door, or beneath her feet. She cannot perceive things farther away than her normal perceptions might allow, nor can she see through darkness. In essence, it's as though everything happening around her were spread out on a flat plain, bereft of obstruction. This allows her to cast sensory-range spells on subjects she might not ordinarily be able to perceive.

The subject is also nearly impossible to ambush or surprise — barring exceptional camouflage or a tremendous distraction to draw her attention, all such attempts are reduced to a chance die. Finally, the subject may reduce any penalties due to range, cover, or concealment (but not darkness or similar poor visibility) by the spell's Potency.

+2 Reach: The mage may use the spell to see through an existing warp or shortcut through Space; a Distortion Iris, the effects of a Scrying spell, or a magical portal created with Co-Location are all applicable. With additional Arcana based on the nature of the portal, other kinds of Iris may be seen through at the Storyteller's discretion.

•• Apprentice of Space

Borrow Threads (Space ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Connection

Suggested Rote Skills: Larceny, Occult, Subterfuge

By changing one's connection to others, one changes oneself. This spell allows the mage to transfer a number of sympathetic connections equal to the spell's Potency between herself and the subjects as determined by the spell's Scale. She can either steal links from her targets or give her own to others. If the mage transfers a link to someone who already has a connection to the same thing, the new connection overwrites the old one for the Duration of the spell. The mage has to be aware of a connection (either through magic or just knowing the subject) to manipulate it.

+1 Reach: The mage may redirect the sympathetic connection between other subjects of the spell directly.

+1 Reach: Instead of transferring sympathetic connections, the mage may copy them.

Break Boundary (Space ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Larceny, Persuasion

To restrain a willworker is to try to ensnare someone in a lie he does not believe. This spell allows the mage to bypass a single obstacle restricting her subject's movement: a locked door, a pair of handcuffs, a barred window, etc. The subject "blinks" through the door, or her hands seem to pass right through the handcuffs, or similar effects.

This spell can only bypass a physical obstacle obstructing an actual path. The mage can, for example, slip through a roaring fire that blocks the road ahead or across a chasm too wide to jump, but cannot blink through a solid wall. If cast on an inanimate object, the mage or an ally must still carry or push the subject through the obstacle.

+1 Reach: The spell allows subjects to fit through narrow or restrictive pathways they would not otherwise pass through, even if the path were not obstructed. For example, casting this spell on a car would allow the mage to drive it inside a house even though it would not fit through the door.

+2 Reach: Subjects pass through obstructions even if they are unable to move, appearing on the other side.

Lying Maps (Space ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Politics, Survival

To know how to get from here to there is to tacitly accept the Lie. By means of this spell, the mage twists the subject's sense of direction, making him *certain* that the best route from where he is to somewhere else is one the mage desires. She could, for instance, convince the subject that the road to a dangerous Verge is actually the way to his mother's house, or that the mage's sanctum is in another part of the city. If the subject actively, carefully navigates using a map or GPS or the like, the navigation roll is a single chance die, and even on a success it feels *wrong*. ("The map says left, but I swear it's right!")

Scrying (Space ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Computers, Occult, Subterfuge

By means of this spell, the mage parts the curtain of the Lie and reveals a distant location to her senses. She creates a "window" that allows her to perceive the subject, much like a television screen. When she casts the spell, she may choose whether the spell is one way, or whether people at the location can see back through the window.

When casting this spell sympathetically, exactly what the mage sees depends on the sympathetic Yantra she employs. Sympathy to a location shows her a broad overview of the area, analogous to a cinematic wide shot, but one that remains static. Sympathy



to a person or object tends to show a “close-up” of the subject – the window will follow the subject if it moves, but the mage may not be able to make out details of where the subject is or who else might be present.

When cast on a subject within sensory range, the scrying window gives the mage a view as though she were standing right next to the subject. The mage can move this view around as a reflexive action to view the target from any angle she wants.

Casting spells on subjects the mage can see through the window counts as viewing them remotely.

Add Fate ••: The mage may make the scrying window selectively one-way, allowing only specific people to perceive her from the other side of the window.

Secret Door (Space ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Stealth, Subterfuge

Doorways, roads, and portals represent a liminal point between two distinct locations – but if distance is an illusion, there can be no “distinct locations.” This spell cloaks a door, intersection, or similar aperture between two locations, such that one’s mundane perceptions simply slide ride past it. All magical attempts to uncover the door provoke a Clash of Wills.

+1 Reach: The mage may specify a Key that allows the Secret Door to be seen.

Veil Sympathy (Space ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Sympathy (Connection)

Suggested Rote Skills: Politics, Subterfuge, Survival

A magician’s sympathetic connections allow her to reach out beyond herself, but they are also an avenue by which her enemies can attack her. This spell conceals one of the subject’s sympathetic links, chosen by the mage from those she is aware of. Any attempt to uncover or use the link provokes a Clash of Wills.

+1 Reach: Rather than suppressing a sympathetic link, the mage may instead make the subject appear to have a link to someone or something else instead. Attempts to detect the link provoke a Clash of Wills to see through the deception.

+1 Reach: The spell prevents the subject from being used as a sympathetic Yantra (p. 122) as well as removing its links; each level of Potency reduces all potential uses of the subject as a Yantra from Material, to Representational, to Symbolic, to suppressing them entirely.

+2 Reach: The mage may suppress *all* the subject’s sympathetic links. This effect applies in both directions; not only does the

subject lose his links to loved ones, but those people lose their links to him. The spell is Withstood by the strongest connection the subject has.

Ward (Space ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Subterfuge, Weaponry

Space is mutable, until a magician wills otherwise. Cast on an area or individual subjects, this spell locks its subject down, preventing the space within from being manipulated. Magic that uses the sympathy of Warded subjects or attempts to warp Warded areas provokes a Clash of Wills. The mage is aware when one of her Wards is attacked.

+1 Reach: The mage may specify a Key that allows use of Space magic on the Warded subject.

+2 Reach: The mage may cast Ward upon an Iris (p. 243) or its Key, preventing the Iris from opening while the Ward remains in effect. Supernatural powers opening the Iris provoke a Clash of Wills.

••• Disciple of Space

Ban (Space •••)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Science, Stealth

In the quest for self-knowledge, it is sometimes useful to cut oneself off from the outer world so that one can understand that the world is contained within. By means of this spell, the mage inverts an area of space, such that nothing inside the space can get out and nothing outside the space can get in. Try to step in and you find yourself on the far side, carried in a single step. Try to get out and you're just stepping right back in again. Magic that manipulates space, like a teleportation power or the ability to step from one world to another, provokes a Clash of Wills to allow ingress or egress.

Even light and air can't pass through: From the outside, the space appears to "lens" as the observer approaches it, as light jumps directly across the Ban. From inside, it's an island of light in a vast sea of darkness.

Add Any Arcanum ••: Either exclude one or more phenomena under the Arcanum's purview from the spell (for example, to let air or light through) or create a Ban that only prohibits phenomena under that Arcanum's purview.

Co-Location (Space •••)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Firearms, Science

Where lesser spells merely distort the Lie that all things are separate, this spell attacks it directly. The mage smears the distance between a number of locations equal to the spell's

Since We Know You're Thinking It...

The average adult human being at rest consumes about one cubic foot of breathable air every four minutes. Have fun.

Potency, causing them to overlap temporarily. The mage must employ the Sympathetic Range Attainment to overlap locations outside of her sensory range.

Only mages using Active Mage Sight with Space can perceive the overlap, seeing it as a confusing jumble of translucent images constantly interpenetrating each other; to others within the affected areas everything seems normal. The spell's Scale factor determines how large each overlapped area can be.

Each turn, as a reflexive action, anyone capable of perceiving the overlap may "move" an object, person, or other being she is touching (including herself, if desired) from one location to another, effectively teleporting it from place to place. Those capable of seeing the overlap can touch things in any of the co-located areas, but can otherwise only interact with the location they are physically in. The other location counts as being viewed remotely for purposes of further spellcasting, and individuals may not attack people in different locations.

Objects cannot be teleported into other objects with this spell.

+1 Reach: The mage can make anything in the overlapped locations visible. She may specify any individual object or person, or just make an entire location appear as she wishes. The contents of locations remain insubstantial to one another, however anyone may "move" an object he can see over, not only individuals with Space senses.

+1 Reach: The mage can restrict the co-location to a two-dimensional plane, creating a stable portal between two locations. Anyone capable of perceiving the portal may pass through it. It is invisible by default, but by combining this with the above Reach effect the mage may make it visible and useable by individuals without Space senses.

+1 Reach: The mage may specify a Key needed to use the overlap.

+2 Reach: Individuals capable of perceiving the overlap may reflexively switch locations *twice* per turn.

Perfect Sympathy (Space •••)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Empathy, Larceny

To possess true Sympathy toward something is to be nearly indistinguishable from it. With this spell, the subject becomes so like those with whom she has sympathy that she finds it trivial to predict them. When the subject takes an action whose subject is one of her Strong sympathetic connections (e.g. social

interaction, guessing what he'll do in a certain situation, etc.), she gains 8-Again on her roll.

+1 Reach: The subject's sympathetic connection is so great that it can fool even magic. When the subject of Perfect Sympathy is the target of a spell using the Sympathetic Range Attainment, it provokes a Clash of Wills. If the mage succeeds, she may redirect the spell's effects to one of the subject's Strong sympathetic connections instead.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the subject gains the rote action quality on a number of actions equal to the spell's Potency, as long as those actions affect one of her Strong sympathetic connections.

+1 Reach: The benefits of this spell extend to the subject's Medium sympathetic connections.

Warp (Space ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Medicine

The mage twists the space her subject occupies, torquing joints, bruising flesh, and tearing muscle. This is an attack spell; its damage rating is equal to the spell's Potency, and it inflicts bashing damage.

+1 Reach: The pain of the attack is such that the victim gains the Arm Wrack or Leg Wrack Tilt.

Web-Weaver (Space ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Composure

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Empathy, Persuasion

We all leave tiny, nigh-imperceptible webs of sympathy behind us wherever we go. With this spell, the mage may bolster such a web into a useful sympathetic link. Each level of Potency bolsters a single sympathetic connection by one "step," from Weak to Medium, Medium to Strong. The mage *can* step up a nonexistent connection to a Weak one, but only if the subject of the spell has been in contact with the desired focus within the last turn. For example, a person likely has no sympathetic connection to the soda cup from her lunch, but as long as it's in her hand, the mage can use the faint sympathy created by physical contact to make the cup a sympathetic connection.

Add Time ●●: The mage can employ Temporal Sympathy (p. 193) to bolster nonexistent connections to anything the subject touched in the target time.

●●●● Adept of Space

Alter Direction (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Firearms, Persuasion

"Direction" is nothing more than a vector between two points. With this spell, the mage overwrites that concept, letting her define her path as anything she desires.

When cast on an area, this spell allows her to change a number of absolute directions (e.g. north, south, up, down) equal to the spell's Potency. She might redefine "down" as "up," causing anything not rooted to the ground to fall into the sky, or redefine "north" as "south by southwest," causing compasses to point the wrong way. Objects entering the area at speed find their direction of travel and momentum abruptly altered, which may require a Dexterity + Athletics or Drive roll to maintain control. This change isn't necessarily reciprocal; if the mage decrees that north is south, that doesn't mean that south is north — rather, it is impossible for anyone in the area to go north.

Alternately, the mage may cast this spell on a specific subject and change a direction relative to that subject. She might redefine her own personal "down" as "the direction my feet are pointing," allowing her to walk on walls or ceilings, or redefine an attacker's "forward" as "toward the person holding the gun" before he shoots her.

+1 Reach: The mage can redefine directions as curves, loops, or other shapes beyond a simple straight line. This might allow her to cause anyone walking straight ahead to move in an endless circle, or trace a "straight" path for her bullets that weaves around obstacles and friendlies. Apply the spell's Potency as a bonus or penalty to relevant actions.

Collapse (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Firearms, Intimidation

While lesser magic can blur the distinction between locations, this spell can destroy them outright. The mage forces her subject to momentarily occupy the same space as another object, with catastrophic effects. This is an attack spell; its damage rating is equal to the spell's Potency, and it inflicts lethal damage. Collapsing multiple subjects into each other, thereby damaging them all, is an application of increased Subject Factor.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the damage is aggravated.

+1 Reach: The co-located object remains inside the subject, preventing natural or magical healing of the wound until it's surgically excised or ripped out.

Cut Threads (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Sympathy (Connection)

Suggested Rote Skills: Persuasion, Politics, Weaponry

Isolation is the beginning of understanding. This spell destroys one of the subject's sympathetic links (additional connections can be severed by increasing the number of subjects with the Scale factor). This effect is Lasting, but normal interactions may restore the links in time, as described on p. 172.

+2 Reach: The mage may remove the subject's sympathetic name. This effect is not Lasting; the name returns when the spell's Duration expires.

Secret Room (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Science, Survival

Volume is a product of dimension, and dimension is merely an expression of distance in three dimensions. This spell allows the mage to manipulate those axes, making a space much larger or smaller than should be possible. A cramped studio apartment can become a spacious loft, or a town square can be made the size of a closet. Subjects crushed by a shrinking space too small for them take lethal damage equal to the spell's Potency and are forcibly ejected from the space.

The Scale spell factor must encompass the area as it exists before the spell acts. The subject space's volume is increased or decreased a number of steps along the Area Scale factor table equal to the spell's Potency. Anyone or anything within the expanded space when the spell runs out simply appears outside the original, unaltered space.

Teleportation (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Larceny, Persuasion, Science

By means of this spell, the mage transforms her subject's current location, effectively moving it from point to point without crossing the intervening space. She can, for example, summon a subject to her from anywhere in the world, banish someone to the outer reaches of Siberia, or teleport herself. By default, the subject's current location and destination must both be within sensory range, but the mage may employ the Sympathetic Range Attainment on one of them.

+1 Reach: The mage can "swap" the location of two subjects with no more than one point of Size difference.

+2 Reach: The mage can now cast the spell with two separate Sympathetic Ranges, teleporting subjects without being present for either end of the journey. The spell is Withstood by the worse Sympathetic link.

Add Death ●●, Spirit ●●, etc: By adding ●● in an Arcanum whose purview includes another realm of existence (e.g. the Underworld or the Shadow), the mage may move things from that realm into the physical world, or vice versa.

●●●● Master of Space

Create Sympathy (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Connection of desired link

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Persuasion, Politics

To a Master of Space, powerful connections are forged as easily as snapping one's fingers. With this spell, the mage creates a new sympathetic connection on the subject. These new connections are Lasting, but can fade with time as described on p. 172.

+1 Reach: The sympathetic connections created are Lasting, and will never fade. Only magic can sever them. This can have dramatic, long-term psychological repercussions on a subject, as he is effectively never able to emotionally let go.

+2 Reach: The mage may apply a new sympathetic name to the subject, which does not replace the original. This effect is not Lasting, and fades when the spell's Duration ends.

Forge No Chains (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Subterfuge, Survival

To leave behind attachments is the truest sign of freedom. For the Duration of this spell, the subject leaves no sympathetic traces behind. She cannot forge sympathetic connections, and even blood, hair, and the like shed during the spell's Duration do not link back to her. Her Space spells leave no tell-tale ripples in the Tapestry. Any attempt to scrutinize her Space magic or previously-created sympathetic connections with Mage Sight (see p. 92) add the spell's Potency to the Mystery's Opacity.

Pocket Dimension (Space ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Survival

The mage creates a space outside of space, one ideally suited to serve as a sanctum — or a prison. Without the addition of other Arcana, this space is devoid of any identifiable features, dimensions, or boundaries. It has no Time, so anything within it is held in stasis, unaging (but also unhealing and never growing or improving). It has no Death or Spirit, so Twilight doesn't exist within it. It is, in essence, a space whose only definition is that it is a space. Someone within the dimension can walk forever in any direction, but when she turns back she finds herself only as far as the boundary of the spell's Area Factor.

The Pocket Dimension is divorced from physical reality; unless the mage chooses to anchor the realm to a point in the world, the only way to reach it is to teleport there. Spells cast within the Pocket Dimension do not incur Paradox, unless they are cast sympathetically on someone outside the Pocket Dimension. The mage counts as a material sympathetic Yantra for her own Pocket Dimension.

If the Pocket Dimension is ever destroyed, or if its Duration expires, everything inside reappears in the world at the exact location from which it or they entered the Dimension.

+1 Reach: The mage may create an Iris to the Pocket Dimension in the material realm, allowing anyone to enter and leave it. For an additional Reach, she may specify a Key for the Iris.

Add Time ●●: Time flows normally within the pocket dimension, matching the flow of Time in the material realm. Wise

mages supplement this conjunction with Matter spells or similar effects to ensure a continuous air supply.

Add Death ••, Mind ••, or Spirit ••: The Pocket Dimension includes Twilight for entities attuned to the Arcanum added.

Quarantine (Space •••••)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Larceny, Socialize

This spell excises a subject from Space altogether, removing all paths from it to the rest of the world and vice versa. For all intents and purposes, the subject simply ceases to exist and reality “fills in” to adjust. A Quarantined house doesn’t leave behind an empty lot; rather, its two neighboring houses suddenly find themselves adjacent. A building with a Quarantined 12th floor appears to only have 11 stories – though the elevator has a “12” button, it doesn’t do anything.

Those inside the Quarantined area find that they cannot leave – any attempt to do so simply loops back through whatever door they passed through. They are, in effect, in a Pocket Dimension – albeit one that, because it is actually an excised piece of the Fallen World, possesses its own Time, Twilight, and so forth.

+1 Reach: The mage may specify a Key that allows access to and from the Quarantined area.

Add Mind •••••: For as long as the Quarantine exists, no one remembers that the Quarantined area, or anyone caught within it, exists. Memories are altered as necessary (so the new neighbors remember always being neighbors, and the office workers are sure the “12” button in the elevator was a weird construction gaffe and there never was an advertising firm on 12, and so on).

Add Time •••••: For as long as the Quarantine lasts, not only is the targeted area excised from space, it retroactively *never existed at all*. Any influence it, or anyone inside, had on the world is either undone or was caused by someone else. Normal history reasserts itself when the spell ends.

SPIRIT

Purview: Essence, spirits, the Shadow, the Gauntlet

The subtle Arcanum of the Primal Wilds deals with repercussions: What we do in this world has echoes that we cannot see or hear or feel, but which are no less real for all that. Spirit mages understand those repercussions, and know that it falls to them to act as intercessors between the Visible and the Invisible. Spirit’s purview is the Shadow Realm and its denizens, the spirits. The flows of Essence that empower them and the Gauntlet that holds them apart from our world also fall under this Arcanum’s dominion.

The Gauntlet

The membrane between worlds isn’t a simple barrier, but a medium of its own that those crossing between material and Shadow have to push through. The Gauntlet’s Strength or thickness depends on a wide range of factors in both worlds, not all of which a mage can know. The Gauntlet is generally strengthened by the presence of humans. The tumult of human emotion and activity keeps the worlds of Flesh and Spirit apart, and simultaneously generates new spirits and the Essence they feed on.

Any spell cast on a subject on the other side of the Gauntlet or on the Gauntlet itself is Withstood by the Gauntlet Strength. If the Gauntlet Strength at the caster’s location and the Gauntlet Strength at the subject’s location are different, apply the lower value (the mage can either direct the Supernal energies to cross the Gauntlet and then seek out the subject, or vice versa).

If a mage casts on a subject she can see across the Gauntlet in real time (e.g. with the Reach effect of the Exorcist’s Eye spell), it counts as viewing that subject remotely.

Gauntlet Strength

Gauntlet Strength is both a number and a dice modifier. Mages mainly use the strength number, while some mechanics use the modifier, such as spirits using the Reaching Manifestation to use their powers across the Gauntlet. The following chart isn’t a definitive guide to Gauntlet Strength; areas of high or low activity can create thin or thick spots – a deserted graveyard in an inner-city borough, for example, may have a lower Gauntlet than the surrounding blocks.

Location	Strength	Dice Modifier
Dense urban areas	5	-3
City suburbs, towns	4	-2
Small towns, villages	3	-1
Wilderness, countryside	2	0
Locus	1	+2
Verge	0	n/a

• Initiate of Spirit

Coaxing the Spirits (Spirit •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Composure or Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Politics, Athletics, Expression

Though most spirits are but slumbering motes that have no will or sapience, the mage may coax them to brief activity in accordance with their natures. She may compel the spirit (or its physical representation) to take a single instant action in accordance with its nature. A frightened animal might attack or flee, a car might start up, or a cliff face might start a small avalanche. The spell is Withstood by the Rank of the spirit coaxed or the Composure of a living representation, whichever is higher.

Exorcist's Eye (Spirit •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Survival, Socialize

The first spell most Spirit mages learn, this spell allows the mage to perceive and speak with spirits in the physical world, whether they are roaming freely in Twilight, slumbering within an object (including disincorporated spirits in hibernation), or possessing a living being. She can also sense any spirit-related Manifestation Conditions in the area. Finally, she can see the conduit of any spirit with the Reaching Manifestation, but cannot communicate across the Gauntlet.

+1 Reach: The mage may shift her perceptions to see across the Gauntlet and into the Shadow (or into the physical world if she's in the Shadow). The spell is Withstood by the Gauntlet Strength.

Add Death • or Mind •: These benefits extend to ghosts or Goetia, respectively.

Gremlins (Spirit •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Larceny, Politics, Subterfuge

Just as the spirit of an object can be coaxed to help, it may also be coaxed to hinder. When a character fails a roll using this spell's subject as equipment, the spell converts the failure into a dramatic failure. The spell converts a number of failures equal to its Potency. If the object's user is a player's character, the player gains a Beat as normal.

+1 Reach: As long as the object is within sensory range, the mage can choose which failures become dramatic failures.

Invoke Bane (Spirit •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Intimidation, Occult

The spirits know what causes them pain, and avoid it at all costs. This spell forces a spirit to avoid its Bane even more assiduously than normal. The spirit must spend a point of Willpower to even come within the area of influence of its Bane (described by the Area factor of the spell), and cannot touch it at all. If the spirit is already within the proscribed area and fails the roll, it must flee immediately. This spell does not affect spirits above Rank 5.

Know Spirit (Spirit •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Brawl, Socialize

To command the spirits, one must first understand them. This spell allows the mage to glean a number of the following facts about a spirit equal to the Spell's Potency:

- *What is the spirit's name?*
- *What is its Rank?*
- *What Manifestations does it possess?*
- *What Numina does it possess?*
- *What are its Influences, and roughly how strong are they?*
- *What is its Ban or Bane?*

•• Apprentice of Spirit

Cap the Well (Spirit ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Politics, Survival, Persuasion

Any creature becomes more pliable when its food source is controlled. This spell wards a source of Essence, making it difficult for spirits to feed from it – but not harder to sense. Any attempt by a spirit to feed on the Essence (or a mage, werewolf, or other being to siphon the Essence) provokes a Clash of Wills.

Channel Essence (Spirit ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Persuasion, Survival

A wise master knows that sometimes she must reward rather than punish. This spell allows the mage to draw Essence into her Pattern from a Resonant Condition or channel Essence to a spirit or suitable receptacle. The mage may transfer an amount of Essence equal to the spell's Potency. However, she

cannot channel more Essence per turn than her Gnosis-derived Mana per turn rate.

Essence stored within the mage's Pattern remains even after the Duration expires; however, she can only hold a combined amount of Mana and Essence equal to her Gnosis-derived maximum Mana.

Add Death •• or Mind ••: The spell may be cast on a ghost or Goetia.

+1 Reach: The mage may siphon Essence directly from a spirit, though the spirit may Withstand the spell with Rank.

Command Spirit (Spirit ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Athletics, Persuasion

Sometimes the gentle approach must give way to raw dominance. This spell allows the mage to command a spirit to undertake a number of actions equal to the spell's Potency. This compulsion only lasts as long as the spell's Duration, so the spirit might abandon an indefinite or extended action when the spell's Duration wears off. Commands that go against the spirit's self-interest (including abandoning a host or Fetter) provoke a Clash of Wills. This spell has no effect on spirits above Rank 5.

Ephemeral Shield (Spirit ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Animal Ken, Medicine, Stealth

To master the spirit world, one must show no vulnerability. This spell protects the subject against the Numina, Influences, and Manifestations of spirits, Spirit spells, and any spiritual powers of other supernatural creatures such as werewolves. Such attacks must succeed at a Clash of Wills to harm the subject.

+1 Reach: The protection afforded by this spell extends to spirits' physical attacks.

Crossamer Touch (Spirit ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Crafts, Intimidation

Sometimes the only way to command a spirit is with raw, brute force. This spell renders the subject's flesh solid to spirits in Twilight, allowing her to interact with them physically.

Add Death •• or Mind ••: These benefits extend to ghosts or Goetia, respectively.

+1 Reach: Any object the mage carries is similarly solid to Twilight spirits.

+1 Reach: The mage shapes her body into a powerful tool against the spirits. Her unarmed attacks against spirits count as a weapon with a damage modifier equal to the spell's Potency.

Opener of the Way (Spirit ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Computers, Socialize

The shaman is not only intercessor, but also gatekeeper. This spell allows the mage to shift the Resonant Condition on the subject to the Open Condition, or vice versa.

Shadow Walk (Spirit ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Stealth, Streetwise

Sometimes the lords of shadow must walk unseen among their prey. This spell shrouds the subject from the notice of spirits and Spirit magic. Any supernatural effect that would detect her provokes a Clash of Wills.

Slumber (Spirit ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Occult, Weaponry

A fool exhausts herself trying to kill what cannot die; better to send hostile spirits into a deep sleep. This spell reduces the frequency with which a spirit that is hibernating after being destroyed (see p. 257) regains Essence. Instead of regaining one point of Essence per day, it regains one point of Essence every (Potency) days; but the effect still ends when the spell's Duration expires.

••• Disciple of Spirit

Bolster Spirit (Spirit •••)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Occult, Expression

The mouse who plucks the thorn is often more respected than the roaring lion. Each level of Potency of this spell heals a spirit of two boxes of bashing damage.

+1 Reach: In lieu of healing damage, the mage may expend one Potency to increase one of the spirit's Attributes by +1 for the Duration of the spell. The spirit's Rank-derived Attribute maximum still applies.

+2 Reach: The mage may spend one Mana to increase the spirit's Rank by 1, increasing its maximum Attribute levels and Essence pool, as well as awarding it one new Numen.

Erode Resonance (Spirit •••)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Brawl, Intimidation

Sometimes a healer must cut out diseased flesh so that the whole may heal. This spell removes the Open or Resonant condition on its target entirely. The effect is Lasting.

+1 Reach: Any future attempt to reestablish the same Resonant Condition while the spell is in effect is penalized by Potency.

Howl From Beyond (Spirit ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Firearms, Medicine

With this spell the mage calls forth a torrent of Essence from the spirit world, which buffets her foes and leaves them drained in body and soul. This is an attack spell; its damage rating is equal to the spell's Potency, and it inflicts bashing damage. This spell can target physical beings or spirits in Twilight.

+1 Reach: The subject becomes more vulnerable to spiritual predation: she gains the Open condition.

+1 Reach: The spell can target beings on the other side of the Gauntlet, but is Withstood by the Gauntlet Strength.

Place of Power (Spirit ●●●)

Practice: Fraying or Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Gauntlet Strength

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Survival

Even the mightiest shaman needs a place to sleep safely, and a place to do her workings where the wall between worlds is thin. This spell allows the mage to either raise or lower the local Gauntlet Strength by an amount equal to the spell's Potency within the spell's Area.

+1 Reach: The mage may alter the Gauntlet independently on either side. She might, for example, reduce the Gauntlet rating from the material side while raising it on the Shadow side.

Reaching (Spirit ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Gauntlet Strength

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Medicine, Socialize

The Spirit mage is a being of two worlds. With this spell, the mage may interact physically and magically with things on the far side of the Gauntlet, whichever realm she is in.

+1 Reach: The mage opens an Iris between the physical world and the Shadow, which anyone or anything can pass through. The Scale factor determines how big the Iris is. By adding another Reach, the mage may restrict access to the Iris by means of a Key.

Rouse Spirit (Spirit ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Expression, Investigation

What slumbers can always be awoken. This spell can also rouse a hibernating spirit prematurely. The Potency required for this effect is the difference between the spirit's current Essence and its total Corpus. The spirit awakens immediately, with only its rightmost Corpus box cleared.

+1 Reach: For each Reach applied, the spirit wakes with one additional Corpus box cleared.

Spirit Summons (Spirit ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Spell Factor: Duration

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Persuasion, Socialize, Occult

The mage sends out a call to the nearest spirit within her sensory range. Conversely she can summon spirits she knows personally. She may send a general call and the nearest spirit will answer, or she can specify the type of spirit by Resonance. The spell does not work on spirits above Rank 5.

+1 Reach: The spell also creates the Open Condition on the area, even if it does not match the spirit's Resonance.

+1 Reach: The mage may give the spirit a single, one-word command to follow. The spirit is not compelled to complete a task if it cannot finish the command before the Duration of the spell elapses.

+1 Reach: The mage may summon spirits from across the Gauntlet. If she is in the vicinity of an open Iris to the other side, the spell functions as normal. If not, the spell is Withstood by the greater of Rank or the Gauntlet Strength. Spirits may only cross the Gauntlet if they have the ability to do so.

+2 Reach: The mage may give the spirit a complex command to follow. The command must be a single task, but the mage can describe the task within a sentence or two.

●●● Adept of Spirit

Banishment (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Brawl, Expression, Occult

This spell strips a spirit of its ability to act in the world, reminding it of its place. This spell strips a number of Manifestation Conditions from the spirit (or its host) equal to the spell's Potency. The effect is Lasting, but the spirit may use its Influences and Manifestations to reestablish the Conditions as normal. This spell does not work on spirits above Rank 5.

Add Death or Mind ●●●●: The spell's effects extend to ghosts or Goetia.

+1 Reach: The target cannot attempt to recreate the destroyed Conditions on the same victim or location until the spell's Duration elapses.

Bind Spirit (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Brawl, Intimidation

What shows mastery more than a leash? With this spell, the mage may bind a spirit to the world, granting it a Manifestation Condition (see p. 258). The mage may grant a number of Conditions equal to the spell's Potency, and must create any prerequisite Conditions as well, if they aren't already present. The entity immediately enters the Manifestation of the mage's choice, and may not leave it while the spell remains in effect. This spell does not work on spirits above Rank 5.

Add Death or Mind ●●●●: The spell's effects extend to ghosts or Goetia.

Craft Fetish (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Persuasion

A vanquished foe can be a useful tool. This spell allows the mage to bind a hibernating spirit into a *fetish*, a kind of magical item. Fetishes work like an Imbued Items, save that a fetish is powered by Essence and, instead of holding a Supernal spell, it holds one of the bound spirit's Influences and, possibly, some of its Numina.

Creating a fetish requires that the spell have one Potency per dot of Influence the object will possess, plus one Potency per Numen. A fetish doesn't have to host all of the spirit's abilities. Activating the powers within the fetish is an instant action and uses the spirit's dice pool.

The fetish has its slumbering spirit's Essence pool and can recharge Essence in a Resonant location just like a hibernating spirit, or it can receive Essence from another spirit or via Channel Essence (see p. 180) or similar magic. The fetish's user can pay Essence out of the fetish's pool to power its abilities. If the bound spirit ever acquires Essence equal to its Corpus, however, the spell ends immediately.

The mage may also create a much simpler fetish that hosts no spirit, but can hold Essence. Such a fetish holds 10 Essence, plus a number of Essence equal to the spell's Potency.

Triggering the bound spirit's Ban or Bane immediately destroys the fetish.

Familiar (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Expression, Intimidate

The mage creates a Familiar bond between a spirit and a mage, who must both be subjects of the spell. The spirit may not be greater than Rank 2. The mage gains the Familiar Merit and the spirit the Familiar Manifestation Condition for the Duration of the spell. Both parties must be willing, and can end the bond whenever they wish.

Substitute Death ●●●● or Mind ●●●●: The mage may bind a ghost or a Goetia as a familiar instead.

Shadow Scream (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Firearms, Medicine



The mage calls forth a writhing torrent of ephemera, raw Essence, and half-formed spirits, which tears into her foes with gleeful abandon. This is an attack spell; its damage rating is equal to the spell's Potency, and it inflicts lethal damage. This spell can target physical beings or spirits in Twilight.

+1 Reach: For one point of Mana, the spell inflicts aggravated damage.

+1 Reach: The mage may divide the spell's Potency between damage rating and destroying Essence contained in the target's Pattern. 1 Potency destroys 1 Essence.

+1 Reach: The target becomes more vulnerable to spiritual predation: she gains the Open condition.

+1 Reach: The spell can target beings on the other side of the Gauntlet.

Shape Spirit (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Medicine, Persuasion

When no tool is ready to hand, the shaman shapes one from what is available. This spell allows the mage to reshape a spirit's fundamental nature. She may invoke a number of the following effects equal to the spell's Potency:

- Change the spirit's fundamental nature; for example, making a mouse spirit into a spirit of bad luck and mischief.
- Redistribute the spirit's Attribute dots.
- Heal one box of lethal damage from the spirit's Corpus.
- Redefine and redistribute the spirit's Influences.
- Add, remove, or replace one Manifestation.
- Add, remove, or replace one Numen.
- Rewrite the spirit's Ban and Bane.

She can also alter the spirit's size, shape, and appearance as she sees fit, within the limits of the spell's Scale factor. The spirit's new traits must stay within its Rank-derived maximums. When the spell's Duration expires, the spirit returns to its original form and capabilities.

+1 Reach: For one Mana, the spell may heal aggravated damage.

Twilit Body (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Subterfuge, Survival

To go unnoticed, the tiger must sometimes change her stripes. This spell causes the subject (and anything she's wearing or carrying, if applicable) to turn into Spirit-attuned ephemera, placing her in Twilight.

+1 Reach: The subject's ephemeral form is so refined she can cast this spell and become immaterial even in realms where Twilight normally doesn't exist.

World Walker (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Gauntlet Strength

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Persuasion, Survival

The shaman goes where she must to find wisdom and power. This spell allows the mage to bring a subject directly across the Gauntlet, either to or from the Shadow, without the need for a portal. If the subject is a spirit or ephemeral object, it appears in Twilight.

+1 Reach: The mage may grant a conjured spirit or ephemeral object the Materialized Condition, which lasts until the spell's Duration expires.

●●●●● Master of Spirit

Annihilate Spirit (Spirit ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Rank

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Science, Weaponry

The most fearsome spell in most shamans' arsenal, this terrible magic utterly destroys a spirit. The target spirit may spend an Essence to roll Power + Finesse in a Clash of Wills, a last-ditch attempt to reassert its existence through its Influences. If the spell is successfully cast, the spirit is instantly and utterly destroyed – even if it still has Essence, it does not retreat into hibernation, it is simply gone. Short of archmastery, this spell cannot affect spirits of Rank 6 or higher.

Birth Spirit (Spirit ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Medicine, Expression

By means of this spell, the mage may coax dormant Essence into life, awakening it as a Rank 1 Spirit. This spirit is not under the mage's particular control, but most newborn spirits feel a kind of respect or gratitude toward their maker. Many mages then use Bolster Spirit and Shape Spirit to improve their ephemeral creation's capabilities.

+1 Reach: For one Mana, the Spirit created is Rank 2.

Create Locus (Spirit ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Withstand: Gauntlet Strength

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Empathy, Survival

By means of this spell, the mage creates a Locus at a location with the Resonant Condition. A Locus is a location in which the Shadow world is especially close. Spirits don't need the Reaching Manifestation Effect to use their powers across the Gauntlet at a Locus, attempts to cross over are at +2 dice, and spirits whose natures match the Locus' Resonant Condition heal at twice the normal rate.

+1 Reach: The Locus generates a number of Essence per day equal to the spell's Potency.

Essence Fountain (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Expression, Occult

The shaman feeds her spiritual children. This spell generates a quantity of Essence equal to the spell's Potency within the subject's Pattern. The Essence has a Resonance of the mage's choosing, as long as she's encountered it before.

+1 Reach: The mage may "flavor" the Essence with multiple Resonances she has previously encountered.

Spirit Manse (Spirit ●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Expression, Survival

The master lives among her shadow brethren in a palace of her will. This spell carves out an extradimensional space in the Shadow, one of the fabled "Places That Aren't" that doesn't map to any location in the physical world. The Spirit Manse can take any form the mage desires, but its appearance is heavily colored by her Path and her Nimbus. As long as the spell's Duration lasts, the mage gains the Safe Place Merit at a rating equal to the spell's Potency.

+1 Reach: The mage may create an Iris between her Manse and the material world, allowing anyone to enter the Shadow directly into her Manse. She may craft a Key to this door if she wishes. The spell becomes Withstood by the Gauntlet Strength.

TIME

Purview: Prophecy, change, postcognition, time travel, time contraction and dilation

Time and Fate rule Arcadia; Time is the gross Arcanum of the pair, governing the progression of events through the ever-advancing present in a way perpendicular to Fate's subtlety. Some Acanthus liken Time to a loosed arrow, and Fate to the archer's aim. Time governs the history and diverse potential futures of the Fallen World. All things must pass. Legends rise and fall. Even gods die and fade into obscurity. Nothing is eternal, save perhaps for time itself.

Spinning the Thread of Time

Sleeper philosophers and scientists debate and make inferences about the nature of Time, discussing theoretical problems and paradoxes, measuring the distortion in the light of distant stars, but always knowing that they are locked into Time's endless march. Mages who study the Time Arcanum have practical experience to marry to Sleeping theory, and quickly discover that while some thinkers have approached something like the truth, thought experiments don't fully prepare them for the reality of temporal magic.

Sleepers often describe time as a river, but traditional Acanthus instead describe it as a spinning wheel, gathering strands of unspun material and binding them into a tight thread.

The Future is Unwritten

The unspun material in the metaphor, the future is protean and ever-changing. Using Time spells to access the future only reveals the most likely future at the time the spell is cast, and foreknowledge can and often does then immediately change the

outcome. Advanced Time spells rewrite the future like any other Pattern, dictating how immediate events will go or constructing theoretical futures mages then examine and let dissipate into the shifting flow of probability.

The Past can be Rewritten

In contrast, the past is like the spun thread — set and decided, unless magic alters it. Sleepers theorize about temporal paradoxes; if someone goes back in time to avert a disaster and succeeds, surely they would never then have to travel back, so would never have changed events? Magic defies causality; a mage who travels back in time can alter the cause of his own trip and more, the magic accounting for any contradiction caused. When an object or person is in the past, the distortion is visible to onlookers using Active Mage Sight with Time, and as she changes history everything she alters also picks up a telltale temporal aura.

Histories Unwritten

The principle drawback of time travel in a Storytelling game is that the time traveler doesn't undo just her actions, but those of the other player characters as well. This problem is exacerbated when only one character has access to time travel. If a player has gained a Beat through circumstances that are then erased, the Beat doesn't vanish. If that player's character earns more Beats by different means in the second version of events, those Beats stay as well.

Temporal Sympathy

Temporal Sympathy	Description	Withstand (Connection)	Withstand (Temporal Sympathy)
Unchanged	The subject has not changed with intervening time. A sealed room left untouched, a diamond in the same setting, a person who has not spoken to anyone or been anywhere since the target time. The connection is unassailable without Unmaking magic and casting using the sympathy is not Withstood.	5*	0
Strong	The subject has not significantly changed; a person days later who has not changed physically, or hours after an injury, a street after hours of foot traffic or a building after days of habitation, a gun that has been fired.	3	1
Medium	The subject has significantly changed; a mage before joining a Legacy, a person before a prolonged illness, an item that has been broken or built, a street after several businesses have changed, a building under new ownership.	2	2
Weak	The subject is vastly different; a mage before her Awakening, an item before being imbued, a different building on the same lot, a ruin when it was new.	1	3

* “Unchanged” sympathy may only be removed with Unmaking spells.

When a time traveler returns to the present, any changes he made to the timeline “set,” becoming Lasting, and the distortions vanish. Dying while in the past “sets” any changes made up to that point. Travelers are insulated against the alterations of history; a mage who prevents her own birth returns to a world that does not know her, but does not vanish from existence. While still in the past, if the spell that projected the traveler backwards is dispelled, he returns to the present but any changes he made to history are reversed.

The Present Moves On

The Fallen World has a **present**, the point at which the future becomes the past, which constantly advances. Mages who travel back in time and look forward find that the intervening span is still set, spun from probability to realized future history. While it may be their subjective future, it’s in the Fallen World’s past. From their perspective, the present is frozen at the moment they left – if they “catch up” to it, anything they changed becomes real, and the normal flow of time resumes. Spells to travel into the future jump the subject out of time until the destination becomes the present.

Temporal Sympathy

The “spun” time of the past is both more certain and useful to examine with magic but harder to affect, as a mage must contend with the weight of all the intervening history. Much as two subjects may have sympathetic links crossing Space marking how magically related they are, a subject has **temporal sympathy** with its own past selves, which influences magic used with a past version of an object, place, or thing as its subject. The more a subject has changed in the intervening time, the harder it is for a mage to look back at it but the easier it is to affect

that sympathy itself. Just as Space magic that alters sympathetic links has consequences for the people or objects concerned, manipulating temporal sympathy can provoke subtle effects; increase a woman’s temporal sympathy with her youth and she’ll become highly nostalgic, perhaps trying to recapture it. Destroy a building’s temporal sympathy with its past and people will forget its history.

Magic that affects the “unspun” time of the future is unaffected by temporal sympathy; the shifting potential timelines have no “substance” for magic to contend with.

• Initiate of Time

Divination (Time •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Empathy, Investigation

The mage can look into her subject’s most likely future. Without Reach, the mage can only see generalities: “Will I meet Anna again soon?” is a valid question, while “What time will the police arrive?” is too specific to return an answer. This spell can see far into the future, such as telling the mage that a young cashier might eventually become a state Governor, or that a child prodigy might become a superstar, but looking too far from the present increases the likelihood of the answer being superseded by the point the future becomes the present. The Storyteller must decide what the future holds, taking into account the nature of the story as well as cues from the mage’s questions. The caster can ask one general question per level of Potency, receiving answers of “Yes,” “No,” or “Irrelevant.”

+1 Reach: The mage can ask more specific questions and receive mostly accurate answers. The answers need not come in the form of “Yes,” “No,” or “Irrelevant.” Instead the mage can ask questions like “Will Anna marry?” or “Will I ever bear a child?” and receive more information, such as “Anna will meet an old flame, Jason, and the two will reunite and one day marry.”

Green Light / Red Light (Time •)

Practice: Compelling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Computer, Larceny, Subterfuge

The mage may manipulate the subtle timings of events, smoothing or obstructing her subject’s progress. Cast positively, the subject finds elevators and taxis arrive just as he needs them, stop lights turn green, and he arrives on time for meetings. Cast negatively, anything that *can* delay the subject *will* delay him.

Momentary Flux (Time •)

Practice: Knowing

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Investigation, Streetwise, Survival

The mage can sense whether a subject will prove beneficial or baneful in the most likely future. The mage can see whether the stranger crossing the street to approach her at night is as threatening as he seems, or whether he has come to offer advice, for example. The spell itself does not tell the mage exactly what will happen, only whether it will prove good or bad for her. The stranger may augur as a bad omen for her; this could be due to his malicious intent — or maybe he’s running from some danger, or even carrying a cold.

Although often used to assess potential dangers, mages can cast this spell with themselves as the only subject, assessing whether their own actions will help or harm them.

Mages with Time •• may use the Temporal Sympathy Attainment to cast this spell on a subject in the past, but the spell still reveals positive or negative outcomes for the future. The spell is Withstood by temporal sympathy.

+1 Reach: When reacting to the information gained from this spell, the mage gains a bonus to Initiative equal to Potency.

Perfect Timing (Time •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Socialize, Streetwise

The mage knows just the perfect time to act, whether it’s with a kind (or condemning) word, a punch, or even simply slipping out a door at the right time. This spell does not directly alter time or affect others, but rather grants the subject a perfect temporal assessment of the situation. Others might describe her as “in the zone,” mistaking her preternatural sense of timing for incredible focus.

The subject can spend a turn during the spell’s Duration planning an action. The subject loses any Defense and must remain still while planning. A turn spent planning grants a

bonus to the next action equal to Potency. This bonus can only be applied to mundane instant actions; extended actions and spellcasting rolls do not benefit from it.

Postcognition (Time •)

Practice: Unveiling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Empathy, Investigation

The mage can see into the past of a subject, witnessing events as though she were physically present to view them. By default, the caster may only view Unchanged subjects, but with Time •• she may view the more distant past, in which case the spell is Withstood by temporal sympathy.

The mage views the subject in “real time” from a moment declared when casting until the Duration of Postcognition expires. While viewing the past, the mage loses all Defense and may not take any actions or cast further spells.

+1 Reach: The mage can “scrub” the vision like a video, speeding it up, slowing it down, rewinding it, pausing it, etc.

+1 Reach: The mage remains aware of her surroundings, and does not lose Defense.

•• Apprentice of Time

Choose the Thread (Time ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Science, Subterfuge

Glimpsing the many potential futures of her subject, the mage selects the optimal course. The subject’s player rolls twice for her next mundane dice roll, and the mage’s player selects which dice roll takes effect.

+2 Reach: The spell affects spellcasting rolls and supernatural powers.

Constant Presence (Time ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Persuasion, Survival

Mages versed in Time know the tell-tale signs of disruption to the Patterns of time travelers, and not many Awakened are willing to trust that a traveler has honorable intentions. This spell preserves its subject against alterations to the timeline. Any alteration to history through the action of time travel provokes a Clash of Wills. If the mage wins, the subject is treated as though she were returning from a trip to the past herself when history settles, safeguarding her against being rewritten.

Hung Spell (Time ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Occult, Expression

With this spell, the mage captures pure expressions of magic — spells — at the moment they enter the Fallen World, suspending them before they take effect but preserving their Duration from decay. The subject must be a mage, who must deliberately build his Imago to take advantage of this spell's effect and pay one Mana when casting. Hung Spell may entrap up to its Potency in spells, which remain in their caster's spell control but do not take effect until Hung Spell is canceled or runs out of Duration. When Hung Spell ceases, the trapped spells immediately take effect and begin their own Durations.

Many mages use the Fate 2 Attainment to set a Conditional Duration on Hung Spell, so that it releases the trapped spells in response to set conditions.

Shield of Chronos (Time ••)

Practice: Veiling

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Stealth, Subterfuge

The mage shields a subject against temporal senses. While under the protection of this spell, any magic viewing the subject through time (whether looking at the shielded Duration from the future, or predicting the subject's future while in the present) provokes a Clash of Wills.

+1 Reach: Instead of simply preventing magic from uncovering the subject during the Duration of the shield, the mage may design a false series of events that inquisitive powers “uncover” instead of the truth. Attempts to magically discern the illusion provoke a Clash of Wills.

Tipping the Hourglass (Time ••)

Practice: Ruling

Primary Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Crafts, Investigation

The mage can momentarily alter the flow of Time, causing it to speed up or slow down for a subject, but not drastically. While the spell might allow the subject extra time to dodge an oncoming car or slow an enemy's movements as though he were drunk, it won't let her go back in time to avoid the car or the angry assailant entirely. The caster may add or subtract Potency from the subject's Initiative. Subjects who have already acted in a turn before having this spell cast upon them do not act again on their new Initiative rating.

Veil of Moments (Time ••)

Practice: Shielding

Primary Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Medicine, Investigation, Subterfuge

The mage can ward off the deleterious effects of advancing time on her subject. This spell cannot undo effects, but can create enough of a buffer between the subject and Time's endless march to buy what a mage needs most — time to think.

While this spell is active, the subject becomes immune to things that worsen with time. She will not bleed out from her wounds, and poison and toxins effectively halt their duration, as does the progression of disease. New Conditions and Tilts cannot be imposed on the subject while the spell remains in effect. Supernatural powers that impose effects provoke a Clash of Wills.

The downside of the spell's protection is that the subject no longer heals naturally during the spell's Duration. More dramatic effects such as Pattern Restoration or Life magic can still heal her. More importantly, the subject cannot regain Willpower or Mana, or spend Experiences while under the spell's effect. The subject ceases aging during the use of this spell.

+1 Reach: The subject may ignore Persistent Conditions during the spell's Duration. Time spent under this spell's effects does not count toward any time necessary for Conditions to lapse.

+1 Reach: The subject may heal naturally while under the spell's effect.

+1 Reach: The subject may regain Willpower while under the spell's effect.

+1 Reach: The subject may regain Mana while under the spell's effect.

••• Disciple of Time

Acceleration (Time •••)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: One Mana

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Drive, Stealth

The mage can greatly accelerate her subject's temporal motion. From the perspective of onlookers she becomes a blur as if moving in fast motion, acting with impossible speed. At high enough levels, mundane creatures simply cannot perceive her at all, save perhaps for hair raising on the neck or a gut feeling that something is not quite right.

Multiply the subject's Speed by Potency. While under the spell's effect, the subject always goes first in a turn unless he chooses to delay his action, in which case he may interrupt any other character's turn with his own as a reflexive action, then return to the front of the Initiative queue the next turn. Other characters using pre-empting powers provoke a Clash of Wills. Acting in such accelerated time makes the subject very hard to hit, but only as long as he is able to concentrate; his Defense does not change, but add Potency to Defense before doubling it for Dodge actions (p. 217). He may employ Defense (and Dodges) against firearms.

+1 Reach: Divide the time per roll of extended actions taken by the subject by Potency. The spell has no effect on the ritual casting interval of mages.

+1 Reach: For a point of Mana, Dodge actions taken while under this spell's effect have the rote quality.



Chronos' Curse (Time ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: One Mana

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Occult, Intimidation

The mage slows his subject's experience of time to a crawl. To the subject, everything seems to move at dazzling speeds, while she feels like she's caught in a dream, unable to run or punch or move properly. She can't even speak normally to others while affected—while from her perspective her words are clear enough, to everyone else they're a long, impossibly drawn-out sound.

Divide the subject's Speed by Potency, rounding down. If Speed reaches 0, the subject is effectively moving so slowly she appears rooted to the spot. While under the spell's effect, the subject always goes last in a turn. The subject's Defense is also reduced by Potency.

+1 Reach: For a point of Mana, the subject loses Defense against attacks.

+1 Reach: Multiply the time per roll of extended actions taken by the subject by Potency. The spell has no effect on the ritual casting interval of mages.

Shifting Sands (Time ●●●)

Practice: Fraying

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Occult, Survival

The mage may step back through time a short distance, undoing a few precious seconds. This spell sends the subject back through time a number of turns equal to Potency. The subject retains any injuries and Conditions gained in the undone turns, and spent Mana and Willpower do not return. Spells cast on her person in the undone time remain as long as she cast them. All other spells she may have cast or had cast on her in the intervening time are canceled. Until the subject catches up to the present, the distortion caused by this spell is visible under Active Time Mage Sight. Once she does so, any changes she made to history become Lasting.

+1 Reach: The subject travels back a full scene. This Reach effect may be applied multiple times.

Temporal Summoning (Time ●●●)

Practice: Weaving

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Investigation, Persuasion

We are all the sum of our previous selves, and with this spell a mage can call those afterimages forth. Cast upon an object, area, or living being, this spell replaces its subject with an earlier version of itself, chosen by the caster. Without the Temporal Sympathy Attainment, only Unchanged pasts may be brought to the present, but this is still sufficient to remove most Conditions and heal injuries. By employing Temporal Sympathy, the mage can restore ancient ruins to their inhabited state, recapture her youth, or return her enemies to childhood. When the spell's Duration ends, the subject immediately returns to its present self. Injuries, Conditions, and other effects imposed on the subject while Temporal Summoning is in effect transfer to the present version of the subject when it returns. The spell does have limits, however; it cannot bring the dead back to life or undo transformation into supernatural beings, though it still changes the subject physically - a vampire returned to "childhood" becomes a vampiric child, and a corpse stripped of decades becomes a younger-looking corpse with no cause of death.

Weight of Years (Time ●●●)

Practice: Perfecting

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Crafts, Intimidation, Medicine

Structures decay, bodies age. Toxins build up in muscles, and materials become brittle. The mage can inflict these processes by Perfecting the passage of time on her subject. This is an attack spell, inflicting its Potency in damage to objects and structures. This damage directly affects the object's Structure, and reduces its Durability by 1 for every 2 points of Structure lost. When used against living things, the spell deals bashing damage equal to Potency. At the Storyteller's discretion, immortal creatures like vampires might be immune to the damaging properties of this spell.

+1 Reach: The spell reduces living subjects' Athletics by Potency through sheer exhaustion.

●●●● Adept of Time

Present as Past (Time ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Cost: 1 Mana

Suggested Rote Skills: Empathy, Investigation, Streetwise

Weaving between the many immediate potential futures, the mage can read the immediate futures of her subjects and react accordingly to thwart (or aid) their plans. In combat, while this spell is in effect, the player can require that every character affected by the spell declare his or her action at the start of every turn. The player need not declare her own action, but instead can choose to act freely at any point within the Initiative order. This trumps all other supernatural Initiative effects save for those created by the Time Arcanum, which requires a Clash of Wills.

In Social situations, the mage adds Doors equal to Potency when the target of Social maneuvering by her subject, or removes them from a subject she is maneuvering against.

Prophecy (Time ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Expression, Investigation

The mage causes the future to conform to her expectations, building a hypothetical scenario she can then examine for knowledge about how to alter the future drastically, whether to ensure or avert a specific event. This works like "Divination," p. 186, but the mage can ask specific questions and also gains answers about things that *might* come to pass, depending on variables like choice or outside chance. For example, she could ask whether calling her ex will lead to reconciliation if she makes the attempt, or whether killing a man might set his son down a road to revenge. She can ask one such question per level of Potency and receive a detailed answer that accounts for hypothetical events. Other mages using Divination on the same subject while Prophecy is in effect see the most likely outcome of the scenario set by this spell.

+1 Reach: By building the hypothetical future around a Social interaction, the mage may reduce the subject's Doors by Potency, since she has intimate knowledge how each question or interaction might affect the target's choices.

Rend Lifespan (Time ●●●●)

Practice: Unraveling

Primary Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Athletics, Medicine, Intimidation

The mage can cause parts of a target's body to age rapidly and others to regress in development. The effects are temporary but devastating, inflicting lethal damage equal to the spell's Potency. Targets killed by this spell often appear to have "died of old age," despite their apparent age. At the Storyteller's discretion, undead beings like vampires and ghosts may be immune to this spell.

+1 Reach: For a point of Mana, the spell now inflicts aggravated damage.

Rewrite History (Time ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Spell Factor: Potency

Withstand: Resolve

Suggested Rote Skills: Expression, Investigation, Persuasion

Reaching back through time, the mage warps her subject's timeline, making her present self as though her life took a very different course. This spell allows the mage to rewrite a subject's history, choosing a point of divergence on his timeline and specifying changes from there. Without Temporal Sympathy, only recent decisions and changes can be rewritten, but as long as the subject is Unchanged at the point of divergence, the mage may make alterations as she wishes. With Temporal Sympathy, the spell is capable of changing every detail of a subject's history, though the false timeline created must still be possible.

Once the Duration expires, the subject instantly reverts to its original history. Memories of the time spent "rewritten" will

seem distant and hazy, dreamlike, but the subject *will* remember the altered perspective at least to some degree unless Mind magic further alters her memories. This spell does not normally affect supernatural creatures.

+1 Reach: The spell may reassign up to Potency Skill or Merit dots, as the subject's training and background shift. Skills may not exceed the subject's maximum.

+1 Reach: The spell may reassign Attribute dots up to Potency, but may not move any category of Attributes below the character creation amount for its priority, or take any Attribute over the maximum for the subject.

+2 Reach: This spell can affect supernatural creatures. While this cannot remove the supernatural Advantages of creatures born to their condition (like werewolves, spirits, or demons), creatures transformed at some point during their lives, like vampires or changelings, can briefly experience life as though they hadn't been changed.

Temporal Stutter (Time ●●●●)

Practice: Patterning

Primary Spell Factor: Potency

Withstand: Stamina

Suggested Rote Skills: Intimidation, Science, Survival

By redefining how a subject's Time Pattern interacts with the present, the mage throws that subject forward through time, awaiting the moment the present catches up to him. The subject completely vanishes from the Fallen World, and reappears unchanged when the spell's Duration ends. The subject experiences a momentary lurch in his perceptions, and then suddenly finds his surroundings changed by intervening events. The subject remains in the same location and retains momentum if he had been moving. If something now occupies the space the subject reappears in, apply the Knocked Down Tilt to whichever has the least Size.

Add Space ●●: By using the Sympathetic Range Attainment tied to a destination, the spell brings the subject back at that destination rather than at the point he left.

●●●● Master of Time

Blink of an Eye (Time ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Spell Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Crafts, Occult

By collapsing time around a subject, the mage allows her to accomplish in seconds what would take hours. This spell turns the next extended action taken by the subject into an instant action, absorbing rolls equal to Potency into a single turn. It does not affect ritual casting intervals for mages.

+2 Reach: For a point of Mana, the spell may affect spellcasting, increasing the effective Gnosis of a mage subject by Potency for purposes of ritual casting interval only. For every effective Gnosis over 10, reduce the ritual interval by one turn.

Corridors of Time (Time ●●●●●)

Practice: Unmaking

Primary Spell Factor: Potency

Suggested Rote Skills: Academics, Investigation, Persuasion

Where less-advanced Time mages can only undo actions leading directly up to the present, a Master may choose any moment in her subject's timeline and destroy everything after it, sending the subject's present self back in time to the moment of the mage's choosing. The subject arrives in the past at the specified time, inhabiting his own past body and is free to act, changing history by his actions, although the distortions to his timeline are visible under Active Time Mage Sight. He remains in the past for a time equal to Corridors of Time's Duration factor, or until he "catches up" to the present. Once in the present, the new timeline sets and any changes the subject made to history become Lasting.

Without temporal sympathy, the subject may only be sent back to a period with an Unchanged temporal sympathy to the present. By using temporal sympathy, the mage may allow her subject to revisit old decisions and make different choices. The subject arrives in whatever location he was in at the time chosen. By including the Sympathetic Range Attainment, the mage may send him somewhere else, but subjects cannot be sent back to periods outside their own lifetime. Such unfettered time travel is the stuff of legend, temporal Irises, and whispers about the powers of archmages.

Temporal Pocket (Time ●●●●●)

Practice: Making

Primary Spell Factor: Duration

Suggested Rote Skills: Occult, Science, Stealth

The mage grants her subject a gift of hours, Making extra time on her timeline. To the subject, the entire world appears to pause, frozen in time. After the subjective Duration factor of the spell, the subject rejoins the Fallen World's timeline and, to him, the universe immediately starts moving again.

While under the effects of a Temporal Pocket, the subject ages normally, any Conditions that change with time continue, wounds continue bleeding out, he must sleep the usual amount, and so on. He may move freely, examine objects, take any Mental actions, heal, touch things, and even cast spells with himself as the subject, but not physically move, consume, or injure anything — any attempt to do so immediately ends the spell, but returns the subject to the timeline having just completed the action he attempted.

Attainments

Attainments are magical effects, similar to spells but not subject to the same rules. They allow a mage to employ meta-magical effects in order to improve the efficacy of her Arcana and change the world around her in lasting ways. Attainments are available to all mages as their understanding of magic (as measured by the Arcana) increases.

As a mage's rating in an Arcanum increases, she gains access to new Attainments. The Orders instruct their members on how to use these abilities, but the instruction bears more resemblance to conditioning in athletics or fundamental principles in mathematics.

In game terms, Attainments use a variety of mechanics. Some are instant actions, some extended, and some don't require dice at all. Many of them require the expenditure of Mana, or allow the mage to use Mana to boost their power and effectiveness. Attainments do not require Imagos and as such cannot be countered by Counterspell, Universal Counterspell, or any other Attainments that affect spells. Adding an Attainment to a spell, however, does not prevent it from being Countered.

One-Dot Attainments

Counterspell

Knowledge of one Arcanum imparts the understanding of how to unravel it. To cast a spell, the mage forms an Imago; to counter a spell, the mage simply needs to disrupt one. The Counterspell Attainment is actually 10 different Attainments, one for each Arcanum. By learning even the most basic principles of an Arcanum, a mage understands how to counter a spell. By the time a spell takes effect and a mage feels it in Peripheral Mage Sight, though, it's too late to counter; to use this Attainment, the countering mage must see her rival casting in Active Mage Sight.

System: Counterspell is a Clash of Wills (see p. 117), pitting the acting mage's Gnosis + Arcanum against the countering mage's Gnosis + Arcanum. A mage can attempt to counter any spell that uses the Arcanum, even if it uses other Arcana as well, but always counters the highest Arcanum of a target spell. The comparative ratings of the two mages' Arcana are irrelevant; an Initiate can, in theory, counter the spell of a Master. Countering the spell of a mage with a higher rating in the target Arcanum, however, requires that the player spend a point of Mana. Counterspell requires an instant action. If the mage is employing Active Mage Sight (see p. 90), she can attempt to counter a spell of the appropriate Arcanum in combat, regardless of her position in the Initiative order, provided she has not used her action yet.

Example: A Moros mage is using Active Death Sight during a fight with some Seers of the Throne. She sees that one of them is about to cast a Death spell at one of her compatriots. Even if the Seer acts before her in the Initiative order, she can attempt to Counterspell. If the Seer had been readying a Forces spell, the Moros would have noticed it, but could not attempt to counter it with Death (she could, however, use Universal Counterspell if she had Prime 2 – see below).

Two-Dot Attainments

The second dot of an Arcanum grants a Lesser Utility Attainment and a form of Mage Armor.

Lesser Utilities are Attainments that fit into the purview of the Arcana, but don't map to the Practices and rely more on a general understanding of the Arcanum in question than of specific spells. Below are some of the most common Lesser Utilities, though the players and the Storyteller may devise others.

Death: Eyes of the Dead

The mage can see ghosts and souls in Twilight when using Active Mage Sight with Death. Her Peripheral Mage Sight reacts to even the passive presence of ghosts.

System: The mage detects ghosts and deathly Twilight phenomena with her Periphery, and can automatically see souls and ghosts in Twilight with her Death Sight. If a ghost is using a power to hide, it provokes a Clash of Wills. With the expenditure of one point of Mana, the mage can interact with ghosts for a scene. She can speak with them, touch them, and even strike them. However, this renders her vulnerable to their attentions, as well.

Fate: Conditional Duration

The mage can, as well as assigning Duration with a spell factor, create a condition under which the spell ceases to function. Doing so can increase the Duration of a spell, although the mage must still spend Mana and a Reach if Duration becomes indefinite. The more improbable the condition, the smaller the bonus to Duration. Some mages use the Conditional Duration to levy curses designed to teach a target a lesson ("You will suffer boils on your hands until you dirty your hands helping another out of kindness."), while others employ this Attainment tactically ("This floor will vanish the second I snap this glass rod.").

System: Spend a point of Mana to add a Conditional Duration to a spell. Doing so adds factors to the spell's Duration based on the nature of the condition.

An *improbable* condition (one that is unlikely to happen given current conditions) adds a level of Duration.

An *infrequent* condition (one that will eventually happen, but does not happen often on its own) adds two levels of Duration.

A *common* condition (one that will almost certainly happen in the near future) adds three levels of Duration.

When the condition is met, the spell ends regardless of how much Duration remains.

Forces: Precise Force

The mage understands the intricacies of Forces to such a degree that she can optimize their intentional application, perfectly directing her energy when striking an object with a mundane attack or spell that involves a physical projectile.

System: If the mage has a full turn to calculate her action, she can take the 9-Again quality on the roll. If she's applying force to a stationary object, she can ignore two points of Durability, and

a successful hit automatically causes two additional Structure damage. Against a stationary, armored target, this strike destroys (and ignores) 1/1 armor if successful. This Attainment doesn't work against anything moving faster than a casual walk.

Life: Improved Pattern Restoration

All mages can spend Mana to heal wounds, but an Apprentice of Life can use that Mana more efficiently, healing more or more serious wounds with the same amount of energy. In addition, Scouring her Pattern for Mana becomes easier and less detrimental.

System: Instead of each bashing or lethal wound costing three points of Mana, the mage can heal bashing damage at a rate of one wound per point of Mana, and lethal damage at a rate of one wound per two points of Mana. In addition, if the mage Scours a Physical Attribute, any derived traits based on that Attribute are not affected (for instance, the mage can Scour a dot of Strength without losing a point of Speed).

Matter: Permanence

Changing an object's nature and properties is easier than changing the nature of a living being. An Apprentice of Matter need simply make a small investment of energy to an object to make any Matter spell's effects long-lasting.

System: The character may spend one Mana instead of using a Reach to use the Advanced Duration spell factor of a spell with Matter as its highest Arcanum.

Mind: Mind's Eye

The mage can see Goetia, other Astral entities, and beings using supernatural powers to project out of their bodies in Twilight when using Active Mage Sight with Mind. Her Peripheral Mage Sight reacts to even the passive presence of such entities.

System: The mage detects Goetia and Mental Twilight phenomena with her Periphery, and can automatically see Goetia and projecting beings in Twilight with her Mind Sight. If a Goetia is using a power to hide, it provokes a Clash of Wills. With the expenditure of one point of Mana, the mage can interact with Goetia for a scene. She can speak with them, touch them, and even strike them. However, this renders her vulnerable to their attentions, as well.

Prime: Universal Counterspell

An Apprentice of Prime understands the formation of spells and the creation of an Imago well enough to attack it on a direct, metaphysical level, allowing her a great deal more defensive capability.

System: The mage may use Counterspell on any Awakened spell. The player rolls Gnosis + Prime when the character does not know the Arcanum used, or when this would be a higher dice pool than the appropriate Arcanum. The mage may also spend a point of Mana to Counter a spell's lowest Arcanum rather than its primary Arcanum. For example, a mage with this Attainment Countering a Fate 4, Space 2 spell may pay a point of Mana to roll the Clash of Wills against Gnosis + Space instead of Gnosis + Fate.

Space: Sympathetic Range

An Apprentice of Space can cast spells using her sympathy to a subject she cannot see. The mage requires a sympathetic connection to the subject, and a Yantra symbolizing that subject to use as a focus for the spell.

To use this Attainment, the mage must be casting a spell at sensory range, use a sympathy Yantra, and spend one Mana. The spell is Withstood by the fragility of the sympathetic connection (p.173), between the mage and her subject, but if the mage does not know the sympathetic name of the subject the Withstand level increases by one.

Spirit: Spirit Eyes

The mage can see spirits in Twilight when using Active Mage Sight with Spirit. Her Peripheral Mage Sight reacts to even the passive presence of such entities.

System: The mage detects spiritual Twilight phenomena with her Periphery, and can automatically see spirits and projecting beings in Twilight with her Spirit Sight. If a spirit is using a power to hide, it provokes a Clash of Wills. With the expenditure of one point of Mana, the mage can interact with spirits for a scene. She can speak with them, touch them, and even strike them. However, this renders her vulnerable to their attentions, as well.

Time: Temporal Sympathy

Temporal Sympathy allows a mage to cast a Time spell at the past of a subject. The mage must be casting a spell on the subject as it exists now, cast at sensory range, use a sympathy Yantra, and spend one Mana. The spell is Withstood by the fragility of the temporal sympathy (p. 186) between the mage and her subject, plus one Withstand level if the mage does not know the sympathetic name of the subject. It is possible to combine this Attainment with Sympathetic Range to cast on a subject both in the past and at a distance beyond the sensory by paying to activate both Attainments, but unlike Sympathetic Range, Temporal Sympathy can only be used on Time spells that call for it and other spells Combined with them.

Mage Armor

Mage Armor is a set of 10 Attainments, one per Arcanum, that allows a mage to protect herself magically. Mage Armor requires a point of Mana to activate with a reflexive action, whereupon it remains active for the scene, even if the mage falls unconscious, unless the mage dies. A mage can only benefit from one form of Mage Armor at a time, but can spend Mana to change between Arcana as a reflexive action. Mage Armors that increase Defense work against surprise attacks.

Death

Death Armor causes a field of entropy around the character, causing her body to react to injury almost like one of the undead.

Death Armor downgrades lethal damage from kinetic attacks (bullets, claws, rocks, etc.) to bashing. A mage using Death

Armor does not roll to stay conscious once her Health track is filled with damage.

Fate

Fate Armor comes from incredible luck — attacks miss, the character trips at just the right moment to avoid a swinging fist, a knife glances off the button on her coat, and so forth.

Fate Armor adds the character's Fate rating to her Defense. In addition, Fate Armor allows the character to apply her Defense to firearms attacks. If the character successfully Dodges an opponent's attack, the player can spend a point of Mana to add the character's Fate dots as a weapon rating on the mage's next physical attack on that target. This bonus must be used by the mage's next action or it is lost.

Forces

Forces Armor disperses the energy of attacks before they can reach the mage, much like a force field.

Forces Armor applies the mage's full Forces rating as general armor, applicable against all damaging physical attacks and the automatic damage from fire and electricity. It has no effect on mental or psychic attacks.

Life

Life Armor heightens the combat instincts of the mage and prepares her body to shrug off injuries.

Life Armor adds half the character's Life rating (round up) as both general armor and a bonus to Defense. Use the higher of the character's Wits and Dexterity as Defense, rather than the lower.

Matter

Matter Armor changes the properties of the matter surrounding the mage to protect her; her clothes solidify to repel a fist, a bullet softens to lessen the impact, or ambient moisture condenses to quench a fireball.

Matter Armor applies the mage's full Matter rating as general armor, applicable against all damaging physical attacks. It is immune to Armor Piercing. Matter Armor has no effect on mental or psychic attacks.

Mind

Mind Armor causes minute doubt and hesitations in the mind of an enemy as to where the mage is and how best to hit him. This allows the mage to be highly effective at dodging incoming attacks, but provides no protection against threats with no cognition to affect (explosions, natural disasters, automatons).

Mind Armor adds the character's Mind Arcanum to her Defense. In addition, if the mage Dodges a target's attack, the player can spend a point of Mana to cause the target to gain the Beaten Down Tilt (p. 319); the target just doesn't want to continue the fight. A supernatural being can contest this with a Clash of Wills.

Prime

Prime Armor does not protect the mage from mundane attacks. Instead, it protects the mage from incoming magical attacks, including the damaging spells of other Awakened, but also any supernatural effect that deals direct damage.

Prime Armor reduces the damage of all *wholly* supernatural attacks by the character's Prime dots. For example, it will defend against an Aimed damaging spell or a bolt of energy shot at the character, but not a werewolf's claws.

Space

The mage makes tiny changes in the fabric of space, moving attacks away from her.

Space Armor adds character's Space rating to her Defense. The character also applies her Defense to firearms attacks. In addition, if the character successfully Dodges an attack, the player can spend one point of Mana to redirect the attack to another applicable target. The attack hits with successes equal to the mage's Space Arcanum rating.

Spirit

The character cloaks herself in ephemeral armor, protecting the character from any attack stemming from Twilight, and slowing the force of physical attacks.

Spirit Armor downgrades lethal damage from kinetic attacks (bullets, claws, rocks, etc.) and the attacks of ephemeral entities to bashing.

Time

Time Armor speeds or slows time in the mage's area, allowing her to move out of the way of incoming attacks.

Time Armor adds the character's Time rating to her Defense. Time Armor also allows the character to apply her Defense to Firearms attacks. In addition, if the character successfully Dodges an attack, the player can spend a point of Mana to reduce the attacker's Initiative rating by the mage's Time Arcanum dots for the remainder of the scene.

Three-Dot Attainments

Targeted Summoning

With three dots in an Arcanum, a mage can add greater specificity when summoning a Supernal being (p. 94). All Supernal beings have a primary Arcanum, defined by their home Realm and the type of being (manifest or recondite). They can have other Arcana, however, and a mage using this Attainment can narrow her summoning to Supernal beings with particular powers.

System: The mage spends one additional Mana during the summoning, and specifies a second Arcanum for the target Supernal being. The primary Arcanum must remain one of the mage's two Path Ruling Arcana.

Four-Dot Attainments

Adepthood brings with it a Greater Utility Attainment. Greater Utilities, like the Lesser Utilities, are methods of using Arcana outside of the normal Practices.

Death: Inviolate Soul

The soul of an Adept of Death is almost impossible to affect, let alone harm or dislodge. The mage can reflexively repel deleterious magic that will or could harm her soul.

System: The mage can reflexively use this Attainment under the following circumstances:

- Her soul is being tampered with or attacked.
- Something attempts to alter or influence her Nimbus or aura.
- Anything attempts to possess her.

The mage is immediately aware when one of the above circumstances applies, and may protect herself by spending a point of Mana. The character enters a Clash of Wills with the intruding power, using her Gnosis + Death.

Fate: Unbound Fate

A mage with this level of proficiency with the intricacies of Fate has a sixth sense for powers intended to usurp control of his own destiny. The mage can reflexively repel deleterious magic that will or could harm her fate. She can resist falling under the sway of a magical oath, for example, or shrug off psychic control.

System: The mage can reflexively use this Attainment under the following circumstances:

- She is being forcibly bound into a magical oath, contract, or geas.
- A supernatural compulsion to do something she does not wish to do is directed at her.
- A supernatural effect is changing her destiny.

The mage is immediately aware when one of the above circumstances applies, and may protect herself by spending a point of Mana. The character enters a Clash of Wills with the intruding power, using her Gnosis + Fate.

Forces: Environmental Immunity

Wind, fire, extreme cold, and lightning — the forces of nature are largely under the command of the Adept of Forces, and she can ignore them with near impunity.

System: The player spends a point of Mana. The character is thereafter immune to the effects of Environmental Tilts and Extreme Environments (p. 231 and 224, respectively), for the rest of the scene. Note that this Attainment does *not* protect the mage from Forces spells aimed at her specifically. In such cases, the Imago of the spell includes damage to her, and thus she must make a more concerted effort to avoid it (perhaps by using the Counterspell Attainment).

Life: Body Autonomy

The mage's body is a temple, and cannot be altered, harmed, or affected without her consent. Any incoming magical effect that would change her physical body can be immediately countered.

System: The mage can reflexively use this Attainment under the following circumstances:

- She is the target of a supernatural power that would alter her physical body in some way.
- She is the target of a supernatural power that would injure her.
- She is the target of an attack that would place a Personal Tilt on her (Arm Wrack, Blind, etc.).

The mage is immediately aware when one of the above circumstances applies, and may protect herself by spending a point of Mana. The character enters a Clash of Wills with the intruding power, using her Gnosis + Life.

Matter: Durability Control

The mage can shift the relative material strength or weakness of any object she touches, making it more easily broken or much tougher than its components would indicate.

System: The mage touches the target object; the player spends a point of Mana. The character can raise or lower the object's Durability by her dots in Matter. The change lasts for the rest of the scene, so the mage can let go of the object once she shifts its Durability.

Mind: Intuitive Leap

An Adept of Mind possesses a keen understanding of social responses and cues, as well as the ability to think quickly enough to eviscerate opponents in debates or find exactly the right wording to garner support.

System: The player can spend a point of Mana whenever she rolls three or more successes on a Social or Mental roll. That roll is considered an exceptional success, meaning that the player can place a Condition on a subject.

Prime: Imbue Item

The mage can infuse an item with magic, creating an Imbued Item. Imbued items are granted a single spell. In effect, whoever wields the imbued item gains the benefits of its spell, even though she did not necessarily cast it. See the Imbued Item Merit, p. 102.

The mage can imbue an item with any spell she is capable of casting. Imbued items retain their magic indefinitely; a spell cast using an imbued item might run out, but the imbued item itself does not. Attainments may only be included if they modify a spell; for example, mages can imbue items with spells using Sympathetic Range, but may not imbue an item with Mage Armor or the ability to create Rotes.

The spell imbued into an item remains in the item's creator's spell control, even if the item only casts that spell when activated. If an imbued item casts its spell multiple times, however, it still only takes up one spell control "slot." Most mages relinquish spells after they have imbued them (see p. 118), but if the mage retains control over an item's spell, she may alter its spell factors when the item casts it, and even cancel it as though she cast it herself. By spending Mana equal to the item's rating, a mage can destroy an imbued item she retains spell control over, no matter where it is.

System: The player must spend Mana equal to the rating of all Arcana used in the spell.

Dice Pool: Gnosis + Prime

Action: Extended (required successes = (Arcana dots in all imbued spells) x 2, one hour per roll)

Cost: See above

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The item is imbued with magical energy, but is cursed. It is unpredictable, baleful, impossible to effectively control and, worst of all, bears the unmistakable mark of the imbuing mage's Nimbus. The mage is advised to find a way to destroy the item as soon as possible – although sometimes, the item works more or less as intended for a short while.

Failure: The player accrues no successes. The character can quit, and possibly attempt to continue the imbuing later (doing so adds successes to the total required; how many is up to the Storyteller).

Success: The player adds successes to the total. If she reaches the required number, the imbued item is complete, and the spell is inextricably bound into the object.

Exceptional Success: The player adds successes to the total. If she reaches the required number, the imbued item is complete, and the spell is inextricably bound into the object. In addition, the spell is relinquished from the mage's spell control without requiring Willpower points or dots.

The caster decides whether the spell imbued into the item is persistent (always active) or contingent (triggered by a word, gesture, or condition).

The item gains the ability to hold a single point of Mana, but the creator can give the item extra capacity by adding successes to the total required, each extra success adding two Mana. The imbuing mage can spend Mana to fill the object's reserve, but this Mana is on top of any required to imbue the object. A mage with the Prime 3 spell Channel Mana (p. 168) can fill the item later.

Space: Everywhere

An Adept of Space can spread the influence of her magic over a large area with very little effort.

System: The character may spend one Mana instead of using a Reach to use the Advanced Scale factor of a spell.

Spirit: Honorary Rank

An Adept of Spirit is sufficiently in control of her own interactions with ephemera that she, while still never a native, is at least not a stranger to the Shadow. Spirits react to her presence with respect rather than naked hostility.

System: The character has an "honorary" spirit Rank equal to her dots in Spirit. Spirits sense her Rank as though she were a spirit, and her Physical attacks count as banes to spirits two Ranks or more below her as described on p. 256. She may spend a point of Mana to reduce a spirit's Doors against her Social maneuvering actions by one.

Time: Time in a Bottle

An Adept of Time can cast spells in seconds that would take other mages hours.

System: The character may spend one Mana instead of using a Reach to use instant casting time for a spell.

Five-Dot Attainments

Create Rote

Masters of any Arcanum can translate an improvised spell into a Rote (Rotes and the mechanics for using them are described on p. 112). Creating a Rote requires Mastery of the Arcanum in question – the mage needs to know the Arcanum's most advanced principles before being able to codify a spell into a Rote. Masters often include personal flourishes in their Rotes, and so is it sometimes possible to tell which variant of a spell a mage uses based on how she performs a Rote.

In order to create a Rote, the mage needs to have cast the spell in question many times and be familiar with the Imago she will use to make the Rote. She then performs it, slowly and deliberately, infusing every gesture and action with magic, until the Rote is solidified and the Imago fixed and perfect in her mind.

System: The mage can create a Rote out of any spell she can cast, provided that she has Mastered all of the Arcana to be included. She needs to choose a Skill to encode and fix the Imago in her mind. Doing so is an extended action (Arcanum + the encoded Skill, each roll equals three hours of study and practice, 5 successes required per dot of Arcana involved in the spell). The mage can devote three hours at a time to this working over a period of weeks – the successes need not be accrued sequentially. The player spends one Mana for each roll. The usual rules for failure apply. If the player fails one of these rolls, the character must either break off the attempt or take a Condition, which cannot resolve until the Rote is complete or the mage gives up.

Once the character has mastered the Imago, the player spends a point of Willpower and an Arcane Experience, and the Rote is complete. The character can then teach it to other mages, or use the Prime 1 spell Scribe Grimoire (p. 166) to write it down and allow others to cast it.

Legacies

Not all Awakened develop Legacies, but most do, because they confer several advantages: Yantras, Oblations, a new or strengthened Ruling Arcanum and Legacy Attainments. By adopting a Legacy, a mage alters her Gnosis, shaping her mystic self in accord with its principles. Some Legacies are initiatory traditions; others, deeply personal obsessions.

Prerequisites

Path, Order or Praxis: All Legacies possess an originating Path, and many (though not all) are connected to an Order.

Normally, your mage must either belong to the Legacy's Path or Order. However, it is possible for a mage of any Path or Order to join a Legacy if she learns a Praxis that duplicates the Legacy's first Attainment, and utilizes one of the Legacy's Yantras. She develops the understanding to join without other requirements. Note that some Legacies possess unusual Attainments that make this impossible. Once she learns the Legacy's first Attainment, she loses the Praxis it duplicates but receives one standard Experience and one Arcane Beat.

Arcane (and Other) Knowledge: Before initiation, your mage must possess at least two dots in the Legacy's new Ruling Arcanum. She must also possess two dots of Gnosis. If she's founding her own Legacy, the requirement is increased to three dots.

Legacies also require other forms of knowledge based on their respective theories and beliefs. This normally takes the form of two or more dots in a particular Skill, but Storytellers and Legacy founders may specify additional requirements.

Indoctrination: Finally, each Legacy demands that prospective pupils perform tasks, endure ordeals, and otherwise encounter the Legacy's perspective through direct experience. Even a

Legacies and Souls

Mages say Legacies change their souls, and this is true after a fashion, but they don't do it by altering the soul itself. Instead, they change the sorcerer's Gnosis and concomitantly, her magical identity. If the mage's Gnosis is a vessel that holds the waters of her soul, a Legacy sculpts it into a new shape – and the soul changes to fit it.

This is an important distinction to note, because this is why soul theft cannot permanently deprive a mage of her Legacy. If a mage loses her soul, any replacement will take the "shape of the vessel," returning her Legacy's benefits as soon as she can use magic again.

If removed from its owner, an Awakened soul is not so liquid as to lose all marks of its Legacy. This makes it possible for soul thieves to learn Legacies from stolen souls without the owner's consent.

Legacies and Sympathetic Magic

Legacy members form close ties in part due to their sympathetic bonds. Every Legacy mage serves as a sympathetic Yantra worth +2 dice for every member of the same Legacy, and all daimonomika and soul stones belonging to that Legacy. Members versed in Space or Time find it easy to communicate and gather, as well as track down errant pieces of their tradition. On the other hand, enemies who kidnap a member or steal a book can do tremendous damage to a Legacy.

self-founded Legacy can't be invented with a mere idea – the mage needs to explore its Mystery through action.

Initiation

Mages have developed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Legacies, but most are no longer practiced. Some represent one sorcerer's obsession, but others are full-fledged "academies." To join, one must be initiated through the following methods, after meeting the Legacy's prerequisites. Legacy initiation usually requires a week of dedicated study and ritual, or a longer period of part-time effort, but certain Legacies naturally require more or less time.

Founding a Legacy

Your mage might be able to develop her own Legacy at Gnosis 3 or greater. You must expend one Arcane Experience to complete the process after designing the Legacy with your Storyteller. This is, however, the least common way to join a Legacy for the simple reason that most mages aren't up to the task – anyone can join a Legacy, but few can found them. There's no hard and fast rule restricting who can found a Legacy. It rests entirely on what the troupe feels comfortable with. Know, however, that a cabal of mages who have each founded their own Legacies would achieve legendary status and an inconvenient degree of attention.

Daimonomikon

Your sorcerer may study a *daimonomikon*: a special Grimoire that teaches the Legacy's secrets. This requires a minimum Gnosis of 2. Daimonomika are difficult to find, and often deliberately hidden or destroyed by rival Legacies or parties who believe the Legacy should be suppressed. To join the Legacy described in a daimonomikon's pages, spend one Arcane Experience.

Soul Study

Your mage may study the soul or soul stone of a mage belonging to a Legacy to join it. This requires a minimum Gnosis of 2. Outside certain Legacies that use this as a traditional way to

instruct students, this is considered a serious crime — you're not only ripping off the Legacy, but probably stealing a practitioner's soul. To learn a Legacy by studying a soul or soul stone directly, spend one Arcane Experience.

Tutelage

This is by far the most common way to learn a Legacy. Once your mage reaches Gnosis 2, an established Legacy member may initiate her into its ways. The tutor must possess the Legacy's third Attainment. To join the Legacy, spend one standard or Arcane Experience. Furthermore, both tutor and pupil earn one Arcane Beat. If the pupil elects to spend an Arcane Experience, she may use this Arcane Beat to contribute to it, though this is not mandatory.

Legacy Advantages

The benefits of initiation are many, from a connection to other Legacy members to the magical advantages of an altered Gnosis.

Yantras

Initiates learn the Legacy's Yantras. Most require one turn to deploy and add +1 to spellcasting rolls. A few add +2 but either impose a disadvantageous Condition or require rare materials, extra time, or special care. The required effort is part of the Yantra, so sidestepping its disadvantages (by eliminating the stupor created by a sacred drug, for example) reduces its bonus accordingly.

Oblations

Each Legacy also teaches Oblations that reflect its philosophy and legends. Unlike ordinary Oblations, the mage does not need to perform Legacy Oblations at a Hallow — her soul becomes the "sacred place" being drawn upon. However, a mage away from a Hallow cannot gain more Mana per day than her dots in the Legacy's Ruling Arcanum.

Ruling Arcanum

Initiation into a Legacy confers an additional Ruling Arcanum, set by the Legacy's creators. This normally raises an existing Common or Inferior Arcanum to Ruling Status, but in some cases the mage already possesses the Legacy Arcanum as a Ruling Arcanum. In this case, he develops an especially strong understanding of the Arcanum's Mysteries. Every time she learns a new dot in this Arcanum he earns an Arcane Experience.

The Mentor–Student Bond

Most Legacy tutors remain involved with their students long after first teaching the Legacy, creating a web of relationships that binds members together. Through Legacy secrets and the teachings they specifically share, student and tutor have both shaped their Gnosis in the same fashion. Mentors and students have a Strong sympathetic link to one another. After a scene where they interact over some mystically meaningful or emotional and intimate matter, both earn an Arcane Beat. This Beat can only be earned once per chapter (game session), even

if the tutor interacts with multiple students, or the student is also a tutor, and meets with both teacher and pupil over a short period of time. Legacy members without teachers don't gain this benefit, and a student can't choose a new Tutor if she can't or won't connect to the old one. Only the person who initiated her triggers the advantage. Note however that these interactions don't have to be friendly ones, either.

Legacy Attainments

All Legacies teach special Attainments, built from Praxes the Legacy's members have internalized. The mage invokes them from her reshaped soul instead of reaching into the Supernal. Legacy Attainments have the following advantages:

Atypical: Legacy Attainments generally operate according to the Legacy's traditions, which may slightly limit or expand their scope. For example, a Legacy of fire worshipers may be restricted to heat and fire-based versions of Attainments based on Forces spells. These adjustments shouldn't make Attainments significantly more or less powerful than they otherwise would be.

Automatic Activation: In most cases, a Legacy Attainment can be activated with an instant action and does not require dice rolls. Like a spell, the Attainment automatically acquires primary spell factor ranks (in Potency or Duration) equal to the mage's dots in the Attainment's highest prerequisite Arcanum minus one.

When required, the Attainment is also considered to have acquired additional spell factors that would incur a penalty (if cast as a spell) up to the Attainment's lowest prerequisite Arcanum.

If the Attainment would require a measurement of its successes, it automatically scores a number of successes equal to the mage's dots in the highest prerequisite Arcanum.

For example, if a member of a fire-summoning Legacy who possesses Forces 5 activates her Forces-based Legacy Attainment. Its primary factor is Potency. The Attainment scores 5 Potency automatically. If Duration is required, it lasts for three turns (as per Duration rating with -4 dice penalty). It scores 5 successes. If the Attainment also harnessed Spirit and the mage possessed three dots in that Arcanum, the Duration would decrease to two turns, since the secondary factor uses the lower of the two ratings.

Unless specified otherwise, activating an Attainment is an instant action. Attainments cannot be enhanced by longer "casting times."

Fixed Reach: Attainments do not use Reach in the usual way. Instead, Attainments receive only the Paradox-free Reach for meeting and exceeding Arcanum requirements, and may not Reach further. They also use the Arcanum rating of their dot, not that of the user. For example, a two-dot spell that becomes a three-dot Attainment should be designed as if it automatically has +2 Reach, even if the user actually has four dots. This lack of dynamism is one of an Attainment's disadvantages. To utilize a comparable power more flexibly, the mage should cast a spell instead. Most Attainments use one Reach for instant "casting"; those that don't (being based on ritual spells) take one scene of preparation to use.

Learning Legacy Attainments

Attainment Rank (Dots)	Minimum Legacy Ruling Arcanum	Minimum Gnosis (Orthodox/Novel Attainment)
First (•)	1	2/3*
Second (••)	2	2/3
Third (•••)	3	4/5
Fourth (••••)	4	6/7
Fifth (•••••)	5	8/9

* The first Attainment is gained upon initiation.

Strange Attainments

A few Legacies teach Attainments that fall outside the usual structure of magic. They might impose advantageous Conditions or confer the ability to use an unusual power. While your mage must reach the usual minimum in her Legacy's Ruling Arcanum, any other systems must be developed by the Storyteller and player. The exact rules are up to you, but should provide a benefit on par with those of standard Legacy Attainments.

Immune to Countering and Supernal Dispellation: Legacy Attainments cannot be attacked with countermagic or Dispellation. They can be undone based on the specific effect they create, however, but are considered no different than natural phenomena. Forces can snuff out fire made by a Legacy Attainment as easily as it could suppress a similar ordinary fire. A Greater Utility Attainment may offer the ability to counter all supernatural powers of a kind, including the Legacy Attainment.

Legacy Wisdom: Using a Legacy Attainment is never considered an Act of Hubris; the mage's mystic self is completely attuned to their use.

Mana Break: Legacy Attainments issue from the mage's soul instead of the Supernal Realms, so Mana is only used to reinforce her will, not channel power from beyond. When adapting Attainments from spells, reduce any Mana cost higher than one point to one point.

Optional Effect: Some Legacy Attainments include an additional or alternate effect if the mage possesses dots in an additional Arcanum equal to the required Legacy Ruling Arcanum. This additional Arcanum is almost always a Ruling Arcanum from the Legacy's originating Path.

Praxis Refund: If the mage knew the Legacy Attainment as a Praxis, she internalizes her understanding. She loses the Praxis, but receives a "refund" of one Arcane Experience plus

one Arcane Beat. Legacy members often develop Praxes to train themselves for upcoming Legacy Attainments, including the first, for pupils who study under a tutor but have yet to be initiated.

Free from the Lie: Legacy Attainments do not count as obvious magic to Sleepers, are immune to Dissonance and do not trigger Quiescence or Breaking Points in witnesses.

Transient Stacking: Legacy Attainments *may* stack with spells, but only for a short time; doing so eradicates the spell, as the Attainment's intuitive, personal nature unravels the spell's Supernally charged Imago. Stacking a Legacy Attainment with a spell causes the spell's Duration to end, as if canceled, after one turn per dot the mage possesses in the spell's highest Arcanum or its usual Duration, whichever comes first. For example, if a Perfected Adept with three dots of Life casts a spell that increases his Strength by three dots for the day, activating his Attainment to add another three dots of Strength increases it by six dots, but his spell disperses after three turns.

Transient stacking can only be performed on spells lingering within the mage's own Gnosis (i.e. those that impose penalties for being actively maintained) and not spells cast by others, relinquished, or bound to enchanted items of any kind.

Learning Legacy Attainments

A mage may either develop Attainments according to the orthodox teachings of her Legacy, or invent novel Attainments based on her personal approach to the Legacy's doctrine. Consult the accompanying chart to determine the minimum requirements.

Each Legacy Attainment costs one Experience, and they must be purchased in order. You may spend ordinary or Arcane Experiences to learn a Legacy Attainment from a tutor who already knows it, but you must spend an Arcane Experience to develop a new Attainment without a tutor – and this includes all novel Legacy Attainments.

Certain Legacy Attainments (such as those of the Eleventh Question, following) impose other prerequisites, typically in the form of Skill or Merit dots.

THE ELEVENTH QUESTION

She called it an interrogation but never asked you a thing, though she spoke as if you said exactly what you wanted to hide. You volunteered more to cover your ass and make a new story look consistent with what she already knew, but that just helped her hone her non-questions. You confessed it all, in the end; better the Hierarch than the masked man outside the door.

We're The Ones Who See

The Eleventh Question credits a 19th century Mystagogue named Lucy Caspian with the core of its philosophy. She said that every Arcanum answered an eternal question so that, for example, Mind revealed the nature of identity and thought, and Matter showed Awakened the truths of tangible, inert phenomena. Yet these were always incomplete answers, and the full Mystery of sorcery, even Ascension, required an *Eleventh Question*, beyond the domain of the Arcana.

While investigating a haunted estate, ghosts possessed members of Caspian's cabal and used the victims' own magic to not only kill each other, but cover it up as an apparent murder-suicide. A Guardian hermit named Sullivan helped Caspian's protégé Jeremiah Moon uncover the truth, clearing the names of the deceased. Combining Sullivan's Guardian training with the philosophy Moon had learned under Caspian, the two founded the Eleventh Question and became nomadic consulting investigators. After Moon perished in their last "case," Sullivan passed the Legacy to three Guardians before vanishing.

For the next century and more, the Awakened have known the Eleventh Question as a near-exclusive Guardian organization, kept at arm's length by the Epopts for their insistence on uncovering truth, but valued for their expertise when needed. Though the Legacy did accept members from other Orders, they were rare and vetted by the Guardians' leadership prior to initiation.

Mages accepted the history taught by the so-called "Jeremiad" Eleventh Question until 2008, when Mystagogues claiming descent from the "real" Legacy went public, claiming that Caspian had founded the Legacy and taught it to Moon, but Jeremiah had killed her to claim it. Members of the "Caspianite" line (both lines just refer to themselves as the Eleventh Question, and

use the sectarian names for their opponents, while neutral observers use both) even suspect Sullivan arranged the original estate murders to cover his tracks. Now that Caspianites initiate worthy individuals from any Order, Guardians consider the **Querents** barely trustworthy, though occasionally insightful.

Origins

Parentage: Moros, Guardians of the Veil or Mysterium

Background: Many Querents hail from law enforcement backgrounds; a smaller number were mathematicians, priests, and philosophers devoted to metaphysical questions. A few Jeremiad Querents are headhunted from spy agencies. All enter the Legacy with a passion for seeking the transcendental truth behind raw facts.

Appearance: Querents often develop behavioral tics or off-putting habits from the stress of their work, and an impatience with the half-truths of ordinary human interactions.

Doctrine

Prerequisites: Time 2, Investigation 2 and one of the following additional Skills at 2 dots or higher: Academics, Larceny, Medicine, Occult, or Science.

Initiation: The prospective Querent must solve the Mystery her tutor assigns.

Organization: Querents don't follow any formal hierarchy, though many work in pairs. If more than two gather for any reason, it's to deal with a Legacy-wide emergency or something really, really strange.

Theory: The Eleventh Question believes that all evidence provides clues to a holistic ultimate truth. Secrets bar the path to enlightenment; they must be exposed to the light of investigation. Yet not everyone deserves enlightenment, so they don't usually share what they discover with a free hand – though new members from the Free Council have been known to defy the rule of secrecy.

Magic

Ruling Arcanum: Time

Yantras: Succeeding on an Investigation roll relevant to the



spell (+2); verbally explaining a mysterious phenomenon to a trusted associate (+1); collecting samples or recording information (images, sounds, writings) relevant to the spell – note that the act of collection is the Yantra in this case, separate from possessing an item that might be used for sympathetic magic (+2); using stimulants to stay focused (+1, or +2 if this creates an adverse Condition).

Oblations: Solving a riddle or puzzle; studying esoteric magical theories; pursuing an obsessive or antisocial habit; giving an extended lecture about an intellectually challenging topic.

Attainments

First: The Undisturbed Scene

Prerequisites: Initiation

The Querent develops an uncanny ability to reach places of interest before nature and human hands wipe away evidence she wishes to find. The authorities haven't arrived yet to destroy subtle information, or they (or someone trying to cover her tracks) didn't have the opportunity to do a thorough job. The Attainment emulates "Perfect Timing" (p. 187) in that the mage gains bonus dice equal to her Time dots to rolls that gather information from a location.

Optional: Matter 1

The Querent also may engage Active Mage Sight (Matter) upon arrival. If it must pierce any form of supernatural concealment, it automatically scores successes equal to the mage's Matter dots.

Second: The Unobvious Answer

Prerequisites: Time 2, Investigation 3

Studying a person, place, or thing for a turn, the Querent peers into her subject's recent past. She picks up this information by examining her target's subtlest behaviors and sensory cues. This duplicates the effects of the "Postcognition" spell (p. 187) with Potency equal to the Querent's Time dots and has assigned Reach to instant use and sensory range.

Optional: Matter 2

The Querent may also cause liquid or particulate solid matter that has been diluted or diffused to take a shape it possessed in the past, as long as some residue remains. This might cause wiped fingerprints to reform and washed-away blood to pool in its old location. The mage must touch these spots. This duplicates the effects of the "Shaping" spell (p. 156) and applies to both liquids and particulate matter. The Querent may make such changes obvious (by giving a murderer bloody hands) or subtle (recreating a clue for Sleepers who "might have missed it").

Third: The Chance Answer

Prerequisites: Time 3. In addition to the Investigation 3 requirement from the previous Attainment, the Querent must increase the other Skill she used to meet the requirements of the Legacy to 3, or must attain two dots in a second skill from the list of possible requirements.

Confident that the truth of a thing will be revealed, the mage extrapolates her present situation to the future, learning what

she will know in the fullness of time. She fetches information from a future where the truth has been revealed. This resembles the spell "Divination" (p. 186) with Reach assigned to instant use, sensory range, and specific questions. The nature of this Attainment imposes an additional restriction, however: The Querent must ask questions she believes *her future self knows the answer to* (not counting the predestination paradox created by the Attainment)! If she would not have personally discovered the answer, she intuits that answer as "Irrelevant."

Optional: Matter 3

The Querent intuitively reshapes matter into an object relevant to her personal future, particularly if it involves an investigation. This might be the duplicate of a murder weapon, or an item of clothing an important person may be wearing – or a key she needs in order to open a future door. The mage needs matching raw materials but no tools, and from her perspective might "discover" it. It might become the *actual* future object, depending on the vagaries of time.

Fourth: The Timely Answer

Prerequisites: Time 4, Investigation 4 and the other Skill requirements of the previous Attainment.

By building a profile of known data about a subject for a full scene, whether on a pin-board or entirely in her mind, the Querent may predict his future actions. If the Querent possesses at least a Representational sympathetic Yantra of her subject, she does not require his presence to construct her prediction. This duplicates the effects of the "Prophecy" spell (p. 190) with Reach assigned to sensory range.

Optional: Matter 4

The Querent no longer requires a sympathy Yantra for a subject she wishes to affect with sympathetic spells. Time and Matter conspire to *create* one for her. Impressions from the past or emanations from the future shape present matter into a representational sympathy Yantra. This usually takes the form of a lucky find during an investigation.

Fifth: The Penultimate Answer

Prerequisites: Time 5. In addition to the Investigation 4 requirement from the previous Attainment, the Querent must increase the other Skill she used to meet the requirements of the Legacy to 4, or must attain three dots in a second Skill from the list of possible requirements, or two dots in a third Skill from the list.

After a scene of meditation, the Querent projects her consciousness into the future, where she inhabits her own body and makes decisions as its ruling consciousness. The mage can project herself up to a year into the future.

The mage experiences a future scene no longer than one hour in length. In the past, the Querent's body loses consciousness, and cannot be revived until the conclusion of the scene, determined by the Storyteller. If the Querent dies in the future she isn't harmed in the present, but the scene automatically ends. In the future, the mage is limited by her current traits, even if they would most likely change.

The future glimpsed is not set, being only the most likely course of history. When the present reaches the point the Querent went to, if she has not already averted it, this future may appear. If it

does, the Querent may elect to do exactly what she did before, and benefit from exactly the same results for any action under her control (such as successes on dice rolls), or she may act differently, taking an unpredictable path.

The Querent may repeatedly visit the same future scene, but later visits (from the perspective of the moving present) overwrite earlier ones.

Optional: Matter 5. When the future she experiences comes due, the Querent may add or delete material objects (as per the spells “Ex Nihilo” or “Annihilate Matter” with combined factors equal to the lesser of the mage’s Time or Matter dots) from her person, or within sensory range. Instead of drowning, she happens to have a rebreather in her coat, or her enemy forgot his rifle’s ammunition. This cannot be used to create or delete magical items.

Other Legacies

The Convocations and Tetrarchies record thousands of Legacies, most of which have died out having not gained continuity of membership or recorded their Attainments by other means. Hundreds remain dormant as soul stones or daimononika, waiting for the right mage to resurrect them. Hundreds more are active today, within and without the Orders. The following is a sample of the breadth of Legacies a modern mage could hear of, and perhaps attain. Each is listed with the third Ruling Arcanum. Note that some are focused, and their Attainments’ primary Arcanum is already Ruling for their Path – see p. 198 for the alternate benefit this provides.

Acanthus

Druids and pathfinders, the **Walkers in Mists** explore a “nature beyond nature,” which they describe as a guiding destiny for the natural world. Experienced Walkers enter an Emanation Realm called the Mists, using it as a shortcut to arrive wherever needed. (Space)

Thoroughly metropolitan, but actually one of the oldest Diamond Legacies, the **House of Ariadne** apply the principle of using random travel through a maze as divination tool to modern-day cities. Members read the past – and future – of a city by seeing its secret signs and walking its hidden paths. (Time)

The Silver Ladder’s **Sisterhood of the Blessed** began as a Legacy for Awakened noblewomen in the Middle Ages, and now accepts society wives, assistants, and any other roles offering quiet, unseen influence on the powerful. Members become adept at applying Fate to social situations, and some chapters even accept male members – as long as they are appropriately discreet. (Fate)

Vicarious artists, each with *some* talent but not *enough*, the **Pygmalion Society** seek out, sponsor, and nurture artistic genius. Through the art they cultivate, they guide all who witness it to their own inspiration. (Mind)

Strictly Libertine, the **Blank Badge** make magic from collective, anonymous action. Members apply the techné of group responsibility to their own magical natures by accepting the des-

tiny of shared consequence; initiates learn to take on a collective nimbus, become occluded, and – with greater mastery – even share Paradox. (Mind)

Born in the Great Depression, the showmen and charlatans of the **Carnival Melancholy** sought a way to escape the sickness of the dustbowl, and learned the greatest con of all. Their descendants are Reapers, tricking marks out of their souls, which initiates harvest for all their fated good fortune. (Death) (Left Handed)

Mastigos

Many Mastigos Legacies form around mages’ exploration of Astral Space, especially the Oneiros, realm of the individual soul. Rivalries between these Legacies have burned throughout history, a tangled web of students absconding with soul stones, branching paths and secret attainments. The foremost two Oneiric Legacies in the modern day are the **Clavicularius** and the **Bene Ashmedai**, both predominantly Seer and Silver Ladder. The former wrestle their inner vices into submission, gaining power over those urges in themselves and others. The latter embrace their darkest urges, forming alliances with the demons of their soul. (Spirit)

Expert persuaders, the **Bearers of the Eternal Voice** use words as precision weapons, instilling emotions, convincing their listeners and – with their higher Attainments – even rewriting memories. That their honeyed tongues work just as well on mages as Sleepers makes the Guardians jealously guard entry to the Legacy. (Mind)

The **Cryptologos** count Libertines, Mystagogues, and even Seers among their society, but all share a fascination with language and the Mysteries of High Speech. Members learn to discern the truth behind the words of others, translate intent instead of simply meaning, and are acclaimed for their skill with High Speech in spellcasting. (Prime)

The Arrow swordsmen of the *onikaze* (or “**Brotherhood of the Demon Wind**”) were once samurai, but in modern times fight for causes that attract them as individuals. Masters of Space and Time magic applied to sword combat, they split seconds with their blades and strike through intervening distance. (Time)

Guardian Eopts publically disavow (**Legion**), but the Order supports them as holy martyrs for their religion nonetheless. The ultimate expression of deep cover, a (**Legion**) has lost his own identity but Reaps the souls of others to *become* them, a disguise so perfect even he doesn’t know who he really is. (Death) (Left Handed)

Moros

Alchemists who know that the true gold is a transformed self, the **Uncrowned Kings** use alchemy, craft, sculpture, and skilled labor as a focus for the mind. Initiates gain iron-clad willpower and sharp perception, as long as they continue their labors. (Mind)

Based on occult principles that a person’s life can be summed up at the moment of death, the **Stone Scribes** record the essence

of the dead and dying. The Legacy's advanced members then use these "final names" in ritual mantling, sympathetically *becoming* the dead. (Time)

Often suspected of being Left-Handed but too influential in the Free Council to ban, the **Bokor** specialize in harnessing the dead as a means to power. Members raise zombies as servants and mark the souls of petitioners. (Death)

Taking inspiration from myriad crafter-gods, the **Forge Masters** are experts in enchanting and imbuing items, renowned for their mastery of Supernal "Perfected" metals. (Prime)

Guardians of magical treasures and those destined for greatness, the **Votaries of the Ordained** keep watch over Artifacts, Proximi, Sleepwalkers, and other persons of interest to the Guardians of the Veil and Adamantine Arrow. So-called "Rooks" sense whenever their charges are in danger, and curse any threat. (Fate)

Magic is knowledge, and even knowledge can die. That's the lesson of the hated **Logophages**, decried as Banishers by Pentacle and Seer alike. Members ensure they are the only ones who know a dangerous secret before using their Attainments to erase it, and gain power from magic's destruction. (Prime) (Left Handed)

Obrimos

One of the Arrows' founding Legacies, the **Perfected Adepts** enshrine the principle that the self is supernal. Initiates gain mastery of their own bodies, honing them to perfection without transformation. (Life)

The infamous **Daksha** are staunch Mystagogues, wielding social power within the Order to maintain their position despite beliefs that, to younger mages, seem problematic at best. Based on Awakened versions of 19th-century theosophical practices, these Atlantis-seekers transform themselves into "Lemurians;" hermaphroditic humanoids with a third eye in the back of the head. (Life)

The hermetic wizards of the **Thrice-Great** explore the Shadow's sky, binding planetary spirits with formulae and high ritual and allowing them access to the material world. The Legacy claims to be the servants of an Oracle, which most other mages take to "just" be an ascended archmaster, but that comes as small comfort to those who wonder what the stargazers deal with out there in the dark. (Spirit)

Perhaps the oldest Legacies in the Fallen World are the interrelated "Tamers," each dedicated to the symbolic magic of an element. The **Tamers of Fire** are one of the most popular,

demagogues and rabble-rousers who stoke the flames of others' passions. (Mind)

The Libertine **Transhuman Engineers** seek new techné in the cutting edge of technology, chasing their ever-elusive "singularity." Members use their Attainments in Matter and Forces to interact with and analyze as many innovative devices as they can. (Matter)

The **Echo Walkers** are listed as Left-Handed in Consilia across the Western world, but are named so for a byproduct of their Obsessions, not their Attainments. Members learn to take on quasi-angelic form for a limited time, seeking Supernal perfection, but do so by tormenting Sleepers with invasive spells that damage their souls. (Life) (Left Handed)

Thyrus

Master shapeshifters, the **Orphans of Proteus** practice with new forms until they become second nature, experiencing life as myriad other beings. (Life)

The Libertine **Dreamspeakers** are the result of dozens of cultural Legacies blending, from Aboriginal Australians to sleep psychologists. Members explore the deepest parts of the Astral Realms, the Anima Mundi or "Dreamtime," where they commune with the world's soul. Initiates become able to walk the astral even while awake or outside a place of power. (Mind)

Members of the **Illumined Path** see Awakening as a spectrum, not a binary condition. Once a faction of Christian théarchs before becoming a Legacy, the so-called "guides" seek to open Sleepers' eyes to the supernatural, a goal that while worthy antagonizes many Consilia. (Prime)

The ancient Legacy calling themselves the **Keepers of the Covenant** exemplify the Thyrus nature as intermediaries. Members merge their destinies with the world of spirits, becoming living bridges between material and Shadow. (Fate)

Not all symbols are positive. The Seer of the Throne **Chrysalides** base their magic in body dysmorphia, offering initiates the chance to be who they wish. Members divide their time between two forms, one of which is perfected in mind and body at the expense of the other. (Life)

Cousins of the Tamers of Fire, the **Tamers of Blood** find less hospitality among the Orders. Experts in the symbolism of blood and the magic of sympathy, members make a living among Nameless Orders and apostates advising on their specialties. When their clients learn that the Legacy can control the bodies of those it takes blood samples from, they quickly move on. (Space) (Left Handed)

The Door

PART VI

The mages my presence calmed last night have been joined by freshly-outraged colleagues. Word of Luretia's death must be spreading through the Caucus, drawing the théarchs in mixed cabals throughout the Borough back home. I make my way — as fast as I can without seeming hurried; it would not help to seem concerned — back to Gee's cell. Outside, the bravest of the new arrivals is already trying to pull rank on the poor Proximus who's still guarding her even now. I assess him with a glance, matching the face to my memorized files on the Consilium's members. Carter. Second-degree Adept of Forces and Mind. Obrimos. Tamer of Fire. Sole théarch member of the Second Knock, a mostly-Libertine cabal based here in Brooklyn. The Knock make a habit of raiding into Manhattan, recovering treasures from the abandoned Athenaea and Lorehouses.

Everything about him screams "direct action."

The Proximus gives me a relieved look as I position myself between them.

"Interfector. I must insist that —"

He never gets to finish insisting. We both feel the magic incoming, as foreign thoughts enter my mind. From his expression, he recognizes the nimbus. Good. I couldn't have timed this better if I'd tried.

I hold up my hand for him to wait, as though I were taking a phone call instead of entering telepathic communion with the Hierarch.

-OUTIS.

Seshat's thoughts are careful, measured. A result of the mental discipline needed to think in English, for my sake. She's lived here most of her life, but Seshat still thinks in Arabic. I keep meaning to learn it.

-Hierarch.

-I WAS JUST CALLED BY HORATIO. WHY ARE YOU STILL IN BROOKLYN? WHY ISN'T IT DONE?

Straight to the point, then.

-The accused is preparing her confession. I am establishing the facts of the case.

A hint of my doubts must have crept through the link. Seshat's thoughts turn concerned.

-IS THE VERDICT IN DOUBT?

-A mage is dead, and I will punish the guilty. I need to know exactly who is guilty of what.

-YOU THINK SHE DIDN'T DO IT ALONE?

-I think there may be...other factors involved. I will contact you to confirm my conclusions.

-SOON. OUTIS. SOON. DON'T LET WHAT HAPPENED HERE CLOUD YOUR JUDGMENT. I KNOW YOU MUST FEEL SYMPATHY FOR...

She had to bring it up. I send back as firm a thought as I can.

-My judgment is clear. Thank you, Hierarch.

I get a sense of her misgivings, but her ultimate agreement. Her spell ends. I frown for effect, and turn my attention back to Carter.

"Now. Where were we?"

"I..."

"If you wish to be useful, Adept, I must speak to those involved in the case. Do you know where to find Diamante and Locksmith?"

"The...uh..."

"Yes or no."

"Sentinel Diamante is upstairs, Interfector. I think Locksmith is in Queens."

"Fetch him. As quickly as you can."

My tone does not make it a request. He considers his options, and nods. When he leaves, I quietly speak to the guard.

"Well done. If anyone else tries to come in here, tell them I have forbidden contact with the prisoner."

He gulps. "Yes, magus."

I smile in what I hope is a reassuring manner, and go to find my first suspect.

...

Those in my station try to cultivate a professional detachment, the better to weather the not-quite-ritual shunning that comes with the title Interfector. I remember the first time a mage I knew as a friend before taking the post crossed the room to avoid his shadow touching mine. I have few friendships – Seshat, Imuthes, possibly old Tiresias. I have fewer enemies.

Diamante, though. Diamante, I just plain don't like. And I liked seeing her name in Gee's confession even less.

I knock at her door, thinking. Our disagreement goes back years. A mage from some war-torn African nation had desperately opened a portal to escape the slaughter of her cabal, and Paradox had taken the spell. She'd wound up here, in New York, and in her panic displaced a Sleeper back to where she'd come from. Sentinel Diamante had been first on the scene, and when she found out what had happened she killed the refugee. Officially, the newcomer attacked her. But I know. And she knows that I know.

She opens the door. Diamante is normally reserved, hard, not a hair out of place. She wears her Shadow Persona like armor. I can relate, if not approve.

The woman in the doorway looks like she hasn't slept at all.



CHAPTER FIVE: FALLEN LAWS

*Spirituality alone will not take a man far in the Mysteries;
he must have intellectual powers as well.*

— Dion Fortune

This section contains the basic rules for playing **Mage: The Awakening**, called the Storytelling system. More information, system variants, and examples can be found in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

Traits

In addition to the supernatural traits of the Awakened, **Chronicles of Darkness** characters have mundane traits common to mortals and monsters alike. Attributes are raw potential, Skills are trained abilities, and Skill Specialties are specific areas of training in which a character excels. Willpower is the extra effort a character can bring to bear in a stressful or dangerous situation, when success is crucial or hangs by a thread. Willpower is also used by some supernatural powers.

Finally, human characters each possess a personal Virtue and Vice from which they draw strength and refill Willpower.

Attributes

Attributes represent essential traits that every character possesses by default. These serve as the foundation to most rolls in **Mage: The Awakening**. The nine Attributes are split into three categories; Mental, Physical, and Social. If a game rule refers to a “Social roll,” or a “Mental action,” that means an action that uses the appropriate Attribute category.

All Attributes receive one free dot. This reflects a below-average capacity. Two dots are about human average. Three and four reflect a high level of competency, while five reflects the height of human potential in that field.

Mental Attributes

Mental Attributes reflect your character’s acuity, intellect, and strength of mind.

Intelligence

Intelligence is your character’s raw knowledge, memory, and capacity for solving difficult problems. This may be book smarts, or a wealth of trivia.

Attribute Tasks: Memorizing (Intelligence + Composure, instant action)

Wits

Wits represents your character’s ability to think quickly and improvise solutions. It reflects your character’s perception, and ability to pick up on details.

Attribute Tasks: Perception (Wits + Composure, reflexive action)

Resolve

Resolve is your character’s determination, patience, and sense of commitment. It allows your character to concentrate in the face of distraction and danger, or continue doing something in spite of insurmountable odds.

Attribute Tasks: Resisting coercion (Resolve + Stamina, reflexive action)

Physical Attributes

Physical Attributes reflect your character’s bodily fitness and acumen.

Strength

Strength is your character's muscular definition and capacity to deliver force. It affects many physical tasks, including most actions in a fight.

Attribute Tasks: Breaking a barrier (Strength + Stamina, instant action), Lifting objects (Strength + Stamina, instant action)

Dexterity

Dexterity is your character's speed, agility, and coordination. It provides balance, reactions, and aim.

Attribute Tasks: Keeping balance (Dexterity + Composure, reflexive action)

Stamina

Stamina is your character's general health and sturdiness. It determines how much punishment your character's body can handle before it gives up.

Attribute Tasks: Staying awake (Stamina + Resolve, instant action)

Social Attributes

Social Attributes reflect your character's ability to deal with others.

Presence

Presence is your character's assertiveness, gravitas, and raw appeal. It gives your character a strong bearing that changes moods and minds.

Attribute Tasks: Good first impressions (Presence + Composure, instant action)

Manipulation

Manipulation is your character's ability to make others cooperate. It's how smoothly she speaks, and how much people can read into her intentions.

Attribute Tasks: Poker face (Manipulation + Composure)

Composure

Composure is your character's poise and grace under fire. It's his dignity, and ability to remain unfazed when harrowed.

Attribute Tasks: Meditation (Resolve + Composure, extended action)

Skills

Whereas Attributes represent innate ability, Skills reflect behaviors learned and honed over a lifetime. These are things that could be practiced or learned from a book. Similarly to Attributes, Skills are divided into Mental, Physical, and Social categories.

Mages receive one free dot in Occult at character creation if they are members of an Order, but no other Skill receives free dots. Skills without dots are deficient or barely capable. Skills

with a single dot reflect a cursory training. Two dots is sufficient for professional use. Three is a high level of competency. Four is outstanding, and five is absolute mastery of the discipline.

We've listed sample actions for each Skill; these lists are just common actions, and should not be taken as comprehensive guides to where Skills can apply. We also suggest dice pools, but it's important to look at the context of the scene, and apply the best Attribute + Skill combination for the events at hand. Also remember that equipment and environmental modifiers can shift a dice pool. We've listed some sample equipment and factors that could enhance Skill usage.

Using a Skill with no dots incurs a penalty. For Physical and Social Skills, it levies a -1 die penalty to the roll. For a Mental Skill, it's a -3 die penalty.

Mental Skills

Academics

Academics is a broad Skill representing your character's higher education and knowledge of the arts and humanities. It covers language, history, law, economics, and related fields. Many mages develop aptitude in Academics to further their research into the Mysteries.

Sample actions: Recall trivia (Intelligence + Academics, instant action), Research (Intelligence + Academics, extended action), Translation (Intelligence + Academics, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Internet access (+1), Library (+1 to +3), Professional consultant (+2)

Specialties: Anthropology, Art History, English, History, Law, Literature, Religion, Research, Translation

Computer

Computer is your character's advanced ability with computing. While most characters in the *Chronicles of Darkness* are expected to know the basics, the Computer Skill allows your character to program computers, to crack into systems, to diagnose major problems, and to investigate data. This Skill reflects advanced techniques and tricks; almost everyone in the modern Western world can operate a computer for email and basic Internet searches.

Sample actions: Hacking a system (Intelligence + Computer, extended action, contested if against a security administrator or other hacker), Internet search (Wits + Computer, instant action), Programming (Intelligence + Computer, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Computer system (+0 to +3, by performance), Custom software (+2), Passwords (+2)

Specialties: Data Retrieval, Graphics, Hacking, Internet, Programming, Security, Social Media

Crafts

Crafts reflects your character's knack with creating and repairing things. From creating works of art, to fixing an automobile, Crafts is the Skill to use.

Sample actions: Appraisal (Wits + Crafts, instant action), Counterfeit item (Intelligence + Crafts, extended action), Create art (Intelligence + Crafts, extended action), Repair item (Wits + Crafts, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Point of reference (+1), Quality materials (+2), Tools (+1 to +3, depending on utility and specialty), Well-equipped workplace (+2)

Specialties: Automotive, Cosmetics, Fashion, Forging, Graffiti, Jury-Rigging, Painting, Perfumery, Repair, Sculpting

Investigation

Investigation is your character's skill with solving mysteries and putting together puzzles. It reflects the ability to draw conclusions, to find meaning out of confusion, and to use lateral thinking to find information where others could not.

Sample actions: Examining a crime scene (Wits + Investigation, extended action), Solving riddles (Intelligence + Investigation, instant or extended action)

Suggested equipment: Forensic kit (+1), Unrestricted access (+2), Reference library (+2)

Specialties: Artifacts, Autopsy, Body Language, Crime Scenes, Cryptography, Dreams, Lab Work, Riddles

Medicine

Medicine reflects your character's knowledge of the human body, and of how to bring it to and keep it in working order. Characters with Medicine can make efforts to stem life-threatening wounds and illnesses.

Sample actions: Diagnosis (Wits + Medicine, instant action), Treating wounds (Intelligence + Medicine, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Medical tools (+1 to +3), Trained assistance (+1), Well-stocked facilities (+2)

Specialties: First Aid, Pathology, Pharmaceuticals, Physical Therapy, Surgery

Occult

The Occult Skill is your character's knowledge of things hidden in the dark, legends, and lore. While the supernatural is unpredictable and often unique, the Occult Skill allows your character to pick out facts from rumor. Almost all mages develop at least some aptitude in Occult, to further their studies of the Mysteries.

Sample actions: Identify the sliver of truth (Wits + Occult, instant action), Relate two similar myths (Intelligence + Occult, instant or extended action)

Suggested equipment: Well-Stocked Library (+2)

Specialties: The Astral Realms, Casting Lots, Cryptids, Fortean Phenomena, Proximi, Sleepwalkers, Ghosts, Goetia, Phrenology, Spirits, Superstition

Politics

Politics reflects a general knowledge of political structures and methodologies, but more practically shows your character's

ability to navigate those systems and make them work the way she intends. With Politics, she knows the right person to ask to get something done.

Sample actions: Cut red tape (Manipulation + Politics, extended action), Identify authority (Wits + Politics, instant action), Sully reputations (Manipulation + Politics, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Official position (+1 to +5, by Status)

Specialties: Bureaucracy, Church, Consilium, Democratic, Local, Order, Organized Crime, Scandals

Science

Science is your character's knowledge and understanding of the physical and natural sciences, such as biology, chemistry, geology, meteorology, and physics. Some mages, especially Libertines, learn scientific methods that are more esoteric than those humans practice.

Sample actions: Assess variables (Intelligence + Science, instant or extended action), Formulate solution (Intelligence + Science, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Reference library (+1 to +3), Well-stocked laboratory (+2)

Specialties: Physics, Neuroscience, Virology, Alchemy, Genetics, Hematology

Physical Skills

Athletics

Athletics reflects a broad category of physical training and ability. It covers sports, and basic physical tasks such as running, jumping, dodging threats, and climbing. It also determines a character's ability with Aimed spells and thrown weapons, and factors into Defense.

Sample actions: Acrobatics (Dexterity + Athletics, instant action), Climbing (Strength + Athletics, extended action), Foot chase (Stamina + Athletics, contested action), Jumping (Strength + Athletics, instant action, one foot vertically per success)

Suggested equipment: Athletic Shoes (+1), Rope (+1)

Specialties: Acrobatics, Aimed Spells, Archery, Climbing, Jumping, Parkour, Swimming, Throwing

Brawl

Brawl reflects your character's ability to tussle and fight without weapons. This includes old-fashioned bar brawls as well as complex martial arts. Almost every member of the Adamantine Arrow, and many other mages, train in at least basic self-defense.

Sample actions: Breaking boards (Strength + Brawl, instant action), Hand-to-hand combat (covered in the Combat section, p. 216)

Suggested equipment: Brass Knuckles (+1)

Specialties: Biting, Boxing, Claws, Dirty Fighting, Grappling, Martial Arts, Threats, Throws

Drive

Drive is the skill to control and maneuver automobiles, motorcycles, boats, and even airplanes. A character can drive a car without Drive dots; the Skill relates to moments of high stress, such as a high-speed chase or trying to elude a tail. It's assumed that most modern characters have a basic ability to drive. As well, Drive can reflect your character's skill with horseback riding, if appropriate to her history.

Sample actions: Impressive maneuvering (Dexterity + Drive, instant action), Pursuit (Dexterity + Drive, contested action), Tailing (Wits + Drive, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Performance vehicle (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Defensive Driving, Evasion, Off-Road Driving, Motorcycles, Pursuit, Stunts

Firearms

Firearms reflects your character's ability to identify, maintain, and otherwise use guns. This Skill covers everything from small pistols, to shotguns, to assault rifles, and anything else related.

Sample actions: Ranged combat (see p. 219 for more on how firearms combat works)

Suggested equipment: See p. 220 for a full list of firearms

Specialties: Handguns, Rifles, Shotguns, Trick Shots

Larceny

Larceny covers intrusion, lockpicking, theft, pickpocketing, and other (generally considered) criminal activities. This Skill is typically learned on the streets, outside of formal methods. However, stage magicians and other entertainers learn these skills as part of their repertoire.

Sample actions: Bypass security systems (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Lockpicking (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Pickpocketing (Dexterity + Larceny, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Crowbar (+1), Crowded area (+2), Lockpicks (+2), Partner in crime (+1)

Specialties: Breaking and Entering, Concealment, Lockpicking, Pickpocketing, Safecracking, Security Systems, Sleight of Hand

Stealth

The Stealth Skill reflects your character's ability to move unnoticed and unheard, or to blend into a crowd. Every character approaches Stealth differently; some use distraction, some disguise, some are just hard to keep an eye on.

Sample actions: Losing a tail (Wits + Stealth, contested action), Shadowing (Dexterity + Stealth, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Binoculars (+1), Dark Clothing (+1), Smokescreen (+2), Spotters (+1)

Specialties: Camouflage, Crowds, In Plain Sight, Rural, Shadowing, Stakeout, Staying Motionless

Survival

Survival represents your character's ability to "live off the land." This means finding shelter, finding food, and otherwise procuring the necessities for existence. This could be in a rural or urban environment. This skill also covers the ability to hunt for animals.

Sample actions: Foraging (Wits + Survival, extended action), Hunting (for animals, Wits + Survival, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Survival Guide (+1), Survival Knife (+1)

Specialties: Foraging, Hunting, Navigation, Shelter, Weather

Weaponry

Weaponry is the ability to fight with hand-to-hand weapons: from swords, to knives, to baseball bats, to chainsaws. If the intent is to strike another and harm him, Weaponry is the Skill.

Sample actions: Attacking another (see p. 217 for more on Weaponry combat)

Suggested equipment: See p. 221 for a full list of weapons

Specialties: Chains, Clubs, Improvised Weapons, Spears, Swords

Social Skills

Animal Ken

Animal Ken reflects your character's ability to train and understand animals. With Animal Ken, your character can cow beasts or rile them to violence under the right circumstances.

Sample actions: Animal training (Manipulation + Animal Ken, extended action), Cowing an animal (Presence + Animal Ken, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Treats (+1), Whip (+1)

Specialties: Canines, Felines, Reptiles, Soothing, Threatening, Training

Empathy

Empathy represents your character's ability to read and understand others' feelings and motivations. This helps discern moods, or read deceptive behavior in discussion. It is not inherently sympathetic; one can understand another's positions without agreeing with them.



Sample actions: Finding someone's pain (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Sense deception (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Soothing nerves (Manipulation + Empathy, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Muted clothing (+1), Relaxing environment (+2)

Specialties: Calming, Emotion, Lies, Motives, Personalities

Expression

The Expression Skill reflects your character's ability to communicate. This Skill covers written and spoken forms of communication, journalism, acting, music, and dance.

Sample actions: Composing (Intelligence + Expression, extended action), Performance (Presence + Expression, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Quality instrument (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Dance, Drama, Journalism, Musical Instrument, Performance Art, Singing, Speeches

Intimidation

Intimidation reflects your character's ability to influence others' behavior through threats and fear. It could mean direct physical threats, interrogation, or veiled implications of things to come.

Sample actions: Interrogation (Wits + Intimidation, contested action), Staredown (Presence + Intimidation, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Fearsome tools (+2), Gang colors (+2), Isolated room (+1)

Specialties: Direct Threats, Interrogation, Stare Down, Torture, Veiled Threats

Persuasion

Persuasion is your character's ability to change minds and influence behaviors through logic, fast-talking, or appealing to desire. It relies on the force of your character's personality to sway the listener.

Sample actions: Fast Talk (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action), Firebranding (Presence + Persuasion, instant action), Seduction (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Designer Clothing (+1 to +3), Reputation (+2)

Specialties: Confidence Scam, Fast Talking, Inspiring, Sales Pitch, Seduction, Sermon

Socialize

Socialize reflects your character's ability to present herself well and interact with groups of people. It reflects proper (and setting-appropriate) etiquette, customs, sensitivity, and warmth. A character with a high Socialize is the life of the party.

Sample actions: Carousing (Manipulation + Socialize, instant action), Fitting in (Wits + Socialize, instant action), Getting attention (Presence + Socialize, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Drugs (+1), Knowing People (+1), Money (+1 to +5)

Specialties: Bar Hopping, Church Lock-in, Dress Balls, Formal Events, Frat Parties, Political Fundraisers, The Club

Streetwise

The Streetwise Skill is your character's knowledge of life on the streets. It tells her how to navigate the city, how to get information from unlikely sources, and where she'll be (relatively) safe. If she wants to get something on the black market, Streetwise is how.

Sample actions: Finding a shortcut (Wits + Streetwise, instant action), Working the black market (Manipulation + Streetwise, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Burner phone (+1), Known nickname (+2), Valuable Contraband (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Black Market, Gangs, Navigation, Rumors, Undercover

Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the ability to deceive. With Subterfuge, your character can lie convincingly, project hidden messages in what she says, hide motivations, and notice deception in others.

Sample actions: Disguise (Wits + Subterfuge, instant action), Lying (Manipulation + Subterfuge, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Costume Supplies (+2), Fake ID (+1),

Specialties: Detecting Lies, Doublespeak, Hiding Emotion, Little White Lies, Misdirection

Skill Specialties

In addition to Skills, your character possesses Skill Specialties. These are refinements of the broader Skills. These should be narrower than the main Skill, and help to define your character's particular expertise. For example, your character might have three dots in Firearms, but a Specialty in Rifles. He's capable with all guns, but particularly good with rifles. If you look to the Skill descriptions, you'll see example Specialties. The Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes a Specialty and what doesn't; Specialties that are too broad or too narrow can hurt the story or never come into play.

If a Specialty applies to your roll, add a die. Multiple Specialties may apply to a single roll, within reason. If you find yourself going to great lengths to justify a Specialty, it probably shouldn't apply.

Skill Specialties let you flesh out your character and offer a mechanical benefit. When creating your character, let Specialty choice guide his development. For example, there's a huge difference between a character with Brawl 4 (Bar Fights) and Brawl 4 (Aikido).

When creating a character, you can't use "casting Rote spells" as a Specialty; that's what the rote Skills taught by Orders are. It is possible, though, to have Specialties in Skill-based dice pools relating to magic that aren't spellcasting rolls, such as "Aimed Spells" for Athletics.

Virtues and Vices

Virtue and Vice are traits human characters possess, including mages. Virtue is a point of strength and integrity in the character's life; Vice is a place of weakness. When choosing Virtues and Vices, use the following guidelines:

- Both should be adjectives that describe dominant personality traits. Don't use physical descriptions.

10 Example Virtues

Hopeful	Ambitious
Loving	Just
Honest	Generous
Trustworthy	Patient
Loyal	Courageous

10 Example Vices

Pessimistic	Addictive
Hateful	Hasty
Deceitful	Corrupt
Ambitious	Greedy
Cruel	Dogmatic

- Traits that describe existing Advantages, Attributes, or Skills similarly do not apply. For example, “Strong,” and “Composed,” would not work as Virtues.
- Virtue should be a point of self-confidence and self-actualization, but something easy and tempting to ignore. It’s a higher calling, if she chooses to walk the talk.
- Vice should contrast Virtue as a short-term, quick source of distraction from the world. It should be a hiding place when you’re weak.
- Virtue and Vice must be different. The same adjective could work as both a Virtue and Vice in some cases, but a character must have two different ones.

Whenever a mortal character acts in accordance with her Vice, she regains one spent Willpower. When she takes meaningful actions in accordance to her Virtue, she regains all spent Willpower. She can only recover Willpower from her Vice once per scene, and her Virtue twice per Chapter.

Size

The relative scale of creatures and objects in the Storytelling system is measured by a Size trait. Adult humans have a Size of 5.

Speed

Your character’s Speed is the number of yards or meters she can travel in a single turn. This trait is a combination of her Strength, Dexterity, and a species factor that reflects her age, physical configuration, Size and other considerations.

Size

Size	Object
1	Handheld object or tool, Rodent
2	Infant, Cat, Sword, Shotgun, Skateboard
3	Mid-size Dog, Child, Window, Two-handed tool, Stool
4	Spear, Teenager, Chair
5	Adult, Door, Electric scooter
6	Very large Adult, Deer, Bicycle
7	Alligator, Bear, Motorbike, Coffin
8	Vault door, Compact car
10	Sports Car, Moose
12	Shark, Luxury car
15	SUV, Elephant
20	Light airplane, Yacht, Semi truck
25	Dump Truck, Houseboat, Tour bus, Semi with trailer
30	Whale

Speed

Factor	Species
1	Turtle
3	Human toddler
5	Human adult
8	Wolf
10	Caribou
12	Horse
15	Cheetah

Other species, such as horses and cheetahs, have physical configurations that lend themselves to high travel rates.

Rolling Dice

When your character is trying to accomplish something and the outcome is in doubt, you roll a pool of ten-sided dice based on his relevant traits and read the results to determine success. Most of the time, you roll a number of dice equal to an Attribute plus a Skill. For example, to get the cop off your back you use your character’s Manipulation Attribute of 4 and Subterfuge Skill of 3, so you roll seven dice. If you have a Specialty (p. 211) that’s relevant to the roll, add an extra die to your pool.

Each die that shows an 8, 9, or 10 is a success. Normally, you only need one success to achieve your goal. It’s always better to

get more successes — especially if you want to hurt someone, since your successes add to your damage in combat.

Every die that comes up 10 is a success. You also roll the die again, potentially scoring another success. If this second roll comes up as another 10, count the success and roll it again, on until you roll a number other than 10. This rule is called “10-Again.” Under certain circumstances, a roll might be designated “9-Again” (in which case you would reroll any die that comes up 10 or 9) or even “8-Again” (reroll any success).

Many rolls have modifiers, either from equipment, circumstance, or someone working against your character. Most modifiers are within the range of +3 to -3, though they can range as low as -5 or as high as +5. Apply the modifiers to your dice pool before you roll. Add all the bonuses first, then apply penalties.

If your pool drops below one die, you instead roll a single chance die. The chance die only counts as a success if you roll a 10. Any other result is a failure. If you roll a 1 on the chance die, your character suffers a dramatic failure. Chance dice do not benefit from 10-again.

Roll Results

Your roll can succeed and fail in a few different ways:

Dramatic Failure: Your character fails badly, and things are about to get a whole lot worse. Suffered when you roll a 1 on a chance die. Alternately, you can take a Beat in exchange for turning a normal failure into a dramatic failure.

Failure: Your character’s action fails. This doesn’t mean “nothing happens,” just that she doesn’t get what she wants and complications are headed her way. Occurs when you roll no successes.

Success: Your character’s action goes off as planned. Achieved by having at least one success (a die showing 8, 9, or 10; or a chance die showing 10).

Exceptional Success: Your character’s action succeeds beyond her expectations. Achieved by rolling five or more successes. Your character gains a beneficial Condition. (See “Conditions,” p. 230). Usually, the Inspired Condition is most appropriate. You can instead give this Condition to another character when it’s appropriate to the story. Several powers and Merits allow exceptional success with three or more successes instead of five.

When to Roll Dice

You don’t need to roll dice for many actions. If your character isn’t in a stressful situation — nobody’s actively trying to tear his throat open, nor is the building being demolished as he works — you don’t need to roll. When the dice hit the table, the Storyteller should have some idea of what will happen if the roll fails as well as if it succeeds. Sometimes, that’s coded in the rules. If you fail on an attack roll, you don’t deal any damage. Other times, it’s up to the Storyteller. If you fail a roll to jump between buildings with a rival mage’s hitsquad on your tail, do you make it but fall on the other side, grab the next building by your fingertips, or plummet to the alley below?

Circumstance and Equipment

Sometimes, fortune favors your character. Other times she gives it a helping hand by packing the right tools for the job.

The Storyteller should weight how the circumstances affect a character’s chance of success. A slight advantage — picking an old and damaged lock — might be worth a bonus die, while a stressful situation — trying to pick a lock while people are shooting at you — might subtract three dice from your pool. Most of the time, the modifier from circumstances will be between +3 and -3, though in very rare cases — picking a lock while your character is *on fire* — it can range from +5 to -5. The Storyteller is free to say that circumstances don’t allow the character to make the attempt at all, meaning that you need to find a different approach.

Bringing the right equipment for a task also gives you extra dice to roll. A sharp suit might give bonus dice when trying to convince the CEO that your character knows the best plan, while a good pair of running shoes will help her escape from the things lurking in the shadows. Most equipment offers a +1 to +3 die bonus. A top-of-the-line or custom item might give a +4 or +5 die bonus, but such items often cost more than just money. When a task is impossible without some kind of equipment — hacking a computer, or driving a car — equipment bonuses indicate how far your tools are above the baseline. A beat-up old station wagon might not add any dice to a Drive roll, but a top-of-the-line sports car may add +4 or even +5 dice.

Willpower

A character’s Willpower represents her determination and her ability to go above and beyond what should be possible to achieve her goals. Spending a point of Willpower adds a +3 die bonus to most dice pools, or +2 to a Resistance trait. You can only spend one point of Willpower per action. Characters regain one point of spent Willpower every time they get a good night’s sleep, and may regain more through fulfilling their Virtues, Vices, and (for mages) Exceptional Success on spellcasting rolls.

Attribute Tasks

Some actions require no special expertise to perform. Mostly, these come in the form of Wits + Composure rolls to notice something that doesn’t seem right, or using Strength + Stamina rolls to lift something. In these rolls, you add two different Attributes together to make your dice pool. If an action doesn’t seem to involve any particular Skill, it can be handled by an Attribute Task.

Muddling Through

If your character has no dots in an applicable Skill, the Storyteller may allow you to roll your Attribute as a dice pool. Your character’s dice pool suffers a penalty for being untrained: If the roll would involve a Mental Skill, you take a -3 die penalty, while a Physical or Social Skill applies a -1 die penalty.

Actions

The majority of actions in the game are *instant* actions. They represent acts that only take a couple of seconds. In combat, an instant action takes up your turn.

A *reflexive* action is the sort of thing you don't even need to think about doing. Most rolls to resist supernatural powers are reflexive. You can take a reflexive action at any time, and it doesn't take your turn in combat.

When two people fight over a specific goal, they engage in a *contested* action. You roll your dice pool and the Storyteller (or other player) rolls the dice pool for the other party. Whoever rolls the most successes is the victor. Note that you count the total number of successes rolled when working out if you scored an exceptional success — don't subtract the other party's successes from yours. A contested action takes up the action of the person initiating the action; resisting it is a reflexive action.

Extended Actions

An *extended* action is an attempt to complete a complex task. You roll your dice pool multiple times. Each roll takes a certain amount of time, and represents a step in the process — your character either makes significant progress or faces a setback. You determine your dice pool for the action as normal — Attribute + Skill + Modifiers. Make a note of your Attribute + Skill + Specialty (if any); that's the maximum number of times you can roll before the action fails.

When you take an extended action, the Storyteller determines how many successes you require. Most actions require between five and twenty successes. Five reflects a reasonable action that competent characters can achieve with the right tools and knowledge. Ten represents a difficult action that's still realistic for a professional in a field. Twenty represents a very difficult action that even a particularly skilled character will have trouble pulling off.

The Storyteller also determines the interval between rolls. If an action would take weeks to complete, she might consider one roll per week. If it's likely to take a day's work, one roll per hour makes for a solid timeframe.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In addition to the effects of a failure, the first roll on a further attempt suffers a -2 die penalty.

Failure: You face a setback. The Storyteller will offer you a choice: take a Condition of her choice or abandon the action. You can offer a different Condition if you think it makes sense. If you refuse or cannot agree on a Condition, you lose all accumulated successes (see "Conditions," p. 230).

Success: Add the successes scored on the roll to your running total. Work with the Storyteller to determine what steps your character has taken towards his goal.

Exceptional Success: Choose one of: Reduce the number of successes required by your character's Skill dots, reduce the time on each following roll by a quarter, or apply the exceptional success result of the action when you complete your goal.

Resistance

Sometimes, an action is resisted. You roll your Attribute + Skill, but apply a modifier of one of your opponent's Resistance Attributes (Resolve, Stamina, or Composure), or your

opponent's Defense. This resistance is over and above any other modifiers applied to the dice pool.

If you're not sure whether to use resistance or a contested action, use this guideline: Resistance applies in situations where the number of successes on the roll is an important factor. If what matters is just whether the roll succeeds or not, use a contested action. For example, combat applies Defense as a resistance because the number of successes on the roll determines how badly the attacker messes up his victim. Awakened spells, however, are Withstood rather than resisted or contested (p. 114).

When uncanny powers other than Awakened magic are involved, they may be resisted or contested as noted in their rules. Supernatural creatures can sometimes add an additional trait, called Supernatural Tolerance. The Supernatural Tolerance trait for Mages is Gnosis.

Permutations

The Storytelling System has a few variations in how dice rolls work. This section lists the ones used most commonly in **Mage: The Awakening**; for a more complete list see the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

- **9-Again:** You re-roll dice that show 9 or 10, as opposed to just 10. Keep rolling until you get a result that isn't a 9 or 10.
- **8-Again:** You re-roll dice that show 8, 9, or 10 — any successful die — and keep rolling as long as your dice show successes.
- **Extra Successes:** Assuming your roll succeeds, you get a number of extra successes added to your total. This permutation mostly applies to weapons, which add their damage bonus as extra successes on your attack roll.
- **Rote Actions:** When you've got plenty of training and the steps you need to follow are laid out in front of you, you've got a significant chance of success. When you make a roll, you can re-roll any dice that do not show an 8, 9, or 10. If you're reduced to a chance die on a rote action, don't re-roll a dramatic failure. You may only re-roll each die once.
- **Successive Attempts:** When you fail a roll, you may be able to try again. If time is not an issue and your character is under no pressure to perform, you may make successive attempts with your full dice pool. In the far more likely situation that time is short and the situation is tense, each subsequent attempt has a cumulative -1 die penalty — so the third time a character tries to break down the door that's keeping her inside a burning building, her roll has a -2 die penalty. Successive attempts do not apply to extended actions.
- **Teamwork:** When two or more people work together, one person takes the lead. He's the primary actor, and his player assembles his dice pool as normal. Anyone assisting rolls the same pool before the primary actor. Each success gives the primary actor a bonus die. If one of the secondary actors rolls a dramatic failure, the primary actor gets a -4 die penalty.

Time

When you're playing **Mage: The Awakening**, time in the story can speed past or slow to a crawl compared to time in the real world. Weeks or months might pass in the space of few words, while a tense negotiation plays out in real-time — or takes even longer.

In addition to years, days, and hours, **Mage** also uses six units of dramatic time. These build upon one another, from shortest to longest.

- **Turn** — The smallest increment of time, a turn lasts for about three seconds. A character can perform a single instant action in a turn. Turns normally only matter in combat or other dramatic and stressful situations.
- **Scene** — Much like a scene in a play, a scene in a roleplaying game is the time spent dealing with a single, specific event. The Storyteller frames the scene, describing what's going on, and it's up to the players to resolve the event or conflict. A scene might be played out in turns, progress in real-time, or skip forward depending on dramatic necessity.
- **Chapter** — A chapter is the collection of scenes that happen during one game session. From the moment you sit down and start playing to the point where you pack up your dice, you're playing out a chapter of your story.
- **Story** — A story tells an entire tale, following the dramatic arc of a related series of events. It might comprise several chapters or be completed in just one. It has an introduction, rising tension, a number of twists, and a climax that brings things to a conclusion.
- **Chronicle** — The big picture, a chronicle is the collection of interlinked stories that involve your characters. They might be linked by a common theme or overarching plotline, or they may only share characters and locations. As your story progresses, the players and Storyteller work together to create an ongoing chronicle. Particularly long chronicles may be broken up into Acts, which work like seasons on a television show.

Social Maneuvering

People often won't do what you want just because you ask them to. You need to persuade them, making your offer or request as enticing as possible. You don't have to use positive enticements — "Your wife won't find out about your affair," is often more effective than "Here's fifty bucks for your trouble." You just need to find out what the other person wants.

Goals & Doors

To begin a Social maneuver, you need to declare your character's intended goal: What you want the victim to do, and how your character is going to make that happen. At this point, you only need to announce the initial stages. The Storyteller will determine if the goal is reasonable — while a con-artist could convince a rich victim to hand over a large sum of money, he

probably can't convince her to abandon all her wealth, at least not without supernatural powers.

Each victim has a number of Doors, which reflect her resistance to coercion, her skepticism, and her mistrust of other people. A character has a base number of Doors equal to the lower of her Resolve or Composure. If the announced goal would be a breaking point or act of hubris for the victim, add two Doors. If the goal would prevent the victim from resolving an Aspiration or Obsession, add a Door. Acting against a victim's Virtue also adds a Door.

The number of Doors can change as the situation alters. If the goal seems mundane at first but ends up being reprehensible, it will probably increase the number of Doors required. If your character changes his goal, any Doors that he's opened remain open, but assess Aspirations, Obsessions, Virtues, and breaking points in case of a potential increase.

A character has to open Doors one by one. Every successful roll opens one Door — not one per success. As Doors represent a victim's unwillingness to do what your character asks, they're strictly a one-way relationship.

First Impressions

The Storyteller determines the first impression based on past history between the characters, the circumstances when the persuader first asks, the nature of the favor being asked (assuming the persuading character is up front with what he wants), and other relevant factors.

Absent any other factors, two characters start off with average impressions of each other. If the persuading character influences the interaction — wearing appealing clothes, playing appropriate music, or meeting in a pleasant environment — that moves up to a good impression. If they really get off on the wrong foot, they may start with hostile impressions of one another, in which case the persuader must attempt to increase the victim's impression at another meeting, or force the Doors (see below).

When the characters meet, the persuading character can make an appropriate roll to increase his victim's impression of him — Wits + Socialize to create the perfect guest list, or Manipulation + Persuasion to get the best table in a restaurant. A successful roll moves the impression one step up the chart.

If your character knows his victim's Vice, he can use that to his advantage. He can make an offer that tempts his victim, enough that agreeing to it would replenish a Willpower point. If the victim accepts, move the impression one step up the chart.

If all else fails, apply leverage in the form of gifts or bribes. Offer something, and if the recipient agrees, move the impression one step up the chart. What you can offer is limited by your Merits; an accepted offer gives the recipient the use of the Merit for a designated amount of time.

Impression	Time per Roll
Perfect	1 Turn
Excellent	1 Hour
Good	1 Day
Average	1 Week
Hostile	Cannot roll

Opening Doors

At each interval, the persuading character meets his victim and moves closer to his goal. He makes a roll based on the situation and how he's persuading his victim in order to open a Door. This roll need not be Social. Fixing a mark's car with Intelligence + Crafts could open a Door just as easily as writing her a song or poem with Presence + Expression. The Storyteller should present situations that demonstrate the range of possible options, mixing up the dice pools involved. In some cases, she might make the roll into a contested action — having the victim roll Wits to detect a lie.

A successful roll opens one Door. An exceptional success on this roll opens two Doors. Failure imposes a cumulative -1 on all further rolls with the same victim; the Storyteller can also worsen the impression level by one (if she does the player takes a Beat). If failure lowers the impression level to "hostile," the persuading character had better find some way to improve his chances.

If your character knows one of his victim's Aspirations or Obsessions, he can use that to his advantage. He has to present a clear path to her goal, and the steps he'll take to help her achieve it. Doing so opens one Door. If the stated opportunity presents itself and the persuading character doesn't help, two Doors close.

Failure

Social maneuvering fails when the victim no longer trusts the persuading character. This can happen when the player rolls a dramatic failure on an attempt to open a Door, though the player takes a Beat as usual. Otherwise, the victim has to realize that she's been lied to and manipulated — not just that the persuading character was trying to talk her into something, but that he's only ever used her for that goal and doesn't care about anything else. Finally, the attempt fails if the impression level reaches "hostile" and remains there for a week.

Forcing Doors

Sometimes, subtlety just won't cut it. A character needs something right now, and will do anything to persuade his victim to do what he wants. He can attempt to force his victim's Doors, but it's a high-risk method. Forcing Doors is a sure-fire way for a character to burn bridges and leave lies and mistrust in his wake.

To force a victim's Doors, state your goal and your approach. Make a roll for your approach as you would to open a Door normally, but apply the current number of closed Doors as a penalty to the roll. If you succeed, you open all your victim's Doors. If you fail, your victim won't ever trust you again; you can't use Social maneuvering against her again.

To make things easier for the persuading character, he can apply Hard Leverage — a catch-all euphemism for threats, intimidation, drugging, blackmail, and other heavy-handed forms of coercion. If the persuader uses a form of Hard Leverage that counts as an act of hubris for his tier of Wisdom, open one Door. If the act is at a lower tier of Wisdom, remove

two Doors. Hard Leverage can only be used in conjunction with forcing Doors; remove the Doors before rolling for the character's approach.

Resolution

Once her final Door is open, the victim has to do something. Storyteller characters do what the persuading character wants in pursuit of his declared goal. A player's character may offer an alternative, which must be something he believes the persuading character would want, but if he acquiesces the player takes a Beat. If no alternative is acceptable but the player does not wish his character to give in, the Storyteller should apply a Condition to the character instead.

If a character tries to use Social maneuvering on the same victim again, that affects how many Doors she throws up in his path. If the attempt succeeded by opening Doors, subsequent influence attempts begin with one fewer Door. If the attempt failed, or the persuader used Hard Leverage, successive influence attempts begin with two more Doors. A victim always starts an influence attempt with at least one Door.

Combat

Mages aren't necessarily violent by nature, but the Fallen World is a dangerous place; mages often come into conflict with rival mages, other supernatural beings, or Sleepers in the way of their Obsessions. Combat is the catch-all term for what happens when tempers flare and one character attempts to do another harm.

Everybody wants something out of a fight. The very first thing you need to do — before worrying about who attacks first or anything like that — is to determine what each character wants to get out of the fight. Boil it down into a simple sentence that starts with the words "I want:" "I want to kill Johnny," "I want the book that Frances is holding," or "I want what's in Larry's wallet."

A character's intent has to be something she could achieve through an act of violence in the current scene — even a gunman on the White House lawn couldn't get away with "I want to be President of the United States."

By stating her character's intent, a player is setting out how much her character is willing to hurt — even kill — someone else in order to get. If your intent has nothing to do with hurting people and you end up killing someone, you lose a point of Willpower.

Optional Rule:

Beaten Down & Surrender

Any character who takes more than his Stamina in bashing damage or any amount of lethal damage is Beaten Down: He's had the fight knocked out of him. He must spend a point of Willpower every time he wants to take a violent action until the end of the fight. He can still apply Defense against incoming attacks, can Dodge, and can run like hell, but it takes a point of Willpower to swing or shoot back.

Before that happens, he can surrender, giving his attacker what she wants according to her declared intent. If you give in, you gain a point of Willpower and take a Beat, but you take no more part in the fight. If the other side wants to attack you, they've got to spend a point of Willpower to do so, and probably suffer a breaking point. If everyone on one side has surrendered, the fight's over and the other side gets what they want.

If one side's intent involves violence, the other side can't surrender — not without being killed. If that's the case, their intended victims don't get Beaten Down, and gain no benefit from surrendering. When someone wants to kill you, the only thing you can do is to try to stop her, whether you run like hell or unload a shotgun at her.

These rules only apply to people who would incur a breaking point or act of hubris for committing (or attempting) "murder." Creatures that don't have a problem killing people in general can ignore surrender without penalty and don't have the fight beaten out of them like normal folks.

Down and Dirty Combat

The Storyteller might decide that your character can get what she wants without focusing on the details of the fight. Maybe she's picking on people weaker than her. Maybe she's internalized the mechanics of violence. Or maybe the fight's not the important thing going on with regards to the character's intent. If that's the case, the Storyteller can opt to use a Down and Dirty Combat. This system resolves the entire fight in a single roll. Storyteller characters might deal some damage, but they're never able to initiate a Down and Dirty Combat.

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive

Dice Pool: Combat pool (Dexterity + Firearms, Strength + Brawl, or Strength + Weaponry) versus either the opponent's combat pool (as above) or an attempt to escape (Strength or Dexterity + Athletics). Ignore Defense on this roll.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's opponent gets the upper hand. This usually includes the opposite of the character's intent — if she wanted to disable the guards so she could escape, she is stunned instead.

Failure: The opponent wins the contest. If the opponent used a combat pool, deal damage equal to the difference in successes plus weapon modifier. Also, the opponent escapes unless he wants to press the combat.

Success: The character wins the contest. She deals damage equal to the difference in successes plus her weapon modifier and achieves her intent — if her intent includes killing her opponents, then she does so.

Exceptional Success: As a success, and the character also gains a point of Willpower from the rush of inflicting violence on an inferior opponent.

Initiative

When a fight's inevitable, it helps to know who acts first. Time in combat is always tracked in turns. At the start of com-

bat, determine your character's Initiative by rolling one die and adding her Initiative Modifier.

When your character is using a weapon, apply its Initiative penalty for as long as she's got the weapon ready. The only way to avoid this modifier is to sling it or drop it. Dropping a weapon is a reflexive action, but picking it back up takes an instant action. A character wielding two weapons subtracts the largest Initiative penalty from her score, and then reduces it by a further -1. Wielding a baton (Initiative penalty -2) and a riot shield (Initiative penalty -4) thus applies a -5 die penalty.

Surprise

Characters who don't realize that they're about to be on the receiving end of bloody violence have a chance to notice the ambush by rolling Wits + Composure, contested by the attacker's Dexterity + Stealth. Any character who fails the roll cannot take an action in the first turn of combat, and can't apply Defense for that turn. Determine Initiative in the second turn as normal.

Attack

On your turn, your character can attack using one of the following dice pools:

- **Unarmed Combat:** Strength + Brawl - Defense
- **Melee Combat:** Strength + Weaponry - Defense
- **Ranged Combat:** Dexterity + Firearms
- **Thrown Weapons:** Dexterity + Athletics - Defense

Resolve the attack roll like any other action. Determine damage by adding the successes rolled to any weapon bonus. See "Injury and Healing," below.

Defense

Subtract your character's Defense from any unarmed, melee, or thrown attacks that the character is aware of. Every time your character applies his Defense against an attack, reduce his Defense by -1 until the start of the next turn. Spending a point of Willpower increases her Defense by +2, but only against one attacker.

You can choose not to apply your character's Defense against some attacks. If two unarmed gangbangers attack before a chainsaw-wielding lunatic, you might want to let the gangbangers get their blows in, and apply your full Defense against the maniac swinging a chainsaw at your head.

You cannot apply your character's Defense against firearms attacks without supernatural assistance, whether it's from a spell, an Attainment, or some other power that grants Defense against gunfire.

Dodge

At any point before your action, your character can choose to Dodge. Doing so gives up her normal action. When Dodging,



double your character's Defense but do not subtract it from attack rolls. Instead, roll Defense as a dice pool, and subtract each success from the attacker's successes. If this reduces the attacker's successes to 0, the attack does no damage. Apply successes from Dodging before adding any weapon bonus.

Against multiple opponents, reduce Defense by one for each opponent *before* doubling it to determine your dice pool. If your Defense is reduced to 0, you roll a chance die. A dramatic failure when Dodging leaves your character off-balance; reduce her Defense by -1 for her next turn.

Unarmed Combat

These rules present special cases that come up when fighting without weapons.

Bite

A human's teeth do -1 bashing damage. Other creatures treat their teeth like weapons, dealing lethal damage to mortals (see "Weapons," below). Animals have a weapon bonus depending on the kind of creature: a wolf applies +1, while a great white shark gets +4.

Humans can only bite as part of a grapple, using the Damage move.

Grapple

To grab your opponent, roll Strength + Brawl - Defense. On a success, both of you are grappling. If you roll an exceptional success, pick a move from the list below.

Each turn, both grappling characters make a contested Strength + Brawl versus Strength + Brawl action on the higher of the two characters' Initiatives. The winner picks a move from the list below, or two moves on an exceptional success.

- **Break Free** from the grapple. You throw off your opponent; you're both no longer grappling. Succeeding at this move is a reflexive action, you can take another action immediately afterwards.
- **Control Weapon**, either by drawing a weapon that you have holstered or turning your opponent's weapon against him. You keep control until your opponent makes a Control Weapon move.
- **Damage** your opponent by dealing bashing damage equal to your rolled successes. If you previously succeeded at a Control Weapon action, add the weapon bonus to your successes.
- **Disarm** your opponent, removing a weapon from the grapple entirely. You must first have succeeded at a Control Weapon move.
- **Drop Prone**, throwing both of you to the ground (see "Going Prone," below). You must Break Free before rising.
- **Hold** your opponent in place. Neither of you can apply Defense against incoming attacks.

- **Restrain** your opponent with duct tape, zip ties, or a painful joint lock. Your opponent is immobilized. You can only use this move if you've already succeeded in a Hold move. If you use equipment to Restrain your opponent, you can leave the grapple.
- **Take Cover** using your opponent's body. Any ranged attacks made until the end of the turn automatically hit him (see "Human Shields," below).

A mage can cast spells in a grapple regardless of if she wins the grapple, but she will suffer a -3 penalty to the spellcasting roll if she failed, and she must operate under restrictions regarding Yantra use. (See "Casting During a Grapple," on p. 118.)

Touching an Opponent

Sometimes, a combatant doesn't want to do damage. Maybe she wants to plant a bug, or deliver a touch-range spell. Roll Dexterity + Brawl, or Dexterity + Weaponry to tap an opponent with a weapon. A successful roll deals no damage.

Ranged Combat

These rules present special cases that come up when shooting at people.

Aiming

Instead of firing, a character may spend a turn aiming at an opponent. Each turn spent aiming adds a die to an attack roll, as long as the attack is the next action by the aiming character. Characters may aim for multiple turns before attacking, building up the bonus, but it may not exceed +3 dice.

Autofire

Automatic weapons can fire a short, medium, or long burst in place of a single shot.

- **Short Burst:** Three bullets fired at the same target. Add a +1 die bonus to the shooter's dice pool.
- **Medium Burst:** Ten bullets, which can hit one to three targets standing close together. Add a +2 die bonus to the shooter's dice pool. If firing at more than one target, subtract the total number of targets from the shooter's pool, then make one attack roll per target.
- **Long Burst:** Twenty bullets at as many targets as the shooter wants. Increase the shooter's dice pool by +3. If firing at more than one target, subtract the total number of targets from the shooter's pool, then make one attack roll per target.

Range

The firearms chart (below) lists the short, medium, and long ranges of some sample firearms. Shooting a target at medium range imposes a -1 die penalty, while shooting a target at long

range increases that to -2. Shooting at targets beyond long range reduces the attack dice pool to a chance die.

Thrown weapons have a short range of (Strength + Dexterity + Athletics - object's Size), doubled for medium range, and doubled again for long range. Aerodynamic objects double each range — so an aerodynamic object's long range is {(Strength + Dexterity + Athletics) * 8}. Characters can only throw objects with a Size less than their Strength.

Cover and Concealment

Hiding behind something is a good way to not get shot. How effective it is depends how much the cover hides. Concealment penalties apply to a shooter's dice pool.

- **Barely Concealed:** -1 (hiding behind an office chair)
- **Partially Concealed:** -2 (hiding behind the hood of a car, with upper body exposed)
- **Substantially Concealed:** -3 (crouching behind a car).

A character who is concealed and wants to fire at someone else takes a penalty to his Firearms attack that's one less than the penalty afforded by the character's protection — so if he's substantially concealed, he can fire back with a -2 die penalty.

If a target's entirely hidden by something substantial, he's in cover. If the cover's Durability is greater than the weapon modifier, the bullets can't penetrate the cover. Otherwise, subtract the cover's Durability from the attacker's damage roll. If the cover is transparent (bulletproof glass, for example), subtract *half* the cover's Durability, rounding down. Both the object and the target take any remaining damage.

Human Shields

Sometimes, the only available cover is another person — be they a terrified member of the public or a life-long friend. Characters who use human shields treat them as cover, with Durability equal to the victim's Stamina + any armor. Unlike normal cover, the victim takes all of the damage from the attack.

Using a human shield is almost certainly a breaking point or Act of Hubris. For a Sleeper, this means a pretty severe modifier (-3 or more) if the victim dies; mages face an Act of Hubris at Enlightened or Understanding Wisdom.

Reloading

Reloading a firearm is an instant action. If you need to load bullets separately, you cannot apply your Defense on the same turn. If you have a magazine or speed-loader, you don't lose your Defense.

General Combat Factors

Some conditions apply to all kinds of fights.

Movement

A character can move his Speed in a single turn and still take an instant action. He can forsake his action to move at double his normal pace.

Ranged Weapons Chart

Type	Dmg	Ranges	Clip	Initiative	Str	Size	Availability	Example
Revolver, lt	1	20/40/80	6	0	2	1	••	SW M640 (.38 Special)
Revolver, hvy	2	35/70/140	6	-2	3	1	••	SW M29 (.44 Magnum)
Pistol, lt	1	20/40/80	17+1	0	2	1	•••	Glock 17 (9mm)
Pistol, hvy	2	30/60/120	7+1	-2	3	1	•••	Colt M1911A1 (.45 ACP)
SMG, small*	1	25/50/100	30+1	-2	2	1	•••	Ingram Mac-10 (9mm)
SMG, large*	2	50/100/200	30+1	-3	3	2	•••	HK MP-5 (9mm)
Rifle	4	200/400/800	5+1	-5	2	3	••	Remington M-700 (30.06)
Assault Rifle*	3	150/300/600	42+1	-3	3	3	•••	Stery-Aug (5.56mm)
Shotgun**	3	20/40/80	5+1	-4	3	2	••	Remington M870 (12-gauge)
Crossbow***	2	40/80/160	1	-5	3	3	•••	

Damage: Indicates the number of bonus successes added to a successful attack to determine the amount of lethal damage dealt.

Ranges: The listed numbers a short/medium/long ranges in yards/meters. Attacks at medium range suffer a -1 die penalty. Attacks at long range suffer a -2 die penalty.

Clip: The number of rounds a gun can hold. A "+1" indicates that a bullet can be held in the chamber, ready to fire.

Initiative: The penalty taken to Initiative when wielding the gun.

Strength: The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a -1 penalty on attack rolls.

Size: 1 = Can be fired one-handed; 2 = Must be fired two-handed and can be hidden in a coat; 3 = Can be fired two-handed but not hidden on one's person

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

* The weapon is capable of autofire, including short bursts, medium bursts, and long bursts.

** Attack rolls gain the 9-Again quality

*** Crossbows take three turns to reload between shots.

Going Prone

When a character can't find cover, the next best thing when bullets are flying is to drop flat to the ground. Ranged attacks against him suffer a -2 die penalty. A standing attacker using Brawl or Weaponry to attack instead gains a +2 die bonus.

A character can drop prone at any point before his action. Dropping to the ground costs his action for the turn. Getting up from being prone also takes your character's action.

Specified Targets

Attacking specific body parts has its benefits. In addition to ignoring armor (see "Armor," below), strikes to limbs and the head can inflict Tilts, as described on page 231.

- Arm (-2): A damaging hit can Arm Wrack the victim if it deals more damage than the target's Stamina
- Leg (-2): A damaging hit can Leg Wrack the victim if it deals more damage than the target's Stamina
- Head (-3): A damaging attack can Stun the victim if it deals at least as much damage as the target's Size
- Hand (-4): On a damaging hit, the victim suffers Arm Wrack

- Eye (-5): On a damaging hit, the victim is Blinded

Killing Blow

When performing a killing blow, you deal damage equal to your full dice pool plus your weapon modifier. You've time enough to line up your attack so it avoids your victim's armor.

While people who kill in combat can justify their actions based on the heat of the moment, performing a killing blow is a premeditated attempt to end a sentient life without the target having a chance to do anything about it. Going through with a killing blow is an Act of Hubris for mages with Enlightened and Understanding Wisdom, whether the victim survives or not.

Weapons and Armor

Weapons are one of the fastest ways to turn a fight into a murder. Sometimes, that's what you want: Pulling a gun shows you're serious about killing people.

A weapon's damage rating adds bonus successes to a successful attack roll. When a weapon might help out in other ways — using a chain to grapple someone, or a gun to intimidate her, add the weapon's damage rating as an equipment modifier.

Every weapon deals lethal damage to mortals. A baseball bat, club, or mace does just as much serious trauma to the human body as an edged weapon or a bullet.

Melee Weapons Chart

Type	Damage	Initiative	Strength	Size	Availability	Special
Sap	0	-1	1	1	•	Stun
Brass Knuckles	0	0	1	1	•	Uses Brawl to attack
Baton	1	-1	2	2	n/a	
Crowbar	2	-2	2	2	•	
Tire Iron	1	-3	2	2	••	+1 Defense
Chain	1	-3	2	2	•	Grapple
Shield (small)	0	-2	2	2	••	Concealed
Shield (large)	2	-4	3	3	••	Concealed
Knife	0	-1	1	1	•	
Rapier	1	-2	1	2	••	Armor piercing 1
Machete	2	-2	2	2	••	
Hatchet	1	-2	1	1	•	
Fire Ax	3	-4	3	3	••	9-Again, two-handed
Chainsaw	5	-6	4	3	•••	9-Again, two-handed
Spear**	2	-2	2	4	•	+1 Defense, two-handed

Type: A weapon's type is a general classification that can apply to anything your character picks up. A metal club might be an antique mace, a metal baseball bat, or a hammer, while a hatchet might be a meat cleaver or an antique hand-ax.

Damage: Indicates the number of bonus successes added to a successful attack to determine the amount of lethal damage dealt.

Initiative: The penalty taken to Initiative when wielding the weapon. If using more than one weapon, take the higher penalty and increase by 1.

Strength: The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a -1 die penalty on attack rolls.

Size: 1 = Can be hidden in a hand; 2 = Can be hidden in a coat; 3+ = Cannot be hidden.

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

Concealed: A character who wields a shield but doesn't use it to attack can add its Size to his Defense, and uses its Size as a concealment modifier against ranged attacks.

Grapple: Add the chain's damage rating to your dice pool when grappling.

Stun: Halve the victim's Size when aiming for the head with intent to stun

Two-handed: This weapon requires two hands. It can be used one-handed, but doing so increases the Strength requirement by 1.

* The reach of a spear gives a +1 Defense bonus against opponents who are unarmed or wield weapons of Size 1.

The full traits of a range of weapons are presented in the Ranged and Melee Weapons Charts.

Improvised Weapons

The weapons charts can only go so far. Characters who grab improvised weapons still stand a chance of doing serious damage.

If your improvised weapon is close enough to one of the weapons above, use the associated weapon profile. Otherwise, an improvised weapon does (Durability - 1) damage, with an initiative penalty and Strength requirement equal to the weapon's Size.

Using an improvised weapon reduces your attack pool by -1 die. On a successful attack, the weapon takes the same amount of damage as it inflicts; Durability reduces this damage as normal. Once the weapon's Structure is reduced to 0, the object is wrecked.

Armor

Armor provides protection against attacks, including bullets and knives. Though most mages rely on their Mage Armor Attainments to protect them instead of physical armor, police officers and other law enforcement agencies rely on it, and some highly combatant mages wear it as well.

- Ballistic armor applies to incoming firearms attacks. Each point of ballistic armor downgrades one point of damage from lethal to bashing.
- General armor applies to all attacks. Each point of general armor reduces the total damage taken by one point, starting with the most severe type of damage.

If armor has both ballistic and general ratings, apply the ballistic armor first.

Armor Chart

Type	Rating	Strength	Defense	Speed	Availability	Coverage
MODERN						
Reinforced clothing*	1/0	1	0	0	•	Torso, arms, legs
Kevlar vest*	1/3	1	0	0	•	Torso
Flak Jacket	2/4	1	-1	0	••	Torso, arms
Full Riot Gear	3/5	2	-2	-1	•••	Torso, arms, legs
ARCHAIC						
Leather (hard)	2/0	2	-1	0	•	Torso, arms
Chainmail	3/1	3	-2	-2	••	Torso, arms
Plate	4/2	3	-2	-3	••••	Torso, arms, legs

Rating: Armor provides protection against normal attacks and Firearms attacks. The number before the slash is for general armor, while the number after the slash is for ballistic armor.

Strength: If your character's Strength is lower than that required for her armor, reduce her Brawl and Weaponry dice pools by -1.

Defense: The penalty imposed on your character's Defense when wearing the armor.

Speed: The penalty to your character's Speed when wearing the armor.

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the armor.

Coverage: The areas of a character protected by the armor. Wearing a helmet increases the armor's coverage to include a character's head.

* This armor is concealed, either as normal clothing (e.g. biker leathers) or being worn under a jacket or baggy shirt.

When applying armor to an attack dealing lethal damage, you always take at least one point of bashing damage from the shock of the blow.

Armor-Piercing

Some weapons have an armor piercing quality, usually between 1 and 3. When attacking someone wearing armor, subtract the piercing quality from the target's armor. Subtract from ballistic armor first, then general armor. Armor-piercing attacks in close combat subtract from general armor only.

When shooting at an object – or a person in cover – subtract the piercing quality from the object's Durability.

Injury and Healing

Characters can suffer three types of damage. Fists and feet, along with other kinds of low-impact trauma, deal *bashing* damage. Brass knuckles, knives, and speeding trucks deal *lethal* damage.

Some horrifying powers deal *aggravated* damage. When something deals aggravated damage directly, it's quite obvious. Flesh bubbles and sloughs away. Skin turns black, blue and green, growing gangrenous in seconds.

If a character's Health track is filled with any damage, his player must make a reflexive Stamina roll each turn for him to remain conscious. If it fills with lethal damage, then each minute thereafter in which the mortal receives no medical attention – mundane or supernatural – he suffers one more injury. One Health box currently marked with an X is upgraded to an asterisk for aggravated damage, from left to right on the character's Health chart. Once all boxes are filled with asterisks, he's dead.

Marking Damage

When a character suffers bashing damage, mark it with a slash (/) in the leftmost empty box of his Health track.

When a character suffers lethal damage, mark it with a cross (X) in the leftmost box of his Health track that doesn't contain lethal or aggravated damage. If you mark over a point of bashing damage, it moves one box to the right.

When a character suffers aggravated damage, mark it with a large asterisk (*) in the leftmost box that doesn't already contain aggravated damage. If you mark over a point of bashing or lethal damage, it all moves one box to the right.

Always mark the most severe injuries at the left of a character's Health track, and push any less severe injuries to the right. Characters heal their rightmost Health boxes first and progress left.

Example: Julia has seven dots of Health. She's just taken two points of bashing damage. Her Health boxes look like this:

☐/☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

If she's later stabbed and takes a point of lethal damage, her Health track would be:

☒/☐/☐☐☐☐☐☐

If Julia next suffered a point of aggravated damage, her Health boxes would look like this:

☒*☐/☐/☐☐☐☐☐☐

Wound Penalties

As a character takes damage, it impairs her ability to act. When one of her three rightmost Health boxes has damage marked, she suffers a penalty accordingly. Subtract this penalty from every action she performs, including rolling for Initiative, but not including Stamina rolls to stay conscious.

Health Boxes Marked	Penalty
Third-to-last	-1
Second-to-last	-2
Last	-3

Upgrading Damage

If your character's Health track is already full of bashing damage, any further bashing or lethal damage upgrades the leftmost point of bashing damage to lethal – turn one of the slashes into a cross.

If your character's Health track is full of lethal damage, any further damage upgrades an existing point of lethal damage to aggravated. Turn the leftmost X into an asterisk.

When a human's rightmost Health box has bashing damage marked in it, she has to make a Stamina roll each turn or fall unconscious. If it has lethal damage, she takes another point of damage each minute (upgrading existing lethal damage to aggravated) until she receives medical attention.

Healing

Characters need time to heal once they've been beaten to a pulp. Mages can speed healing times, and even close wounds with a single spell given enough mastery of the Arcana, but absent any supernatural effects recovery takes time.

A human character heals her rightmost Health box at the rate below. The healing time is enough for the wound to fully recover – lethal damage doesn't "downgrade" into bashing. Normally, a character can heal without medical attention, though use of the Medicine Skill will doubtless help her recover. The only exception is if a human character has all her Health boxes full of lethal damage – she's bleeding out. She can't recover from that without urgent medical attention and emergency surgery.

Wounds recover at the following rates:

Bashing: One point per 15 minutes.

Lethal: One point per two days.

Aggravated: One point per week.

Example: After the combat, Julia out of harm's way for now. She isn't looking for another fight. Her Health track is the same as it was at the end of the fight.



Her rightmost wounds heal first. Each point of bashing damage takes 15 minutes to heal. Her lethal damage then heals over the course of the next two days. Finally, her aggravated wound heals over the course of the next week. In all, it's taken a little over a week and two days for her to recover from her injuries.

Resistant Damage

Some extremely rare effects cause *resistant injuries* – for mages they are almost always the result of containing a Paradox with Wisdom (**see p.116**). Resistant injuries are bashing, lethal, or aggravated like other wounds, but the player should mark them with a dot above the Health box. They cannot be healed by magic, or have their healing times accelerated by magic – only recovery at the rates on this page will work.

Objects

Objects in the Storytelling system, such as lead pipes, walls, or cars, have three traits: Durability, Size, and Structure. Mostly, these relate to how easy the object is to destroy.

Durability: How hard the object is to damage. Subtract Durability from any damage dealt to the object. Durability has no effect against attacks that deal aggravated damage.

Durability	Material
1	Wood, hard plastic, thick glass
2	Stone, aluminum
3	Steel, iron
+1	per reinforced layer

Size: How large the object is. Objects smaller than Size 1 can fit entirely in a person's palm. See the Size chart on p. 212.

Structure: An object's Structure is equivalent to its Health and equals its Durability + Size. Each point of damage removes a point of Structure. Once it's taken more damage than it has Durability, anyone using the object suffers a -1 die penalty. When its Structure hits 0, the object is destroyed. Objects do not differentiate between bashing and lethal damage, and can be repaired with an appropriate Craft roll.

Disease

Outside of combat, a character who suffers from a disease suffers damage over a period of time. Resisting the damage inflicted by a disease requires a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll. This roll is not contested but it is modified by the severity of the disease. Only one success is necessary to avoid damage each time.

Some diseases are the kind that people don't heal from without magic. A character's cancer could go into remission, or he can hold his HIV back with medication, but time alone won't cure them. The Storyteller should set a benchmark of how many rolls the character has to succeed at in a row for the disease to go into remission. Medical treatment can offset any penalties to the Stamina + Resolve roll applied by the disease – but might inflict penalties on other rolls, as sometimes the cure is almost as bad as the disease.

Drugs

A character who has taken drugs, willingly or not, must fight off the effects of the drug. Resisting the effects requires a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll. This roll is not contested but it is modified by the potency of the drug ingested. Only one success is necessary for a character to regain her senses. In the case of some drugs, this roll must be made once per hour, once per scene – or even once per turn, in the case of strong hallucinogens or narcotics.

Overdose

Characters who overdose on drugs treat the drug like a poison, with a Toxicity somewhere between 3 and 7. The overdose deals damage once per hour until the drug has run its course – if a character's spent 8 hours drinking, then the poison takes another 8 hours to fade, with Toxicity between 3 (beer or wine) to 5 (rubbing alcohol). A character who injects stronger heroin than expected takes damage for (8 - Stamina) hours, with Toxicity 7.

Some sample severities for diseases, drugs, and poisons are listed below:

Nicotine, salmonella, food poisoning – 1-2

Ammonia (inhalation), common cold – 3

Venom (injection or ingestion) – 3 (bad spider bite) to 8 (cobra venom)

Drug/alcohol abuse – 3 (moderate intoxication), 5 (heavy intoxication), 7 (overdose)

Life-threatening disease – 7 (cancer), 8 (Ebola)

Electricity

Mages trained in Forces know that a potentially deadly weapon lies almost everywhere in the modern world, kept caged by wires and cables. Electrocutation automatically causes bashing damage per turn of exposure. No attack roll is made.

If harm from electricity is more than just instantaneous – there's a constant flow such as through power cables – a victim may not be able to escape. His muscles contract, which can prevent him from pulling away. Roll Strength as a reflexive action in each turn of contact. Failure means your character is still connected to the source and suffers its damage each turn until a successful roll is made.

Source Damage

Minor wall socket 4 (B)

Major protective fence 6 (B)

Severe junction box 8 (B)

Fatal lightning bolt, main line feed/subway rail 10 (B)

Worn armor provides no protection against electrocution.

Extreme Environments

The human body is not conditioned to withstand extreme heat, cold, air pressure, and other weather. These harsh conditions hinder and endanger unprepared characters. When exposed to a harsh environment, the Storyteller assigns a level to the environment, using the chart below as a guideline. Survival gear can reduce the effective environment level.

While characters are exposed to these conditions, they suffer the level of the environment as a penalty to all actions. After a number of hours equal to the character's Stamina, he takes bashing damage equal to the environment's level once per hour. In the case of a Level 3 exposure, the damage is lethal instead of bashing. Fourth-level environments cause lethal damage each turn after a number of turns equal to the character's Stamina.

Any damage caused by levels 2-4 exposure leaves lasting marks, scars, and tissue damage. Damage caused by Extreme Environments cannot be healed until the character is back in a safe environment.

Level Example Environments

0 Safe environment

1 Light snow, heavy storms; too cold to sleep safely; air pressure causes shortness of breath; sweltering sun can cause first-degree burns

2 Heavy snow; cold causes physical pain and potential hypothermia; sun quickly causes first degree burns, can cause second degree burns with time; minor radiation poisoning

3 Desert exposure; heat rapidly causing second-degree burns; moderate radiation exposure

4 Desert sandstorm, severe hurricane, tornado, tsunami

Fire

Fire automatically inflicts lethal damage per turn of exposure (no attack roll is required). The damage inflicted depends on both the size and intensity of the flames.

Size of Fire Damage

Torch 1

Bonfire 2

Inferno 3

Heat of Fire Damage Modifier

Candle (first-degree burns) –

Torch (second-degree burns) +1

Bunsen burner (third-degree burns) +2

Chemical fire/molten metal +3

So, a fire the size of a bonfire (2) and with the intensity of a torch (+1) inflicts three lethal damage per turn of contact.

In general, if exposure to fire persists for more than a turn, it ignites anything combustible. A burning character continues to take full damage, even if he escapes the original source of the flame. Depending on the accelerator involved, the size of a fire can be reduced by one level per turn by means such as a hose or extinguisher. The Storyteller may rule that a fire goes out immediately under some circumstances (local oxygen is removed with a controlled explosion or your character is completely immersed in water). Or, a fire could continue to burn despite efforts to put it out – such as with a grease fire when water is poured on it.

Most armor can block its general rating in fire damage automatically for a number of turns equal to that rating.

Poison

Outside of combat, a character who is the victim of a poison or toxin suffers lethal damage over a period of time equal to the poison's Toxicity. Some substances deal this damage only once. Others deal this damage once per turn or once per hour until purged – or until the poison has run its course. To resist the damage, make a reflexive Stamina + Resolve – Toxicity roll. Each success reduces the damage taken by one point. This roll must be made every time the poison deals damage unless the character stops fighting and gives in.

Equipment

Equipment, tools, and technology help to solve problems. Having the right tool for the job can mean the difference between life and death – or in the Chronicles of Darkness, the difference between life and a fate worse than death. This list is not all-inclusive, but features many of the tools characters in the Fallen World might have at their disposal.

Equipment is divided up by the Skills the items typically assist with. Mental Equipment typically assists with Mental Skills, for example.

Availability and Procurement

The dot cost of a piece of equipment relates directly to the Resources cost if your character wishes to purchase it (or the components, for some things). It also reflects the level of Allies or other Social Merit required in order to find the item and the Skill level required to procure it with a single dice roll. For example, if a Party Invitation has Cost ●●●, a character with Larceny ●● should not be able to find and steal an invite without a roll, but a character with Politics ●●●● might be able to get one by virtue of saying the right words to the right organization. If your character wishes to obtain higher Availability items with her Skills, it requires a deeper effort.

Size, Durability, and Structure

These are guidelines that represent common, standard examples of the items in question. For most items, characters could procure better examples at a higher Availability rating.

Dice Bonuses

Most equipment offers a bonus to dice rolls pertaining to its use. Multiple items can influence a given roll, but a roll should not receive more than a +5 bonus.

Game Effect

A character with the item can use these Effects. Any restrictions, costs, or parameters are listed individually.

Mental Equipment

Mental equipment is all but essential for many character types. Mental Skills without the proper tools are almost useless in most cases. A doctor without medicine is hardly capable of healing, and an auto mechanic without a toolbox couldn't change even some minor belts on a car.

Automotive Tools

Basic (Kit): Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability ●

Advanced (Garage): Die Bonus +2, Availability ●

Effect: Automotive tools are a necessity for all but the simplest automobile repairs. Even then, a fully stocked garage with heavy equipment is required for more involved tasks such as engine or transmission replacement. If time is not a factor, any trained character with a Crafts Automotive Specialty can repair a vehicle's mundane issues without rolls. A complex modification or enhancement, or massive damage repair, always requires a greater effort (an extended Intelligence + Crafts roll) to work out.

Cache

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 2, Size 1–5, Structure 5, Availability ● to ●●●

Effect: A cache is a hidden and defensible place for items, usually weapons. It keeps important items from prying eyes. A cache can never be more than half the Size of its parent object. For example, a Size 6 car can support no larger than a Size 3 cache. A given cache can hold two items of its Size and any reasonable number of smaller-sized items. Its Availability determines its die bonus, which both adds to concealment rolls and subtracts from rolls to find the items within.

First-Aid Kit

Die Bonus 0 or +1, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability ● or ●●

Effect: A first-aid kit contains all the necessary supplies to stabilize an injury and stop wounds from getting worse until the victim can find proper treatment. The one-dot version of the first-aid kit does not offer an equipment bonus; it simply allows for treatment. The two-dot version offers a +1 to treatment rolls due to superior supplies.

Flashlight

Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3, Availability ●

Effect: A flashlight can be a person's best friend. It generally does what it's supposed to; it helps cut a path through the unknown. Its

die bonus subtracts from any penalties due to darkness, and adds to any rolls to search in the dark. A good flashlight can serve as a club in a pinch. As well, it can blind an unfortunate subject. A Dexterity + Athletics roll, subtracting an informed opponent's Defense, will put the beam where it needs to be. The victim's player may make a contested Stamina roll. If your character scores more successes than the subject, they're blinded for one turn. Victims with especially acute senses are blinded for two turns.

Personal Computer

Die Bonus +1 to +4, Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability • to ••••

Effect: In the developed world, almost every household has access to a personal computer. They can vary in size, functionality, and price, from decade-old models that barely surf the Web to high-end machines that process gigabytes of data per second. In today's world, many lives revolve around computers. For some people, their entire careers and personal lives exist within digital space. The Availability of the computer determines its equipment bonus.

Smartphones

Die Bonus +1 to +2, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability • to •••

Effect: By themselves, smartphones can make calls, send text messages and emails, take pictures, maintain an agenda, and search the Web. With a bit of software, the smartphone becomes the multi-tool of the electronic age. While it cannot accomplish the raw computing power of a full-sized personal computer, higher-end smartphones can manage almost all the same tasks with ease.

Most major gadgets have been successfully replicated with smartphone applications. GPS scanning and tracking are staples of the amateur investigator. Facial recognition software finds a face in a crowd with relative accuracy. A smartphone can photograph and transcribe text, then translate ancient tomes. It can store a library's worth of text and allow for automated searches. It offers directions, with photographic assistance. Even the value of a mindless video game on a stakeout is often underestimated.

Survival Gear

Die Bonus +1 or +2, Durability 2, Size 2 or 3, Structure 3, Availability • or •••

Effect: Survival gear is the catch-all term for the various kits of equipment needed to survive in harsh environments. This could encompass tents, canned foodstuff, raingear, sleeping bags, sterile water, or any of the various things people can use to survive the world outside their cushy homes. Gear kits come in two levels: a basic level and an advanced level. The basic level offers +1 and subtracts one from the effective level of environment, (see *Extreme Environments*, p. 224), while the advanced offers +2 and subtracts two from the effective environment level. This does not help with a Level 4 environment. A resourceful character can rig or scavenge the necessary supplies for basic survival gear, but an advanced set of gear requires very specialized equipment. Basic survival gear can assist with most any environment, but advanced survival gear must target one particular type of environment.

Physical Equipment

Physical equipment enhances the use of Physical Skills. This often means the use of simple and complex machines to make things easier, or simple tricks to heighten the effectiveness of a character's inherent talents.

Climbing Gear

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability ••

Effect: Climbing gear includes ropes, pulleys, handles, carabiners, hooks, and other assorted tools for scaling things. It serves a twofold purpose. First, it adds its equipment bonus to the normal Strength + Athletics rolls for climbing. Second, if properly applied (with a Wits + Athletics roll), it prevents a character from falling more than ten feet at a time.

Crowbar

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 4, Availability •

Effect: A crowbar is a curved piece of steel used to pry open shipping pallets, jammed doors, and other things a normal person would be incapable of doing by hand. It adds to any dice rolls used to establish leverage. When prying things open, it allows your character to ignore two points of Durability of the lock or barricade. A crowbar can also be used as a weapon (see p.221).

Firearm Suppressor

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability ••

Effect: A firearm suppressor is popularly and misleadingly referred to as a silencer in cinema and other media. It's a cylinder placed on the end of a gun barrel that changes and lightens the sound of a shot. A suppressor delivers many minor benefits, but offers two noteworthy advantages: short-range accuracy and concealment.

Increased Accuracy: A suppressed firearm travels through a longer barrel and the muzzle crown evens the expulsion of hot gasses that can slightly affect trajectory. In game terms, reduce a suppressed gun's damage rating by -1 due to the bullet's subsonic flight, but increase the attack dice pool by +2 when firing at short range.

Position Concealer: The sound changes dramatically, to the point where many people do not recognize the sound as that of a gunshot and are often unable to place where the lower tone came from. The muzzle flash is also reduced dramatically with a suppressor, helping to conceal a shooter's position. A character trying to identify a suppressed shot must roll Wits + Firearms - 2. Any character searching for the shooter using the gun's tells suffers a -2 penalty.

Gas Mask

Die Bonus +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability ••

Effect: A gas mask is a filtration device placed over the face that defends against noxious chemicals in the air. With a working gas mask, a character can stand minor toxins for as long as he needs, whereas other characters might take damage over time or require rolls to remain conscious. Powerful toxins may still require rolls. A gas mask adds +5 dice to these rolls.

Handcuffs

Die Bonus +2, Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 4, Availability •

Effect: A solid pair of steel handcuffs is made to restrain even a remarkably strong person. Applying handcuffs to an unwilling combatant is an additional option in a grapple. Roll Strength + Brawl – the opponent’s Strength. Success means the handcuffs are where they need to be.

Breaking out of successfully applied handcuffs requires a Strength + Stamina – 4 roll. Each success on the roll reduces the Structure of the cuffs by 1. Cuffs reduced to 0 Structure snap open. Each attempt to escape causes one point of bashing damage.

A character may also try to finagle her hands out of the cuffs. This requires a Dexterity + Athletics – 4 roll. Success allows for an escape, and causes one point of bashing damage. Failure on this roll causes one point of lethal damage, as her thumb jerks out of its socket.

Attempting to do anything requiring manual dexterity while cuffed incurs a –4 penalty, or –2 if the hands are cuffed in front. Witnesses are unlikely to behave favorably around a cuffed character; Social rolls against strangers incur a –3 penalty.

Many police forces and security companies now prefer heavy-duty plastic zip ties in place of handcuffs. While they’re slightly less durable (Durability 3), they incur a –5 penalty from behind or –3 from the front, because they can be far tighter on the wrists. Zip ties can also be cut free.

Lockpicking Kit

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability ••

Effect: A lockpicking kit consists of picks, tools, and rods for manipulating tumblers and opening locks. A good kit contains a wide array of tools to all but guarantee intrusion of an analog lock. With such a kit and at least a dot of Larceny, a character can pick a lock without a roll if time is not an issue. If time is an issue, the die bonus applies to the Dexterity + Larceny rolls. At Availability •, a character may procure a portable lockpick. It has Size 1, Structure 1, and is far more concealable. However, it only offers a +1 bonus and doesn’t allow for picking without rolls since the kit realistically may not have the right tools for a given job.

A lockpicking kit only works on mechanical locks. Digital locks require more specific hacking and code prediction. A character may procure a digital lockpick at Availability •••, but it typically only works on one type of lock, such as the keycard locks used in hotels. Digital lockpicks can be Size 2, or Size 1 if crafted as an extension of a laptop computer or smartphone.

Social Equipment

Social actions deal with people. Social Equipment offers tools for leverage, influence, and manipulation.

Cash

Die Bonus +1 to +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability • to •••••

Effect: This represents a wad of cash, a briefcase of money, an offshore bank account number, or some other lump sum. It can’t be reflected in the Resources Merit since it’s not a regular income. How-



ever, it can be expended to offer a bonus equivalent to its Availability on any Social roll that could benefit from a bribe. As well, it can be expended to purchase one item of equal Availability. For more complex uses, consider it a single month's allotment of the same Resources.

Disguise

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 1, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability • to •••

Effect: A good disguise goes a long way to help fit in with a strange group or go unnoticed in a crowd where one doesn't belong. Properly costumed for a situation, no rolls are required to blend into the crowd. Any rolls to actively detect the outsider suffer a penalty equal to the die bonus of the disguise; the disguised character also gains the bonus to remain hidden.

With a disguise, a character can emulate the first dot of a single Social Merit that would make sense within the scope of the scene. For example, it doesn't make money appear from thin air, but it would allow a character to get their drinks on a non-existent tab, reflecting Resources •. This requires a Composure + Subterfuge to maintain in the face of anyone in the know, contested by the witness's Wits + Subterfuge. The die bonus of the disguise applies to the liar, but does not affect the witness.

Fashion

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability • to •••••

Effect: Never underestimate the value of high fashion. Like a disguise, fashionable clothing allows a character to fit in. However, the point of fashion is to draw attention, not to fade into the crowd. As opposed to anonymity, fashion means being noticed. Note that the clothing chosen must be appropriate to the setting. Punk chic will not work at a Senator's fundraiser, for example. When improperly dressed, the die bonus applies as a penalty to all Social Skill rolls.

The die bonus for Fashion is equal to half the Availability, rounded up.

Services

In addition to the fully-fleshed equipment in this chapter, characters may look for services from other characters. Below is a list of some things characters may pursue. Each has an Availability rating that works identically to other equipment. This can act as a foundation for what certain levels of Allies, Status, and other Social Merits might accomplish. Most are sorted by Skills to reflect their general uses. Most include a die bonus as well. Assume most services take a week to procure at the listed Availability levels. Raise Availability by one to make that a day instead.

Note that some services listed could be highly illegal and should be limited in access to appropriate Merits. In many cases, illegal services only offer negligible die bonuses. Their real advantage comes from a layer of separation from legal authorities.

Services

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
<i>Academics</i>		
Historical specialist consulting	•••	+3
Research assistance from grad students	••	+2
Translation of a dead language	•••	+2
<i>Computer</i>		
Custom phone application	•••	+2
Digital image enhancement	••	+3
Graphic design/forgery	••	+2
<i>Crafts</i>		
Antiquities restoration	•••	+2
Auto repair	••	+3
Custom equipment modifications	•••	+2
<i>Investigation</i>		
Consultation on evidence	•••	+3
Investigative photography	•••	+2
Private investigation/background check	••	+2

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
<i>Medicine</i>		
Black market surgeon	••••	+3
Expert medical witness	••••	+2
Rush plastic surgery	••••	+2
<i>Occult</i>		
Esoteric consultant/sage	••••	+3
Exorcist	•••	+2
Protective amulets or wards	••••	+1
<i>Politics</i>		
Campaign assistant	•••	+3
Cutting red tape (read: bribe)	•••	+2
Spin doctor	•••	+2
<i>Science</i>		
Fact-checking	••	+3
Falsifying research/coverup	•••	+2
Lab access	••	+2
<i>Athletics</i>		
Meditative assistance	•••	+2

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
Personal trainer	•••	+3
Throwing an athletic competition	••••	+4
<i>Brawl</i>		
Arrange underground boxing ring	•••	+2
Bodyguard service	•••	+3
Self-defense classes	•	+1
<i>Drive</i>		
Chauffer	••	+2
Stunt performance/mock crash	•••	+3
Tour bus rental	••••	+2
<i>Firearms</i>		
Antique gun repair	•••	+2
Cover fire from gangs	•••	+3
Procuring smuggled military arms	••••	+2
<i>Larceny</i>		
Breaking and entering	•••	+2
Security consulting	•••	+2
Stealing a protected relic	••••	+3
<i>Stealth</i>		
Strategic distraction	•••	+3
Tailing a suspect	•••	+2
Targeted vandalism	••	+2
<i>Survival</i>		
Field dress and preserve an animal	•••	+1
Trail guide	••	+3
Weatherproof a shelter	••	+2
<i>Weaponry</i>		
Properly forged sword	•••	+2
Identify wound from obscure weapon	•••	+2
Training in archaic warfare	•••	+2

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
<i>Animal Ken</i>		
Buy a trained animal	•••	+2
Identify animal droppings	••	+1
Rule out natural causes of death	•••	+2
<i>Empathy</i>		
"Good cop" interrogator	•••	+2
Neutral arbitrator	•••	+2
Therapy session	••	+1
<i>Expression</i>		
Document forgery	•••	+3
Ghostwriting	••	+2
Motivational speech	•••	+1
<i>Intimidation</i>		
Anti-interrogation training	••••	+3
"Bad cop" interrogator	•••	+2
Deprogramming therapy	•••	+2
<i>Persuasion</i>		
Defense attorney	•••	+3
Hostage negotiator	••••	+3
Pickup artist	•••	+2
<i>Socialize</i>		
Catering	••• or ••••	+1 or +2
Elocution consulting	•••	+1
Escort	•••	+2
<i>Streetwise</i>		
Arrange a rave or block party	•••	+2
Black market access	••	+2
Find crash space	••	+1
Smuggling contraband	•••	+1
<i>Subterfuge</i>		
Amateur Actor/Actress	••	+2
Con artistry	•••	+2
Gambling ringer	•••	+2



Conditions

Conditions represent ways in which the story has affected your character, and what she can do to move past those events. Players don't buy Conditions; events in the game apply them and they remain until certain *resolution* criteria are met. A character can't have more than one copy of the same Condition unless each applies to a distinctly different thing – for example you may be Delusional about both spiders crawling under your skin and your friends plotting to kill you. You'd have to resolve each independently.

Characters can gain Conditions as a result of various factors. Magic may inflict or grant a number of Conditions. A player can also choose to take a Condition relevant to the situation as a result of an exceptional success, and breaking points can cause Conditions as your character deals with them. Sometimes, the Storyteller will inflict Conditions based on the circumstances of the story.

The listed resolutions for each Condition are the most common ways to end its effects; other actions may also resolve it if they would reasonably cause the Condition's effects to end. Work with the Storyteller to determine Condition resolution. When your character resolves a Condition, take a Beat. If a Condition has a natural time limit and then fades away, don't take a Beat – just waiting the Condition out isn't enough to count as resolving it.

Some Conditions are marked as Persistent. These Conditions typically last for a long time, and can only be resolved perma-

nently with a specific and impressive effort. Once per game session, a character can gain a Beat when a Persistent Condition impacts her life.

Improvised Conditions

Storytellers shouldn't feel limited by the list of Conditions in the Appendix (p. 314). As a rough guideline, a Condition typically consists of a modifier between +2 and -2 dice to a certain type of action, or to any action taken with a certain motivation. A Condition is removed when the character's done something significant to act on it, or when she addresses the original source. The sample Conditions later in this book have examples of how to resolve them, but you can also resolve them after other events if it makes sense in the story.

If play would bog down as you search for the right Condition, just improvise one and keep things going.

Lingering Conditions

Conditions are designed as reminders that events that happened earlier in the story have repercussions later. Usually, Chekhov's gun applies – if you put the Condition on stage, it should fire by the end of your story. But storytelling games are slippery things, and sometimes a story thread represented by a Condition is better to drop for the sake of the ongoing narrative.

For example, an emotional state like Wanton might no longer be relevant to events in the game because a long time has passed, or it might have been the result of a conflict with a character

you don't care about anymore. In those cases, it's perfectly fine to just cross off the Condition. We recommend awarding a Beat as if resolving it, but that's at the Storyteller's discretion.

We recommend doing this sparingly, but bottom line: If a Condition doesn't feel relevant to the story anymore, just let it go.

Tilts

Tilts are a unified way of applying circumstances to both characters and scenes. Tilts are mechanically similar to Conditions, but they affect characters and scenes in combat. Out of combat, use Conditions instead.

Tilts provide a way of handling drugs, poisons, sickness, and environmental and weather effects, but *only as they apply to combat*. Out of combat, use the normal rules (found earlier in this chapter) for these effects.

Tilts do not give characters Beats when they end, but the effects of a Tilt can very easily cause a Condition. For instance, a character in a fight gets a handful of road salt flung in his eyes and receives the Blinded Tilt. When combat ends, this shifts

Tracking Tilts

A full list of Tilts is in Appendix Three. To keep track of who is affected by what Tilt, sticky notes or index cards come in very helpful. Environmental Tilts should sit somewhere that everyone can see them, while Personal Tilts should be close to hand for the player of the affected character. When a Storyteller character is hit with a Tilt, jot the character's name down on the card as well.

to the Blind Condition. Resolving this Condition will give the character a Beat. If the character enters combat again before the Condition is resolved, the Blinded Tilt applies again.

Tilts come in two forms: Personal and Environmental. Personal Tilts only apply to one character and include ways in which that character can overcome the effect. Environmental Tilts affect the whole scene, and offer ways for individual characters to mitigate their effects.



The Door

PART VII

"It's my fault."

I've gone into Diamante's room. It's a mess — sheaves of paperwork (the Ladder do love their paperwork) undone and scattered on all available surfaces, like she's been searching for something.

"How do you mean?" I ask, as neutrally as I can.

"Gee was my apprentice. I had a duty of care. I just...I was so busy, and she seemed fine..."

"You know why I'm here." Not a question.

"Why don't you just get on with it?" She sounds resentful. I've abandoned my planned interrogation already. Diamante isn't a suspect, as much as it would satisfy me personally. She's a bystander trying to make sense of what happened. And she's still loyal to Genevieve.

"Because I don't know if she's truly responsible. We've had our differences, you and I. But I need to know. If anyone else was involved, if Gee was coerced or pushed into it..."

She shakes her head.

"There's nothing. I've been searching all night."

I feel a stab of disappointment, and crush it. Maybe Seshat is right. Maybe I'm letting this one get to me. I know what Gee's going through, after all. I know what the sentence she couldn't finish was. Everyone here does.

"You know my story?" I ask. Diamante pauses, then nods.

"Help me to help her. Think."

...

I leave her there, and return to Gee's cell. The guard proudly tells me no one has been in or out.

Inside, Gee is awake. She's been busy.

"Is this all of it?" I ask, taking the notebook she holds out to me. She nods, silently, grieving.

I step back outside, close the door again, and begin reading where I left off.

Lucretia, you said you would marry me, and you made me the happiest person in the world. It was three years since I had picked you up from the airport, since we first had hope for the city and the people living in it. We were married at the Squat, on the roof. Surrounded by Sleepers, Sleepwalkers, and the Awakened alike, we exchanged vows and rings we'd made for each other.

We kept the same quarters, and treated ourselves to some new furniture in lieu of a honeymoon, which I wasn't so keen on anyway. I married you because I knew it would make you happy. You were always more of a traditionalist than I was. I knew we would be forever together and didn't need to say it in front of everyone. But I knew the symbolism of the rituals mattered to you, so I happily asked you for your hand and gladly signed the certificate.

"Will you settle down back at the sanctum?"

"No," I always said. "My life is here and you know me, breaking rules." We'd laugh. The Order enjoyed the centers we'd set up throughout the city, pulling away from the tradition of staying under one roof. The others appreciated the amenities we'd been able to hide in plain sight. Mundane gyms, libraries, and meeting areas became training grounds for thearchs after hours.

I oversaw the recreation centers and went home to the Squat, our first project, every night. I stood in front of the door to the storage room and imagined the door in my mind, black and twisted. Every night, I imagined creating a fire which would destroy the door completely, engulfing the tub and eating through the threads of magic woven together to create the door. In my mind my magic was strong enough to dispel and consume the energy there.

I knew it wasn't, not yet. It would probably be easier to open it. Find out what it was there for. Curiosity would be sated and I would never think on it again.

So many nights, I stared at the door and you would wake, asking me what was wrong. I always lied, the only lie I ever told you. Well, that and that your rice and peas were good. I told you I was worried about the Cryptopoly, or whether Diamante would come back safe from whatever head bashing she had that night, or Deacon Horatio's health. I waited so long to tell you. By the time I told you the truth, I was already set on my course.

I should have told you. You were so much wiser than me. Horatio was wrong to trust me. I know that now. If he hadn't been distracted by his personal vendettas, mediating between the petty squabbles of Adepts and Masters. If Diamante had stayed close to home. If the older Mastigos had laughed at me less. Lucretia, you alone are blameless in all this, but you are the one who paid.



CHAPTER SIX: A WORLD OF MAGIC

When he awoke it was dawn. Or something like dawn. The light was watery, dim and incomparably sad. Vast, grey, gloomy hills rose up all around them and in between the hills there was a wide expanse of black bog. Stephen had never seen a landscape so calculated to reduce the onlooker to utter despair in an instant. "This is one of your kingdoms, I suppose, sir?" he said. "My kingdoms?" exclaimed the gentleman in surprise. "Oh, no! This is Scotland!"

— Susanna Clarke, *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*

Awakened from the Lie, mages quickly learn just how strange the universe really is, and how dangerous its inhabitants are. This chapter discusses those mages cast out of the six Orders for dangerous magical practices, explores the many strange realms within the Fallen World that mages delve into in search of Mystery, and gives rules for the inhuman entities found within.

Left-Handed Mages

The Pentacle and Seers are not the only mages who seek the Mysteries. Other mages — those whose addiction to mystery has warped them in the same way cancer warps a sixty-a-day smoker — come into conflict with more grounded mages. Sometimes it's a chase, sometimes it's a fight, or all too often a mage seeks out one of these cracked mirrors to learn esoteric secrets lost to other mystics. The Orders refer to any magic that they themselves have banned as "Left-Handed," but they recognize five larger groups of Awakened that are themselves inimical to the continued existence of the Orders.

Though the Orders categorize each type of Left-Handed mage as a group, each one contains disparate philosophies. The Scelesti contains all mages who deal with the Abyss, for whatever reason, and "Banishers" is a catch-all term for mages who hunt their own.

The Mad

When other mages refer to the Mad Ones, an apprentice might get the wrong idea. Even more than other Left-Handed mages, the Mad have no organization or philosophy. Each is

unique, and the name is no more than a taxonomy of mages who have passed through obsession and into something else — becoming a mystical singularity in service to a single idea or issue that so consumed the Mad One that it cost her the last of her Wisdom. For the longest time, other mages thought that each Mad One was a unique occurrence; only in the last century have the Orders realized the similarities that underlie the Mad — that they have become so obsessed with something that it has become a Fault in their world-view.

For one Mad One, the Fallen World does not seem real unless she casts a specific spell over and over. Another may feel a compulsion towards some kind of bizarre behavior that seems perfectly normal, or even becomes something that she believes *everyone* needs to do. Maybe she has to poison innocents and carefully record the outcome, or plan her actions around astrology. Another found a Mystery that she cannot resolve; she worked away at it until her Wisdom snapped, leaving solving the Mystery as her only reason for being.

A Mad One's very presence leaks magic, whether she's manifesting spells or not. Sleepers experience Quiescence when recalling the Mad One as though she were a spell, cutting her off even further from the mundane world. She soon finds herself separated from the mundane side of the Fallen World entirely as friends, lovers, and family all forget her presence. When she pauses to consider it, she may mourn her lost relationships — or feel relieved that she is free of needless shackles that keep her away from her work.

Any mage can become one of the Mad. It's easy, really. All she has to do is focus so much on one thing that she ignores both the rest of the world and her own Wisdom. Sometimes, her cabalmates can enable the transition without meaning to. A

few times, they may even welcome her transition into Madness as she gains greater insights into her obsession than an otherwise well-balanced mage might. Stripped of any empathy, she must rely on her cabal for any dealings with the Fallen World. Her obsession even cuts her off from the Temenos, leaving her unable to venture beyond her own soul.

Mad Ones often demonstrate incredible skill in the fields of their obsessions. An Obrimos obsessed with the celestial fires of the Aether is probably one of the world's finest experts in all aspects of magical fire. A Moros who tries to distill the Supernal essence of a soul is the best person to ask about any magic dealing with souls.

Systems

In game terms, a mage becomes one of the Mad when she reaches Wisdom 0. At that point, she replaces her Virtue with one of her Obsessions. This all-consuming Obsession is called her Fault, and her default state involves working towards it. It might compel her to perform an act or cast a spell over and over, or to chase a Mystery that she will never solve. In the field of her Fault, a Mad One is supernaturally capable. Skill rolls relating to her field require only three successes for an exceptional success, while she may be able to cast spells using a specific Practice with any Arcanum, whether she knows it or not.

The Mad leak magic, causing Quiescence in Sleepers. Additionally, a Mad One's presence in the Fallen World is diffuse thanks to her disjointed Gnosis. Every week the Mad One goes without indulging her Fault, she gains a dot of the Occultation

Merit. However, whenever the Mad One isn't working towards her Fault — whether by choice or external action — her subconscious manifests spell effects called "Tulpa" that draw her back to her Fault. Sometimes, these effects benefit her. Sometimes, they harm her enemies or anyone who gets in her way. Sometimes, they drag her away from any semblance of reasonable life.

Banishers

Banishers are mages who turn on their own kind. All it takes is one second of indecision, one moment of doubt, one answer that's worse than the question. With that seed of fear, a prospective mage realizes that Mysteries pervade the world on a scale that nobody can fully comprehend. The Fallen World hides its truths, and surely it hides them for a reason? But Banishers are still mages, still aware of — and drawn to — the Mysteries.

Some Banishers come about organically, as mages push too far and discover answers that should have been left unknown. This leaves them traumatized, possibly insane, and determined that no other mage should go through the same thing. Another mage discovers an answer that so disturbs him that he joins the Logophages or the Timori, Left-Handed Legacies that actively destroy magic and Supernal knowledge. Another is the product of an Awakening gone wrong, making her experience all of her own magic as a source of pain and fear.

Most Banishers do not live a long life. Those who fear the Mysteries frequently commit suicide rather than face that fear, as do those without the wisdom to see magic for what it is. Others come into lethal conflict with other mages, either trying to



stop them from engaging with Mysteries, or hunting them for their magic. Some mages take it upon themselves to kill those Banishers resulting from a twisted Awakening, seeing it as an act of kindness — better to end their pain now than drive them to further pain and madness. If nothing else, a dead Banisher is no longer able to hurt others. Some cabals form around that horrific calculus: the question is not who will a Banisher hurt, but how many, and how badly?

A handful manage to escape the scrutiny of other mages until they have developed their mystical abilities, and manage to rationalize their own experiences. Many believe that, though they are damned to know the secrets of magic, their awareness is a tool to help those who are blind to their fallen state. Others accept that mages — themselves included — are ordinary people underneath the magic, and though other willworkers do not appreciate the dangers of their power, the Banisher must use her magic as a necessary evil to speak truth unto power. A Banisher who joins a Left-Handed Legacy gains a support group that can teach him forbidden lore and greater magic. Those whose Awakenings went wrong wield magic that they do not understand, lashing out with blind instinct at things that hurt them, rather than having a coherent reason to hate mages.

Perhaps their internal hypocrisy has a Supernal resonance of its own, or perhaps being a Banisher taps into a fear that all mages have at some point. The Orders don't know. They do know that friendly contact with a Banisher is far more likely to drive the other mage to become a Banisher than the other way around. The mindset that leads to hunting mages is in some way contagious, a virus spreading throughout the Awakened with disturbing consequences.

Systems

In game terms, most Banishers are simply Nameless mages. Twisted Awakenings are slightly different — the Banisher retains Integrity rather than exchanging it for Wisdom, and experiences her own Peripheral Mage Sight as pain and suffering.

Liches

Many mages flirt with the idea of living forever. It's especially prevalent among those who Awaken in their late teens or early twenties, for whom death hasn't been a major part of their lives. Others come around to the belief after suffering a great loss — the death of a parent, a child, a husband or wife. Whatever the case, they see death as a concern for humans. What greater Mystery to solve than how to overcome death itself? While it's an interesting thought experiment, most mages do not try to push too far beyond their natural lifespans. The Awakened are still human, after all, and understand the tragedy of a parent surviving his children. Using magic to survive not only his children but his children's children is a sign that the mage has deeper-rooted issues than the fear of death that comes complete with being a functional human being.

Liches are those mages who never let go of that goal, using magic to live long past the natural end of their lives. For many, it's a repudiation of the concept that mages have to be human — if the Supernal truths of magic can defeat even death, then

surely mages are something better than human from the very moment of Awakening. Others start from a position of fear — having stood powerless as a loved one died a long and painful death, they use magic so as to never face that fate themselves.

Immortality is possible through Awakened magic, but that doesn't mean it's easy. An inexperienced mage may use indefinite Life and Death spells to stave off the end, often using scars or tattoos as Yantras to bind the magic into his body. All it takes is one mage to take umbrage with him to sever those spells and let time catch up with him — or a bullet or blade ruining the careful runic patterns. Realizing that, a Lich has options open to him. He may transplant his mind and soul into a new body, stealing it from another person or even taking from his own offspring should he need a connection to his familial resources. Alternatively, he can cast spells that bind his ghost back into his body at the moment of death, but this is a great risk — a ghost is propelled by a single need or task, and these Liches are no different. Some remove their souls, then bind them into their Dedicated tools so that they may retain them even after death.

Others want to avoid death by eschewing the physical world, usually by taking on a Legacy that transforms body, mind, and soul into a new form — a ghost mage, a spirit mage, or a *Morphean*, a Lich that stalks the Temenos. The only thing that a Lich will not do is give in to death. For all his posturing, the real drive that forces a Lich to stave off the end is simple fear. Humans can learn to accept death, but a Lich lives in constant fear of his magic failing and the reaper catching up.

Liches do not lose their magical powers as part of cheating death; a spirit-Lich looks for the answers to the Mysteries of the Shadow, a Morphean stalks the inner worlds of humanity's soul looking for new challenges, and a body thief can continue his magical work uninterrupted for centuries. As such, a transformed Lich becomes an expert in his new state of being. Many mages would never admit to communing with a ghost-Lich to learn more of the Underworld, or learning how best to bind souls at the moment of death, but they do so all the same. Over the course of the interaction, they discover the power that a Lich can gain from her new state. Many find it repulsive, but some take heart in knowing that they do not have to put up with the shallow trappings of humanity.

Systems

Liches who take on new bodies, or who are bound to their own bodies, are effectively long-lived mages who believe they have transcended human frailties. Those who become spirits, ghosts, or Morpheans retain access to their Gnosis and Arcana, using the systems for Supernal beings on p. 253.

Reapers

Awakened society understands a fundamental difference between what a mage can do and what she should do. Even the Mad, the Banishers, and the Scelesti have their limits. One such limit is that mages should not use their magic to steal and destroy a person's soul. Some mages, so-called *Reapers*, ignore that concern. For the relatively little mystic knowledge it takes to harvest a human soul, a Reaper can find great benefits. Reapers claim that the taboo on stealing human souls isn't a matter of

“right” and “wrong,” but that a mage who does use souls for her own benefit would soon eclipse the power of even a master mage who holds to the taboo.

Those Reapers are partially right: Souls are incredibly powerful. A mage can consume a soul to access any of the Subtle Arcana that relate to her victim. She may drink deep on the Fated good fortune of one victim, and the intelligence and wits of another unwilling donor’s Mind. She can also use a victim’s soul to bind his ghost to her power, gaining his ghost as a slave to her will. She can even drain his soul to extend her own lifespan.

Some Reapers try to cover up their actions by claiming their victims should know better. A mage should take precautions against another mage stealing his soul. The man on the street should know better than to cross the Reaper. Only thing is, that’s a lie. Reapers are the ultimate expression of magic used for selfish gains. Other people, other mages; none of them matter. The Reaper doesn’t care who donates his soul, just that she has someone’s life to use.

Mages still seek out Reapers, though only if they have guarded their souls appropriately. Only a Mad One who experiments with souls has more knowledge of how to extract and bind a creature’s eternal spirit. Some make soul jars, binding the vital essence of people who have crossed them, or who have a particular talent. A few become pushers, dealing souls to more squeamish mages who desire the rush of power but do not want to harvest the soul themselves. The first hit’s free, but after a time, anyone who feels the benefits of becoming a Reaper will find her own supply.

Systems

Stealing and manipulating souls is largely a function of the Death Arcanum, but many Reapers develop Legacies based around *using* those souls with a different subtle Arcanum. Reapers do not have any special mechanics beyond that — their Left-Handed nature comes from their use of a power available to many mages.

Tremere

A blasphemous combination of Reaper and Lich, the Tremere started as a Legacy that used twisted magic to alter their own souls to the point that they can live forever — though they have to consume the souls of others. At first glance, supernatural creatures not familiar with the Tremere may confuse them for vampires or some other form of immortal parasite. The Tremere have organized to the point that they are more a Nameless Order than a Legacy, with individual Reaper Legacies as “Houses” within them. Every Tremere becomes a near-immortal soul-eater as part of joining the Order. That much is not optional. Those who reject the transformation, or who fall to Paradox, become *Pretas* — monsters that seek out human flesh rather than souls.

Scelesti

The Scelesti pervert Supernal magic by invoking the Abyss. Though it’s an easy way to commit suicide-by-Paradox, the Abyss is a fount of power. Whatever the reason they call upon it, the Scelesti abrogate a mage’s connection to the Supernal in exchange for tangible power, and it’s for that reason that the Orders — including the Seers of the Throne — will kill a Scelestus on sight. Of course, finding the Scelesti is another matter. The Abyss does not obviously mark them all, and they have infiltrated all of the Orders at some level. The other Left-Handed mages stand outside Awakened society, pariahs who nevertheless have some use. The Scelesti squat in the heart of the Orders because to do otherwise is to invite destruction. Though the Orders hunt them, the Scelesti have a handful of Legacies that make deals with the Abyss, infecting the mage’s workings with Paradox in exchange for great power.

The Scelesti aren’t a formal Order — each has his reasons for calling upon the Abyss. He may want to control Paradoxes as a sign of his magical strength. He may need the power of the Abyss to overcome an otherwise insurmountable obstacle. Touching the Supernal may make him yearn to slip the shackles of the Fallen World. Whatever the reason, he has a shard of doubt or uncertainty, and the Abyss provides the answer. Its power provides freedom from doubt and solutions to unsolvable problems.

Some Scelesti don’t have a noble reason to infect their magic with Abyssal energies. They know that the Abyss is anti-thought, the antithesis of all that is. It is real in a way that the Fallen World is not, so they will tear down the Fallen and Supernal both to hasten its coming. By placing their faith in it alone, they fall prey to an antinomian urge that drives them to destroy all that is.

Abyssal magic comes in three broad forms. Many only practice one form, while others use all of them to enhance their spells. A mage can *deliberately* infect his spells with Paradox, increasing their power. No Order would admit the fact, but any mage can invite Paradox into his spells. Many only learn how through hidden writings or the suggestions of others who have managed the feat. Though he unleashes Paradoxes on the world, the rush of power is addictive. Some cabals believe in rehabilitating mages who attempt this kind of Abyssal magic, as a user can choose not to — but after a while, that’s like saying an alcoholic can just choose not to drink.

Other Scelesti turn their backs on their Watchtowers and on the Supernal entirely. The Abyss is the antithesis of everything, and that includes the central pillars of the Supernal. Such a Scelestus must abase himself before an Abyssal Ziggurat, which twists his Path into the opposite of what it once was. Though it warps his Path Yantras and Oblations, he gains a measure of control over Paradox in return.

The third kind of Scelesti make bargains with the astral reflection of the Abyss, communing with it directly and bargaining for command over Paradox. Though he gives his soul over to the Abyss, he becomes a conduit for Paradox into the Fallen World. He can twist another mage’s spells against her, or infect them with Paradox without her knowledge.

Systems

Any mage can invite Paradox into a spell, though doing so is highly addictive. He doesn't contest the Paradox roll for a casting, but rolls Gnosis. Each success allows him to control one Reach applied by the Paradox roll. Scelesti who bargain with Abyssal beings gain more control over the Paradox pool, but the details are up to the Storyteller.

Fallen Worlds

Reality is a transmission from on high but the signal's a scrambled, twisted wave. The Awakened can tune in, behold the pure transmission, and broadcast it over the Lie. Nevertheless, even static-wracked funhouse visions of the world contain aspects of the original transmission. By exploring the Lie's convolutions and utilizing those rare places where the signal hits clearly, sorcerers study the occult connections that bind everything together, under that Supernal transmission.

The Awakened can't track everything to a Supernal origin. The Abyss stands apart, seething with Paradoxes and entities that defy full explanation. Some entities come from places mages haven't mapped. Even though the Awakened believe the Supernal casts the light of reality as pure symbols, mages debate whether the fundamentals of Creation are eternal, or are generated elsewhere — perhaps even in the Fallen World — and through some incomprehensible process, exalted on high and sent below again. Mages know the legends of Ascension, where

mortals become Supernal Forms. What else might rise up from the Lie, insinuating itself within ultimate truth? What slithers between the poles of Creation, contradicting the Supernal/Fallen divide? Every answer strengthens a mage's Gnosis and provokes her obsessions.

Mysteries Are Everywhere

True to the name, Sleepers stick to the dream of a mostly ordinary world where pain lingers and pleasure flees capture, where you put a shoulder to the wheel and keep your head down because there are things out there you shouldn't see — because if you look, they look back.

But mages Awaken. Their will turns the wheel of life and they've got their eyes up, staring dangerous, strange things straight in the eye. They don't just look into the shadows. They chase them. They want to know and name what Sleepers ignore. The world is full of contradictions and flaws in the Lie. Rogue elements enter from strange dimensions, and not just Supernal Realms, the Abyss, or anything else a sorcerer's ever pinned on a map of worlds, confident she knew its place in the order of things.

Mysteries are *everywhere*. The world's sheer weirdness is pervasive enough that it's part of every chronicle. You don't have to put a cluster of high strangeness in the heart of your game, but we suggest you do, to provide conflicts, Mysteries, and Arcane Experiences. Every setting in Chapter Seven of this book provides an example to lift wholesale, or adapt to anywhere you want to place your chronicle:

- In LA dreams literally come true, through mirages and materializations from the Astral Temenos.
- Among the tangled streets, hidden rivers, and Underground lines of London, mages trace words in the High Speech with their movements.
- At the University of Salamanca's library, occult books and gates to alternate worlds appear and vanish without human intervention.
- In Tokyo, magic dies in Mana siphoning zones called Ansho.
- In Tucson, bells ring for the dead, or those who will die.

Map versus Territory

The supernatural cosmos defies definitive mapping. Mages often draw diagrams arranging the Supernal, Fallen, and other realms based on their supposed mystical connections, but these fall apart when others posit (and even experimentally verify) different relationships. When sorcerers try to integrate the perspectives of other supernatural beings, these maps degrade into convoluted, contradictory messes. They encounter duplicate and alternate names, alternative methods of travel — sheer chaos. Mages press on anyway, because enigmas are part and parcel of their lives and besides, even bad maps can serve practical functions.

Storytellers should avoid confusing the relationships between realms and entities as definitive statements about what and where they are. Don't feel pressured to decide on the full truth of your setting. Remember, mages don't know, and they have the psychic equipment to contemplate ideas that drive ordinary people out of their minds. Let your cosmos grow bigger than your imagination. Make maps to inspire and order your thoughts, but don't feel bound to them.

The Realms of Earth and Flesh

The Lie includes the world of base matter, that too-solid material realm of hunger, nations, petty passions, and failing ecologies. Strange shadows crawl across it, and supernatural powers stream across occult wavelengths. The Awakened explore, and look for cracks in the world's disguise.

Sancta

Hearth and home, a sanctum reflects its owner's Path, favored symbols, and the theories she uses to join her soul to the Supernal Realms. It's a safe place that offers a distraction-free place to perform occult research.

Weird Stuff: An Incomplete List

The following strange phenomena exist in the Fallen World and are worthy of study by mages as enigmas in of themselves, or signs pointing to even greater Mysteries. Some of them might fit into **Mage** cosmology, but others could stay elusive until a mage attains a significant degree of enlightenment.

Ciphers and Secret Messages: Strange communications permeate the airwaves. Numbers stations alert operatives around the world, and not all of them are of this world. Popular movies contain coded messages for those who know how to look for them. On the other hand, some messages have destructive effects on people able to comprehend them. Many mages believe some of these contain High Speech transmissions from the Supernal Realms – the Exarchs or the mysterious Oracles – but many more defy understanding.

Cryptids: Supposedly extinct creatures survive into the present day, but many of them don't leave tracks, spoor or other indication. The world hides them. Why can't anyone tell the killer is a smilodon? Are these beings half-spirit? Did they survive from the distant past, or did they travel here? Perhaps they waited in a fold of time or magical chamber. If so, what let them out?

Genius Loci: Houses, factories, groves, and other places have lives of their own. Maybe they absorb Resonance until they wake up, or a sudden psychic trauma provides the initial burst of power. What created these witch-houses and cursed abattoirs? What happened to the kids who went in, and what do these minds of places even want?

Immortals: Some people just don't die, provoking a lich's envy, and suspicion from everyone else. Those fears are well-founded even after you rule out vampires, because immortality always has a price. Some immortals may not drink blood but bathe in it. They eat ghosts or Mana. How did they get this way? What secrets do they keep from the past? How do you kill the bastards, anyway?

Interstices: It's easy to miss the places between places, but some alleys stretch a little *too* far. Tent cities, apartment complexes, and sewers grow beyond the dimensions people build for them. People get lost and acclimatized, just as in any other wilderness. What creates subway stations nobody else can see? What do the "mole people" want?

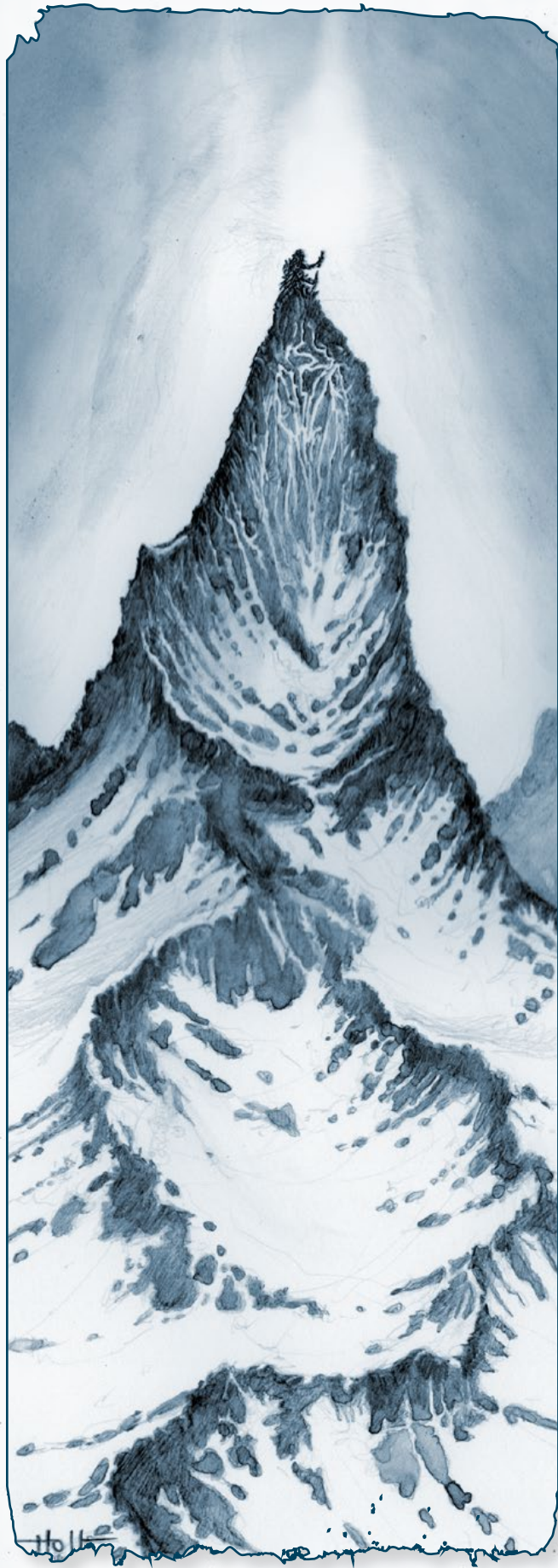
Men in Black and Other Strangers: Appearing in the wake of UFOs and reports of paranormal phenomena, Men in Black are slightly less authentically human than a wax statue. They're the best known "strangers," a category of people who are not people, that infiltrate the world. (Their fame may be mages' fault, as the disguise was common among Guardians of the Veil from a certain generation.) Mages believe the strangers aren't spirits, Abyssal creatures, or anything else they can easily identify, but nobody knows why they shuffle through the world regarding everything with plastic gazes.

The Others: Finally, you can always ask yourself how other **Chronicles of Darkness** games and their protagonists fit into **Mage**. What are vampires, really? How do they fit into a world of Supernal shadows? These other creatures might have some idea and even something to say about mages, but frankly, there's every chance they're wrong. If the answers were easy, the Awakened would already know them.

Mages who prefer the wandering life might not possess personal sancta, but that doesn't mean they don't use them. Nomads may use communal facilities provided by their Orders, or borrow an ally's sanctum while "couch surfing." Communal sancta are only tailored to the individuals who maintain it, and are less effective and comfortable than personal sancta. Thus, experienced sorcerers almost always invest in a personal ritual space. Sancta include the following places:

- **Athenaea and Lorehouses:** The Free Council and Mystorium both build communal sancta for their members. For Mystagogues, Athenaeum access depends on a member's degree of initiation. Some archives might be guarded against all but the most trusted officers of the mystery cult. The Free Council allows any member in good standing to visit a Lorehouse.

- **Consilium and Caucus Sancta:** Many Consilia maintain sancta for occasions when the Consilium's officials need to cast spells or provide ritual space for important visitors. Well-organized Caucuses build them for member use. In both cases they double as meeting places.
- **Personal Sancta:** Most sancta are modest personal spaces, highly tailored to the mages who build them.
- **Seer Nexuses:** Seers of the Throne build communal sancta to satisfy specific needs. The sect's selfish focus means these are typically spartan places with just enough rooms and ritual design to support ritual casting, as no Seer wants to sacrifice too much of his own resources to keep it running. The most common Nexuses support Space spells for communication and transport.



Systems: Sancta use the Safe Place and Sanctum Merits. Some sancta (particularly Athenaea and Lorehouses) typically provide other place-based Merits, though visitors use them on the sufferance of their true owners. Characters must possess the Sanctum Merit or have requisitioned it through their Order to make use of the Merit's mechanical effects such as extra Spell Control.

Hallows

The phenomenal world may be a Lie, but it still relies on Supernal forces. The strongest channels of power lead to places of symbolic importance. These Hallows trigger a mage's mystic senses, and may be further examined with Prime to determine their strength and if any ley lines intersect with them. Even without ley lines, a Hallow is a special place. Things just seem more *real* in its vicinity, searing themselves into long-term memory like the first taste of a rare fruit. Hallows can be found on mountain peaks, deep caves, and anywhere in between, but always seem to be located near unique features, or in places that seem to be the epitome of their environments: deep, old-growth forests and sinister cracks in the earth, not tree farms and anonymous ditches.

Mages harvest Mana from a Hallow by either performing oblations there, or harvesting tass: Mana that fills material forms. The type of tass that manifests depends on the Hallow's physical and symbolic characteristics, as Mana that hasn't been otherwise harvested merges with the environment. Tass is the water from a sacred spring, or stones chipped from the summit of a mountain. When people change the Hallow's environment, tass is slow to conform. Cap the spring, and sacred water still pools around the concrete. It takes time, and reawakening from a prolonged period of dormancy, for a Hallow's tass to assume a new form.

Systems: The Hallow Merit represents reliable access to a Hallow and gives the rules for Mana and tass production. Powerful Hallows (3 dots or greater) almost always intersect with ley lines. Prime spells can connect ley lines to Hallows of any strength however, to imbue them with a specific Resonance. Thus, many Hallows are also Nodes.

Ley Lines and Nodes

Some Awakened say that the Lie is an imperfect mirror reflecting Supernal symbols, but those imperfections include the entirety of our experience. Ripples on the surface inspire emotions and generate Resonance. Cracks in the mirror transmit it. They're the web of ley lines, and where they join, Nodes form. Then again, ley lines may represent the creative powers of the Fallen World, whose passions harness magical energies.

Each ley line possesses a specific Resonance. Nodes are places where multiple ley lines converge, providing access to multiple forms of Resonance. Many Nodes exist alongside powerful Hallows, giving credence to the idea that ley lines are cracks in the Lie. Ley line Resonance subtly affects the areas around it. For instance, the murder rate goes up around a line of Fury. Finally, Resonance generates Essence that spirits at the roots of the Shadow's ecology devour.

Systems: Spells cast at a ley line may harvest its Resonance, and when a ley line intersects a Hallow, any tass collected from it possesses

that Resonance. Resonance can typically be described by a keyword that describes an image, emotion, or theme, such as “Subterranean,” “Wrathful,” or “Ichthyoid.” When a sorcerer spends Mana from this tass on a spell where the effect or manifestation matches the stored Resonance (“Ichthyoid” for growing gills, for instance), it suffuses her Nimbus, allowing a Persona Yantra worth one die.

Prime spells manipulate ley lines by moving them, creating them, or altering their Resonance. Certain Spirit spells manipulate Resonance as well. See the descriptions of those Arcana for details.

In addition, as a place where Supernal and Fallen energies join, a Node is “charged” with power related to one gross Arcanum connected to its Resonance traits. Each point of tass from a Hallow with a Node carries just one of the Node’s Resonance types, but such a Hallow can generate a different type of tass for each of them. These types may not look significantly different to the naked eye, but reveal their differences to Prime and Spirit Unveiling magic.

A Node also provides the following benefits within an area of roughly 100 yards per contributing ley line to anyone who casts the Prime spell “Sacred Geometry” or an Unveiling spell to examine the energies linked to that Arcanum.

- **Forces:** By precisely aligning a stationary piece of technology that requires heat or electricity to function, the mage may use the Node to power it.
- **Life:** The mage may harness the Node to bring any plant put there to any point in its life cycle, as long as that point would take a year or less. These changes require a day to complete and a successful Intelligence + Crafts or Intelligence + Survival roll.
- **Matter:** Unless totally destroyed, stationary, inanimate objects built in alignment with local Resonance heal one point of Structure per day. Their permanent Structure may slowly wear down due to environmental conditions, but at half the usual rate. This process is undetectable by Sleepers.
- **Space:** Mages who examine the area magically acquire a +2 bonus to tasks that require significant movement through space, including driving, running, and certain athletic feats.
- **Time:** Mages who study the area with magic benefit from a +2 bonus to Initiative.

Verges and Demesnes

Verges are places where the Supernal World manifests, barely diluted by the Lie. Mages compete for control of them, drawing on their power to enhance their spells.

Supernal phenomena manifest freely in a Verge. In a Stygian Verge Shades accost visitors, and people find ancient coins and fallen tombstones buried in the ashen earth. These phenomena manifest on the material plane in the heart of the Verge, but are usually disguised by Twilight along the periphery. Space might warp at the heart of a Verge, and in such cases objects and beings inside

are invisible to anyone outside. Thus Cyclopean ruins, bizarre trees, and magical beasts conceal themselves inside some Verges.

Verges manifest spontaneously or in response to a supernatural event, and can be temporary or permanent in nature. Old, stable Verges tend to develop other supernatural traits. They collect Mana into Hallows, sprout ley lines, or erupt with Irises to Emanations connected to the Verge’s ruling Supernal Realm.

A mage with a sanctum may create a synthetic Verge known as a Demesne by extending the Supernal connection within a soul

Strange Verges

Exarch-ruled and Abyssal Verges operate slightly differently from counterparts keyed to general Supernal radiance, as follows:

Abyssal Verges: Perhaps it lives. Without exception, an Abyssal Verge is a tendril for one of the great anti-gods/realms called Annunaki, which sheds Acamoth like microbes falling from a great beast, sends Gulmoth to investigate whatever pulled it through, or conjures other unclassifiable intruders. Even in a Verge, ordered reality repels Annunaki, so they only send such entities occasionally. There’s no system for this, but the Storyteller shouldn’t overdo it. The environment disconnects from nature; stones scream and water flows uphill. This applies a –2 penalty to Skill rolls that depend on a knowledge of natural laws. Abyssal Verges don’t supply the usual benefits but instead provide +2 dice to Gnosis rolls to invite Paradox into a spell the way Scelesti do (**see p. 239**). Scelesti with powers allowing them to summon Abyssal beings also enjoy a +2 bonus.

An Abyssal Verge may be used to join a Scelestus Legacy, though details are left up to the Storyteller.

An Abyssal Demesne is the sort of risky idea even Scelesti might think twice about. Unlike other Demesnes, an Abyssal one is not insulated from visiting entities. All of the above benefits apply. Unfortunately, the soul stone now belongs to the Verge’s ruling Annunaki, which may destroy, move, or transform it as its inscrutable desires dictate.

Exarchate Verges and Prelacies: The Exarchs are loath to permit any strong bond between the Supernal and Fallen, but if they must, they extend their palaces.

An Exarchate Verge only provides its Yantra bonus and Paradox immunity to spells that use the Arcanum connected to its ruling Exarch. On the other hand, it provides +1 Reach to such spells by exploiting the Exarchs’ mastery of the Lie, and visiting entities are always loyal to the Exarch. Seers may use Prelacies (**see p. 103**) to create Exarchate Verges from Demesnes.

stone. This behaves much like a natural Verge, except that Supernal phenomena do not manifest on the material plane spontaneously. The mage doesn't have to worry about strange intruders.

Systems: A Verge offers a +2 die Yantra bonus to spells that utilize its Ruling Arcana. Furthermore, as long as a spell that qualifies for the bonus doesn't leave the Verge, it doesn't risk Paradox unless a Sleeper is present at some point during the spell's duration. Spells cast in natural Verges are not subject to Dissonance (see p. 299), but those cast in Demesnes are. Sleepers suffer Quiescence as usual.

A Demesne uses the same systems, but is confined to a mage's sanctum. See p. 99 for the systems to create a Demesne. (Neither the stone nor the spell need come from the sorcerer who uses it.) A natural Verge manifests Supernal phenomena spontaneously, while a Demesne does not. In addition, a mage may travel to the Astral Realms from a Demesne (but not a natural Verge) powered by her own soul stone, a stone with a soul on the same Path, or through any Path's stone (with the permission of the sorcerer whose soul resides within it). Once given, permission cannot be rescinded until the beneficiary returns.

A Verge or Demesne's Yantra bonus is limited by its semiotic associations, as is usual for Yantras. A Stygian Verge that's filled with metal but no aspects of Death won't help a mage bind ghosts, but will help him create strange alloys. Mages typically equip Demesnes with equipment and symbols that support the spells they plan to cast.

Verges and Demesnes both provide a +2 die bonus to rolls to summon Supernal entities from the realms they're connected to.

Iris

Doors to strange places. Trees intertwined so that you pass through a band of shadow. The mouths of enormous idols. Caves and cloudy mountain tops. The world's full of strange passages. Mages call them *Iris*es to signify the blurry line between travel and perception and perhaps, to hint that travelers should look before leaping — or stepping with the left foot and speaking a secret name, for many *Iris*es require a special action or object to function.

*Iris*es arise spontaneously, or in response to some epic event. Potent spells (typically of the fifth dot — see "Spirit Manse," p. 185, for an example) generate them. Archmages open *Iris*es from their personal realms to virtually anywhere in the cosmos. *Iris*es have various specialized names, but these are mostly of interest to academics; most mages are content to call one an "Iris (such and such)" and be done with it.

Systems: Passing through an *Iris* from the material side brings a traveler to the connected realm as long as she utilizes the *Iris*' Key (see p. 172). *Iris*es formed by phenomena other than Awakened spells possess Keys related to the manner of their creation. One need only burn a picture of the evil man who died there, walk widdershins around the boundary stones, or do whatever else is necessary.

The following *Iris*es have been catalogued by the Awakened.

Aberrances: *Iris*es to the Abyss are extraordinarily rare, but can be opened by epic Paradoxes, strong Abyssal verges, and Scelesti rites. Step through, and you won't come back unless you're a Scelestus returning from a successful initiation, or a possessed shell for an Abyssal entity.

Avernian Gates: Doorways to the Underworld, Avernian Gates manifest in tombs, caves, and other places associated with death and passage underground. Mages create these with the spell Create Avernian Gate (p. 133). Natural examples occur in every graveyard and cemetery in the world, and many Stygian Verges.

Distortions: These *Iris*es offer travel from one place on Earth to another without crossing the distance between them, or to a pocket dimension. Mages create them with fifth-dot Space spells such as Pocket Dimension and potent variations of Teleportation, but many are naturally-occurring.

Shadowed Doors: The Reaching spell builds an *Iris* to the Shadow. These *Iris*es might also manifest near ley line nexuses or anywhere where spirits are especially active, particularly if people feed spirits Essence with actions on the material plane.

Scars: No spell can create a Scar into the Lower Depths, because it's a place where reality itself fails. As one approaches a Scar, its signature absence grows ever stronger. Color fades, or certain emotions degenerate into wordless urges. People who pass through don't return. Lower Depths entities might whisper from the other side, begging to be raised.

Soul Eyes: This *Iris* has an informal name because it describes a poorly understood phenomenon: gates leading to Wendings, the realms made of archmages' manifested souls. All known Soul Eyes enter abandoned Wendings (as opposed to the "Golden Roads" of an archmage's active presence) but most still retain complex Keys and potent defensive spells. Wendings that don't allow physical journeys place visitors in a trance state, just as for Astral Synesi.

Synesi: These *Iris*es provide direct access to an Astral Realm. Synesi allow anyone with the Key or another means of entrance to enter the linked realm while sleeping or meditating. Travelers don't physically enter the Astral through a Synese, but enter the usual trance state for Astral journeys. Instead of going to a personal dream, they immediately arrive at the *Iris*' destination in dream form.

Thuræ: Thuræ lead to an Emanation Realm (see p. 250 for *Emanation Realms*). No known spell can create them — instead, they usually manifest at the heart of Supernal Verges. Add +2 dice to Supernal Summoning attempts where the mage opens the Thura.

Enigmatic Gates: Finally, certain *Iris*es lead to places mages know very little about. One type leads *inside* the Gauntlet, not across it, compressing visitors so that the world outside looks enormous and distorted. Another takes travelers to an airless landscape where the stars are wrong. Their particulars are up to the Storyteller.

Ruins of Before

Once, gods ruled the Supernal Realms. In another age beyond all history, sorcerers built towers and tombs to honor civilizations that Time has since abjured. When the Lie sent that age crashing down (or prevented it from ever being) it didn't do a thorough job. Gods fell and mystic temples collapsed, but their ruins fell halfway into known history. Yet there's always something out of place about them, because they retain some memory of an age without the Lie.

The **Bound** are god-monsters from the Atlantean epoch. Mages say that before the Fall, these Supernal beings rampaged through the world. Legends of minotaurs, gorgons, and other mythic monsters may be distorted memories of them. Mages destroyed some, tamed others, and imprisoned some of the strongest. When the Exarchs came, they hurled Old Gods out of the Supernal Realms, and they fell to the Fallen World.

Atlantean temples might not be religious structures but most sorcerers treat them with reverence, and a few pray before them. Nobody knows what the Atlanteans worshiped, but mages base diverse theories upon the symbols in old ruins, or visions gleaned from distant corners of the Temenos. Both of these sources are unreliable, for these visions share a critical characteristic with the ruins themselves: They come from many versions of Atlantis. Some believe that there was never a definitive version of Atlantis beyond its Supernal ideal, so all physical evidence is a shadow cast upon Fallen history. Thus, temples represents Greek, Indian, and other structures, twisted by their true origin during an indescribable epoch. Others say that there have been many versions of Atlantis, rising along various tracks of history but Falling into a single continuum: the Lie.

Many ruins contain Bound which appear to have been intentionally imprisoned within, but Bound exist apart from temples and vice versa. Both interest mages because they preserve secrets from the Time Before. Temples contain weird enchantments, mighty artifacts, and other wonders, but some of them are traps that confound intruders. And the Bound? They remember another age, resent yet obey the old spells of binding, and offer service and secrets to anyone who frees them.

Systems: At first glance, Atlantean temples appear to belong to one or more historical cultures, but expert inspection reveals that something is off. They possess anachronistic features and strange stylistic elements. Wooden elements belong to unknown species and defeat radiocarbon dating. Other parts are made of “adamas,” materials from the Atlantean age that cannot be affected by Matter spells. Contemporary Awakened have no idea why this is, and can’t reproduce it. Rigorous examination leads to bizarre or inconclusive results. The Storyteller should design ruins and their challenges to fit story goals, but with an eye to the site’s possible history. Atlantean temples often stand within Verges and contain other supernatural features, such as Hallows and ley line Nodes.

The **Bound** are Supernal entities (see p.253). Many weaker Bound were ensorcelled to act as guardians and assistants. Greater Bound are prisoners or exiles from the Supernal Realm who are unable to return. Bound often lair in the Atlantean complexes even when they weren’t imprisoned there, or after they win freedom. Ruins give them a place to hide and something to bargain with. Structures that were prisons usually contain magical safeguards that can harm the Bound and intruders alike.

Separated from the Supernal, the Bound hunger for Mana. Each Bound loses one point of Mana per day. When it’s all gone, the Bound returns to its prison or the place where it fell to Earth. It must sleep. But when a Mage or other source of Mana draws near, they wake up. Bound devour Mana by destroying its source. A few Bound can eat a Sleeper and gain Mana equal to what a mage would acquire by scouring herself to death. Most are re-

stricted to the Awakened, tass, and enchanted objects, however. Awakened victims grant Mana from total scouring as above, but also provide any Mana they contained above and beyond that, and one point per dot of Gnosis. Mages are attractive victims, but can mollify one of the Bound by channeling Mana through suitable spells. The Bound can only take Mana destructively, but can receive it through less violent magical means.

The Realms Invisible

Beyond perception, power. Step sideways, sink into the dark, or slip the surly bonds of Earth on wings of knowledge. These acts take you to the Realms Invisible, where the Lie’s iron rusts and creatures who partake of forgotten truths and insidious deceptions dwell.

The Realms are places beyond the mundane plane so their locations relative to it are subjective. Our tour moves from the low to high, as Awakened reckon it. Mages speak of “Above” when describing the Supernal Realms and planes they believe stand closer to them, and “Below” when speaking of what lies further down in the Fallen World.

The Lower Depths

Places so far from the light they shouldn’t be able to exist, but do. Wormholes under a rotting log of Creation. The Lower Depths consist of countless realms, because the region lacks even the energy to contain a unitary reality. The Lower Depths are to the Fallen World what the Fallen is to the Supernal, and are therefore a Lie of the Lie. Some mages believe that the petty symbols of the human psyche take on great importance in certain of the Depths, just as Supernal signs cast their shadows in the ordinary world.

Each Lower Depth is unable to retain a critical constituent of existence; it’s either absent, or has been distorted into something hostile to ordinary existence. Sometimes the lack can be defined by an Arcanum. A Depth realm without Death might be choked with endless knots of imperishable flesh and plant matter. Other depths lack less definable principles, such as Shape, Identity, and Righteousness. Some mages situate Hell here, because the entities known as *akathartoi* (“unclean ones”) closely resemble the demons of Abrahamic legend, feeding from human depravity. Mages have catalogued numerous Lower Depths, but only by interrogating and examining their inhabitants. No reliable source speaks of a mage returning from the Lower Depths, but it’s possible to summon an inhabitant upward. Their denizens find it difficult to manifest. They must satisfy signature hungers, and find it extremely difficult to take material form.

System: Short of archmastery, entering the Lower Depths is a one way trip, as its basic hostility to existence destroys most visitors. Entering a realm without a feature like solidity, consciousness, or desire ensures annihilation. It might be possible to craft a spell that reinforces the lacking reality constituent, but such workings are currently speculative.

The Underworld

Dis, Mictlan, Gehenna and the other dark afterlives in Sleeper mythology are aspects of the Underworld, where ghosts go when

they can't find peace. Mages know that ghosts aren't really dead souls, but reflections generated by passions that persist after souls pass to unknown kingdoms. Some believe that a ghost is part of the original soul, separated by traumatic death, and others hold that it contains the person's actual personality: everything that can be defined as "them." Therefore, ghosts must be laid to rest. The dead should be honored. As for the soul itself, Moros say that all souls once went to Stygia to be purified and reborn, but nobody knows if this still happens, or even if it was ever true.

Some ghosts wander from their haunts into the *Autochthonous Depths*: strange caves, or constructed passages that stretch beyond the efforts of human builders. They lead to secret mazes where ghosts and chthonian monsters (the never-alive, inhuman natives of the Underworld) lair. Descending deeper, the maze gives

way to enormous underground vaults, sunless valleys, or great tunnels. Eventually, the traveler encounters one of the rivers of the dead. Each river possesses a special supernatural property, and is often patrolled by strong ghosts and chthonians. The *Lower Mysteries* of the Underworld possesses many such rivers. These separate various *Deep Dominions*, each of which is ruled by one or more lords called Kerberoi. Each realm is a world unto itself, made of unique legends and metaphysical laws, though not always ones that match known mythology.

Certain Old Laws constrain native and visitor alike. An Old Law may make speech impossible, or turn all sustenance into ashes. But one rule binds all living visitors: They're not welcome. Canny old ghosts and corrupt chthonians tolerate the living under mutually beneficial relationships, but most beings are coldly indifferent, or try to rectify any problem by killing intruders.

Systems: The Death Arcanum and rules for ghosts cover the relevant systems for dealing with the Underworld. In the Underworld, spells that use the Death Arcanum benefit from a -2 die penalty to Paradox rolls. Finally, the Underworld has a curious effect on the psyches of the living: Their Virtues and Vices are reversed, such that fulfilling the Vice provides a full Willpower refresh while fulfilling the Virtue grants only a single point.

Chthonians use the same rules as ghosts, but don't possess Anchors or an Integrity trait and may be any Size and appearance. They usually have disgusting, unsettling appearances, merging vaguely human characteristics with other traits like maggot-like bodies or insectile legs.

The Ranks of the Dead

Western Grimoires assign ghosts the following names. There used to be a different hierarchy for chthonians – texts describe "Nephwracks" and other forms – but over the centuries a common set of terms has grown to describe ghost and chthonian alike.

Plasms: This is a catch-all term for Rank 0 ghosts and generic chthonic phenomena such as mysterious handprints and streams of ectoplasm.

Manes: Rank 1 ghosts. Most Manes are not truly intelligent, but can speak and act according to patterns complex enough to fake it. When confronted with something beyond their obsessions, their limitations become clear.

Lemures: These Rank 2 or 3 ghosts are typically intelligent, though still focused on unfinished business with the world of the living.

Lares: Rank 4 or 5 ghosts balance their obsessions with other motivations, centered on their existence beyond life. All Lares are aware that they're no longer living. Many are figures of worship in ancestor cults, and enjoy certain powers as a result.

Kerberoi: Ghosts and chthonians of Rank 6 or greater always reside deep in the Underworld, and have evolved beyond easy understanding – Awakened theories that the dead are mere echoes fail to understand these beings' powers and motivations.

Geists: A subset of Lares called Geists (a neologism) sometimes possess humans on a semi-permanent basis, sharing other aspects of the host's soul. The strongest of these bonds produce the un-Awakened necromancers called Sin-Eaters. This process and the Geists themselves are poorly understood.

The Shadow

To get to the Shadow you must either cross the Gauntlet between worlds or find one of the Spirit Irises called Loci. If you do, the Shadow arises in an exaggerated parallel. You've entered the land of spirits, where animism is the basic fact of existence. Werewolves are natives of the Shadow and material realms. Mages invade the Shadow instead. They're almost never welcome visitors, and the spirits offer them grudging respect at best.

Every location in the material realm possesses a Shadow counterpart. So do most objects, though in some cases, fallen trees and wrecked buildings still stand, maintained by the spiritual significance they possessed while they stood in the ordinary world. They're made of ephemera, like everything else in the Shadow. Anyone and anything that crosses over changes into ephemeral matter, and automatically changes back when it returns to the material plane. Anything that began as ephemera arrives in the material world in Twilight.

Some places in the Shadow are of different shapes and sizes than their material counterparts. An old mansion has extra rooms, or a forest that has been cut back to a modest stand of trees in the material realm might contain miles of twisted old growth in the Shadow. A few places have no material parallel at all. To reach them, you need to cross the Gauntlet and travel the Shadow, beyond mirrored locations. *Mysterium* texts say that some of these places are Irises to other realms: the Lower Depths, certain Emanations, and even the Astral Realm (though falling unconscious in the Shadow to enter the Astral is probably a bad idea). The dominant Resonance of a place determines its characteristics, because it generates Essence that permeates the

region, and hosts the spirits best able to feed on it. Places with no parallel are emergent phenomena, growing from the energies of adjacent realms and greater spiritual connections that mages don't fully understand.

The Shadow teems with spirits. There's a spirit for almost every living thing, object, and emotion, and spirits that represent species and evolutionary roles. For instance, every cat has a spirit, but there's a greater cat spirit as well, and a spirit of stalking predators. Mages would say that all of these belong to the same spirit choir (see below), but the spirits themselves might not agree. Humans and most formerly human creatures do not have representative spirits. Some mages believe that the human "spirit" might be an aspect of the soul. Werewolves on the other hand are half-spirit, half-flesh in one being, and simply take both sides with them wherever they go.

Spirits with broader portfolios are usually stronger, but this is not always the case. They obey a hierarchy set by raw power and ecological niche. The meat and drink of all spirits is Essence, the energy generated by Resonance. Essence flows across the entire Shadow, but is especially concentrated around ley lines. Few spirits feed upon raw Essence, however. Instead, they hunt one another.

Systems: The Spirit Arcanum and other rules for spirits cover the rules for dealing with the Shadow. In addition, spells that utilize the Spirit Arcanum benefit from a -2 die penalty to Paradox rolls when cast in the Shadow.

The Astral Realms

Mages explore the Astral Realms by turning inward, following their Gnosis to the worlds within human souls, and even beyond, to alien and primal ideas. The Astral Realms are states of mind as much as worlds. The Self is infinite, expanding outward to other selves and thought-forms until they intermingle. Travelers meditate, sending a dream self in to search for knowledge.

Everyone enters the shoals of the Astral by dreaming, but most never go deeper. All mages traveled the Astral through their Watchtowers when they Awakened, though they might not have been aware of it in the face of Mystery Plays and other enigmas. They've even gone beyond, to the Supernal – but they can't duplicate the journey now. Yet the experience allows them to follow the path partway, and even blaze new trails beyond individual dreams, and to the following realms.

Dreams: The shallows of the Astral are experienced by almost every human being as their own dreams. Mages can enter the

The Spirit Hierarchy

Mages don't speak the language of spirits without magic to translate it. At best, they bastardize a few words of the language to fill in anything they can't describe in the High Speech. Spirits usually find this presumptuous, even cause for outrage, and can't be fooled by any means into thinking a mage barking "Dihar" (another name for Incarna) is a native. So the Awakened use terms that have evolved among human students of Shadow-lore. Spirits still don't care for these, but at least the speaker acknowledges her foreign origin by using the following titles.

Note: The insects and microbes of the Shadow. Motes possess a Rank of 0. This is not to say that the spirits of small things are always so weak, however. Mosquitos may manifest as Motes, but if enough of them gather into a cloud, the bloodsucking insect-spirits possess a greater Rank. Some physically large creatures and things might also be represented by Motes as well. Some medieval sources call them "Pawns."

Gaffling: Gafflings are Rank 1 ("Page" or "Squire" in the old texts) or 2 ("Knight") spirits, the weakest entities of consequence in the Shadow. They're often spirits of common creatures and things: particular street corners or an especially vicious dog.

Jagging: These Rank 3 ("Baron/Baroness") or 4 ("Count/Countess") spirits encompass significant entities from the material realm or narrow categories of beings. The spirit of a city's principal river and the spirit of stray dogs would be Jagglings.

Incarna: Spirits of Ranks 5 to 6 ("Duke/Duchess," and "Prince/Princess," respectively) are called Incarnae to note that they represent the greater powers of the material realm. The chief of a sizeable spirit court is usually a lesser Incarna at least. Greater Incarnae include the heads of many spirit choirs or of mighty things in the ordinary world, such as the Amazon River or the sewers of Paris.

Celestine: The Rank 7+ ("King/Queen" and "Emperor/Empress") Celestines are spirits of mighty global or even cosmic phenomena, such as Darkness, Forests, Rain, and the Sun. Mages might encounter a Celestine's lesser and lower-Ranked aspect (all Celestines can create and dissolve these as they wish) but only rarely win audience with the undisguised god itself.

Choir and Court: Mages divide spirits into choirs, which represent a common concept. They note choirs of flowers and flames, for instance. In as much as spirits have a society, mages call it a local court, where powerful spirits rule over lesser ones, though always beneath the greater laws of the Shadow's ecology. Mastery of Spirit gives a sorcerer the power to assume a spirit Rank and rule her own court.



dreams of subjects with Mind spells, or practice lucid dreaming to explore their own. Some Goetia and other, strange supernatural beings stalk through human dreams and nightmares, and a mage meditating on a problem may find inspiration in a dreaming state.

The Oneiros, The Personal Soul: The lowest layer of the Astral proper contains individual thoughts, beliefs, and passions in dozens of cells, side by side. They hold memories, beliefs, Vices, Virtues, and personal fancies. Each cell is an individual realm and on the inside, is large enough to contain any setting. A traveler's Oneiros creates the people, places, and things she needs to act out the scene at hand. Most of these are weak Goetia, but a mage's *daimon*, or embodied "higher self," is stronger and more insightful. Sorcerers raise personal Goetia here, or examine the Imagos of their Rotes.

Mages enter their own Oneiroi by default, but can journey to others through Mind spells, or by crossing a tenuous bridge made of shared thoughts. These aren't high archetypes, but

specific people, places, and things. Thus, a sorcerer might use the fact that she is currently thinking about the same person as someone else as a bridge into another person's soul. (Famous people and things don't qualify unless they're of great personal significance, because Fame vaults the subject's Astral double into the Temenos.) She follows the common element from her soul, to the other. Note however that the other party must be actively dreaming or meditating for this method to work.

In many Astral journeys, the Oneiros is just a starting point. If a mage looks outward, she generates a vision-narrative about widening her perspective. She moves through the vision, deals with its petty challenges, and meditates upon it to vault herself past into the Temenos.

The Temenos, Soul of Humanity: Mages think of the Temenos as the next layer up from the Oneiros. This is where individual souls coalesce into the massed soul of Humanity, private thoughts becoming shared myths, archetypes, and concepts. They cluster by theme. Realms of Fascism, Collectivism,

and Democracy belong to the greater realms of Government, and share territory with Human Nature. You can meet every god here, every fiction, and even people so famous they fill the mythic roles of old deities. Temenos conceptual realms include every magical tradition ever practiced by more than one person. Various regions belong to Paths, Orders, Legacies, and other cults. The groups so represented take particular interest in these realms, often protecting them with spells and magical guardians.

Traveling from one region to another is a game of association, similar to travel between Oneiroi, but doesn't require the same degree of specificity. It still takes the form of a dream story, however. To travel from Democracy to Fascism, you might enter the realm of a failing government: Germany in 1933, or a fictional realm of mashed-together states and archetypal tyrants. If you wish to journey "upward" to the Anima Mundi, travel through a story where archetypes give way to primal concepts and emotions, and consider the thoughts of beasts, stars, and stones.

Mages travel the Temenos in search of occult insights and a better understanding of human nature. In fact, it's possible to alter collective thought realms by changing their stories. These changes manifest in the material realm. If you want to get a television show cancelled, kill the protagonists in the Temenos; on some level, viewers will believe the show's dead and watch something else. Fortunately, the more pervasive and important a concept, the harder it is to adjust. Belief in free will, true love, and the rest probably can't be expunged or radically altered in this top-down fashion. Stronger concepts also possess guardians. These Goetia don't depend on an ideal being popular, though this helps. Goetia also play the parts of gods, celebrities, and other personified ideas.

As a mage rises through the Temenos, cultural skin flakes off collective ideas until she reaches the border of the Anima Mundi, the Omphalos or Boundary Stone: the liminal realm of High Speech that represents the highest form of human language. From here, mages can either travel through tunnels in the stone into the Anima Mundi, or skirt its edge to walk into the Primordial realms containing humanity's essential emotions and fears. These realms, representing the animal instincts of the human race, are poorly understood. Their inhabitants are typically monstrous and highly protective of their territory.

The Anima Mundi, Soul of the Cosmos: The final layer of the Astral accessible to mages, the Anima Mundi or *Dreamtime* is the shared soul of the whole Fallen World, where the subtle thoughts of animals and even stars array themselves.

After a mage follows the runes of High Speech through the Omphalos, she might travel to the *Swath*, where the polluted aspects of post-industrial civilization manifest, or the *Spire Perilous*, a remnant of the Axis Mundi that is said to have been damaged by the end of the Time Before. These places (typically visualized as upward journeys) connect in turn to the *Dreaming Earth*, where nature and the raw elements manifest, and beyond to the *Sidereal Wastes*, where mages behold the dreams of planets and stars.

None of these are human-generated dreams and ideas. Sidereal Mars isn't a planetary romance with green, sword-bearing natives (you can find that in the Temenos), but sterile red sands – that is, assuming Mars didn't once bear life. The Sidereal Wastes cause Time to mutate so that time is divided into actions, not

The Goetic Legion

Rather than explicable titles and systems of Rank as for ghosts and spirits, Goetia come in a near-infinite range of powers and potential, based more on how central a concept they embody in the layer of the Astral that birthed them than on any true hierarchy. The daimon of a high-Gnosis mage is higher Rank than that of her apprentice, a popular television character may be higher Rank than a forgotten god, and a fearsome nightmare may pale next to a subtle but long-lasting trauma.

units you can measure with a clock – and it holds true even when the action might take years to accomplish.

In the Anima Mundi, travelers must resist the Ecstatic Wind, where human thought dissolves into the cosmic oversoul. Raising the Astral Amnion (see below) protects against it.

Beyond the Sidereal Wastes, explorers find a desolate beach on the shore of a light-absorbing sea: the *Ocean Oroboros*, Astral reflection of the Abyss. Along the beach, travelers find the citadels of the Aeons, mighty beings who represent the Arcana. All but one of them manifest in pairs matching the Path Arcana. The final Aeon, the Old Man of the Abyss, lives alone by a ramshackle hut.

Mages can go no further than the shores of Oroboros. Even touching it is tantamount to entering the Abyss, and destroys the fool who does it. Mages sometimes cast things they don't want into Oroboros. This includes memories, souls they wish to damn, and even material items they've converted into ephemera for the journey. One need merely imagine the act of throwing something in your (Astral) possession away and it vanishes forever.

Systems: All a mage needs to enter her own dreams is a Resolve + Composure roll to meditate while going to sleep; Mind spells bypass the need for meditation or are used to enter the dreams of others. Spells within dreams are cast normally, except that Sleepers do not treat spells affecting the dream or its narrative as obvious magic.

The Astral Realms proper are made of thoughts, emotions, and other ephemeral creations of the soul, but the Arcana affect their creations using the same rules as they do on the material realm. In a place of symbols, each Arcanum's dominion has equally symbolic importance. Matter affects visions of stone, for instance. That said, a place of thoughts and emotions made manifest eases the use of the Mind Arcanum. Mind spells benefit from a -2 penalty to Paradox rolls in the Astral.

To create an Astral Path and begin her journey, the mage meditates at a place of power. This can be a *Hallow*, a *Demesne*, or a *Synese* (an *Astral Iris*; see p. 243). Each of these starting points demands its own requirement for access, as per the table on p. 249.

After satisfying the access condition, the sorcerer meditates. Roll Resolve + Composure. Success projects the sorcerer into the

Astral Path Creation

Place of Power	Access	Rationale
Demesne	Made from your own soul stone, a soul on the same Path, or you gain permission from the owner of the stone's resident soul.	You follow the traces left by the soul's Watchtower.
Hallow	Absorb and then spend Mana from the Hallow equal to 6 minus the Hallow's rating.	Cycling the Hallow's Mana through yourself attunes your soul to its Supernal connection.
Synese*	Use the Iris' key to gain access.	You project your soul through the Iris.

*Synesi lead directly to realms beyond the mage's dreams.

Oneiros over the course of a scene or hour. Exceptional success pulls it off in a single turn. The mage enters her own Oneiros unless she makes telepathic contact with someone else, in which case mutual assent or the strongest telepath (using Clash of Wills where necessary) determines which Oneiros she visits.

A sorcerer in his own Oneiros is formidable; his spells never risk Paradox as long as the magic doesn't leave the confines of his own soul. This doesn't apply to shared or foreign Oneiroi. Sleepers' Oneiroi reflect their curse to a greater extent than the material realm. All magic cast in a Sleeper's Oneiros is a Paradox risk. Finally, a mage "killed" in the Oneiros by its contents and native Goetia (but not intruders or their actions) doesn't suffer Soul Shock (see below) – she just wakes up in the material realm, disoriented but able to return with full Dream Health after meditating again.

The mage manifests in dream form while in the Astral or her own dreams. The dream form may look nothing like the sorcerer, because this is her self-image as influenced by contact from the Supernal, and divorced from the limitations of flesh. Characters with the Shadow Name Merit often appear radically different in age, race, sex, or fitness, as their dream forms conform to their magical selves. The traveler uses this form to interact with anything in the Astral Realms while her body remains in the material realm, alive but unconscious. The dream form has the following Traits instead of the mage's standard set:

- **Power:** Equal to the higher of Intelligence or Presence for mages, or just Intelligence for others. Used for Intelligence, Strength, and Presence tasks.
- **Finesse:** Equal to the higher of Wits or Manipulation for mages, or just Wits for others. Used for Wits, Dexterity, and Manipulation tasks.
- **Resistance:** Equal to the higher of Resolve or Composure for mages, or just Resolve for others. Used for Resolve, Stamina, and Composure tasks.
- **Dream Health:** This Trait replaces regular Health. Add Resistance to the character's Gnosis-based Attribute maximum (e.g. 5 at Gnosis 3, or 6 at Gnosis 6, according to the table on p. 86). Losing Dream Health imposes wound penalties just as for standard Health. When a mage is "killed" due to Dream Health loss, she acquires the Soul Shocked Condition and returns to her body.

- **Amnion:** Only the Awakened possess this Trait. The Amnion is an intensified self-image that a sorcerer can invoke to protect herself. Amnions take many shapes, from antique diving suits to scaled hides and spiked bat's wings. A sorcerer may invoke her Amnion as an instant action. When she does so, she gains general armor equal to the lower of her Gnosis or highest subtle Arcanum against attacks that appear physical, and against the Ecstatic Wind. However, as a refined form of egocentrism, it impairs the ability to interact with the outside world, imposing a -2 die penalty to Finesse-based tasks and a -1 penalty to Defense. The Amnion is treated as a form of equipment. It doesn't stack with "physical" armor, but does stack with spells and Attainments.

- **Path Tools:** All mages can will Path tools into existence in dreams or the Astral as a reflexive action, since they're symbols of the bond between soul and Watchtower. These can only be Tools she has used before, in the material realm.

Once in the Oneiros, the mage can choose to explore it or continue on to the Temenos. The sorcerer must journey through the course of a vision, surpassing any challenges it may raise, until reaching the threshold. At that point, she again meditates, using the same system as travel into the Oneiros. (She doesn't need to satisfy the conditions demanded by her means of access from the material realm.)

The sorcerer can step off her Astral Path and explore, or continue onward. In the latter case, the Temenos presents a challenge drawn from humanity's collective imagination, especially where it intersects with the mage's personal experience. If the mage merely survives the challenges, she can continue to the Anima Mundi. If she not only survives but deciphers the challenge's symbolism or mystery, she earns an Arcane Beat.

Magic isn't greatly altered by the Temenos, and obeys the same rules as it does throughout the rest of the Astral Realms. Mages benefit from a wealth of symbolism however, as the entire realm is made of humanity's archetypes. Thus, every point in the Temenos is a potential place Yantra offering +1 die to spellcasting rolls.

To breach the Anima Mundi, the mage again concentrates, making the same Resolve + Composure roll as she used to enter the Oneiros and Temenos. She arrives at the Omphalos and may journey through it to the Swath or Spire Perilous. Now she

Ecstatic Wind

Location	Typical Wind Strength	Damage	Interval
Omphalos, Swath, Spire Perilous	Weak	Roll mage's Gnosis + 1	Every 24 hours
The Dreaming Earth	Medium	Roll mage's Gnosis + 2	Every hour
The Sidereal Wastes	Strong	Roll mage's Gnosis + 3	Every turn*

* That is, every discrete action within the Sidereal Waste's multiple subjective time streams.

must contend with the Ecstatic Wind: the inhuman, cosmic consciousness of the Anima Mundi which might smother the mage's individual identity. The better handle a mage has on transcendental reality, the worse the Wind affects her, flaying identity away and inflicting damage as follows.

When a mage is killed by Ecstatic Wind, she returns with the Soul Shocked Condition and loses a Willpower *dot* due to depersonalization. Finally, since her soul momentarily escapes its usual confines of self to be smeared across raw celestial Being, it often brings back some sign of its deformity: a Paradox Condition (see p.116). This crosses metaphysical lines and can even affect the mage's physical body and surroundings. The Condition resolves itself as usual.

The mage encounters a challenge every time she moves from one region of the Anima Mundi to the next. Again, unearthing a hidden truth within the challenge often earns an Arcane Beat. The Ecstatic Wind vanishes when a mage reaches the shores of Oroboros and the homes of the Aeons.

Mages can return from their personal Oneiroi as a reflexive action. They just wake up. Coming back from anywhere else requires the same Resolve + Composure rolls for each Astral threshold, but doesn't require the mage to pass through vision challenges. She walks back along the now-resolved Astral Path. Alternately, she can deny herself full psychic reintegration with the material realm to wake up in a single turn, but leaving part of herself behind this way inflicts the Soul Shocked Condition.

Beyond the Lie

Even the Realms Invisible suffer from the Lie. To unite with the original truth of the cosmos, a sorcerer must visit the Supernal Realms. Mages do this when they Awaken, when their Watchtowers provide safe passage across the Abyss. They cannot return. Unless a mage studies the secrets of archmastery, the Supernal Realms obliterate her, and in any case, the way is closed; virtually every realm stops short of the Supernal. Only Ascension grants the power to dwell there permanently, like an Exarch, Oracle, or true god.

Emanations

On rare occasions Supernal links to the Fallen World extend beyond Verges. These become realms unto themselves that a traveler can enter in material form. Each of these *Emanations* symbolizes how an Arcanum manifests in the world. One usually enters through natural Irises inside Verges, near powerful Hal-lows, or in places related to the realm's Arcanum or symbolism. Some Legacies also teach their adherents ways to enter specific

realms. Otherwise, there's no known way to enter an Emanation. Multiple Emanations exist for each Arcanum, though theorists posit that these are regions within some meta-Emanation, and a traveler might pass between them with some undiscovered spell.

Each Emanation possesses unique physical laws, though they're always influenced by the realm's dominant Arcanum. Its inhabitants are Supernal entities. These usually take forms in accord with the realm's symbolism. Emanations usually connect Fallen myths and archetypes to their Supernal correspondences. The deeper one travels into an Emanation, the more its denizens and terrain grow to resemble their ineffable Supernal forms. The heart of an Emanation — in the blackest pit, highest summit, or within some grand maze or wild — contains a passage to the Supernal. They become inhospitable to all visitors before this point, as the Abyss corrupts the gateway's periphery; and if a mage does survive long enough to enter, the unfiltered experience of the Supernal annihilates him. Emanations take convoluted paths between other realms according to where their Irises appear or how Legacies make use of them.

The Orders record Emanations whenever they arise, though most are so obscure, researchers might only find short descriptions in obscure Grimoires. Rumor has it that the Exarchs extend their Supernal domains into Emanations of their own creation, which lead to Exarchate Verges (see p. 242). The best-known Emanations include the following, but the Orders know of many, many more.

- **The Mists, Realm of Unknown Destiny (Time):** The mages of the Walkers in Mist Legacy learn to travel this realm, which clings closely to the material plane. Legacy sorcerers use it to travel and peer into distant times and places. The Mists is filled with the dense fog of destiny that has yet to coalesce into particular events. Its denizens are half-substantial manifestations of people and places that might be. Irises to the Mists manifest in Arcadian Verges and Astral realms representing the unknown and the future.
- **The Place Between, Realm of Liminality (Space and the Abyss):** Seers of the Throne whisper that the forbidden Exarch called the Gate bargained with the Abyss so that it would curse the world with the Lie. The Gate stood between the Fallen World and the Abyss to conduct its negotiations. Members of its Legacy learn to enter that liminal Emanation, which resembles a ruined, distorted mirror of the material realm. Abyssal entities haunt the Place Between, and spatial distortions allow for shortcuts between mirrored locations. Irises manifest in Abyssal Verges, or at the site of the most extreme Space Paradoxes.

- **Yggdrasil, Realm of Sacrifice (Spirit):** Yggdrasil is a mighty tree whose branches fill the realm so completely that no inhabitant can see a supposed space beyond it — just amber and green light, filtered by distant branches, from a source travelers can never reach. No living Legacy is known to harness Yggdrasil, but voyagers can find Irises in old-growth forests, Verges of the Primal Wild, and great trees in the Shadow. Wood dragons, monstrous squirrels, and other creatures possess a wealth of knowledge, but must be paid in sacrifice to share what they know. The tree itself might even whisper some occult secret, but the seeker must do what Odin did, hanging herself until knowledge enters her soul.

Systems: Each Emanation provides the same benefits as a Verge (a +2 Yantra bonus and no Paradox risk when using its signature Arcanum), though only to one Arcanum. Emanations are usually material places, connected by Irises with Keys related to their respective themes. Their inhabitants are primarily Supernal entities. Each Emanation possesses a unique geography, physical laws, and other conditions, all based on its ruling symbolism. As noted, Emanations are usually physical places, though unearthly, and travelers typically enter in material form. Various Legacies enter Emanations through unique Attainments, which describe specific ways members can enter and otherwise utilize their signature realms.

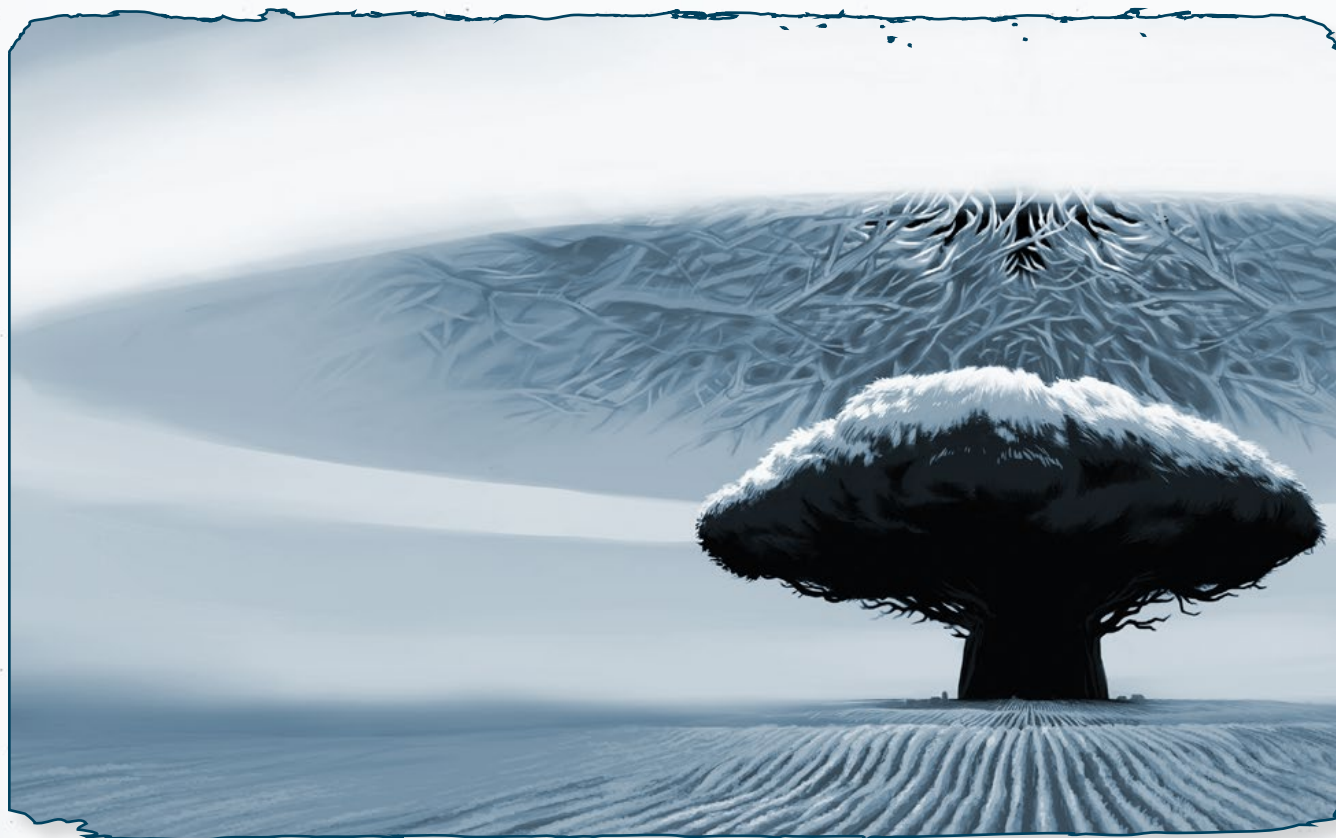
The Imperial Mysteries

Awakened magic might seem infinite in scope, but the thirteen Practices leave gaps that gnaw at even multiple-degree masters. No master can create souls, build Artifacts, alter the

sources of various supernatural beings' powers, cast spells that react, change, and grow beyond the initial Imago, or — most frustrating of all — enter the Supernal Realms. And yet, since they were founded, the Orders have collected evidence that some mages *can*; that, even as powerful as they are, masters have only begun their discovery of the Mysteries.

An **archmaster** (also called an archmage, an Imperial Master, a Seeker, a Bodhisattva, an Exemplar, or dozens of other honorifics) is a mage who has broken through the limitations of Awakened magic to access the Imperial Practices beyond Making and Unmaking. Those who have achieved the transformation from mage to archmage do not advertise how it is achieved, but will say that many who make the attempt are destroyed, or heavily imply that the existing archmasters take measures to prevent those they consider unworthy from joining them. The hint of amorality is typical of the Imperial Masters, who are characterized in the Orders' lore as having their minds on lofty, cosmic Obsessions beyond the comprehension of lesser mages.

The Pentacle bans archmages from holding positions in its caucuses, Convocations, and Consilia, and sees the fact that some Seer of the Throne Tetrarchs and Ministers are openly Seekers as a sign of how enslaved by their Order common Seers are. Most masters are content to build their knowledge of the Arcana and guide their Orders, but almost every mage knows of at least one master who feels inspired to attempt the quest. The overwhelming majority of them will die of old age chasing dead-ends and obscure Grimoires, but even so, if a Pentacle mage is in desperate need of a miracle Awakened magic cannot perform and he asks the right people in his Order, he might follow the breadcrumbs to an archmaster's door.



However the transformation is achieved, it is profound. An archmaster has transcended her Path, forging her own, personal connection to the Supernal Realms called a **Golden Road**. This manifests as a shimmering Astral Realm, separate from all the known Inner Realms, which a handful of archmasters have revealed to actually be their half-Ascended souls. Rather than meditating into the Astral, archmasters meditate *out* of themselves; an archmage's seemingly physical body is no more crucial to him than a mage's dream form. An archmage may go further and use one of the unknown Imperial Practices to construct a **Chantry**, a personal Emanation Realm inside herself, inhabited by Supernal entities and any beings the archmage has created or imported.

Archmages form Irises from their Golden Roads and Chantries to realms they find interesting, and it's these doorways to the Imperial Master's domains that a mage seeking their attention must find. When an archmaster dies, his realm doesn't disappear; a **Wending** is an unoccupied Golden Road, unstable without its creator but a valuable Mystery and nexus of Irises that can offer shortcuts throughout the many realms to mages brave enough to explore.

If a living archmaster accepts a visitor, she is usually loath to speak of the intricacies of her studies. This isn't mere arrogance or impatience with mages unable to keep up; the Orders whisper of a **Pax Arcanum**, a nonaggression pact or agreement between archmages (and, it's rumored, the Exarchs) that they will not grossly interfere with the Fallen World using the full weight of their powers. Archmages who break the Pax vanish, or are assassinated by Ochemata. When an archmaster does agree to use Imperial magic on behalf of another, she invariably sets a quest or task for the supplicant. The Orders believe that the Imperial Practices require unique Yantras called **Quintessence**, each transcendent spell the culmination of months or years of work.

The archmages employ their enigmatic powers in service of an end even the roughest apprentice can understand; every Seeker explores the deepest Mysteries and makes subtle manipulations of Fallen reality to further the cause of her own Ascension, which to the archmages isn't a pipe-dream but an achievable (albeit the work of decades or centuries) goal.

Systems: The full powers and capabilities of archmages are beyond the scope of this book, but as a baseline treat them as mages who treat all ten Arcana as Ruling, and always use all ten Arcana in Mage Sight without cost. Archmages automatically win any Clash of Wills against lesser beings. Their spells from the known practices violate the limitations of spell factors, and cannot be countered or dispelled. If a mage explores the worlds within an archmaster's soul, treat the Golden Road as an Oneiros for purposes of magic, apply fluctuating Paradox bonuses and penalties in a Wending, and treat a Chantry as an Emanation.

Invisible Entities

Awakening brings with it a revelation — humanity is not alone in this world. Like maggots writhing under the skin of reality, all manner of specter and spirit crawls and squirms through places just beyond the sight of humanity. These beings seem

intangible and unreal to unwary mages; while terrible, mournful, or glorious to see, they are always a hairs-breadth away from the material. Some mages become fascinated, delving into the Mysteries of these beings that inhabit an existence orthogonal to physical world, calling them forth with their Arcana.

Denizens of Other Realms

Ghosts are born of death, the remnants of humans who have perished in sudden or traumatic fashion. Many ghosts are shattered, insensate phantasms locked into an eternal replay of their deaths, but others are spiteful terrors fully cogent of their lifeless torment and eager to share their misery. Ghosts are common wherever humanity is to be found, clinging to physical Anchors of their former lives, but they are drawn through Irises to the Underworld.

Spirits are bizarre beings created by Resonance and driven by hunger for Essence. Everything in the world has a spiritual reflection — not just physical objects such as trees or cars, but strong emotions and significant events as well. The only thing that lacks this reflection is humanity itself, but the actions and passions of humankind provide a bounty of Essence for ravenous throngs of spirits. The home realm of spirits is the Shadow.

Goetia are entities of pure thought and concept. Some dwell within the shared consciousness of humanity, birthed from ideas and beliefs of the people of the Fallen World. Others live within the mind of the individual — daemons and figments that make up the psyche. The home realm of Goetia is the Astral Realms.

Abyssal Entities

The insane emanations of the Abyss are sometimes expressed as corrupting entities that slither and chew their way into the world. These beings, the Acamoth and Gulmoth, use similar rules to other ephemeral entities. Acamoth are treated as Goetia, while Gulmoth are treated as spirits.

The Resonance an Abyssal entity feeds from is reflective of its nature — the truth it exists to corrupt. For example, the Gulmoth Anumerus, which twists mathematics into insane anti-numbers, may draw Essence from the Resonance of "numbers." All Abyssal entities treat the presence of Sleepers undergoing a breaking point, Quiescence, or Dissonance, as well as mages releasing Paradoxes, as Resonant.

Unlike Goetia and spirits, Abyssal entities have unique and bizarre Influences, Numina and other, weirder expressions of their corrosive natures. Acamoth and Gulmoth twist and taint reality just by existing, and their powers are turned towards the purpose of furthering that. Gulmoth corrupt matter and warp the laws of physics; Acamoth reforge Astral realms into hellscape of Abyssal insanity and nonsense.

Collectively, Goetia, spirits, and ghosts are known as **ephemeral entities**, after the substance their bodies are made of when in the material world. Ephemera is naturally invisible and intangible, putting the entity into Twilight unless revealed by its own powers or magic.

Supernal Entities are phantasmagorical creatures, living pieces of the Tapestry of Supernal truth. Each Supernal World has its own order of inhabitant – the Fae of Arcadia, the Demons of Pandemonium, the Shades of Stygia, the Beasts of the Primal Wild, and the Angels of the Aether. When a mage stares too deeply into the Supernal, these beings stare back. Supernal Entities rarely enter the Fallen World unless conjured up by the Awakened. The home realms of Supernal entities are the **Supernal Realms** themselves. Unlike Ephemeral Entities, Supernal Entities are not formed of ephemera, and remain in the Supernal World rather than Twilight unless summoned fully into the Fallen World.

Entering the Fallen World

Some entities can force their way into the material world in search of rich sources of spiritual sustenance, to escape from enemies, or to set plans into motion. Other beings must use existing Irises if they want to cross over. Ghosts are born into the material world at the moment of death, but pass on to the Underworld once their Anchors are gone or their purposes complete; that doesn't stop some restless dead from trying to return again. These incursions into reality are rarely beneficial for humankind, who can end up as the playthings and prey of such otherworldly creatures.

The Awakened themselves summon ephemeral and Supernal entities to do their bidding, and are capable of tearing open the barriers that hold them back from the world of flesh. Spirits, ghosts, Goetia, and Supernal entities can be called up as servants, warriors, mentors, sources of information, or foci of contemplation and self-betterment. Still, these creatures have their own wills and their own agendas, even when suborned by Awakened magic. They are the denizens of alien realms and should not be underestimated.

Manifestation & Possession

In their home realms, ephemeral entities are visible and solid, but in the physical realm the properties of ephemera leave them out of phase in a state called **Twilight**. Beings in Twilight are invisible and intangible to anything not comprised of the same kind of ephemera – ghosts can see and touch one another but are invisible to most living people, can pass through solid objects, and don't even interact with other ephemeral entities like spirits or Goetia. A spirit cannot perceive or attack a ghost, even if they are both in Twilight; it can see the physical world and the denizens thereof, but cannot interact with them. It might follow a human around to feed on the Essence his actions create, but it cannot touch him or make itself known to him.

Many types of ephemeral being can *Manifest* to affect the physical world. This might involve becoming fully physical, imprinting messages into the world, possessing victims, or just becoming visible. Not all ephemeral entities can Manifest, but even those that can require certain Conditions to do so. A ghost

Familiars

A *Familiar* is an ephemeral being bonded to a mage. The ephemeral being receives the Familiar Manifestation effect. A mage always has a Connected sympathetic connection to her Familiar, and if another mage created the Familiar bond, the Familiar has a strong connection to *that* mage. The Familiar Merit is described on **p. 101**.

The Familiar Manifestation lasts until the mage or the Familiar chooses to end it, or until another mage severs the bond (this requires an Unmaking spell using the appropriate Arcanum).

Once bound, the Familiar retains its personality, free will, and moral compass (which can vary widely depending on the being in question). Forcing the Familiar to do something that would compromise its ethics or violate a ban is an Act of Hubris against Enlightened or Understanding Wisdom.

requires Anchors – the places, objects, and people linked to its living days that reinforce its sense of identity. Spirits need the spiritual Resonance of the area or host to match their own. Goetia cannot naturally Manifest, and must be granted the ability to do so through magic.

Supernal entities remain in the Supernal World, visible only to mages using the correct form of Mage Sight, unless fully Summoned or within overlapping regions of reality like a Supernal Verge. In these cases, they appear fully solid and visible unless they then use their own powers to enter Twilight.

Game Systems

Invisible entities share a broad set of rules, with some significant variations between the different types.

The State of Twilight

Without Manifestations or magic, ephemeral entities in the material world exist in the state of Twilight. To beings in Twilight, physical objects appear pale and semi-translucent; light sources are dimmed, and sounds are distorted. They can only touch and interact with Twilight objects, phenomena, and creatures comprised of the same kind of ephemera. Attacks pass through a Twilight being, and even solid concrete in the material world is no more hindrance than fog. Sometimes structures and objects can enter the state of Twilight, such as the ghostly reflections of destroyed buildings or items, as well as those made immaterial through magic – these *are* entirely solid to Twilight entities of the same type of ephemera.

Movement through Twilight roughly corresponds to that of the material world, even though there is no gravity, wind, or pressure. Flight is not possible unless appropriate for the entity's form; a fiery-winged Goetia might take to the sky, but a clattering, rusting spirit of metal will stick to the material terrain.

Rank

Rank*	Trait Limits**	Attribute Dots	Maximum Essence/Mana	Numina***
•	5 dots	5-8	10	1-3
••	7 dots	9-14	15	3-5
•••	9 dots	15-25	20	5-7
••••	12 dots	26-35	25	7-9
•••••	15 dots	36-45	50	9-11

* Each Rank levies a -1 modifier on attempts to forcibly bind the entity and acts as a Supernatural Tolerance trait like a Mage's Gnosis (see p. 86).

** These represent permanent dots, not temporarily boosted ones.

*** Ephemeral Entities only

Ghosts, ghostly echoes of destroyed buildings and objects, and objects or people that have entered Twilight through the magic of the Death Arcanum are all considered in phase with each other. Spirits and objects or people that have entered Twilight through the magic of the Spirit Arcanum are considered in phase with each other. Goetia and mental projections through the Mind Arcanum are considered in phase with each other. Supernal entities that have entered Fallen Reality and used their Arcana to enter Twilight are in phase with the appropriate type of entity.

Ephemeral Traits

Ephemeral and Supernal entities have no divide between mind, body, and soul. Their thoughts and emotions *are* their shape and form. These beings are not biological creatures and their state of "life" is radically different from that of a human. In game terms, ephemeral beings are represented by simplified game traits.

Rank

Every ephemeral and Supernal entity has dots in an Advantage called Rank, which notes how self-aware and powerful the entity is. Rank technically ranges from 1 to 10 dots, but those with more than Rank 5 are overwhelmingly powerful and too alien to the physical world to support themselves with the Conditions that lesser beings use; their presence in a chronicle should come about through critical conjunctions and momentous events.

Rank is used to determine the number of Attribute dots and the maximum ratings in other game traits that an ephemeral entity can have, as described in the table above. An ephemeral entity can sense the relative Rank of other beings of the same kind, and can attempt to conceal its own Rank with a contested Finesse roll. Success means that the entity appears to be the same Rank as the being it is concealing it from.

Ghosts cannot increase in Rank outside of the Underworld, and come into existence as either Rank 1 or 2 depending on how much self-awareness they have. Ghosts summoned back from the Underworld may be of any Rank.

Goetia, Spirits, and Supernal entities run the full range of Ranks depending on age, power, and symbolic significance.

Essence and Mana

Invisible entities do not need to breathe or to eat; instead they subsist on Essence or Mana. It fuels their existence and serves as a prized currency for barter, bribery, and payment. Each entity has a maximum Mana or Essence rating and an equal number of Mana or Essence points it can spend to achieve effects. Maximum Mana or Essence is determined by Rank.

Ephemeral entities subsist on Essence, while Supernal beings use Mana.

Entities can use Mana or Essence in the following ways:

- Ephemeral entities must spend a point of Essence per day to remain active in the material world. If they run out, they fall into hibernation until something happens to let them regain at least one point, which can be spent on returning to activity. Spirits and Goetia are pushed back into their home realms when they hibernate; ghosts are likewise forced to the Underworld as long as they don't have any Anchors remaining. A ghost with remaining Anchors will begin to reform at the Anchor closest to where it fell into hibernation. Supernal beings do not spend Mana to remain active, but have much more limited lifespans in the Fallen world.

- In their home realms, Goetia, ghosts, and Supernal Entities regain their Rank in Essence or Mana per day. Spirits are not sustained by the Shadow; they must always find sources of Essence even when in their own world.
- Spirits, Goetia, and ghosts outside of a suitable Condition bleed one point of Essence per *hour*. Entities that run out of Essence due to bleed suffer a single point of lethal damage, then enter hibernation. Supernal entities lose Corpus over time regardless of their remaining Mana (see p. 96).
- Entities can spend Essence or Mana to boost their traits for a single scene on a point per dot basis. They can't boost a single trait by more than Rank + 2 dots; boosting takes a turn and they can only boost a single Attribute in a turn.
- Entities can sense sources of Essence or Mana appropriate for their needs from up to a mile away. The "Seek" Numen (p. 262) increases this range.

- Ephemeral entities regain one point of Essence per day they are in proximity to any Condition relating to them – ghosts are sustained by staying near their Anchors and spirits in the Shadow feed upon Resonance.
- Ephemeral entities can attempt to steal Essence or Mana from beings of the same type – ghosts from ghosts, spirits from spirits, etc. The attacking entity rolls Power + Finesse, contested by the victim's Power + Resistance. If the attacker succeeds, it steals up to the successes in Essence or Mana, as long as the victim has Essence or Mana remaining to lose.
- Spirits may attempt to gorge themselves on a source of appropriate Essence. Once per day, when in proximity (even if it's on the other side of the Gauntlet) to a suitable Condition, a spirit can roll Power + Finesse, regaining successes in Essence. If the spirit is still in the Shadow, the dice pool is penalized according to Gauntlet Strength.

Attributes & Skills

Invisible entities don't have the nine Attributes familiar in material characters, but use a simplified set of the Power, Finesse, and Resistance categories other Attributes fall into. The Rank chart earlier in this section gives guidelines on how many total dots an entity should have, and what its trait maximum is.

Power describes the raw ability of the entity to impose itself on other beings and the world at large. It is used in all rolls that call for Strength, Intelligence, or Presence.

Finesse describes how deft the entity is at imposing its desires with fine control. It is used for all rolls that call for Dexterity, Wits, or Manipulation.

Resistance describes how well the entity can avoid imposition from its peers and how easily it is damaged. It is used for all rolls that call for Stamina, Resolve, or Composure.

Ephemeral beings don't possess skills, but don't suffer unskilled penalties as long as the actions they're attempting are appropriate to their natures. They roll the appropriate Attribute + Rank for actions relating directly to their concepts, or Attribute + Attribute for actions like surprise and perception. When rolling Attribute + Rank for mundane (i.e., not magic) tasks, Supernal entities of Rank 4 or higher have the rote action quality (p. 214).

Advantages

Ephemeral entities differ in how they treat Integrity, Virtue, and Vice. Not all of them possess these traits, and those that do treat them differently.

Ghosts retain their Virtue and Vice from life, but with their effects reversed; a ghost regains all Willpower by fulfilling its Vice once per chapter, and regains one Willpower point a scene by fulfilling its Virtue. A ghost retains the same Integrity score that it had before death, but this score cannot change and the ghost does not suffer breaking points.

Spirits and **Goetia** do not have an Integrity trait, Virtue, or Vice. They regain one point of spent Willpower per three points of Essence they consume.

Supernal Beings possess a Vice and a Virtue, but these Vices and Virtues don't have to be anything that a human would consider virtuous or wicked – they reflect the pure principles of the Supernal instead. Supernal entities do not have an Integrity trait.

Other Traits

Because they have simplified traits, ephemeral and Supernal entities calculate derived traits differently than other characters.

Corpus: Entities don't have Health, but measure how intact their form is using Corpus. Permanent Corpus is equal to Resistance + Size and grants Corpus boxes that act like Health boxes, filling when the entity suffers injury. Corpus boxes don't have wound penalties associated with them.

Willpower: Willpower dots are equal to Resistance + Finesse, with a maximum of 10 dots for entities of Rank 1 to 5. As well as the Willpower-gaining methods described above, all entities regain one point of Willpower per day.

Initiative: Initiative is equal to Finesse + Resistance.

Defense: Defense is equal to Power or Finesse, whichever is lower, except for Rank 1 entities which use the higher of the two Attributes.

Speed: Speed is equal to Power + Finesse + a "species" factor. Spirits of inanimate objects usually have a species factor of 0.

Size: Entities can be of any size and shape, often growing larger as they become more powerful. Ghosts are usually Size 5.

Language: Ghosts know whatever languages they could speak in life, although Rank 1 ghosts rarely have the awareness for communication. Spirits speak the harsh, strange tongue of the Shadow-World, and often learn the human languages common around their feeding grounds. Goetia from the Oneiros know the languages of the mind they originate from; Goetia from the Temenos speak whatever languages are appropriate for their concepts or origins. Supernal beings use High Speech as a true language of communication, but may also speak a range of other languages if they care to do so.

Bans & Banes

All ephemeral and Supernal entities suffer from a mystical compulsion known as a ban, a behavior that the being must or must not perform under certain conditions. Bans increase in both complexity and consequences with Rank.

Rank 1 entities have mild bans that are easily triggered but don't endanger the being. A spirit of bliss can't resist an offering of opiates; a weak Fae must play any game of chance that it is invited to.

Rank 2 and 3 entities have moderate bans that curtail the creature's activities in a more serious way than mere distraction. The murderous spirit of a car that has run down multiple people loses all Willpower if it doesn't kill one person a month. A ghost must immediately dematerialize when it hears the sound of a cat.

Rank 4 and 5 entities have complicated bans that put an end to whatever the creature is trying to do – often in an explosive fashion. They have consequences in game traits or long-term

Influence Effects

Level	Effect
• Strengthen	The entity can enhance its sphere of influence; it can add to the Defense of a beneficiary, make an emotion stronger, an animal or plant healthier, or an object more robust, gaining the entity's Rank in Health or Structure. This Influence can shift the Anchor or Resonant Condition to Open for its duration. The cost is one Essence.
• • Manipulate	The entity can make minor changes within its sphere of influence, such as slightly changing the nature or target of an emotion, or making minor changes to an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's functioning. The cost is two Essence.
• • • Control	The entity can make dramatic changes within its sphere of influence, twisting emotions entirely or dictating an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's functioning. The cost is three Essence.
• • • • Create	The entity can create a new example of its sphere of influence; instilling an emotion, creating a new sapling or young plant, creating a young animal or brand new object. The entity can cause a temporary Anchor or Resonant Condition in a subject for the duration of the Influence. The cost is four Essence.
• • • • • Mass Create	The entity can create multiple examples of its sphere of influence; triggering emotions in multiple people; creating new copses of trees, small groups of animals, or multiple identical items. The cost is five Essence. The number of examples of the Influence created is equal to Rank. Alternatively, the entity may create one instance of its sphere of influence – including creating the Resonant Condition – permanently, without spending additional Essence for duration. An ephemeral entity can't permanently alter the mind of a sapient being though Influence.

actions, but esoteric requirements. The spirit of Mount Iliamna, a volcano in Alaska, must use its Numina to kill a victim named by anyone who makes it an offering of platinum that was mined from its foothills. The gothic concept of the Teenage Rebel from the Temenos can never submit to or obey any authority, order, or demand, and is driven to lash out against such.

Invisible entities are not of the material world and react strangely to some elements of it. The interaction between their ephemeral forms and physical substance always contains a flaw – a bane – that damages the being's Corpus through symbolic or mystical interference. The bane is a physical substance or energy that the entity can't abide.

- Entities voluntarily attempting to come into contact with the bane must spend a Willpower point and succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll with a dice penalty equal to their Rank.
- Banes are solid to entities, even when they are in Twilight.
- Touching the bane causes 1 point of aggravated damage per turn if the entity is Materialized or in its home realm, and causes any relevant Condition to end unless the entity succeeds in a roll of Rank in dice. Repeat the roll every turn if contact holds.
- If the bane comes into contact with an item or person linked to a Fettered entity, the entity suffers 1 point of lethal damage per turn as long as contact holds. The entity must use the Unfetter Manifestation Effect to escape.

- Touching the bane while in Twilight causes 1 point of lethal damage per turn to non-Manifest entities.
- Touching the bane causes 1 point of lethal damage per turn to Supernal entities.
- If the bane is used as a weapon against the entity, the wounds suffered are aggravated for Manifest entities and those in their home realms, and lethal for entities still in Twilight or Supernal entities in the Fallen World.

Banes are increasingly esoteric and obscure for entities of increasing Rank.

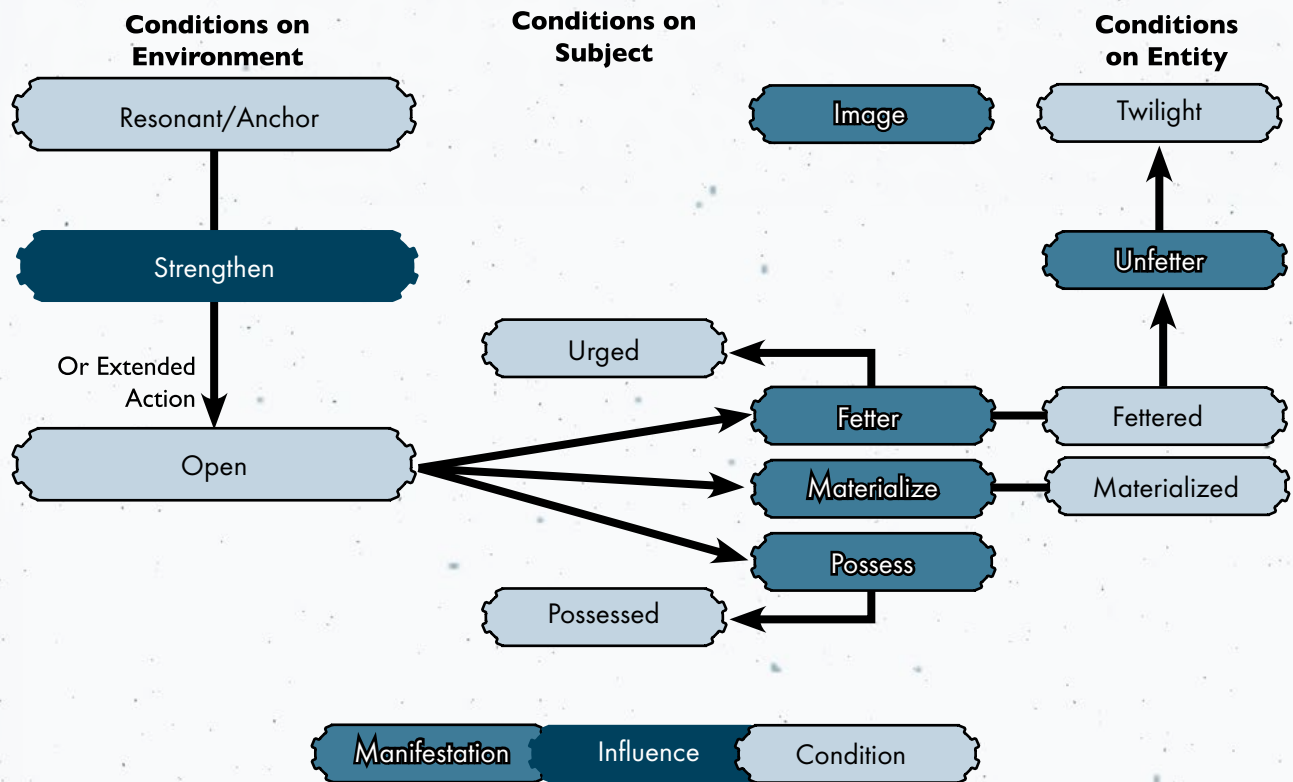
Rank 1 entities have common substances and phenomena as banes. Ghosts burn at the touch of salt. The spirit of a forest is poisoned by the fumes of burning plastic.

Rank 2 and 3 spirits have difficult to obtain but still "natural" banes. A wild-wood spirit must be killed by a sharpened stake made of pine. A gothic entity of self-loathing is vulnerable to any mirror that it has seen its reflection in.

Rank 4 and 5 spirits have highly-specific banes that require great effort to acquire. The spirit of the US Treasury (the building) can be killed by a silver bullet made from a melted-down original dollar. A colossally powerful Beast of the Primal Wilds is vulnerable to the teeth and claws of a bear that killed a dozen or more humans.

The hierarchical nature of these beings also plays a part – Rank isn't a social convention for them but a fundamental part of their natures. Entities of 2 Ranks or more higher than an opponent of the same type (a Rank 5 spirit attacking a Rank 3 spirit, for example) count as their opponent's bane when using unarmed attacks, claws, or teeth.

Ephemeral Entity Flowchart



Combat

As noted earlier, invisible entities use the lower of Finesse or Resistance for Defense unless they are Rank 1, in which case they use the higher. They apply Defense against *all* attacks, even firearms.

An entity rolls Power + Finesse to attack. Its attacks inflict bashing damage unless its nature (a spirit with metal fists, for example) indicates that it should inflict lethal wounds instead. Some entities use weapons, in which case roll Power + Finesse and then apply weapon damage on a successful attack.

Entities in Twilight can only attack or be attacked by other entities in the same phase of Twilight, or beings that are able to touch them through magic or other supernatural means (unless the attack utilizes the entity's bane).

Physical attacks on a Manifested or solid Supernal entity that normally cause lethal damage only cause bashing damage unless the attack utilizes the entity's bane. Even an entity that's solid to its attacker doesn't have any internal organs to injure.

Entities record and heal from wounds the same way as material characters, but in addition lose one point of Essence or Mana for every aggravated wound they suffer.

Entities that lose all Corpus from lethal or aggravated wounds explode into a burst of ephemera or Mana stylized to their natures. A forest-spirit dies in a hail of rapidly vanishing pine needles; a ghost wails and howls as it crumbles away in the grip of an ephemeral gale. The entity isn't actually dead, though, unless it has also run out of Essence or Mana. If it has even a single Essence or Mana point remaining, it reforms in a safe place (a Conditioned location, usually), hibernating. Once it has regained Essence or Mana points equal to Corpus dots, it can spend a point to reawaken. As the entity can't act while hibernating, this means waiting for the one point of Essence or Mana a day that the entity absorbs while in a suitable area to slowly build up to the being's Corpus, and that more powerful entities take longer to recover from being "killed." Supernal beings only reform if they die in a Supernal Verge or summoning circle; if trapped in the Fallen World upon disincorporation, they are consumed by the Abyss.

Influence & Arcana

Most invisible entities have a degree of Influence over the world that they can leverage to control and shape the basis of their existences, control their environments, and encourage the phenomena they were born from. Ghosts have power over

their own Anchors, while spirits and Goetia can control and encourage the phenomena that they symbolically reflect. Supernal beings wield the power of the Arcana with consummate ease.

Ghosts, spirits, and Goetia begin with dots in Influence equal to their Rank; a Supernal being possesses dots in two Arcana equal to its Rank, one of which must be one of the Ruling Arcana of its Realm, and may have additional Arcana at lower ratings. Although an ephemeral entity's Rank is also the maximum rating for an Influence, it may split its dots to have more than one. A Rank 4 spirit of dogs, for example, might have Influence: Dogs ••• and Influence: Loyalty •.

Spirits and ghosts may reduce the number of Numina granted by Rank to increase Influence dots at a cost of one Numen per dot.

Spirits and Goetia have Influences that relate to their natures, but that may be used in multiple circumstances – the dog spirit, for example, has Influence over Dogs as a whole, not over a particular dog.

Influence is measured in both scale and duration. To use an Influence, compare the entity's Influence rating to the total dots of the intended effect and how long it is to last. The total must be equal to or less than the entity's Influence rating in order for the Influence to be attempted.

The entity pays the listed cost in Essence and rolls Power + Finesse, with success creating the desired effect. If the Influence is altering the thoughts or emotions of a sentient being, the roll is contested by Resolve or Composure (whichever is higher) + Gnosis.

Supernal beings follow the same rules as the Awakened for using their Arcana, paying Mana as appropriate, but instead of using Gnosis + Arcana they roll Power + Finesse. They have infinite free Reach for their spells, and may activate Reach abilities at will. If a Supernal being risks Paradox for any reason (such as casting an obvious spell with Sleeper witnesses), the Paradox pool always has the rote action quality and deals aggravated wounds to the entity equal to successes rather than producing an anomaly or Paradox Condition.

Influence Durations

Level	Duration	Cost
0	One minute per success	No additional Essence cost
•	Ten minutes per success	No additional Essence cost
••	One hour per success	1 additional Essence
•••	One day per success	2 additional Essence
••••	Permanent	2 additional Essence

Manifestation

Ephemeral entities can interact with the mortal world in various ways, including physical manifestation and the possession of victims. Just as Influence traits determine what level of control the entity has over its environment, Manifestation traits note which forms of Manifestation are possible for a particular entity.

Spirits and ghosts begin with the Twilight Form Manifestation and a number of Manifestation Effects from the list below equal to Rank. They may increase their capabilities by reducing the number of Numina they possess, at the cost of one Numen per Manifestation Effect.

Many Manifestation Effects have prerequisite Influence or Manifestation Conditions – a spirit can only Fetter to something with an Open Condition, for example.

All Manifestation Effects require a Power + Finesse roll to use. Most have an associated cost in Essence, and some are contested or resisted.

Goetia do not naturally possess Manifestations. They can be granted physical bodies through the Death and Spirit Arcana; Goetia can be granted the ability to possess victims through the Mind Arcanum.

Within their home realms, ephemeral entities do not require Manifestations.

Ephemeral Influence & Manifestation Conditions

If something falls into an ephemeral entity's sphere of Influence, this is handled mechanically by declaring an Influence Condition. Influence Conditions resemble Tilts and Conditions – they may be applied to locations and objects as Tilts, or to characters as Conditions.

Different Manifestations create or require Conditions to be in place. Influence and Manifestation Conditions are tiered and interrelated, often possessing prerequisites. Some occur naturally but many must be created through Influences, Manifestations, and Arcana.

When one Condition is advanced into another, the remaining duration of the prerequisite Conditions is halted. For example, a spirit can use its Influence to temporarily create the Open Condition. If it then uses the Fetter Manifestation to create the Fettered Condition, the remaining duration of Open is frozen until Fettered ends.

If a prerequisite Condition is removed from a character (for example, a Fettered spirit's Open Condition is removed by a Mage's Spirit Arcanum) any Conditions relying on it are immediately removed.

ANCHOR

The subject of this Condition is within the sphere of Influence of a ghost. Ghosts within Rank x 3 yards of their Anchors do not suffer Essence bleed.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created when a new ghost is formed, based on whatever subject anchors the ghost's identity. The Death Arcanum can temporarily create this Condition.

Ending the Condition: The Condition can be removed through destroying the subject, resolving a ghost's unfinished business, and the Death Arcanum.

Manifestation Effects

Manifestation	Effect
Twilight Form	If the entity enters the material world, it does so in Twilight (see p. 253). The Effect has no cost.
Discorporate	In emergencies, the entity can voluntarily Discorporate as though it had lost all Corpus to lethal injury – a painful way to escape a greater being threatening to permanently kill it. The Effect has no cost.
Reaching	By spending one Essence, the entity applies the Reaching Condition to itself. The activation roll is penalized according to the local Gauntlet Strength.
Gauntlet Breach	(Requires Resonant Condition) By spending three Essence, the spirit forces itself through the Gauntlet – returning to the Shadow from the physical world, or appearing in Twilight Form by entering the material world. The activation roll is penalized by the local Gauntlet Strength.
Gateway	(Requires Open Condition) The entity can open a portal to its home realm that it and other creatures may use. This costs three Essence, or Essence equal to Gauntlet Strength for a Gateway into the Shadow. It applies the Gateway Condition to the location.
Image	(Requires Anchor or Resonant Condition) By spending one Essence, the entity may make its Twilight form visible to material beings for a scene.
Materialize	(Requires Open Condition) By spending three Essence, the entity may shift from Twilight form into the Materialized Condition.
Fetter	(Requires Open Condition) By spending two Essence, the entity adds the Fettered Condition to itself. Living beings targeted by this Effect contest the roll with Resolve + Composure + Gnosis. If the Effect is successful, living targets gain the Urged Condition.
Unfetter	(Requires Fettered Condition) By spending one point of Essence, the entity temporarily suppresses the Fettered Condition for a Scene, allowing it to use other Manifestation Effects or roam in Twilight. When the Scene ends, any Manifestation Effects used during it immediately end. If the entity isn't back within range of its Fetter (see p. 260) when Unfetter ends, it immediately goes dormant.
Possess	(Requires Open Condition) By spending three Essence, the entity gains temporary control over an object, corpse, or creature, applying the Possessed Condition to the subject. Living subjects contest the roll with Resolve + Composure + Gnosis.
Familiar	This Manifestation is special: no ephemeral entity possesses it innately, but it may be granted by the spell "Familiar" (p. 183). The entity is under the Familiar Condition unless the bond is ended.

RESONANT

The subject of this Condition is within the sphere of Influence of a spirit or Goetia.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is common. If an object, phenomenon, person, or place matches the entity's purview in some way, it has this Condition. Anything matching the description of one of a spirit or Goetia's Influences counts as having this Condition tagged to the entity. The Spirit and Mind Arcana can instill this Condition by manipulating Resonance, emotions, and thoughts.

Ending the Condition: The Condition can be removed through ending the phenomenon causing it, and through the Spirit and Mind Arcana.

OPEN

The place, object, animal, or person covered by an existing Condition is now prepared to accept the entity. That entity can now Fetter or Possess the subject of the Condition or, if the Condition is on a location, Materialize there.

Prerequisites: The Anchor or Resonant Condition for the same phenomenon to which this Condition is tagged.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is usually the result of fine-tuning the prerequisite Condition. This is an extended action, involving the subject and entity acting in concert for a number of scenes equal to Rank or a living subject's Resolve, whichever is higher. Using a Control Influence or the Death, Spirit, or Mind Arcana as appropriate allows an entity to temporarily upgrade Resonant to Open as an instant action.

Ending the Condition: Removing the prerequisite Condition ends Open. The Death, Spirit, or Mind Arcana can also end it as appropriate for the type of entity.

REACHING

The spirit has opened a conduit through the Gauntlet, allowing it to use Influences and Numina to affect the other side. Numina with [R] after their names can be used with this Condition. Characters capable of perceiving spirits in Twilight can sense the conduit's presence with a successful Wits + Composure roll.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is the result of the Reaching Manifestation Effect and lasts for one scene. It can also be applied to a spirit via the Spirit Arcanum.

Ending the Condition: At the end of the scene, the Condition fades. It can also be removed by the Spirit Arcanum.

GATEWAY

The location has an opening to the Shadow or Underworld. Ghosts regain one Essence per scene in an Underworld gateway's presence. Anyone, even mortals, can pass through the gateway into the realm on the other side.

Causing the Condition: This Condition can be created by using the Gateway Manifestation on an Open Condition, or directly opened through the Death (for the Underworld) and Spirit (for the Shadow) Arcana. Irises to the Shadow or Underworld have this Condition when open.

Ending the Condition: At the end of the scene, the Condition fades. It can also be ended early through the Spirit or Death Arcana.

MATERIALIZED

The entity has shifted from ephemeral to material substance, manifesting in physical form. All the rules for ephemeral entities' traits still apply except for the effects of being in Twilight. This Condition protects most entities from Essence bleed for its duration; it does *not* protect a Supernal entity from losing Mana, however.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created either by an entity using the Materialize Manifestation Effect on an Open Condition, or through the Spirit or Death Arcana being used to create a physical form for an ephemeral entity. If the Open Condition used is on an object or person, the entity must Materialize within its Rank in yards.

Ending the Condition: The entity remains Materialized for one hour per success rolled. When the duration ends, the entity fades back into Twilight. The Spirit and Death Arcana can also remove the Condition early.

FAMILIAR

The entity has been bonded to a mage. It may use any other Manifestations freely, but is protected from Essence bleed. The entity and its bonded mage have a Connected Sympathetic link to one another, may use one another's senses with a reflexive action (casting magic through a Familiar requires a Reach for remote viewing, but does not require the Sympathetic Range Attainment), and can pass Mana and Es-

sence between them — Mana given to the Familiar converts into Essence, and Essence given to the mage converts into Mana, but one point of the transferred resource is lost with the exchange. If an entity under the effects of Familiar is discorporated, it will reform in a location bearing the mage's Signature Nimbus:

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created with the Familiar spell (p.183).

FETTERED

The entity has secured itself to an object or creature. As long as it remains Fettered, the entity is safe from Essence Bleed. The being remains in Twilight and must stay within five yards of the Fetter. Most entities Fettering themselves literally hide inside their Fetters if they are small enough.

The entity pays one fewer Essence for using Influences on the Fetter, but may not use them or Numina on another target as long as the Fetter lasts.

Prerequisites: The intended subject of this Condition must have the Open Condition, tagged to the entity attempting to cause it.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an entity using the Fetter Manifestation Effect.



Ending the Condition: Fetters are permanent unless the prerequisite Conditions are ended, or if the subject of the Fetter is destroyed or killed (if a living being). The entity can voluntarily end the Condition by using the Unfetter Manifestation Effect. The Spirit and Death Arcana can also end the Condition.

URGED

This animal or human host has been used as a Fetter by an ephemeral entity. The entity may read the subject's thoughts with a successful Power + Finesse roll, contested by Resolve + Gnosis (or other Supernatural Tolerance trait). Success reveals surface thoughts. The entity may urge the host to take a specified action with a successful Power + Finesse roll contested by Resolve + Composure. If the entity wins, it creates the urge. Following the urge rewards the host with a Beat.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an ephemeral entity using the Fetter Manifestation Effect.

Ending the Condition: The Urged Condition ends whenever the linked Fetter ends.

POSSESSED

This object, corpse, or living being is temporarily controlled by an ephemeral entity. Living hosts are put into a coma-like state while being possessed. The entity may not use Numina or Influences while controlling the host, but is safe from Essence Bleed as long as the possession lasts.

The entity may pay one Essence per turn to heal one lethal or bashing wound or a point of Structure lost to damage in its host.

Entities possessing inanimate objects or corpses have a great deal of control over their hosts. A being controlling an object can't make it do anything it couldn't do while being operated, but it can turn switches on and off, operate machinery, use keyboards, and turn dials. Use the entity's Finesse if dice rolls are necessary.

Corpses and other articulated hosts capable of movement, such as shop mannequins or industrial robots, use their own Physical Attributes but the entity's Attributes in Social or Mental rolls. By spending a point of Essence, the being can use its own Attributes instead of the host's for Physical tasks for a turn, but doing so causes one point of lethal damage or Structure loss to the host.

Living hosts require more time for the entity to gain full control and always use their own Attributes. The entity may read the host's memories with a Finesse Roll at a -4, use the host's Physical Skills at a -3 penalty, and the host's Social and Mental Skills at -4. Reduce these penalties by one die per day that the being has been Fettered to the host.

To possess a host, the entity must remain in Twilight, superimposed over the victim. This means that if the host touches the entity's bane or is injured by a weapon made of the bane, the entity will suffer wounds to its Corpus.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an entity using the Possess Manifestation Effect on an object or victim under the Open Condition. It can also be created through the Death or Spirit Arcana for ghosts or spirits, and through the Mind Arcanum for Goetia.

Ending the Condition: The possession lasts for a single scene, unless the entity abandons it early or the host is killed or destroyed. Possessing entities can also be ejected by the appropriate Arcanum.

Numina

Spirits, ghosts, and Goetia possess discrete supernatural powers called Numina. A Numen is activated by a successful Power + Finesse roll unless stated otherwise.

This Numina list is not comprehensive, and Storytellers are encouraged to create new Numina to suit the ephemeral entities appearing in a chronicle. Numina reflect the type, theme; and symbolism of the ephemeral entity that uses them; a winter spirit's Blast is freezing cold, while the Awe of a Goetia of faith is a terrible, holy aura.

Numina with [R] next to their names are usable in conjunction with the Reaching Condition.

AWE

The entity causes terror in anyone who can see it. The Numen costs three Essence and activation is contested individually with Presence + Composure + Gnosis by anyone looking at the entity. Anyone gaining fewer successes than the entity is unable to move or speak for a turn. If the entity gains an exceptional success, the effect lasts three turns.

BLAST

The entity may wound opponents at a distance. Range is equal to 10 yards per dot of Power and the entity does not suffer range penalties. If the activation roll succeeds, the Blast wounds as a +0L firearm. The entity may increase the lethality of its Blast by paying Essence — every two Essence spent increases the "weapon" by +1L. The maximum weapon bonus is equal to the entity's Rank.

DEMENT ^R

The entity may torture its victim's mind via psychic assault. This Numen costs one Essence. The activation roll is contested by the victim's Intelligence + Gnosis. If the entity succeeds, the victim suffers the Insane Tilt (p. 322) for the rest of the scene.

DRAIN

The entity can steal Essence or Willpower (chosen at activation) from a material being. The activation roll is contested by Stamina + Resolve + Gnosis. Whichever character – entity or target – gains the most successes receives points of Willpower or Essence equal to the number of successes, while the other party loses the same number.

EMOTIONAL AURA **R**

The entity sends out a wave of powerful – and distracting – emotion. This Numen costs one Essence and lasts for a scene or until the entity uses another Numen. The activation roll is made once but anyone coming within 5 yards of the entity must make a Resolve + Composure + Gnosis roll. If the activation roll has more successes, the victim suffers a -2 die penalty to all actions as long as the aura remains. If the victim gains more successes, he is immune to the aura unless the entity uses the Numen again.

ENTROPIC DECAY **R**

The entity accelerates the natural processes of decay in a target. This Numen costs three points of Essence. The activation dice pool is resisted depending on the subject of the Numen – living creatures penalize the roll by Stamina, ephemeral entities by Resistance, while inanimate objects use Durability. Each success on the activation roll inflicts one point of lethal damage.

FIRESTARTER **R**

The entity causes flammable materials to combust. This Numen costs one Essence and causes one small fire to break out per activation success within the entity's Power in yards.

HALLUCINATION

The entity may create an illusion experienced by a single target. It can be anything from a sight or sound to an imaginary person who holds a conversation. The Numen costs one Essence and is contested by the victim's Wits + Composure + Gnosis.

IMPLANT MISSION **R**

This Numen grants a mortal a vision of a task the entity wishes him to accomplish as well as a mystical determination to see it through. The entity pays two Essence and rolls Power + Finesse. On a success, the subject receives a short vision of whatever the entity wishes him to do and is under the Obsessed Condition regarding carrying that mission out.

LEFT-HANDED SPANNER

The entity positions itself over a device, touching it if Manifest or moving its Twilight form to superimpose over it. Once in position, the entity disables the device by paying one Essence. The device must be a human-manufactured object with at least three moving parts. If the activation roll succeeds, the device malfunctions for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. Using this Numen in combat requires the entity to grapple and gain control of the object, and so can't be used this way in Twilight unless the target is in Twilight as well.

MORTAL MASK

This Numen disguises a Materialized entity as a human and can be used at the same time as the Materialize Manifestation Effect. Using the Numen costs one point of Essence and the human seeming lasts for activation successes in hours. The human "costume" is flawed – witnesses may make a Wits + Composure - Finesse roll to realize that something is wrong. Characters able to sense the entity in Twilight do not suffer a penalty to the roll.

PATHFINDER **R**

This Numen allows an entity to know the quickest route to a destination. The fastest route isn't always the safest, of course; the Numen doesn't reveal any dangers on the way, only a set of directions to the target. If the destination is the subject of the Safe Place Merit, the activation roll is contested by the lowest Resolve + Gnosis among any owners. The Numen costs one Essence and lasts for a scene. If the destination is too far away to reach that quickly, the entity must use the Numen again.

REGENERATE

The entity can use Essence to heal bashing and lethal wounds on its Corpus. This Numen does not require a roll to activate, but costs one point of Essence and heals one point of bashing or lethal damage – the entity must reactivate the Numen each turn to heal more severe wounds. Bashing damage is healed first, then lethal.

SEEK **R**

The entity can sense the presence of suitable Conditions from a distance. The base range is two miles per Rank; entities may spend one Essence to multiply this by 10. By making a successful Finesse roll, the entity becomes aware of the direction and distance to the nearest suitable Anchor or Resonant Condition.

SPEED

The entity accelerates into a blur of movement. The entity chooses whether to spend two or four points of Essence when activating this Numen. Spending two Essence doubles its Speed for the remainder of the scene, while spending four Essence triples it.

SIGN

The entity creates messages or images in any media – it can write in the condensation on cold glass, produce images on computer screens, and send audible messages via phone lines. The Numen costs one Essence to activate, and if successful creates a single message.

STALWART

The entity appears armored, and uses Resistance as its Defense score instead of the lower of Power or Finesse.

TELEKINESIS

The entity can manipulate objects without using a Manifestation Effect. This Numen costs one Essence. Successes on the activation roll become the entity's "Strength" when attempting to lift or throw an item. Fine motor control is impossible using this Numen.



The Door

PART VIII

I began to dream about the door. Something in it woke up. I said I was doing inventory and I would move everything out of the tub and sit on the edge, the chill of the hard porcelain eating through my pants. I put my hand at the bottom of the tub and I knew it went somewhere I had never been before. Somewhere no one had been before.

I told myself if I knew what was behind the door, I could better protect the people on this side. A frontal assault instead of waiting. Why should I be passive when my family was here? My community? Who knew what was lurking behind the door? I told myself I would open the door and deal with whatever was within. I would overcome it and make the Squat safer.

I told you what I was going to do and you didn't stop me. I wish you had. I told you I was protecting us. I told you about my dreams where the vines of the door would ripple and grow. The screams I heard as thorns bit into flesh. The red and black of blood and filth. I told you if we worked together, we could prevent this from happening, find out what was on the other side of the door and stop it. I could unlock it.

You didn't question me. You'd been by my side. You'd seen what I could do and I was shaking with what you maybe thought was earnestness, not excitement.

"Will you help me, Lucretia?" I asked. "The time is coming."

"Of course," you said. Of course you said that.

I never should have asked you. I knew you would help. I didn't know what your aid would cost me.

We stood in the storage area, in the old bathroom. I looked up at the ceiling, knowing what the sky looked like beyond the steel beams and insulation and plaster and gravel of the roof. I knew the time had come and you stood there with me.

I had the knife. Even in the dark, it glimmered with its metallic sheen. I could taste its metal. The hilt was made of brass and bone. I placed the blade against my hand and cut into my own flesh, the hot blood leaping to coat the blade. I held my hand over the tub, watching as my blood splattered with a quiet, wet sound on the surface.

We didn't breathe. You stood, ready. I held my hand out, my arm shaking.

The vines began to manifest, becoming visible even without Sight. Black and twisted, fitting so tightly together, thorns and tendrils interlocked. And then, they shuddered.

Like a thousand, dark mouths with black teeth opening, the vines pulled back and receded. A smell like a thousand deaths, fetid and cold, rushed out of the door, blowing our hair back.

"What is it?" you asked.

"I don't know," I said. "I've never heard of anything like this before."

"We should close it," you said. There was urgency in your voice. If only I could have acted as quickly as you wanted me to.

"How!?" I asked.

YOU DON'T. The voice sounded like ragged nails against ancient stones. Fingers whiter than milk, whiter than maggots showed at the edges. I clutched the blade in my hand, my bones growing cold as the words scraped against my brain. **THIS PLACE IS NO LONGER SAFE,** came the voice again.

"Gee, move!" you screamed my name, but I did nothing. You pushed me out of the way as it rose from the depths of whatever hellish landscape it came from. It glowed with a sickly light. I could imagine its skin, colder than anything I'd ever imagined, but wet. Sticky.

Lights shot from your hand as you shouted Speech, locking yourself in combat with this creature. It reached out with an emaciated arm and grabbed you. It put its hands on you, gnarled fingers and jagged claws clenching around you. You shrieked, stumbling over your incantation. I leaped up, knife in hand.

You withered before my eyes. Your gaze turned to me as the creature whipped you around, its other hand around your neck. Your skin lost its luster and faded. Your eyes wilted like flowers in their sockets. The life in your body was gone, as the monster shook you like a doll. I saw the last light of your spirit glow as your form fell at my feet, a sickening slap of meat and bones. Your spirit hovered briefly above your body, as if looking at yourself in a mirror. You looked at me. And then you dissipated, in a shower of white, shining mist.

I felt all my plans and ambitions melt away from me, like wax and feathers under the too-hot sun. I clutched my blade, made by my own hand. I stepped over your withered body and screamed. The windows shook as I pushed my will into the blade, summoned the power stored in the house, power we had written into the walls and the doors. I thrust the blade into the creature. The blade ate flesh and glowed, the reek of abominable flesh searing and burning. The monster flailed as I shoved the knife deeper, tears burning in my eyes.

The monster shrieked, a sound like metal and bones tearing. I pushed, my weapon and hands covered in vile pulp and gore. Its ragged nails tore into my skin as it fell back through the threshold. If there was a bottom of that hellish place, I never heard it hit. I screamed again, my blood splattered all over the bathroom, trying to drown out the terrible grinding of the vines coming back together, the thorns interlocking like so many terrible teeth in twisted grins.

"Why?" I shrieked at myself. "Why? Why!"

I screamed, but no one answered me. The only answer I had for myself, I drowned out with my sobs.



CHAPTER SEVEN: MYSTERIOUS PLACES

It's a strange world. Let's keep it that way.
— Warren Ellis, Planetary

London, UK

The River Thames flows across southern England, traveling over two hundred miles from its head in Gloucestershire to where it empties into the English Channel at Southend-on-Sea in Essex. Along the way, it winds through London, where one of the oldest and most powerful Consilia in the world thrives.

Though there's evidence of earlier settlements along the Thames, the conquering Romans founded Londinium in 43AD. Through two thousand years of invasion, fire, plague, and rebellion, the city has endured. Today London is one of the top global cities, with over 13 million people making their homes in and around the Greater London area.

London is a center of education, history, and culture. Forty-three universities are located in the city. Tourism guides suggest setting aside whole days to visit the British Museum and the National Gallery. On any given evening, you could see the ballet or the opera, catch a world premiere movie, or hear live music in a crowded pub. It's the city of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens, and Woolf; the home of Queen and the Rolling Stones; a birthplace of and inspiration for punk rock. Its inhabitants speak over three hundred languages.

Not generally included in that tally, but spoken among certain residents, is High Speech.

Not only does London attract millions of Sleeper tourists every year, its Awakened population also swells with visitors who come seeking the city's ghosts and mystic places, to study under renowned members of their Orders, or to search for Artifacts and arcane tomes from the Time Before that will advance their own power and standing back home.

Runewalking

Most guidebooks suggest walking tours of London, some arranged by sections of the city, others by its sundry attractions. Maps of the city, its bus routes, and the Underground abound in convenience store spinner racks, souvenir shops, and hotel information booths. The Tube map appears on tee-shirts, mugs, mousepads — anything that makes a good memento. It's easy for tourists and long-time residents alike to get lost among London's tangled, twisting streets, even with the aid of maps and GPS. The city's Awakened joke that its fleet of cab drivers must be secretly composed of Proximi with an affinity for Pandemonium.

Mages in London also learn that words and symbols in High Speech are *everywhere*: etched onto the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, flashing in the neon signs at Piccadilly Circus, hidden in the street art in the East End. Messages in High Speech have even been found on the undersides of cobblestones. From ancient times to modern, the Supernal has left its indelible mark on the city.

The number of possible routes from one point in the city to another is nearly infinite. A person might choose to walk partway and take the train the rest, or go bus-Tube-bus, or hail a cab — whose journey will depend on the driver's knowledge, local traffic patterns, construction, and other factors. If you were to plot out those varying routes on a map, most of them might appear as nothing more than scribbles — a twisty squiggle here, straightforward lines and angles there. But *some* routes, mages through the centuries have discovered, tremble with power.

Those ones, if you traced them from start to finish, spell words in High Speech.

Though not all words written in High Speech are runes, London's mages have dubbed these mystical routes through the city "Runewalks." One of the Awakened who travels these

paths intentionally, with a specific outcome related to the sigil he's spelling in mind, is usually rewarded with that outcome. A Thyrsus makes a symbol for healing with his steps and strengthens a spell. A Mystagogue gets on the Underground at Westminster, switches lines half a dozen times to spell out a word for *clarity* — and when she exits at Marble Arch, a choice she's been struggling with is finally clear. What appears to Sleepers as a group of tourists meandering through Regent's Park is actually a cabal tracing out the elaborate path that will grant them access to an ally's sanctum.

Travelers must mark their trails in some way for the High Speech to have an effect. Some mages leave literal trails of breadcrumbs, or mark buildings they pass with a piece of chalk. Others might touch every lamppost along the way, or pluck leaves from bushes and window boxes. When public transportation is part of the trip, swiping one's Oyster (fare) card might be the marker. With the advent of smartphones, some more technologically inclined mages have repurposed their fitness-tracking apps: Fire it up at the start of the trip, stop it when you've reached your destination to reveal the sigil traced out in pixelated form.

Tracing a symbol in High Speech accidentally, or with no particular effect in mind, can yield surprising — and occasionally disastrous — results. This doesn't discourage mages from doing so. In some cases, mages embark on unfocused Runewalks when they're out of ideas, trusting that this touch of the Supernal will lead them to the answers and solutions they seek. Others do it for sheer curiosity and adventure, following trails their peers have blazed to see how their own experiences will differ.

A Moros leads his ailing friend among a cemetery's grave-stones. Their path creates a rune for Death. They pause now and then to clear weeds away from neglected headstones, the tidied graves marking their passage. The two find themselves joined by the ghosts of loved ones, bringing comfort and closure to both the dying man and the friend he'll be leaving behind.

On the other side of the city, a cabal's pub crawl follows a path that, when written in High Speech, is a far more (ahem) potent variation on the concepts of *water of life*, *aqua vitae*, and *uisce beatha*. Each pint they drink becomes a trail marker. Though their bender seems to last a week, only a night has passed at the end of it.

A Mystagogue wanders through the stacks at the British Library. Her fingertips graze across leather-bound spines, and every now and then she pulls a book from its shelf, examines it, and slides it back into place. After an hour of perusing, she steps into a room full of Grimoires that were thought lost a century ago.

When Runewalks take a tragic turn, the effects may be concentrated solely on the mage himself, or may affect the immediate vicinity. An Obrimos who unwittingly triggers a word that means *lightning* in High Speech might be struck from a bolt of the same out of the clear blue sky but leave any bystanders unharmed. Or he might not suffer any ill effects, but the power goes out in a three-block radius, with the mage at its exact center.

If there are Sleepers in the area, their memories of what they witnessed are inconsistent. Rather than a lightning strike from a clear sky, they're convinced a transformer blew, and that poor

man was in the wrong place at the wrong time, *how awful*. When an Arrow mage accidentally traced the High Speech for *rage*, a brawl broke out in the pub he was passing. No two police reports agreed on what started it, but every Sleeper in the establishment was sure they'd heard the insult that preceded the first punch.

Entire tomes have been written dedicated to these phenomena and their possible causes. Some Mystagogues believe that the mage's subconscious desires are amplified and made manifest by the presence of the High Speech — that whatever happens was what the mage wanted all along, whether she realized it or not. Others think the hidden symbols act as a kind of guide, pushing the mage inexorably along the path as soon as he sets foot on it, driving him to complete the message. Many believe that Runewalks that end in harm for the mage or her surroundings are the result of corrupted writing: a stumble along the way, a shortcut down the wrong alley, delays on the Underground, or a bus route forced to take a detour.

Order libraries contain records of Runewalks known to be successful. Mages have been overlaying their routes on maps of the city for centuries. While it used to be harder for Nameless mages to gain access to these, there are now entire websites dedicated to sharing these discoveries. With the aforementioned repurposed fitness apps, it can even be as simple as friending mages who share their routes.

Following another mage's route doesn't always yield the same results as the person who first discovered it. In fact, two people walking the path together don't always experience identical outcomes. One oft-retold tale tells of a Mastigos and an Acanthus walking side by side, marking their progress the same way. At the end of their journey, they came to a door. Each described what they saw to the other, and as far as they could tell, they were looking at the exact same door. Yet, when they stepped through, the Mastigos found herself in the crypts beneath St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church in Trafalgar Square, while the Acanthus ended up in his own kitchen clear across the city.

And yet, the pub-crawling cabal above shared not only the same time dilation, they all agree their resulting hangovers were pretty much identical, too.

Runewalks have the same effect on Sleepers as hearing or seeing words in the High Speech would, which is to say none at all. Sleepwalkers, however, may experience the effects of Runewalking on a smaller scale, if they join a mage on her route, or follow directions left for them by the Order they serve. If the mage traces out a healing symbol, for example, the Sleepwalker feels energized at the end, aches and pains gone, that sore throat that was threatening no longer a concern.

Banishers and some Seers of the Throne have been known to plant flawed routes where Order mages can find them: a path sketched out on a pub napkin printed with the neighborhood map, or posting on online forums with throwaway accounts. At least one Seer in a position of municipal power has attempted to destroy popular Runewalk routes through perfectly mundane means: blocking off critical sections of a street with construction, closing down Tube stations for repairs. The Consilium has commissioned several cabals with the task of watching for these

changes and spreading the word to the Orders and Nameless mages alike.

Awakened London

London is a huge, sprawling city, covering over 600 square miles. The Awakened have always been part of London's history; mystics were present in the area long before the Romans came, and had a hand in the shaping of the city. Cabals of all types can be found throughout the city; no Order is restricted to, or completely controls, any one area, but each has areas where its influence is felt more strongly than others.

The oldest part of London, known as The City of London (or simply "the City"), was where the Romans originally built their port city. Today it is the domain of the Adamantine Arrow. They lay claim to certain buildings and streets, notably the area around the Old Bailey. Part of the renowned court building was constructed on the site of Newgate Gaol, where many famous (and infamous) persons were held. Over a thousand prisoners were executed at Newgate; some of their ghosts still roam the halls. Outside of the City, the Arrow cabal called The Stone Philosophers frequents the Lamb & Flag in Covent Garden. Appropriately for an Arrow haunt, the pub's nickname was "The Bucket of Blood" for all the bare-knuckle prize fights that went on there in the 1800s.

The Guardians of the Veil can be found in and around London's oldest institutions. Unconfirmed rumors abound about a cabal of Guardians within the ranks of MI5 and MI6, branches of Britain's domestic and foreign intelligence services. No one can quite agree on the Shadow Names of those Guardians, or their physical descriptions, or where the gossip mill even heard the scuttlebutt from originally, which of course lends the tales even more credence.

Several Silver Ladder mages can trace their mentors in a line leading back to the Celts who settled southern England in the days before the Romans came. The current théarch Deacon, in fact, chose the name Boudica to invoke the Iceni warrior queen. The modern Boudica was indeed courted by the Adamantine Arrow for quite some time before she chose the Ladder. The decision, while over 40 years old now, is still a sore spot between the Orders. While the Silver Ladder's London sanctum is located atop a Hallow a few streets over, one entrance to the space is located in the Palace of Westminster, where the Houses of Parliament meet. This doorway is mainly a symbolic one, maintained in an unused office "forgotten" by administrators for years – but when a théarch wishes to make a grand entrance into the sanctum, she will use this one.

Mages of the Mysterium are deeply vested in historical London. The Order sponsors lifetime memberships to the many museums in and around the city, procuring after-hours passes, and gaining early access to special collections. Mystagogues are also the curators of some of those special collections, and London is home to one of the greatest Athenaea in the world. Entire wings are filled with Artifacts brought back by imperialist mages in the 19th century. Petitions by mages from several now-independent countries to have those artifacts returned have thus

far been rebuffed, causing no small amount of friction. Some of the Mysterium's younger members have been recruited from, and still participate in, the Society for Psychical Research, which was founded in the late 1800s to study paranormal phenomena and debunk fraudulent claims.

While London is an ancient city, with thousands of years of mage influence guiding it, the Free Council has embraced the changes ushered in by 20th century progress. Libertines keep tabs on the rise and fall of subcultures. They whisper in the ears of those demanding social change and sponsor their protests. They schedule meetings with scientists, staying abreast of innovations and how they might affect – or be integrated with – mage society.

Working opposite the goals of the Libertines are the Seers of the Throne. Every year, they make it harder and harder for the non-wealthy to live in the city. Hardly any magic is needed to achieve that goal: Gentrification serves their aims quite nicely, as does the passage of laws that chip away at others' power. At least one of the Raven-Keepers at the Tower of London is a Seer of the Throne, making sure the birds are well cared for lest they – as old prophecies suggest – abandon the Tower and bring about England's fall. What lies beneath the Tower is unknown, but the Exarchs' commands are clear: Keep the ravens happy, so that what is imprisoned never stirs from its slumber.

Awakened Politics

London teems with mages. The Wise have lived in the city since before its walls were built, influencing Sleepers, seeking out Mysteries, raising up libraries and colleges and kings. Ancient Caucuses share stomping grounds with cabals full of fresh-faced Nameless, and both must share their streets with mages visiting from all over the world, come to London as diplomats or tourists or seekers of knowledge. The city harbors some of the most potent magical Artifacts in the world, and the Guardians of the Veil (aided by the Mysterium and reinforced by the Arrow) take their duty as protectors and keepers of those artifacts with utmost gravity. Grimoires written by legendary archmages and kept in heavily guarded vaults contain spells that could level cities.

London is governed by Consilium. No matter how quickly the Libertines insist the city is changing, mages – especially Hierarch Civitas and his Provosts – are in no hurry to fix what simply isn't broken. The Diamond Orders have long kept the peace in London, and their influence stretches to Consilia throughout Britain. Though they don't often interfere overtly with the decisions of other Consilia, London's Heralds are well traveled, and their opinions and leanings well known to neighboring councilors.

The Free Council, while the youngest Order of the Pentacle, is the fastest-growing. Libertines recruit from the ranks of the Awakened that the Diamond Orders tend to pass over, promising those who feel voiceless that they will be heard at last. Mages of the Free Council consider themselves the grease that will keep London's wheels from grinding to a halt. Though their influence in mage politics is small, the Acanthus Councilor is a Libertine, and she has developed a reputation for acting as a peacemaker and voice of reason when her peers disagree.

The Banishers would like to see London's Awakened turn on one another. While they'd never outright work *with* the Seers, several Banishers make it their job to keep tabs on what the Seers are up to, and help from the shadows. In the last few years, a particular Banisher has made it his goal to target mages who have strong influence in the Consilium. His victims tend to be quieter figures, ones who offer their opinions in small groups and let more vocal acquaintances spread the message.

Both the Seers and the Free Council have taken notice of these missing mages. Neither side knows who is behind it, but both have begun directing resources toward finding out.

Los Angeles, USA

Los Angeles is a vast sprawling city with a population roughly equal to New York City's. However, while New York City is dense and compact, Los Angeles is a vast, sprawling metropolis of disparate neighborhoods that covers almost 5,000 square miles. In many ways, it is a diverse collection of cities and suburbs connected by vast stretches of crowded freeways. It contains the United States' second-largest and busiest port, neighborhoods that are home to millions of immigrants from all across the globe, hundreds of celebrities and multimillionaires, and of course the various corporations that own and control vast multimedia empires of music, film, television, and electronic games. Here, the poorest residents live on the streets, competing with coyotes for food and shelter, while the wealthiest residents dwell in ostentatiously lavish splendor.

Sleepers call LA the City of Angels, but many mages know it as the city of dreams. For as long as mages have known about the Los Angeles area, it's been more connected to the Astral Realm than almost any other portion of the material world. Visions of the Temenos appear as shimmering mirages, and some Sleepers and Sleepwalkers become involuntary (often unknowing) channels for Goetia.

Astral Intrusions

Occasionally, objects from various portions of the Temenos become visible in LA. Everyone can see these manifestations, and they do not cause Quiescence. Mortals can remember them as clearly as mages. However, most attempts to photograph them result in blurred, largely unrecognizable images. These manifestations are entirely non-corporeal, and most are nothing more than mirages of fantastic buildings or a brief image of a mythical creature slinking down an alley. The majority never reappear. Many long-term Angelinos have heard of the city's strange mirages.

One Astral manifestation has appeared dozens of times. Known in local urban legends as the *Lesser Wall*, it appears as a large mural that regularly changes in appearance but is always roughly the same size and always includes at least one iconic image of LA. Mages in LA have seen it in several locations, including on the concrete walls of the dry culvert of the LA river, on the side of a building in Venice Beach, or on a sidewalk in Monterey. The Lesser Wall is of special significance to mages, because sometimes it includes cryptic messages written in ancient languages, including High Speech. On a few occasions its



images are prophetic, like the images of looting and burning buildings in Hollywood that appeared on the Lesser Wall five months before the 1992 Rodney King riots.

Astral Possession

Goetia possess people in LA, in defiance of their usual inability to do so without aid; whatever causes the mirages also allows them through into the material world, and gives them the power to take over weak minds. Hundreds of Sleepers and Sleepwalkers randomly make transitory connections with various portions of the Temenos when they are drunk, high, delirious from illness, or otherwise seriously mentally impaired. In this state, these people say (or sometimes shout) random phrases. Most often they repeat advertising jingles and popular songs, but occasionally they also speak ancient secrets, passages from lost texts, or even deeply personal information about someone they know nothing about. Examining these people with Mind Mage Sight reveals that they are actually asleep.

Other individuals become temporarily possessed by individual Goetia. These possessions always occur when the person becomes intoxicated or when she falls asleep. Some are possessed by a different entity each time; others are always possessed by a single Astral entity, often one associated with the person in some way. A disturbing number of celebrities have even been possessed by entities that are Astral embodiments of their own legends and public images, leading to spirals of exaggerated behavior that often end in tragedy.

Many Sleepers are never aware of their Astral visitors, except as reports or videos of them sleepwalking or talking and acting strangely at parties; they remember nothing of their experiences. However, some Sleepers and all Sleepwalkers who become possessed by Goetia retain at least fragmentary memories of the experience. The majority of these people, termed "dreamers" by the local mages, believe these episodes are symptoms of some form of mental illness and seek spiritual or psychological help, making it easy for clever mages to locate them and study them, under the guise of treatment or spiritual aid. Others retain some awareness while they are possessed and are able to ask the entity questions. These people often learn how to both invite the entity to possess them and evict it when they wish the possession to end. Some believe they have ghosts living in their heads; others think that angels, demons, or even aliens are speaking to them.

Most dreamers seek out similar individuals and encounter a variety of cults and spiritual organizations, including those run by the local Guardians of the Veil. Others believe themselves to be specially blessed and start their own cults. A few of these cults have become quite popular and now have one or more mages as members. Mages join so they can study the possessed individuals.

One particularly inexplicable feature of these possessions is that they seem tied to the city's total population. As LA's population grows, the number of dreamers increases in proportion. When this phenomena was first discovered in the early 1900s, there were only a handful of people possessed. Now that the city's population has grown by more than a factor of 100, almost a thousand people are regularly possessed by Goetia.

Astral Visiting

In addition to Goetia possessing people in Los Angeles, attempts to visit the Astral Realms from LA are easier, but also less reliable. Visiting the Astral Realms in LA using a Hallow for access costs one fewer point of Mana. However, LA is also surrounded by a degree of Astral turbulence that makes entering the Temenos less reliable. When mages first enter the Temenos, a mage must make a Gnosis roll. Any degree of success on this roll means that she enters the realm she expects to. However, failure or dramatic failure on this roll means that she is in a different realm, typically one that has some association with Los Angeles, or one that is currently appearing as a mirage.

Los Angeles also has a significant presence in the Temenos. Portions of and elements from LA can be found throughout the Temenos, and an Astral version of the city can be found in the Temenos realm known as the Metropolis. Some of the murals and mirages that appear in LA also show up in portions of the Temenos associated with LA, but they only show up at least one day after they first appeared in the city.

Mage Politics

LA is sufficiently vast and diverse that it defies all forms of order and organization, and this disorganized sprawl applies equally well to mage politics. It is one of the most famous cities where mages from all four of the Diamond Orders have joined the local Assembly in large numbers. The LA Assembly is a true rival to the LA Consilium. In response to numerous Diamond mages joining the Assembly, the local Consilium began actively recruiting members of the Free Council. The presence of two different mage political bodies is an enduring artifact of how Los Angeles has grown and changed. In the early 1900s, when LA was beginning to become a major industrial and agricultural city, the Assembly arrived, drawn by reports of strange mirages and odd behavior. The newly recognized Free Council looked forward to LA being one of the first cities where one of their Assemblies held sway.

Thirty years later, LA's population had grown by almost a factor of 20. It was now the capital of the motion picture industry and had become one of the centers for wealth and power in the United States. Both the Seers of the Throne and the Guardians of the Veil began taking a major interest in Los Angeles, and additional Diamond mages were drawn by the increasing Astral activity produced by the city's rapidly growing population. Although the Assembly and the newly formed Consilium cooperated against the Seers of the Throne, the Libertines and other mages in the Assembly had no interest in giving up their power to the newly arrived Consilium. Instead, the two groups agreed to divide up the rapidly growing city.

Today, each group claims to speak for and represent mages in Los Angeles, each group is powerful and diverse, and unsurprisingly the two groups do not get along all that well. In practice, the Assembly and the Consilium do their best to ignore one another. Doing so is often relatively easy; while mages belonging to each group are free to live anywhere in LA, most mages who

belong to the Consilium live on or near the coast, in relatively wealthy locations like Orange County, Long Beach, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, Thousand Oaks, or Oxnard. In contrast, Assembly members mostly live inland, in locations like South or East LA, Hollywood, Whittier, Burbank, or Glendale.

While the two groups continue to work together to defeat Banishers and new efforts by the Seers, they guard their research and the possessed humans they are working with quite closely, and there is little cooperation beyond working to defeat mutual foes. However, individual mages from each group regularly interact and there are now several cabals with members from each group. The leaders of each organization believe that such cabals are an attempt to overthrow them by stealing their members, but such fears are entirely unfounded.

In local stereotypes, members of the Assembly are poor or working class, hold radical political and social views, and have no respect for magical traditions, while members of the Consilium are wealthy, socially and politically conservative, and hold all of the Diamond's traditions to be sacred truths. The reality is quite different. In general, Consilium mages are somewhat wealthier than Assembly mages, but the local Consilium is one of the more progressive; while members of the Consilium do not vote on matters like members of the Assembly, the leaders make certain that most of their decisions have popular approval.

Los Angeles is also home to mages who belong to neither group. Most Nameless are recent immigrants or the children of immigrants who belong to one of the city's various insular ethnic enclaves. A few know no other mages, but the majority are part of small organizations which reject contact with outsiders. Some members of the Assembly attempt to recruit these mages when they encounter them. This process is often quite difficult, especially recruiting one of the Nameless whose only previous encounter with other mages has been with one of the local groups of Banishers who consider these Solitary Nameless easy prey.

Cults and Control

Los Angeles has been a center for personality cults, spiritual seekers, and eccentric religiosity for most of the last century. As a result, both the Seers of the Throne and the Guardians of Veil thrive here. Some mages work as magically assisted charlatans who enrich themselves on the hopes and well-fed delusions of their wealthy and middle-class followers; others find the various cults and spiritual movements to be useful tools to help them perform various esoteric endeavors. In addition, mages in both the Assembly and the Consilium keep track of the number of cults, both to make certain that they are not controlled by the Seers and also to look for activity by previously unknown dreamers.

Dealing with Astral Mysteries

The local Assembly and Consilium have agreed to divide up the city's various Astral mysteries. Each group claims various Demesnes, and they also secretly claim individuals who are either sources of Astral knowledge or who are regularly possessed by Goetia.

Both organizations wish to keep careful track of individuals who have a connection to the Temenos. They also want to make certain that they have the opportunity to question the hosts when they are possessed. The two organizations have agreed that the mage (or cabal) who discovers such a person has the option of "claiming" her. However, to make this claim, the mage must observe the dreamer, determine the basic parameters of her connection to the Temenos, and then report his findings to the organization he belongs to.

The first step in this process is monitoring the dreamer when she is intoxicated or asleep. Many dreamers simply randomly spout bits of information she could only have learned from the Astral Realms and rarely change what she says in response to questions. Mages sometimes plant listening devices in dreamers' homes, to see if any of them say anything potentially interesting or useful, but rarely bother to do more than that. However, a handful of individuals are able to answer most questions about the Temenos if asked when they are intoxicated or asleep. The Assembly found the most recent such individual, Miranda Perez, four years ago, and members of the Assembly and Consilium barely avoided violence during an argument about who would monitor her. Mages are also exceedingly interested in individuals who are actually possessed by Astral entities, especially the rare individuals who are aware of and can communicate with the Astral entity that periodically possesses them.

Once a mage (or cabal) has "claimed" a person he wishes to monitor closely, most use a mixture of magic and conventional persuasion to convince the individual to join a particular cult or support group, begin seeing a specified counselor or therapist, or even just hang out with some new friends. The goal in all of these cases is to gain access to the person so that the mage can question and observe her when she becomes possessed. Except when the individual is aware of the entity possessing her, mages are expected to not reveal anything about what is actually happening to the person. Both the Consilium and the Assembly forbid mages from simply kidnapping individuals with Astral connections. However, both groups have occasionally needed to discreetly rescue people from local Seers.

Mages are expected to record all information they obtain from dreamers. They must also immediately turn over any information that reveals large-scale threats or opportunities to their organization's leaders. The leaders are then obligated share this information with the leaders of the other organization. Otherwise, mages are free to pursue any information they uncover from dreamers, but are asked to turn over any information that they are not interested in or able to pursue to their organization's archives. Mages are free to consult their own organization's archives, but the most recent treaty between the Assembly and the Consilium states that mages who wish to consult the other organization's archives must either be invited to do so or must pay for the privilege with services, Mana, or information.

Enemies & Threats

Banishers are unusually common in LA. Many mages believe that the local Astral anomalies either cause more people who Awaken in LA to become Banishers, or subtly attract Banishers

from elsewhere. In either case, most local Banishers are also interested in dreamers. Some care only about hunting other mages and simply observe dreamers, waiting for mages to approach them. Others fear people acting as channels to Astral entities almost as much as they fear mages. The majority of these Banishers hunt down and kill dreamers, but a few attempt to convince or threaten them to leave Los Angeles in the hope that the dreamers' Astral connections will fade once they have been away from the city.

The most dangerous Banishers are a small but deadly cabal who work with a young man named Hector Jefferson. Hector is regularly possessed by a Goetia known as the Producer, a creature made from LA's dreams and legends of personal power. The Producer loves LA, but distrusts mages and fears that they will disrupt its city and disturb other dreamers, who it considers to be its "Stars."

It forbids the Banishers it works with from interfering with any of these "Stars" and keeps in close contact with more than a dozen other possessing Goetia, either in the Astral Realm or while they are possessing Sleepers. The Producer hopes to eventually be able to entirely break down the barriers to the Temenos in Los Angeles, so that any Astral entities that wish to do so are free to possess humans, animals, or electronic devices, and thus transform LA into a city ruled by Astral entities.

The Producer keeps the Banishers it works with from learning anything about its goals and instead uses its powers to help them identify and locate other mages, so that the Banishers can find and kill them. The Producer also warns these Banishers if it learns anything from the Temenos about mages attempting to hunt them down. However, it sees these Banishers as nothing more than a means to an end. It does not hesitate to try to make certain that its pawns are killed rather than captured by other mages, so they cannot reveal any information about the Producer. It also secretly betrays any Banishers who ask too many questions about its plans and goals.

The Seers of the Throne are present in LA, but mostly have little to do with either the Assembly or the Consilium. Their primary interest in LA is as a center of power and control, and several Seer cabals have connections to various important figures in the entertainment industry. In addition to their more typical tools of bribery, blackmail, and covert alliances, the local Seers also maintain several cults specifically designed to attract members of the entertainment industry as a means to obtain information and influence various projects.

Rivalries between these cults and similar cults run by local Guardians of the Veil occasionally become sufficiently heated that celebrity gossip magazines periodically carry stories about animosity between wealthy and powerful people in rival "spiritual organizations." Cults run by the Seers of the Throne also commonly use threats of lawsuits and similar forms of intimidation to attempt to prevent journalists or bloggers from posting any remotely negative information about them.

In the last six months, a Pylon that controls one of these cults was contacted by the Producer. These Seers are currently negotiating with the entity to work out a plan to work together with the Producer and its Astral allies to alter the balance of

power in the Astral Realm in order to greatly increase belief in the Seers' cult. In return, the Producer asks that it and several other possessing Astral entities become major figures in the cult. It hopes to use this cult as a means to both encourage Sleepers to worship it and, if possible, to increase the number of people possessed by Astral entities as a step toward its goal of weakening the barriers between LA and the Temenos. One difficulty in these negotiations is that the Seers must keep them secret from their superiors, since both senior Seers and the Exarchs strongly oppose dealing with Astral entities as equals.

Salamanca, Spain

Salamanca is a small city of 154,000 located 120 miles northwest of the Spanish capital, Madrid. It is also the home of the oldest university in Spain and the third-oldest university in Europe. With 30,000 students, and almost 4,000 faculty and staff, people associated with the university make up almost a quarter of the city's population. Day and night, the city's streets echo with the sound of human voices, and no matter what time it is there's a party going on somewhere, while the native *salmantinos castizos* ("born and bred") remain stereotypically aloof, serious, and even shy. The historic center of the city, clustered around the university and including palaces, convents, and monasteries, is almost entirely made of coarse, sandy, light golden stone.

Like any ancient university, Salamanca has strange rituals and customs of possible interest to mages, such as the tradition of painting *vitores* or victory symbols on the walls when graduating. In centuries past, the blood of a sacrificed bull was used. Now the *vitores* are paint (or so the authorities say). The city itself has some strange legends, including tales of a cave hidden beneath the city where the devil taught magic to seven students. The primary Mystery of the Consilium, though, is a complex phenomenon centered around the library.

Mysterious Books

The University of Salamanca's historical library is the oldest library in Spain. This library is located one of the oldest portions of Salamanca University, in buildings built with secrets of hermetic "magic" encoded into their design. It contains a wealth of rare and ancient manuscripts, and patrons must request books rather than retrieving them from the stacks. Occasionally, a mage notices an unusual book in the online catalog which she has never seen before. Alternately, she may find that a second book was delivered to the main desk along with one that she requested.

These unexpected or unasked for books are unique, and some are highly magical. Many of these books only appear once, others only appear if the same individual requests it again, and a few appear to multiple patrons. However, all other attempts to locate the book in the online catalog or to ask a librarian to find it are met with a complete lack of evidence that the book exists. Even the most thorough search of all of the library's climate-controlled warehouses will not reveal its existence.

Known as *libros efimeros* ("fleeting books") because many are only seen once, these volumes are extremely diverse. Some are

ancient diaries with entries describing events that haven't happened yet, or sometimes events very different from ones that occurred in the Fallen World. Other books are technical manuals for non-existent devices, Grimoires of rites unknown elsewhere, histories of otherwise unknown events, or detailed reports about ancient and often very strange ruins. Some of these ruins do not exist; others are not recorded anywhere else, but can be found exactly as described. Although *efimeros* books can appear in any known language, they only appear to patrons who are capable of understanding them.

All *efimeros* books instantly vanish if anyone attempts to remove them from the library. They also vanish moments after the library closes for the day, or the patron who received a book returns it. Although most seem like ordinary books, some *efimero* books can only be read using Mage Sight. Photographs or copies of these books reveal either gibberish, blank pages, or perfectly mundane text, requiring anyone who wishes to copy the magical text to do so by hand or using magic. Others can be scanned or photographed, but patrons must request permission to scan or photograph rare or old books or manuscripts.

The Salamancon Consilium knows about the library's mysterious books and includes a promise to share knowledge of any such books with other members in its membership oath. In practice, local mages immediately share the contents of most books, but are permitted to keep a few details like unique rites or the locations of arcane treasures secret for up to three years.

The Consilium employs several Sleepwalkers who work as librarians in the historical library. (Mages avoid becoming librarians here, because *efimeros* books never appear to librarians.) Members of the Consilium are asked to immediately report to one of these librarians if they find an *efimero* book. Mages who do not belong to the Consilium sometimes come to Salamanca to visit the library, and the Sleepwalker librarians make certain to carefully watch these patrons to see if they find an active text.

Although such incidents are rare, the library is occasionally host to an untoward scene as mages attempt to spy on, steal from, or subtly intimidate one another in order to get access to one of these magical tomes — or to prevent some other mage from getting access to one. Naturally, all mages are expected to make certain that Sleepers do not notice these disputes. If such disputes begin to be disruptive, one of the Consilium's librarians intervenes and notifies other members of the Consilium. The Consilium's Lex Magica bans disruptive mages from the library for at least a year, and sometimes longer.

One of the most puzzling aspects of the unknown magics that control the appearances of the *efimeros* books is that these books usually appear to mages, but they can also appear to Sleepers. Grimoires never appear to the uninitiated, but histories of non-existent places and, on a few rare occasions, texts on science or engineering beyond current understanding do appear to Sleepers. As with other books, they only appear to people able to understand their contents. A handful of local mages believe that several important scientific and technological advances had their origins in a Sleeper reading an *efimero* book. However, the books themselves are under the effect of the Curse of Quiescence

— Sleepers who read *efimeros* books remember what they read, but swiftly forget the details of the book they read it in.

Gates and Worlds

Every few weeks, a crack in the fabric of reality appears somewhere in Salamanca. These gateways can appear anywhere within the city limits that is more than 50 yards from the historical library, but they almost always appear outdoors. Known as *puertas efimeras* ("fleeting gates,") these Irises are invisible to Sleepers, but trigger Peripheral Mage Sight. Closer scrutiny reveals the gates as relatively narrow, faintly glowing rips in the air of the Supernal World, with other locations visible through the rip. Traveling through one is as simple as walking through the rip in the air and stepping into the *mundo efimero* ("fleeting world") beyond.

Visiting a fleeting world is often not a planned endeavor. The gates rarely exist for more than three hours and some persist for as little as 30 minutes. Also, once someone passes through it, the gate loses stability and collapses between 5 and 15 minutes later. Most commonly, the mage who discovers a *mundo efimero* will spend a few minutes getting ready before immediately traveling there, or she will contact other mages who would be willing to make the trip. The act of entering or leaving the Iris triggers the Peripheral Mage Sight of any mages nearby. Mages who visit a fleeting world are expected to report their findings to the Consilium and to turn over any photographs, videos, or other recordings they made while there.

Regardless of the particulars of each individual world, visits to these strange realms have common elements. In almost all cases, mages cannot use their magic to affect anything other than themselves or any others who traveled with them. Their magic simply does not affect any objects, spirits, or living beings in *efimeros*-worlds. Also, all visits are inherently quite brief.

Between 30 minutes and eight hours after entering an *efimero* world, all visitors find themselves back in the Fallen World within the blink of an eye, no more than a block or two from where they entered the Iris. The few mages who have died while visiting *efimeros*-worlds had their bodies ejected. At first, mages assumed that each *efimeros*-world was unique and, indeed, some are seen only once. However, there are also dozens of reports of *efimeros* worlds that are similar or perhaps identical, implying that at least some of these worlds may persist from one visit to the next.

Reports of the Irises have existed for at least the last 1,300 years, and most mages presume that they have either always existed here, or were created by the Fall. The *efimeros*-worlds are also present in ancient local legends of people wandering off into strange magical realms for a short while and returning. Mages are not the only ones who sometimes visit these worlds; on rare occasions, one of the gateways engulfs a Sleeper, leaving him with an inexplicable story of a short visit to a strange world. Such events are quite rare, and the reason that some Sleepers are carried away in this fashion is unknown. In the most recent event, which occurred 11 years ago, the individual Awakened the instant that she returned to the Fallen World.

Fleeting World Protocols

The Consilium attempts to distribute access to *mundos efimeros* through a process that emphasizes both fairness and skill. The Consilium's ruling triumvirate (the Consilium has two Councilors and a Hierarchy, rather than the greater numbers in many cities) keeps a list of local cabals and regularly issues lists of the three cabals that are currently approved for Iris travel. After each approved cabal has traveled to a fleeting world, it is not eligible to be approved until each of the other approved cabals has also either passed through an Iris or turned down a chance to do so.

According to Consilium law, any mage who sees an Iris should immediately report it to one or more of these cabals, and the first cabal to reach the *puerta efimera* is eligible to go through. In practice, this rule is often ignored, because the gates last only a few hours and many willworkers are interested in traveling through them. Most mages understand that traveling alone to a fleeting world can be very risky, and so travelers usually wait for their cabals before entering the Iris.

Books and Worlds

Anyone studying one of the fleeting books with Mage Sight who has also visited a fleeting world can immediately determine that they are somehow connected. The Consilium's working theory is that the books come from the myriad *mundos efimeros*, but they haven't proved it by finding one inside a world that then later appears in the library. Also, no mage has found a fleeting gate actually within the library or within 50 yards of any section of it, despite them appearing all across the remainder of Salamanca.

While the appearance of *puerta efimera* is seemingly random, the appearance of the books is far more regular. For example, some *libros efimeros* appear in searches of the online catalog, but only for specific individuals. Masters of Fate, Prime, and Time who have spent time studying the library have revealed that it is under the influence of some type of powerful, enduring and entirely unknown enchantment.

Most local mages believe that this magic channels and directs the Irises that would appear in or near the library so that instead of opening "normally," they remain imperceptibly small and fast and only deliver unusual books. Others believe that the fleeting gates are a side effect of the spell that causes the books to appear. However, local stories that seem to record Sleeper encounters with *mundos efimeros* go back well more than 1,300 years, meaning that the spell that affects the library must be older than the library. Regardless of which came first, the question of who created the spell and what its parameters are is a major focus of study in the Consilium.

Fleeting Worlds

The following are some of the worlds that mages report having visited. No one knows if *mundos efimeros* that appear similar are actually the same, but they seem to be. Over the centuries, mages have visited and reported on many dozens of worlds, but the following are two of the twenty-one that mages have visited repeatedly.

Franco

Mages have reported visits to this world for the last 70 years, and its existence and seemingly continuous timeline has provided much of the evidence that different gates may lead to the same *mundo efimero*. In this world, the United States stayed out of the European portion of World War II. Germany conquered all of Europe except the UK, Spain, and Italy, which were all allied states. Nazi Germany then collapsed into internal revolution when Hitler died in 1968.

Fascist dictator Francisco Franco died in 1975 and was succeeded by his aide and confidant, Luis Carrero Blanco, who continued the fascist government until his death in 1999, when his grandson took power. Spain remains a somewhat authoritarian nation, and while people of color and Jews are no longer official second-class citizens, racial prejudice and conflict with Basque separatists remains more significant and obvious than in the Fallen World, and ethnic minorities and foreigners are far less common than in the Salamanca visitors came from. Surveillance cameras are ubiquitous and the gap between the wealthy and well-educated and the poor is even greater than in the Fallen World. Also, the police are well armed and detain and question anyone who seems suspicious, especially if they are not white or are obviously foreign.

Magical Spain

Like most other fleeting worlds, visitors cannot use their magic to affect the world the Consilium simply calls "Magical Spain," but local mages obviously exist and in fact are in charge. Here, Quiescence does not seem to function and the university offers degrees in various magical studies. However, while people talk of powerful magics being used to bless and protect the nation, Salamanca remains a pre-industrial town in a pre-industrial world. It has a population of only 20,000, and while the local mages can communicate with or even travel to Madrid or more distant locations via magic and created enchanted items to allow the wealthy to do the same, ordinary people ride horses or walk. Also, the university has magical heat and lighting, but most houses and taverns use candles, oil lanterns, and firewood for light and heat. Mages who visit this world are encouraged to attempt to talk to local mages about the Irises and to attempt to learn local magic.

Returning from Fleeting Worlds

Mages who return from a *mundo efimero* come back carrying only what they took through the Iris with them. Their cameras can take pictures, and notes they wrote with pens or pencils they brought with them still exist, but anything they try to bring with them vanishes. The only exception is if a mage holds onto a native item when she returns. As she enters the Iris, the player may spend a point of Willpower and make a Gnosis roll; if successful, the character brings one item back with her.

The Salamanca Consilium

The vast majority of mages in Salamanca came here after they Awakened. Most work at the University, although some work in the rest of the city and a few young mages arrive as students. A combination of magic and social connections provides the Salamanca magical community with a thriving network of nepotism. While only four mages work as professors at the university, Awakened who either know mages in Salamanca or who contact the local Consilium and impress its members can almost guarantee that they will soon obtain a job at the university. Most mages at the university work as cooks, gardeners, clerical staff, technicians, or personal assistants.

The Salamanca Consilium is widely regarded as the most traditional one in Spain. The triumvirate of mages who rule the Consilium are all full professors and members of the Diamond. Antilla and Medici are both members of the Mysterium, and the triumvirate's head, Artemisia, is a member of the Silver Ladder. Antilla is a professor of History, Medici is a professor of folklore, and Artemisia is a professor of Classics. All three favor top-down leadership and respect for authority, and most members of the Consilium value education, social status, and adherence to tradition. Although they never openly denigrate the Free Council or its members, everyone in the Consilium is well aware that Libertines and mages who are not associated with the university must work harder to gain recognition and status here.

These attitudes are not popular with some Libertines, but even the most radical members of the Free Council are well aware that the dominant attitudes in the Consilium aren't going to change anytime soon. One member of the Free Council, Dr. Ana Matapang, is an associate professor of physics at Salamanca. However, a growing number of Free Council members are choosing to work outside of the university and to rely upon their connection to Dr. Matapang to gain access to university facilities.

Enemies at the Gate

The Seers of the Throne are also very interested in the mysterious books and in the efimera-worlds, but have far less access to them than members of the Consilium. Salamanca has been controlled by the Diamond for centuries, and the mages working at the university do their best to make certain that no Seer is ever employed there. No security is perfect, but very few Seers of the Throne can find jobs at Salamanca University. However, keeping track of the residents of a city of 150,000 people is far more difficult, and so a few Seers of the Throne now live in Salamanca. They explore Irises and look for magical books in the historical library while attempting to keep hidden from the other mages.

Over the past few years, some Seers of the Throne have been attempting to take advantage of the dissatisfaction that some members of the Assembly feel at the dominance of the Diamond Mages in Salamanca. These Seers approach Free Council members who are not associated with the university. Pretending to be Nameless, these Seers mention being dissatisfied at the

dominance of the Diamond in Salamanca and attempt to lure Libertines into various projects. These endeavors are designed to both disrupt the Consilium's activities and also to learn some of its secrets. The Seers hope to gain access to the Consilium's archives of libros efimeros and records of visits through the Irises, but understand that success is unlikely. Instead, their primary goal is to sow discord between the Diamond and the Free Council in Salamanca, hopefully to the point that the two groups begin to turn against one another.

Tokyo, Japan

Awakened magic holds a unique seat in the world's largest city. In Tokyo, spaces as small as rooms, or as large as entire neighborhoods, can become magical "dead zones" where Awakened magic ceases to function, and where Mana bleeds instantly from any vessel. The city boasts a disproportionately high number of Awakened, including two Mystagogue caucuses and a caucus of every other Order.

The Awakened take these dead zones, or *Ansho*, very seriously. They're charted and catalogued, studied and experimented on. After all, anyone traveling through Tokyo must avoid these spots, lest he find himself defenseless and drained.

Because of this, Tokyo's Consilium stands mostly dominated by Mysterium interests. They've taken it upon themselves to spearhead the efforts to map the *Ansho*, and to disseminate up-to-date information to the city's Awakened.

A History of The Awakened

Records kept by the Awakened of Tokyo go back nearly five centuries. The first known mage in the area was a (probable) Thyrsus called Nakatomi. The stories say that Nakatomi used his or her Life magic to empower the local fishermen to great success. At the time, Tokyo (or Edo as it was called during the period) was nothing more than a little-known fishing village.

Nakatomi's magic helped the fishermen achieve great renown, which drew in much of Honshu's growing population. For the next century, the influx of Sleeper citizens to Edo came with a commensurate influx of Awakened residents. The Awakened flocked around Nakatomi's guidance, and formed one of the oldest surviving Consilia in the world.

Edo grew rapidly, and remained successful long after Nakatomi vanished from record.

In the early 18th century, Tokyo became the first city in Asia with over one million residents. Tokyo remained ever fresh and new, as it suffered frequently from wars, fires, and earthquakes which devastated its landscape, essentially forcing the city to start over and rebuild multiple times. In the Consilium, this has sparked countless debates, since many of the records have been lost to the fires. This includes all records concretely confirming Nakatomi's existence, or any of Nakatomi's words or behaviors. Every extant record is rumor and third-party hearsay. No Consilium member still standing remembers Nakatomi, or

even any true record of Nakatomi's existence. Some claim to have Nakatomi's first Consilium charter, but in a reproduced, unprovable form. This caused the Consilium to fracture into distinct factions. So far, nobody has been able to use Time magic to see Nakatomi or the charter. This is exacerbated by the fact that nobody knows the mage known as Nakatomi's sympathetic name, or otherwise has a true, Strong connection.

In the past century, since World War II, Tokyo has seen a radical uptick in mysterious phenomena all around the city. From hauntings, to new places of power, to clusters of rapid Awakenings, Tokyo seems every bit the eye of a supernatural storm.

Nakatomi-En

The standing Consilium is called *Nakatomi-En*. It maintains three major factions, each viewing Nakatomi with a different perspective, and following Nakatomi's teachings with a different driving philosophy. The factions refuse to use names, each referring to itself as "the First Faction," and the others as "the Second Faction"; the "Second Faction" is singular, as not one of the groups recognizes a third faction. Each could be loosely named after its perceptions of Nakatomi. Here, we call them "the Deifiers," "the Mentors," and "the Myths."

One faction, the Deifiers (*Nakatomi-Sama*), espouses that Nakatomi was a deified entity, something beyond human, and beyond the Awakened. In their version of the story, Nakatomi was a fisherman; he lived amongst men until Awakening, then achieved archmastery. They believe that Nakatomi still exists, and that he walks with them, guiding their actions. They hold up a series of writings attributed to Nakatomi, considering them the first law, and of the utmost priority. Due to Nakatomi's archmastery, he could never hold office. Even if it were allowed, his concerns are simply too lofty and alien to be beneficial to his lessers. While the faction does believe that the Consilium can forge new laws, it is also of the opinion that lesser mages may never amend or change the laws as set down by Nakatomi. This puts them at ends with all other mages in the Consilium, as the dated laws define rigid roles within Awakened society, and refer to customs and practices that would have been considered archaic and outdated two centuries ago. While Gold Laws exist elsewhere, this faction believes all of Nakatomi's words are immutable.

A mage named Kamakura is a member of this faction and the city's current Hierarch. He cannot enact all his deeply conservative agendas thanks to the rest of the Consilium, but he does try. For example, none of his currently appointed advisors are women, thanks to a narrow reading of Nakatomi-Sama's laws. His strength in the Mysterium is sufficient that no others have succeeded in calling a Convocation of Japan to overrule him.

Another faction, the Mentors (*Nakatomi-Senpai*), teach that Nakatomi was simply another mage, a renowned Thyrus who helped raise Edo into a great city. Their version of Nakatomi was a young woman married to a fisherman. She Awakened during a time of famine, and her magic was able to bring Edo to greatness. She led and fostered the first Consilium through direct action, through example, and through community organization. Unfor-

tunately, the faction has little concrete evidence of their stories, as all physical rolls and meeting notes from Nakatomi's original Consilium were destroyed in the 1657 Great Fire of Meireki.

In recent years, this faction dominates the Consilium electorate. They advocate strongly for citizen involvement, and attempt to give every Consilium member a role and responsibility as part of their citizenship. They also fiercely push to break Kamakura's prohibition on women in high governance. Unfortunately, the current Consilium law allows him veto power over fundamental changes in structure. So as it stands, he's allowed to appoint whomever he wants to advisory and delegate roles.

The last faction, the Myths (*Nakatomi-no-Mikoto*), teaches that Nakatomi never properly existed in a traditional sense. The being known as Nakatomi was a convenient and powerful story. If the being exists as a god or legend, it's irrelevant, because it has no noticeable effect on daily life, and no voice, mortal or Awakened, can influence it in any way. They believe that to lead Awakened society, one must become like the masters of legend. The greatest masters of the art, those most magically significant, are inherently those who should shepherd the flock. They're a stark minority group in the Consilium, a group which looks like a clique to most of those on the outside.

Their current leader, Taiyo, is a rumored to be close to archmastery. He's easily the most potent Obrimos in Tokyo, and has been for a great many years. He may very well be the strongest active mage in city politics in terms of pure personal power. However, he's outclassed by some of his "inferiors" in social and political power. He acts as a rival Hierophant to Kamakura. The two both lead the Mysterium, but Kamakura has greater weight in the Consilium.

The mages of the Myths faction believe Nakatomi never once laid down any sort of law – or even that he founded the Consilium. They maintain that the other two factions' beliefs and doctrines are completely invalid, and that the Deifiers faction's writ of law was pushed through illegitimately to avoid the will of the people. They believe the Mentors faction pushes for social agendas that exclude merit and magical advancement from the natural state of rulership. If this group has their way, control over Hallows and magical phenomena would be the metric for political power within the Consilium. It comes as no coincidence that their faction controls a wildly disproportionate number of these places.

Phenomena in Tokyo

The following oddities occur within the wards of Tokyo. The Consilium and members of the Mysterium across the three factions track, map, and catalogue these occurrences.

Note that these things occur all across the Tokyo metropolitan area, and for an indeterminate distance outside it. The affected areas are quite massive, and ultimately comprise all of the formal Tokyo Metropolis, as well as parts of the Kanagawa, Shizuoka, Yamanashi, Saitama, Nagano, Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, and Chiba Prefectures. As one gets farther from the heart of Tokyo, the strange phenomena become less and less frequent.

The Ansho

The Ansho are the single most debated and studied Mystery for the Tokyo Awakened. Spots on the map, whether they be little alcoves or city blocks, are magical dead zones. A mage traveling through an Ansho finds herself quickly robbed of all Mana, and incapable of using spells.

Some mages (and more than a few Seers) have used the Ansho as ambush points, drawing their enemies in, remaining outside, and laying down attacks. In one famous case in 1971, the Hierarch Ikaruga was tricked into a warehouse Ansho, and a gang waiting for him inside stabbed him over 100 times. The bureaucrat in charge of mapping the local Ansho kept this location secret, so none in the city knew of its existence. Since then, Kamakura demanded that Ansho must be the purview of an entire Order (the Mysterium), and a single mage should never be the sole holder of any information pertaining to them.

The prevalent theory is that Tokyo has small pockets of Abyssal energy that neutralize Supernal forces within; alternate theories are put forward by some Mystagogues who consult with foreign caucuses about known Lower Depths. Masters of Prime have had limited luck in shrinking Ansho through extensive rituals, but the effects are always temporary, and the costs far outstrip the benefits.

New Ansho arise only rarely, with roughly three to five new ones per year across the entirety of Tokyo. This is frequently enough that the Mysterium is justified in constantly searching for new ones. Their current, most successful method was inspired by astronomers' research into black holes. They send out magical pulses, slow effects expected to bounce back. They scrutinize the return Supernal energies, and track gaps and slow points within the return signals. They chart these results, move locations, and "ping" again to triangulate before actively moving in to verify. Mapping is typically done by a cabal, which sends a single member inside the suspected Ansho to attempt to spellcast in numerous places to find its boundaries.

While three to five appear each year, one to three vanish randomly. The number slowly grows, and many fear they will overwhelm the city in time.

Beacons

There's a saying in Japan: "The stake that sticks up will be hammered down." For the Awakened, this is a harsh reality of

magic. Whenever a mage in the Tokyo area releases Paradox, it sends out a "beacon" that alerts those sensitive to the supernatural. It doesn't inherently identify the offending mage, but all such creatures in a certain distance notice that something unnatural has occurred, and from what general direction it came.

Functionally, this affects vampires, werewolves, and other creatures that exist as mostly supernatural beings. It affects "lesser supernatural beings" such as vampire ghouls, and shapeshifters' close relatives, if they possess any Supernatural Merits pertaining to their natures. As well, human characters with Supernatural Merits are affected. The beacon goes out in a radius of 10 yards per dot of the mage's Gnosis, plus an additional 10 yards for every success on the Paradox dice pool. The dice pool must be successful for this to occur. Characters sensing the beacon do not know the source, nor do they understand it in any way. They just know something is "off," and from what general direction it came. Curiously, an Ansho blocks the effect radius of these beacons.

Tokyo's Orders

The Awakened Orders exist in Tokyo, as with most cities. The six stand strong and populous among the metropolitan area's nearly 40 million people.

The Adamantine Arrow (*Kongou no Ya*) acts as the front line against the strangeness. Inevitably, many of the phenomena that occur within Tokyo are followed immediately by manifestations of the Abyss. Younger Arrow mages refer to these monsters jokingly as "random encounters," as a way to diffuse the utter horror they face as their friends and compatriots fall at the tentacles, teeth, and miasmas of the unknown. Unfortunately for their efforts, the Consilium stymies many of their more important agendas by drowning every military excursion in extensive red tape. The Arrow cannot take action without three delegates from Kamakura's advisement panel, or a majority vote from the Consilium at large. This means getting over 100 Awakened to both congregate, and agree on a single agenda. (This also assumes a unanimous vote, since over 200 Awakened reside in the metropolitan area.) Surprisingly, this has occurred three times in the Consilium's recorded history. In two of these missions, the delay brought on by the vote nearly meant the end of the city as a whole. In one, the delay meant the monster in question fell to the weight of the world around it before the Arrow arrived. A building full of Sleepers crushed the creature, leaving nearly nothing of the threat (or the building's inhabitants) remaining.

The Free Council (*Jiyuu Hyougikai*) runs around like a desperate animal. The group has numbers and potential, but it's spinning its wheels constantly, trying to lobby and fight for the Nakatomi-Senpai faction. Free Council mages push hard for women's representation in the council governance, and they fight to push out Kamakura so the Consilium charter can be amended. Kamakura's defense against their efforts has been to put into place an extensive system of replacements for his position who are all presented politically as worse than him. Some are downright fascist, and he manipulates these perceptions well to denigrate the works of the Free Council. So the Councilors toil endlessly in a political, PR, and logistical war they're unlikely to win in their lifetimes.

The Mechanics of an Ansho

Every turn a mage remains in an Ansho, she loses a point of Mana. She cannot cast new spells at all, although she can use her remaining Mana normally, and her Attainments are unaffected. Existing spells she has not relinquished or placed with a Sleepwalker fade after a number of turns equal to her Gnosis. Spells targeting those within the Ansho have their Potencies halved each turn (round down) until they cease to exist.

The Guardians of the Veil (*Shikiri no Shugosha*) act mostly as an internal affairs department for the Consilium. They're a small group, barely recognized to have any significant power in Tokyo, but the Consilium will empower them to act against problem elements. Unfortunately, these priority targets tend to be members of the Free Council, and any other currently dissenting group. Kamakura barely hides his contempt for his enemies, and wields that transparency as a weapon. Everyone knows that speaking too loudly will leave you open to attacks. The Guardians know this, and see it as a regrettable truth of their situation. Ultimately, they will only strike down a Consilium member who has made mistakes, so their public warning to Tokyo is to keep everything above the table, and don't take major risks.

The Mysterium (*Hiouden*) heavily overlap into both the Nakatomi-Sama and Nakatomi-no-Mikoto factions. Almost all the Nakatomi-no-Mikoto faction hail from the Mysterium. Many of the Nakatomi-Sama faction, including Kamakura himself and all his advisors are of the Mysterium. Clearly, the Mysterium receives grossly preferential treatment. Mysterium members get first pick of territories, and this is always couched under coincidental terms. Nearly every Hallow in Tokyo beyond a tiny Mana trickle is under Mysterium control.

While they are clearly a significant power in Tokyo, maintaining that status keeps them from the levels of advancement, research, and exploration they'd like. Most of their efforts are spent establishing and defending an unassailable position in the city.

A single (but large) Mysterium cabal singlehandedly spearheads research, investigation, and procurement for all occult phenomenon in Tokyo. They're sufficiently large that they contain smaller splinter cells tasked with specific areas of specialty. For example, they maintain a sub-group responsible for charting Hallows all across the city.

The Silver Ladder (*Gin no Hashigo*) are nearly an independent interest in Tokyo. While they exist within the Consilium, they mostly deal with the Sleeper world, trying to manipulate it into their ideals. They do this separate of the Consilium's bickering and politicking, except in the rare cases where Consilium law debates focus heavily on Sleeper relations.

The Silver Ladder's agenda in Tokyo focuses on pushing the exploratory spirit among the Sleeper population. This is a holistic approach, focusing on religion, art, and the sciences. The sorcerers of the Silver Ladder push the populace to think in new ways, and to innovate. This even means approaching long-established and religious principles with a new mind. This puts them at odds with the Seers of the Throne on occasion, but the Ladder works closely with organizational politics rather than the mass media.

Most Ladder members maintain at least nominal leadership or advisory positions in Sleeper organizations, corporations, temples, or other facets of local culture. One of the most powerful members of the Tokyo Ladder maintains an influential role on an international corporation's board. This Cryptopoly, called The Hototogisu, has a hidden branch which interacts diplomatically with other supernatural entities in Tokyo, including vampires, obake (shapechangers), and other, stranger things. This puts the

Silver Ladder in a position of unique privilege, since it can make connections with things outside the Orders when in specific need. These favors do not come cheap, and often ripple outward with unforeseen consequences, but they can bring massive and near-immediate benefits.

The Seers of the Throne (*Zasho no Senkaku-sha*)

Japan stands in an interesting position, where it's both moving forward in technology and social development in many ways, but standing behind the rest of the world in others. Scientists make leaps and bounds in robotics technology, but you can't use an ATM past 7 P.M. because the elderly are concerned about not being able to connect with a live support person. This contrast, this dissonance, is a perfect vehicle for Seer intervention.

The Seers fight tooth and nail to keep the recording industry tied to physical CDs in opposition to digital services, because wider distribution breeds wider availability. Keep it petty. Keep it immediate. Keep it all locked down. They push hard to maintain the popularity of highly formulaic, rigidly ruled idol groups, to keep the populace throwing their time and savings into the same thing over and over. They promote racially charged political policies in spite of public trends, to keep the people distracted. They play a game of diversion, and they play it well.

Currently, the pet project is to pose organized crime as a "friendly," viable societal solution. They're going to great lengths to help these criminal enterprises rebrand themselves as forces against drug abuse, to help garner public favor. This means these groups can help to keep the people down without the scrutiny they might otherwise garner.

The Conceptual Ki

The Awakened of Tokyo use the word *Ki* (pronounced "Key") for what most mages call Mana. However, this word has many other meanings. It refers to the air, the atmosphere, flavor, heart, mind, spirit, emotion, humor, intention, and the human will. While it isn't inherently the word one would use commonly for all those concepts, it's an umbrella word that contains all those ideas. It's important to note that this is both a linguistic and cultural difference. Japanese is a highly contextual language. For example, the word for "foot" and "leg" in Japanese are the same. Without context, a reader or listener might not understand of which you speak.

When a Tokyo mage speaks of *Ki*, she may be speaking of any of these concepts, or all of them. Awakened society sees this as a boon, since it allows for more and more open speech. A discussion of *Ki* at a local ramen bar might seem a little quirky, but not completely unordinary because of the context. Similarly, local mages don't linguistically differentiate Mana from *tass*; *Ki* covers both concepts just fine for them.



Tucson, USA

Tucson, Arizona has a long and varied history. Long before it became part of the United States in 1853, it was home to the Hohokam people, who farmed the land and brought irrigation techniques to their desert settlements. The Hohokam lived near Tucson until nearly 1450. Their descendants, the Tohono O'odham, live in and around Southwestern Arizona to this day.

By 1700, Spanish explorers and missionaries were settling the Southwest. The Jesuit missionary Eusebio Francisco Kino founded the Mission San Xavier del Bac (Saint Xavier of the Water) a few miles north of Tucson, where a Spanish military fort was located. When Mexico gained independence from Spain, Tucson became a Mexican territory for the next 30 years, until the land was sold to the United States. It was the largest city in Arizona until the early 1900s, when the population of Phoenix surged and kept climbing.

For good or ill, Tucson personified the Old West. It was a stop on the stagecoach lines for years, though riders and their cargo were often attacked by highwaymen and Apaches. A few months after the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone, Wyatt Earp was in Tucson to see his brother Virgil and family off on the train to California. Frank Stilwell, the man who had murdered Earp's brother Morgan, was laying in wait, preparing to kill Virgil. Wyatt Earp and his crew chased down and shot Stilwell, and the Earp Vendetta Ride began, with the purpose of hunting down the remaining cowboys who had gone free in Tombstone.

Tucson is a desert city, surrounded by mountains on all sides. Saguaro National Park bounds the city to the east and west. The city and Pima County adhere to Dark Sky Ordinances, setting maximum levels of nighttime illumination and guidelines to keep the skies visible to local observatories.

The eastern side of the city is home to an artists' colony, begun in the 1930s when artists from the Bolsius family renovated the existing adobe houses. Over the next few decades, more writers and artists settled in the neighborhood. Jack Kerouac wrote sections of *On the Road* while staying there.

Sleeper kids tell each other ghost stories about vengeful cowboys, monsters come out of the desert or down from the mountains, and the phantom bells. They dare each other, on nights when the air is crisp with the desert chill, to stand out in the darkness and listen for the bells of the old missions. Legend has it if you hear them, your death is imminent. It usually ends with a *boo* and a screech, and peals of shaky laughter. Those kids, they rarely hear the bells.

But the Awakened hear them all the time.

The Phantom Bells of Mission San Xavier del Bac

In 1767, King Charles III of Spain banished the Jesuits from Spanish lands. When the original mission built by Padre

Kino to serve the people of Tucson was destroyed in 1700, a casualty of frequent attacks by the Apache, it was rebuilt by the Franciscans who had taken over the missions in the meantime. Many – maybe even all – of the craftsmen and artisans who raised the new structure were Native American workers. No records exist of their names, but their influences can be seen and felt throughout the mission's interior. When the Mexican government banned all Spanish-born priests in the late 1820s, the San Xavier del Bac Mission spent the next 30 years falling into disrepair. It was the Tohono O'odham people who began repair and restoration work until Arizona became part of the United States. The bishop for the Santa Fe region ordered the building fully restored, and it reopened in 1859.

Today, the mission is a church, a community center for the Tohono O'odham people, and a pilgrimage site. The faithful come on foot or on horseback to worship. The yearly San Xavier festival celebrates the Tohono O'odham and Yaqui peoples. Despite all the renovations, one dome remains unfinished. Local scuttlebutt claims it's to avoid taxes on incomplete buildings. Other, older stories talk of an "Excellent Builder," prophesied to come along and finish it.

It's from this empty tower the bells ring out, discernible to Awakened using their Mage Sight to look and listen.

Efforts to discern what sets the bells to ringing – astronomical events, environmental triggers, the fluctuations of Halls or ley lines in the area – have returned inconclusive results. They ring at least once a week, often more, for varying durations. The peals have been heard while their physical counterparts are struck during services; in the dead of night, like the sleepover stories say; at dawn or dusk, or in between. The duration of the sound varies as well, from hours-long chorales to a single, great *bong* that nearly knocked one Acanthus from the tower wall he'd rappelled to study them.

Contrary to the urban legend, the bells do not always signal the listener's impending death. In fact, correlations drawn between the two events are rare. The bells are as likely to predict death as a dropped fork is to herald company arriving – plenty of silverware gets dropped without a knock sounding afterwards, but coincidences do happen.

As often happens with urban legends, though, there's a nugget of truth in the stories. For those present on the mission's grounds when the bells begin, the veil – between life and death, fate and time – lifts, and the dead appear. The *future* dead.

The "ghosts" who appear at any given time died – *will* die – within a few weeks of one another. That span isn't fixed: Some appearances have been filled with people who passed on the same day; others died on different days of the month, but shared a time of death. Also not set is how far into the future those people die, though the bounds seem to be between one month and five years away. On average, between ten and fifteen of the future-deceased manifest when the bells ring. Anyone using Active Mage Sight can interact with the apparitions, though it's best to do so in hushed tones, or in an out-of-the-way corner of the mission, lest Sleepers in the area witness the mage talking to empty air. This, too, is part of the Mystery: These beings can be viewed using *any* form of Mage Sight, which makes them something other than ghosts

in the traditional sense. While what these apparitions truly are is yet to be discovered, local mages have settled on "ghosts" as a catch-all term.

One Mystagogue cabal has made it its purpose to collect information from the people who appear. Its members maintain a list of "frequent fliers," entities who have appeared more than once. The Mystagogues have also observed what any Acanthus worth her salt would point out: The future isn't set in stone. Whether through Awakened intervention or other strokes of fate, some of those who were once seemingly destined to die are still alive after their death dates have come and gone.

While tweaking fate is simply part of day-to-day existence for some mages, the Awakened of Tucson have begun setting guidelines for interfering with San Xavier's dead. Twelve years ago, a particular manifestation was almost entirely made up of local mages, heralding a disaster in their not-too-distant future. Initial *let's fix this before it happens* talks between those mages involved and their cabals – who had bad blood between them to start – fell apart within hours. Both groups spent the next ten months vying to control the outcome, to tragic results.

Destinies were manipulated on a near-daily basis, leaving mages on both sides exhausted from trying to outmaneuver the other. In the end, the cabals had their battle anyway. Months of attempting to thwart what they'd witnessed at the mission culminated in a dozen deaths: all of those from the original vision, plus four others.

Never again, declared the survivors. The two mages who remained set aside their lost friends' grievances and their own, and formed a new alliance on the ashes of the old hatreds. To this day, Sandrene and Acaste head the committee offering guidance and mediation to willworkers with opposing ideas on how the future ought to play out. No penalties are meted out to those who *don't* heed their advice, but Awakened Tucson's rumor mill is busy – mages who disregard the women's wisdom find themselves hearing the story of the dead cabals brought up often in their presence.

Bells Will Ring Throughout the Land

San Xavier del Bac isn't the only site where the phantom bells can be heard, though it is the place where they are the most consistent.

Santa Cruz Catholic Church was completed in 1918. The bells there rang for the first time on November 11th of that year, when word came of the German surrender in World War I. Bishop Henry Granjon ran to the tower as soon as he got word and sounded the bells, signaling that it was time to rejoice. By the beginning of 1919, mages in the neighborhood were hearing the bells when no services were scheduled at the church. These act in a fashion similar to those of San Xavier del Bac, though the tableaux that play themselves out in the church's courtyard are scenes of future triumph rather than death. They aren't relegated to events that will happen in the immediate area; bringing an item belonging to an ally or a rival will show observers their victory or defeat no matter where it will occur.

El Tiradito is a shrine in Tucson's Old Barrio neighborhood. Legend has it the man buried there was killed fighting for the

woman he loved, though other versions vary the genders and roles of the participants. Light a candle and make a wish, say the Sleeper stories. If the flame is still flickering come sunrise, your wish will come true. Mages in the area sometimes glimpse the entity who actually lives at the shrine, though more often, she's heard. Rather than great, reverberating church bells, hers are softer, smaller. When she deigns to acknowledge mages, it's in the High Speech. She prefers to speak on matters of love and loss, but for the right price, she'll hold forth on what this area was like in the Time Before.

Fifty miles southwest of Tucson is Baboquivari Peak, one of the most sacred sites to the Tohono O'odham Nation and the home of their creator, I'itoi. The god is said to live beneath the mountain, at the bottom of a maze. O'odham storytellers recount the tale of a Spanish officer and his men who attempted to dig their way through the mountain for a look at I'itoi, rather than attempting to navigate his maze. The ground opened up and swallowed them. Rather than bells, mages who journey to Baboquavari hear the ring of shovel on stone, and gain wisdom about their own hubris.

Awakened Politics

While each of the five Pentacle Orders is represented in Tucson, the city is governed by neither a Consilium nor an Assembly. In fact, there are more Awakened *not* affiliated with any of the Orders than there are Pentacle mages present. Tucson sits in a spot just outside the reach of several groups – the US–Mexico border acts as a natural barrier preventing the city from being absorbed by its nearest Consilium in Mexico, while it lies too far from Phoenix and El Paso for those cities' mages to have any claim over Tucson's Mysteries. Over the years, the city has become known as a haven for mages who forego choosing an Order. This is not to say that Tucson is a city of loners or outcasts. In fact, for the most part the Awakened community is closely knit, willing to offer help, resources, and information to those who need it. Rivalries do exist, and tempers do flare, but the city's mages attempt to keep those conflicts well contained, not wanting to attract the attention of Consilia or Assemblies from nearby regions.

When circumstances require that the local mages handle a supernatural problem, Tucson's cabals, solitaires, and apostates join together as a Nameless Order until the issue is resolved. Although the central Awakened figures have remained the same over the years, the Order receives a new name with each gathering. Potentially confusing for outsiders, for the Tucson Awakened these names invoke the reasons for the Order's formation, the time period, the problems solved, and the mages who participated. Written records *do* exist recording these criteria – preventing the Mysterium or the Guardians from collecting the information would be nigh impossible – but oral tradition is vital to Tucson's Awakened community. Ask a Tusconan mage about the Cactus Wren Council, the Uncrowned, or *Lichanura Trivirgata* and they'll launch right into the story and the lessons learned.

Once every few years, the Hierarchy of Phoenix sends representatives to Tucson, looking to see if the Diamond Orders in the city have the pull or the desire to bring the mages there into

the Consilium, though thus far their sallies have been rebuffed. Tucson's system *works*, and Order mages within its bounds are generally happy with the arrangements. The Free Council tends to work toward maintaining this opinion. When their members get wind of incoming Consilium visitors, they work to remind Diamond mages in the city of recent triumphs, and offer their services to the established cabals and solitaires should the Hierarchy ever make a real push for power.

Aggressively recruiting for the Orders is frowned upon. While it's perfectly fine to show a newly Awakened mage what one's organization can offer her, and show her why she'd thrive in that environment, once an offer is refused it's expected the Order will abide by the individual's decision. Recruiters who don't respect refusals find their welcomes lukewarm at society events, and their associates' resources restricted until an apology is made and the recruiter backs off.

The Seers of the Throne have a handful of Pylons in the Tucson area, mainly in the Catalina Foothills to the north of the city. The suburb is pricey, dotted with resorts offering the sort of luxury the Seers are accustomed to. These mages rarely involve themselves with the other mages in the city, viewing the Nameless as neither a threat to their own existences, nor a strong enough tool to help dismantle the Pentacle. Seers with militant attitudes about fighting the Pentacle don't linger in Tucson; the region's seat of Seer power is El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, capitalizing on the twin cities' increasing militarization and the tension of the border; aggressive Pylons are too busy jockeying for favor there to pay attention to Tucson's Nameless.

Awakened Tucson

The Flowing Wells branch of the Pima County Public Library is a gathering place for those Awakened who wish to come hear stories of previous Nameless Orders' adventures, the good deeds of the city's cabals, and cautionary tales of mages far and wide. The cabal that arranges these storytelling sessions – who call themselves, appropriately, the Librarians – hosts after-hours meetings once a month. All are welcome, and are invited to listen to stories, or tell tales of their own. Perhaps ironically, in the early 1970s a Flowing Wells schoolteacher was accused of witchcraft and fired from the high school. The court found in her favor and ordered the woman (who was neither witch nor Awakened) to be reinstated, but the district did not rehire her. The Librarians have quietly established a fund in her memory to help newly Awakened mages in Tucson.

On Tucson's east side, the Adamantine Arrow have claimed the aircraft boneyard at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base as their headquarters. The dry desert air makes it the perfect place for the military to store retired planes. Many of the aircraft in the boneyard are in states of disassembly, as their useful parts are removed and reclaimed for use in other, active planes. Getting onto the base itself is tough; security is tight and the Sleeper airmen on duty vigilant. The Arrow considers gaining access *without* resorting to magical means a rite of passage. For those who succeed, the belly of the base's lone C-130 is where the Order gathers.

The Eight of Cups is a bar in downtown Tucson, home to the cabal of the same name. The tarot card it takes its name from signifies new directions, especially after learning things aren't what they seem. The bar's décor is full of optical illusions, false walls, and trompe l'oeil paintings, a wink at the Lie its Sleeper patrons live and its Awakened customers have woken from. The door to the back room can only be seen and opened by someone using Mage Sight. It is often used by Tucson's Awakened movers and shakers as a secure meeting room.

The Searcher is a Thyrsus who spends most of his time outside of Tucson, roaming Saguaro National Park or hiking the trails in the mountains surrounding the city. He's one of the older Awakened residents, claiming to have been around for events during the first World War, including the first ringing of the bells at Santa Cruz Catholic Church, though he only appears to be in his late forties. His name appears in tales from that era, leading to rampant speculation. Some mages go the Occam's Razor route, insisting the original Searcher passed his Shadow

Name down to an apprentice, possibly even one of his own descendants. Others posit that he's found a way to hibernate for months or even years at a stretch, putting off the aging process while he sleeps. Perhaps he doesn't sleep the time away, but skips over years entirely by virtue of a ritual, or an accomplice who is strong with that Arcanum. The Searcher won't say, though he's offered to pay for a lifetime's worth of drinks at Eight of Cups for the person who figures it out.

The Dark Sky Cabal takes its name from the ordinances passed protecting Pima County from light pollution. Its members' particular blend of ancient, star-based divination arts and ultra-modern astrophysics make for interesting conversation at their bi-monthly retreats in the national parks or at sites along the Santa Cruz river. The cabal is a mix of Pentacle and Order-less mages, many of them students at the University of Arizona. Currently, they're studying whether changes in the manifestations at San Xavier del Bac are reflected in, and corroborated by, the skies.



The Door

PART IX

They found me there, covered in my own blood, throat raw from screaming your name. The people who trusted us to watch out for them, protect them, and they had no idea what to do for me. One of them must have called Diamante, because the next thing I knew I felt her Nimbus around me...and then nothing.

I woke in Horatio's Sanctum, in a room converted into a cell. Horatio asked me what happened, and it crashed down onto me. What I'd done. How I'd lost you.

I told him I killed you. I didn't set out to - I loved you - but I killed you nonetheless. He left me alone, then, for hours. And now the Interfector is here.

Lucretia, I write these words to remember you. To remember what I did to you. I loved you. I failed you. Whatever Outis is here to do to me, I deserve it. This is my confession.

- Gee.

I look up from Gee's writing to find that I am no longer alone here with the guard. Carter is at the end of the hall, looking like he wants to approach but doesn't want to risk it. I fix him with my best level stare, and he retreats back to the common area. In his wake, a Persian man wrapped up against the cold Brooklyn winter comes in. It's about time.

"Locksmith," I greet him, "good. I need a teleportation spell."

"Uh..." he blinks, and recovers. "Of course. Where to?"

"Where else? The scene of the crime."

...

I kneel to inspect the bathtub. The fresh stains of Gee's and Lucretia's blood layer over earlier marks, just as Gee described.

Locksmith fidgets as I make a fingernail diamond-hard and scrape up some of the blood. I review what I know about him. An Adept of Space, but curiously not a warlock; my uncomfortable traveling companion is a Thyrus. Mastigos have

a tendency to break down barriers. Locksmith specializes in making them.

"Genevieve mentioned you in her confession," I say, neutrally. He has a good poker face, I'll give him that, but he reacts. I just can't tell if it's guilt or surprise.

"May I ask..?" he ventures. I stand up, inspecting the flakes of old blood in my palm.

"She said you lied. You told her this wasn't an Iris, that it couldn't open. Well, it opened. What do you say to that?"

"I said it might. That the doorway hadn't formed, yet. I..." I feel him open his Sight, and he frowns at where the Iris should be.

"That's not right," he says. "It still hasn't formed. Look at it."

I open my inner eye, pushing the Fallen World away. In Stygia, the room still bears the marks of Lucretia's death. The floor where she landed is dented with a vague outline of her body, and Gee's trauma and grief have left chains everywhere. The Iris — if it is an Iris — hangs in the air above the tub, vines coiled tight around the aperture.

And then I feel them. A resonance I have never felt, not in this timeline. Familiar voices play at the edge of my hearing, voices that fill me with joy and horror. I will my awareness back to Fallen reality.

As I come around, I realize I'm on one knee, gripping the edge of the tub for support. A fresh cut drips blood from my thumb, caught on a sharp object...like a vine.

Locksmith looks confused, but anger is growing to cover it.

"Tell me." I say, quietly.

"It hasn't changed. It's just as it was when I assessed it: a possible Distortion in Space, but not fully formed. She... Genevieve must have killed Lucretia to try to open it."

"And the creature?"

"There is no creature! I'm telling you, Master, there is nothing on the other side of this door!"

I shake my head.

"No. I'm sorry, Locksmith, but you're wrong about that. I know exactly what this is. But now I need to ask you something important."

"Like what?"

"Who exactly did you report your findings to?"

• • •

We head back to the sanctum. While Locksmith casts the spell to teleport us, I mull over his angry declaration. Genevieve must have killed Lucretia to try to open it.

He's half right. He just has the wrong culprit in mind.

I feel Locksmith's spell, and the momentary sensation of nothingness, before we reappear. Thanking him for his time, I quickly check that no one has disturbed Gee before heading upstairs.

Diamante opens the door on my second knock. Her expression is grim. I enter, and the background noises of the chantry suddenly vanish; she wants privacy.

"Before you tell me what you found," I say, "let me ask you two questions. The Squat. Your Order owned it before Gee and Lucretia took it over, correct?"

"That's right." Her voice is clipped, carefully controlled.

"A building assigned to two apprentices just so happened to contain an Iris? An Iris that someone had previously attempted to open? Does that strike you as odd, Sentinel?"

"It does." She knows. Or she suspects.

I open my palm, revealing the tiny flakes of dried blood, fragments of an old death and a new one. I cast a spell, separating the two, then another, calling on the laws of Time and Death to reverse the passage of years. The old blood, the blood Gee found when she first moved to the Squat, liquefies into a droplet on my palm. It grows, shimmering and warping into the image of the person it once was.

"Second question," I ask. "Who's this?"



CHAPTER EIGHT: STORYTELLING

Reality's just a story that's taken on a life of its own.

— Paul Jenkins, *Hellblazer*

Storytelling a game of **Mage: The Awakening** is part art, part craft, and part flying by the seat of your pants. Here, we'll provide some general guidelines, some advice from our experience, and some examples of how you can take the game, twist it, turn it, and reshape it into something entirely your own. What does a Storyteller do, exactly? The name is a bit of a misnomer. The Storyteller tells parts of the story, but so do the other players. Mostly, the Storyteller tells the parts outside the protagonists' control (the protagonists are your players' characters). She portrays all the supporting cast, antagonists, and bit parts. But that's not all. She can delegate roles to the other players if she'd like. She comes up with most of the plot seeds for the story, and helps keep the narrative flowing and on target. The Storyteller takes the *Chronicles of Darkness*, and makes them her own, choosing on what to focus, and on what to twist.

How do you do these things?

There's no solid answer. With a little experimentation and experience, everyone finds their own style. What works for one Storyteller might not work for another.

On the other hand, a Storyteller adjudicates, interprets, re-defines, and applies the game rules. This is a little easier to do, since you have over 300 pages of text here helping you out. Just apply what's here when it comes up, and if it doesn't work the way you want to, tweak it and make it your own.

Room 101

Fucking with the rules is important. After all, a storytelling game is a machine that's all about the structure, and what outputs (the story) come out of the inputs (the players and their actions). You're playing to see where the story goes, and the rules will help determine that. But consider when and where you use the rules, and what consequences they might have. When we write rules, we

can't hope to facilitate every unique situation, and doing what the moment needs is one of the main reasons the Storyteller exists.

To consider a popular example, think about Indiana Jones running from the boulder trap. If you model that in straight game rules, the consequence for failing at a dice roll means Indiana dies, and his story ends prematurely. Is that how you want your stories to go? Maybe in your version of that story, if the player fails, our hero drops the valuable artifact, only for the boulder to demolish it. This means a new quest, to find someone capable of fixing it. When push comes to shove, the answer should always be "more interesting stories."

Here are some general bits of advice:

Remain Consistent

If you decide that a rule works a certain way in your game, it should stay that way unless there's an essential reason. To portray their characters well, your players need to understand the basic physics of your chronicle. If a character fires a gun, the player needs to have an idea of how deadly it is, whether you're favoring gritty or cinematic action results.

This isn't to say the players need to know and understand everything in the game world. However, they need a foundation for how their actions will work. If they're busy wondering how basic actions will happen, they won't be able to focus about the important narrative elements occurring around their characters.

Find a Theme

You should find a theme, a grounding point for your chronicle. Look to film and fiction genres as examples. These worlds work in certain ways. A gunshot wound means something different in horror, than in noir, than in action, than in drama. You have to look at what your particular style of story favors, and how you want to address those themes. Sometimes, this can be subtle.

Going with the gunshot example: If you want a less deadly experience in your games because you want a more cinematic story, you might choose to apply weapon damage ratings as additions to attack dice pools, instead of having them apply damage to successful attacks. This would mean a greater number of successful hits, but less damage per hit. So your heroes can take a few blows without much concern, and your villains have room to escape even if ambushed.

Show, Don't Tell

As Storyteller, it's your job to lay down the set dressing, the props, and the costumes. But wherever possible, you need to give your players something to engage with. Don't just tell them it's dark, use the rules to your advantage. Create minor benefits or penalties based on the darkness. Even if it's just a +1 to rolls to hide, and -1 to rolls to find things, that draws your description into the narrative framework built by the rules. There's no "setting versus rules" in a Storytelling game; the rules facilitate the story, and should marry well wherever possible.

Just like in artistic filmmaking, use tricks to tell your story. Use symbolism. Use pacing. But engage the rules.

Symbols should be actual story elements, not just descriptors. Bonus points if the characters can directly interact with those symbols; this draws investment, and makes those symbols memorable. That way, when you call back to those symbols, the players connect the dots and it makes for a more meaningful experience.

If you want to use pacing, place some counters on the table. Every action, take away a counter. Let the players know the consequences for running out. **Mage** has great in-universe vehicles for this, since some characters can divine potential future events.

Love the Characters

The game rules are agnostic toward characters; every character weeps and bleeds identically, dependent on their traits. However, the protagonists are the stars of the show, and should be considered thusly. If you're looking at reworking a rule, ask yourself if it might rob the spotlight from the protagonists. This is particularly true if you're thinking of changing the rule to facilitate "game balance." Ultimately, "game balance" should take a back seat to fun, and a back seat to story. **Mage** isn't about winning or losing; it's about the stories of people in interesting situations. If a rule moves away from those people and their interesting situations, it's probably not a good rule. If a rule would hurt a protagonist character, favor player agency.

Let players dive in and revel in the negativity they're comfortable with. Give rewards for failing in interesting ways. You'll notice that we give Beats every time a player opts to turn a failure into a dramatic failure; this isn't blanket permission to "screw with" players, this is their opportunity to look at you and say, "I want something interesting to happen to my character right now." Dramatic failures should be just that: Dramatic. They should be about ripples. They should be about consequences that come back to haunt them later. This is not player punishment; this is added drama, erecting more roadblocks and hurdles the characters can confront.

The Characters Must Fit

Storytelling collaboratively is give-and-take; it's constant compromise. You have to be willing to sacrifice your darlings to the story. Even your favorite Storyteller character has to be ready for the chopping block if the story demands. This is a two-way street. The players also have to work to fit their characters into the story, and you have to adapt the story to their needs. Sometimes you can fit a character who seems dissonant on the surface, but characters need to work within the setting, the themes, and the genre of the chronicle. Often, as Storyteller, you can adapt to fit them, but not everything is on your shoulders.

Create characters together. In fact, it's best if you make them all as your first game session, along with prelude scenes to get a feel for them. If someone doesn't fit, if they don't click, if things don't work out (or even if the group seems more antagonistic than you're interested in,) don't hesitate to cut the character and make something else. A strong cast needs chemistry. A strong cast needs dynamic ties. In those prelude scenes, focus heavily on finding common threads between the characters, and reasons they would interact. Focus on finding motivations they can all share, or at least relate to.

Communicate

Find out what works, and what doesn't. Talk to your players. Understand their wants, their needs, and their interests. If something isn't working, change it or get rid of it. If something is working, run with it. Pay close attention to what they do, and how they communicate their desires. For example, when players write their characters' Aspirations and Obsessions, jot them down. Those are clear messages about what the players want to see in your stories.

Be open. Be direct. Ask them, "Is this thing working?" Trust their answers, and reject the inherent desire to defend your choices and explain them extensively. If something isn't working for them, just find out why – and fix it. Think of your chronicle like a television show. You have twelve episodes to make a lasting impression on your viewers. If Wacky Cousin Steve isn't working, you write him out of the story. You find out who the real star of the show is, and you push him forward. Every episode matters, and the more time you spend spinning your wheels on the less interesting elements, the less interested your viewers will be.

Creating Conditions and Tilts

Conditions and Tilts define exceptions to the default rules, where something changes temporarily. Conditions are bits of *conditional* circumstance in the story. They might be positive for the character, they might be negative, but they always bring something to the table. For this reason, indulging in a Condition and playing off its mechanical effects brings a reward, a Beat. Tilts are much more immediate factors of the drama. You can't avoid their effects once applied, but conversely they're far more temporary, and don't reward portrayal.

Conditions

Conditions require two major things to exist: A mechanical game effect and a resolution.

Game Mechanics

The main part of a Condition is its effects in game terms. For “positive” Conditions, this effect is usually tied in with its resolution. For example, the Inspired Condition resolves when the player chooses to use its beneficial effect. However, for most Conditions, the effect lasts until resolved. Usually the resolution offers a difficult choice or a significant drawback.

For most Conditions, a +2 or -2 modifier to a specific action is sufficient. For example, a “Frightened” Condition might give -2 to Composure rolls due to the shock. These kinds of Conditions should be relatively commonplace in your chronicle; any dramatic event, dramatic failure, extended action, or exceptional success can cause these Conditions.

For particularly dramatic Conditions, such as those resulting from spells or monumental effort, you have a few more options available:

- You can offer exceptional successes on three successes instead of five.
- You can offer modifiers from up to +5 to -5. These should be keyed to a character trait, such as an Attribute or Arcanum.
- You can add a temporary Virtue, Vice, Aspiration, or Obsession. Alternatively, you can force one of those traits to temporarily change.
- You can add or remove a Door in Social maneuvering.
- You can offer the 8-Again quality on a series of rolls pertaining to one Attribute, or a single use of the rote action quality on a specific Skill. Negative Conditions can remove 10-Again, or resolve in exchange for an automatic failure.

These are just some examples of effects you can apply to Conditions. Be creative, and suit the narrative need in the moment. Try to make the effects commensurate to the effort and drama invested in generating the Condition.

Resolution

When coming up with the Condition’s resolution terms, consider what meaningful event would shed the Condition’s dramatic appropriateness. This resolution has to be a voluntary choice, or at least a circumstance that’s likely to happen anyway. The player should be able to engage the resolution, and bring it into the story when he feels it appropriate.

Some resolutions are hard choices. This means questionable sacrifices, or abandoning some degree of agency. For example, with our Frightened Condition above, the resolution may require the character to falter when a friend is in danger, thanks to the fear. That’s clearly not something the character wants to do, but for the player, it’s an interesting dramatic element.

Positive Conditions usually resolve when expended. These Conditions offer an advantageous mechanic, which is gone once used.

If the resolution is a particularly detrimental or worrisome choice, you can also have the Condition fade over time. However, if a Condition fades, it doesn’t award a Beat.

Playing With Conditions

Conditions are all about the flow of drama. They’re about new things occurring, and adding complexity to the story. It helps if they’re physically represented, so you can visually track their existence outside of just a character sheet. As a Storyteller, keep a note pad, index cards, or similar objects at ready. Jot down the basics of Conditions, and pass them to players. Or, print the Conditions Appendix of this book, cut it up, and distribute the slices as you need. This helps players remember their Conditions exist, and make noted evidence that they’re gone.

You can take it a step further and use beads or other tokens to represent Beats, so as Conditions change hands, you can represent that with an interaction, with an exchange. The player sheds the Condition; you hand them a Beat token.

For Storyteller characters, you should only track Conditions if you judge them significant. Usually, they shouldn’t last more than a scene unless they’re particularly important (and on particularly important Storyteller characters). However, you don’t want to track Beats for Storyteller characters. Instead, let Beats refresh Willpower points for them. Start most characters with no available Willpower, and major, named Storyteller characters with half their allotment (rounded down). As they resolve Conditions, replenish those Willpower reserves. If you do this, just remember to expend that Willpower, so as to give weight to those choices.

Also as Storyteller, always opt to indulge Conditions. Never “sit on” Conditions. The players give Conditions to influence the story, so it’s your responsibility to make that influence meaningful. Above, we talked about how you have to be ready and willing to sacrifice your Storyteller characters, and put their success on the line for the players’ characters. Conditions often afford those opportunities. Jump on that minefield. Let the effects ripple outward and change the story.

Also, be free and open with Conditions. We offer standard mechanical examples of when Conditions come into play. Exceptional successes, dramatic failures, Social maneuvers, extended actions, and many spells give Conditions. However, don’t hesitate to just grant a Condition when it feels appropriate. Any time something influences the story in such a way that it should have a lasting (but temporary) mechanical effect, make it a Condition. If you’d like, you can even give Conditions to the entire cabal, instead of to an individual character. In this case, the first player who jumps on that resolution gets the Beat.

If you find one player cashing in a lot of Conditions, consider sharing Beats among players, dividing them equally at the end of every game session. This way it’s still beneficial when one player takes a lot of the limelight, and the other players are more likely to support bolstering a single character’s dramatic activity. In the case of particularly negative Conditions, diving into their dramatic resolution can be detrimental to the cabal’s goals, so sharing in Beats can help to curb a bit of that sentiment.

Lastly, when moving between game sessions, it's not unreasonable to shed unused Conditions. You can keep them from story to story, but as a rule of thumb, if a Condition isn't important enough to resolve in the same story, it's probably not offering much ongoing dramatic benefit. This is mostly up to player choice; if they want to keep a Condition to resolve it later, they should be allowed to.

Tilts

Tilts work similarly to Conditions. In fact, they use the same basic mechanical guidelines. Usually, a simple $-2 / +2$ modifier to a specific action is reasonable. Use the greater options for Conditions if the Tilt comes from an extraordinary source. Tilts can also cause a point or two of damage, usually bashing, sometimes lethal. The difference is, Tilts occur, but don't have inherent secondary benefits (usually Beats, in the case of Conditions) for resolution. They're immediate and shift the balance of the scene just a little.

Usually, the advantage to resolving a Tilt is to do something which would remove that circumstance. Often, this is obvious. For the "On Fire" Tilt, the resolution would be "Put out the fire." This should have an example mechanic attached. In our "On Fire" example, you might offer the option to stop, drop, and roll as an instant action, requiring success on a Dexterity + Athletics roll. For Tilts related to physical injury (the Arm Wrack Tilt, for example), the resolution is simply healing the damage that caused the Tilt. Alternatively, mages can repair their Patterns with Mana.

Tilts are simply codified modifiers. Any time you say, "This is particularly difficult, take -2 to your action," that's actually a Tilt. We usually only formalize Tilts with names and resolution terms when they last more than a single instant action.

Another big difference between Tilts and Conditions is that Tilts can affect a scene, as opposed to just a character. A Tilt reflecting the effects of an earthquake could affect any characters in the scene, for example. Even if it doesn't affect everyone equally, a game effect that could potentially affect many characters in a scene is a Tilt, not a Condition.

Music is Always: A Chronicle-Building Tool

You live in the real world, or at least the Fallen World that is as real as you're going to get right now. You live in a place with commercials, jingles, and church bells in the distance, or street performers on the corner. The Lie is all around you, but so is music. And music has a universal communicative ability, and the ability to cement moments and make them somehow more Real than the Lie should allow. It's as if music, in its truest moment, when embraced soul-deep, escapes the Abyss and carries the Supernal not just to the Awakened who know, but to everyone.

In an attempt to ground a chronicle in a real and living place, this section will talk about using music to create the members of a cabal, the city they exist in, the mentors who make them who



they are, and those still Sleeping who lean on or support them.

Questions of taste should be expressed for the character's point of view, rather than the players. Whenever possible, someone should hum a few bars, play the song from a recording, or mutter some lyrics if all else fails. Referencing movies that the song was in, or other media, is okay too.

A white board, index cards, or large sheet of newsprint should be available for the group to take notes.

Top 10

One of the players goes first; she names her character's favorite song, plays it, sings it, or otherwise expresses what the song is. On the notes, she puts down her character's name and her favorite song. Popular modern music is best, but it's okay to use anything, especially if players have access to a recording. Go around the table. Do any of the other players know the song? If yes, that means the song has a connection between the two characters. Their players discuss a time when they were interacting and the song was somehow playing. Were they in the mall together? Was it on someone's headphones too loud on a crowded city bus? Was one of them humming to the other after love-making? Write down the second character's name, draw a line to the name of the song, then on that line, a one-word or short description describing the connection, through the song, that the characters share.

Go around the table until each character has a similar connection to another character in this way. If one of the players doesn't know any of the songs that come up, they can still have a connection, describing their character's favorite. Alternately, one character who hates music in the group can make a pretty poignant statement, as their connections would be built out of silence and discomfort. That can be very dynamic!

Classics and Oldies

Next come mentors. Every character should wind up with one or two. The Storyteller should pass out a list of oldies or classic songs. She can pick based on a theme, or just a random list. This list is just to get started, and players can suggest other ones.

Now, another player goes first (someone who didn't go first last time). She picks a classic song from the list or her own head. She picks a magical aspect or Arcanum. Then she builds up a one- or two-sentence idea for a mentor who could have taught her that Arcanum or other magical practice, and how she relates to the song. (You do not have to have the Mentor Merit to participate in this step. A mentor is not the same as the Mentor Merit.) They write the mentor's name down with a song title under it, and connect her character's name to the mentor's name. For example, a character with the Mind Arcanum chooses first and picks Sarah Vaughn singing "Whatever Lola Wants." The player then talks about this devilish beauty who taught him Mind magic by literally messing with his head and taking him on this crazy, emotional roller coaster. Before moving on to the

next character, players can decide to share a mentor, in which case the player picks another classic song to attach to the mentor. Write that second song down. Players work to add another level of dimension to the mentor by adding songs, or they can have a number of different iconic mentors with less nuance. Either way it's okay. Time permitting, you can go around the table twice or three times, either adding a mentor-figure or else adding depth (through music) to the character.

Nostalgic

Now we're talking about modern or at least fairly recent music. The sort of music you'd hear at a coffee shop, on a music channel on TV, or on the radio. Pop songs or hits that have gone viral on the Internet.

Begin with someone who hasn't started yet. They pick a song, something in popular awareness right now, and describe a place where they'd hear that song. Now, the Storyteller suggests someone who would be in that place at that time, but he must be a Sleeper or Sleepwalker. It could be a broad-stroke suggestion, like a barista or a bartender, or it could be something more specific to seed the plot. The player then builds on the person in the scene. They have a connection together, and the player describes how the song is thematic of that relationship. This scene, described, can be the first time the character met this person, or it can be just the most important time. The player writes down the Sleeper or Sleepwalker's name and draws a line between their names. On that line, they write the name of the song. If any of the other players knows the song, his character also knows the Sleeper or Sleepwalker and should describe how his character feels about the song and how it colors or is thematic to the relationship. Then he connects his name to the Sleeper or Sleepwalker in the notes and puts a short description about their relationship.

For example, a character hears a sugary pop song playing over the speakers at a public parking lot near the train station. Despite his gruff appearance, he's kind of singing along, because hey, it's catchy. The Storyteller suggests that a known Proximus from a local family is there, his car broken down. They wind up fixing the car together, and share their "guilty pleasure" tune. Another character, waiting for her train, sees this and it cements in her mind the idea that the Proximus and his family are all phonies. She hates the song.

Sad Songs

Each player should also pick a sad song. Something that makes the player feel a little moody, though no one should feel it necessary to explain why the song makes them ache. Each player should attach her sad song to another character — player character or Storyteller character. This sad song should reflect some darker or tragic part of the character in question. The player who picked the sad song should draw a line connecting her character to the character with the sad song. This song can also reflect a bad direction the two characters are headed together.

A Rose is a Rose: Shadow Names

If the whole rest of the world around you, everything you once thought and believed is a Lie, what does that make you? Where do you start, and the Lie end? How can you claim a sense of identity when the Awakening comes for you and you realize everything around you is bullshit?

Taking on a new identity is a hollow fix, but it's one many mages settle on. Holding on to what you can of your old identity may allow you to maintain feeling of stability in the face of mind-blowing chaos, but that hardly soothes the ache. There is a chasm between who you were and what you have to be to wield Supernal magic. And in that place you'll need something else. A new person to be. A new hero or villain to replace the lies and uncomfortable truths about your time Asleep.

Your Shadow Name, therefore, isn't just a nickname or an online handle. It isn't a pet name or a preferred spelling. Your Shadow Name is your magical identity, and it's your answer to the Lie that your whole life has been, up to this point.

Nothing so Frivolous

Creating a Shadow Name and taking it on isn't an easy thing to shrug on and off. Once you've tied yourself to a new mystical persona, you can't just change your mind and refile at city hall. Your Shadow Name helps to anchor every Imago you create. It grounds and directs your spell work. It protects you in the Astral and it defines who you are in Awakened society. While there are thoughtless mages who do, on rare occasion, stumble into a Shadow Name for a lark, that action is not without consequences. Calling yourself the Joker and tossing around a lot of silly puns might start off funny, but as the Supernal flows through you, who you are shifts, a bit at a time, toward whatever your idealized Joker is. Perhaps you become a clown in your social life, being taken for granted or abused for a laugh among your peers. Perhaps fate conspires to remold you to follow the footsteps of a famous and well-known Joker, burdening you with a ton of cultural baggage and expectations.

Most mages take their new magical identities very seriously, and those who don't find the matter may become serious no matter what their original intentions.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Names are ideas and communication. We give our children names so that we can use a word to bring the concept of that child to mind. "He looks like a George." Or "I've never met a Brittany that was any good." Names tie us to cultural expectations and regional assumptions. Of course, Shadow Names aren't just George, Sal, and Harold in most cases. They may be the words for places or things cobbled together to suggest

ideals the mage believes are personally significant. They may be drawn from history and mythology as well. Shadow Names, though, do not exist in the harmless world of baby books and etymology searches. Each word or concept a mage pulls into her Shadow Name carries with it all the resonance and attachments the Fallen World has fastened to it, as well as any Supernal influence that might remain.

Rose-thorns-growing may be a safe choice, depending on region or culture, allowing the mage some room to create her own meaning around the name. However, should a mage take on a name like Hercules, depending on his region, he is calling on an idea that has its own weight and meaning. Hercules means things to those familiar with the word. And by taking that name, and using it as a way to direct magic, the expectations and concepts that name carries affect the magical working — and therefore, the Mage's magical identity. Eventually, this bleeds into the mage, and he will become something else.

It is possible to control a Shadow Name, over time and through great acts — to influence what it means and who it makes you — but the more famous the name, the more gravity attached to its meaning, the harder that feat is. As a wise old master tells his students, "Don't pick Odin for your Shadow Name if you are overly fond of both your eyes."

Ritual Grounding

Names that carry their own identities already have some advantages. They are a short cut to establishing and drawing an Imago. These symbolic names may help a mage who works with others, as the nuance of meaning in a more personal Shadow Name will mean less to other members of a cabal, at least for a while. What's more, it's a way of establishing who you are and how you expect to be treated in Awakened society. Iloria the Meek certainly suggests a very different personality than Ilora, Slayer of Men, when introducing yourself to a Consilium. Neither is wrong, depending on the reaction the mage expects.

To bring the Supernal down, through the Nimbus, and change the Fallen World, grounding is necessary. A grounded self, no longer adrift in the mess of the Fallen World, is necessary to do magic.

Who You Are, Why They Think You Are

Shadow Names are for magic, for the mage's sense of self, and for secretive interaction with other mages. Cabalmates don't shout each other's Shadow Names down crowded hallways to get each other's attention. Calling out a Shadow Name in mixed company is a considerable faux pas depending on where and when. It's revealing a secret, frankly, like shouting a lover's favorite sexual position in the middle of family dinner. It happens, but it's a good way to lose your seat at family dinner.

For the mage, putting on her Shadow Name changes who she is; and so when acting in secret with her cabal, she may take on different manners, dress differently, speak differently.

Making Mysteries

You can construct a good Mystery in a hundred thousand ways. Or two, depending on how you want to look at it. Mage characters make creating Mysteries difficult both because they tend toward the observant, and because they cheat. They break the “reality” of the Fallen World easily and they can see things others can’t. If there’s a key here, it’s in remembering that magic is a short cut to real work, but it still requires effort, and that you are designing Mysteries for players as much as for the characters they play.

Fair Play

Speaking of play, in the study of mystery literature as a genre, the concept of fair play comes up again and again and is worth examining in the context of a game of **Mage: The Awakening**. In mystery literature, fair play is the gap between what the detective knows, what the author knows, and what the audience can possibly know. It’s variable, and depending on the detective and audience, or the skill of the writer, that gap can be a great chasm, or it can be a crack in the sidewalk, easy to hop over. Fair play is how an author dances the line between eliciting the desirable “ah ha” moment from the mystery reader, and making her mystery either “too easy” or impossible to solve. Some mysteries work with no fair play involved: where the crime to be solved appears on screen in the opening, for example, or in some thrillers where the characters’ intense skills prevent the audience from ever really guessing at the crime itself. Ideally, though, the concept of fair play — balancing what you know, what the mages can know, and what your players can figure out — is useful for providing your group with enough clues to formulate a solution without boring them.

It’s also worth noting that sometimes a mystery is only a framework for a series of challenges and character exploration. In the old detective novels, the mysteries and fair play were secondary to watching heavy-fisted flat-foots plug heavies and goons. The journey was more important than the intricate crafting of a delicate and cerebral mystery. That’s okay, and depending on your players, focusing on their abilities showcased by the mystery may work out better than straining to create a mystery itself.

Backwards Crafting

All mysteries start backward, both in the way most authors craft them as well as the way detectives solve them. At the start of a mystery, a crime has or is about to be committed most of the time. It is past tense (or soon to be), and unraveling that mystery often means spiraling backward from the most obvious climax to see all of the events and decisions that lead up to that specific moment.

As a Storyteller crafting a Mystery for your players to solve, beginning at the end and working backward is a good way to start. If you’re going for a more traditional “find the clues, sort it out” style of game, the easiest and perhaps most important thing you can do is have a clear image in your head of what exactly

happened in the moment of death, theft, or other mysterious event. When a cabalmate’s daughter went missing, in the exact moment, what happened? Who was there? What time? Where exactly? The more of these details you have in mind, the easier it will be to work backward even as your players do.

Seeding a Scene

Players in a cooperative and collaborative setting like a tabletop game tend toward the dynamic. Unlike writing a mystery all by yourself, as a Storyteller, you can’t expect that your players will follow your clues in a straight line and go along each trail as you see fit. Rather, they may go where you never intended, following leads they made up on the spot — and doing the impossible (especially with magic at their disposal), as compared to a more mundane investigation.

You can help to rein this in on a meta level by seeding your scene and making physical representations of those seeds for the players to see, touch, and gather or organize. As you’ve decided on your scene, you know what’s happened, so you know there’s blonde hair to find. A car to identify. A witness to track down who saw something he wasn’t supposed to. Pick a seed that’s going to be found pretty much no matter what. (This keeps the story going even if dice fail.) This core seed should potentially point to other seeds, and you should find a way to give it to the players even if they fail all rolls. Having a character “earn” this seed while accepting a negative Condition might be a good way to work around bad rolls. For the other seeds, keep them in your pocket, so to speak, and see where the players go. None of these should be vital, and some should be absolute dead ends. If you have a variety of extra puzzle pieces to scatter about, no matter how the players get creative, you can reward them.

Ideally, you’d print out pictures from security cameras, fake Polaroids, watercolor impressions of a psychic impression found on a weapon. But most situations are less than ideal. Index cards with your seeds written on them, especially if they are described as in-game artifacts, are great. You can play them out on the table as you go, letting the players fuss with their progress in a real, physical way. If they have access to a white board or bare wall, they could even hang these index cards up, draw lines, circle things, really get into the movie-cop investigation methods.

The other nice thing about these index cards is that they can be an unspoken way to signal the end of a scene or phase of the investigation. When your hand of index cards is exhausted and all passed over, they, as players, know they can probably stop digging.

Open Ended Mysteries

Who dun it? How they dun it? How do you balance your carefully constructed plot with your numerous seeds in the face of characters who have simply come to a very different conclusion? One you never saw coming?

The real secret to running an amazing mystery with mages is this: Don’t decide who did ahead of time.

Let that sink in a minute.

Plant your seeds, run scenes, let your players run wild with Mage Sight and auguries and DNA testing. Go to the hilt. Give them, a piece at a time, the pieces to a puzzle — just don't assume you know what the picture is until it's done.

Why? Because your players are clever and fun and they want to feel smart. Let them place their pieces and come up with a reasonable narrative; if they're right (or close to right, you can always pull a frame-up or other tricky maneuvers at the end), then you look brilliant, they feel brilliant, and everyone has had more investment in the story. As the Storyteller, it's not your job, at the end of the day, to craft the perfect mystery. It's only your job to provide the experience of the perfect mystery. Let your players do the heavy lifting. You just laugh and plot and hand out clues along the way and come out smelling like gunpowder and roses. Or is that arsenic and old lace?

The Duel Arcane

It is a mistake to assume a Duel Arcane is just two mages flinging spells at each other until someone dies. While it can, to the outside, appear that way, the reality is that a Duelist's real work is internal, as each pushes at not just at the other's body, but at the mind and soul of the enemy, hoping to lay them bare. The Duel Arcane is meant to make one mage more right than another, and to reduce the opponent to nothing or next to nothing by right of might and will.

Narratively, the Duel may be a complicated affair with witnesses, ceremony, ritual, and fanfare. The duelists may fling insults, converse, or abuse one another with words while they set up. Intimidate one another with their mystical pedigrees or beg for understanding. The traditions and practices around the Duel vary by city and Order.

Systematically, the Duel is a set of steps listed below.

Step 1: Determine the Stakes

What do you want? What does your opponent want? Are you in agreement over the end results for the winner and loser? You may not be. Sometimes duels are fought over territory, mentors, students, social slights, heartbreak, or money. Sometimes they're fought over more ephemeral concepts like honor or truth. (In these cases, though, declaration of stakes would probably be "he admits in public that I'm right about ghosts." Or, "She should declare to the Order that I am her superior!" and so on.)

Once the stakes are clearly established with exactly what each mage expects of the other, work with the players to determine what sort of Condition should afflict the loser at the end. (See [Creating Conditions](#), p. 288.) Players and Storyteller should agree to the Conditions as the duelists (perhaps grudgingly) agree on the stakes.

Step 2: Determine Doors

Inside the dueling space created by the Prime spell Display of Power, the body becomes secondary, and it is the will that the

Door Modifiers

The characters in conflict are lovers - 1 Door.

The character has previously declared her rival as her nemesis +1 Door.

The character's rival has declared his intention to destroy her as a result of the duel. +1 Door.

The character's rival is from an allied sect (for example, a Diamond mage dueling a Libertine.) +1 Door.

The character's rival is from a hostile sect (for example, a Diamond mage dueling a Seer.) +2 Doors.

duelists attack. To reflect this, Health levels are forgotten and replaced with Doors. Each Door is closed and sealed, one level of protection against the will of the other sorcerer. Attacks fly at the Doors to force (or nudge) them open.

Each character possesses as many Doors as she has dots in Willpower with other possible additions to the numbers of doors.

Draw Swords

With Doors determined, characters begin the Duel itself. Roll Initiative, but in the Duel Arcane a character's Initiative modifier is equal to Wits + Composure.

On their turns, players have a few choices as to what their characters do for their actions.

Attack: The character flexes her creative use of raw magic and shows the extent of her strength. Her attack roll is any Attribute + Arcana as fits the description of her attack. These descriptions should be loose and liminal, drawing on the forces of the cosmos rather than anything so simple as "I throw a fireball at him." Because the Duel takes place in the Supernal World, the "spells" used do not actually occur. Rather, the mage demonstrates how she *could* have performed an effect against her opponent. A dueling character may not use Yantras or spend Reach beyond that she gains for Arcana mastery, and must still account for spell factors and resistance. Opening a Door with an attack is a binary action. It opens or it does not; successes above and beyond opening the Door are added to the character's next roll as bonus dice instead of opening additional Doors.

Failing to open a Door means the character must change tactics, and cannot use the same Arcanum a second time on a closed Door.

Defend: A character may forgo an attack for a turn, and instead rely on her magic entirely to protect her. Any attack rolls made against her become contested, and she weaves a spell from her Attribute + Arcanum of choice just as her attacker did.

Negotiate: Even in the pitch of battle, the Awakened can (and do) manipulate one another. A character may put an offer on

the table to open a Door without attacking. These are promises mystically sealed by the Prime magic that fuels the Dueling space, and as a result, are never made or accepted lightly. To negotiate, a character makes an offer. “I promise no harm will come to your cabal as a result of your actions tonight,” or “I will teach you the Fate spell you’ve been searching for, no matter what,” as examples. The character on the defensive may accept the offer and automatically open a Door. She does not need to accept the offer the moment that it’s made, however; she may accept it later in the Duel. This is sometimes expected, as accepting the offer can be a graceful way to end a Duel when a mage is surely going to lose. These promises are almost always upheld, as mage society treats breaking one as breaking a sworn vow.

First Blood or Last Blood

No matter what the terms of the Duel, when the final Door is opened for one of the duelists, his soul is laid bare, and he is as good as spiritually destroyed. He is helpless against his opponent and has spent himself. At that moment, the Duel ends, the magical space created by it fades, and the mages’ view of the Fallen World returns. The victorious character refreshes Willpower to full, and gains the Triumphant Condition. The loser loses as many points of Willpower as she lost Doors, and suffers the Defeated Condition. If the terms of the Duel were “to the death” or something equally drastic, an execution may proceed – but it happens in the Fallen World, outside of the sacred dueling space.



the Door

PART X

It's nearly 24 hours after I first arrived by the time the dust has settled. The anger, the recriminations, the accusations of the Guardians overstepping our bounds...Diamante did herself credit in holding her Caucus together while we did what needed to be done, but in the end Seshat herself had to come out here. Her presence, not to mention her authority, calmed the théarchs down from the boiling point, but as I walk the halls of this sanctum I am painfully aware of the Interfector's burden. I enact the Consilium's punishments on mages who break the Lex Magica. Those mages always have friends, apprentices, mentors.

I've killed tonight, at the Hierarch's command. I need balance.

There's no guard at the door any more. The staff have all been sent home. There's only one théarch in the city who doesn't know what just happened.

I knock, and enter Gee's cell.

...

"It wasn't a door, Gee."

I'm sitting on the edge of Gee's bed. She's across the room from me, sitting on the floor with her back to the wall.

I've just told her that Horatio is dead. That I killed him went unspoken, but she's a smart girl.

"I don't understand."

"Back in 2001, when the city nearly died, tears opened everywhere. We remember it as Turifex's folly because the Seers betrayed him, but working with them saved everyone. Cabals all over the five boroughs tracked down the damage the ley quakes did and fought to limit it. That's when Horatio committed his first murder. In your Squat.

"Horatio found what he thought was a scar in the leys, a knot in the Supernal World that, if he could unravel it, would undo the damage. He tried to find a Key with his magic, but couldn't. Finally, he tried sacrifice. In the aftermath of the Folly, dozens of mages and Sleepwalkers were missing, or dead. One more Sleepwalker was just another name on a list."

"Who was he?"

"His name was James. Diamante knew him, a little, when she was an apprentice. He was assigned to Horatio's cabal and officially, he vanished in the Folly. But now we know better."

She shakes her head, disbelieving.

"If it opened, the creature would have..."

"The creature...the door didn't open for Horatio fourteen years ago. He put you and Lucretia there, kept you there despite your obvious obsession, because he hoped you would solve what he couldn't. He didn't know what he was dealing with, and Lucretia died as a result."

Tears well up in her eyes.

"I killed her. I killed her!"

I shake my head, gently.

"Horatio saw a tangle of ley energy, sealed away behind a locked Iris. Locksmith saw a closed Distortion, a portal to Manhattan that was safely locked away. You saw a threat, a monster from your own mind. The 'door' feeds on obsession, on the nature of the person observing it. Your concerns grew into fears, and your fears turned into the thing that killed your wife."

She sobs, grief taking her. I wait, not disturbing her, until she looks up at me again with red eyes.

"How do you know what you're telling me?"

I close my eyes, pained.

"A long time ago, I was recruited for a mission by my master. He sent me back in time, to accomplish a critical mission. He should have known better. I was young, and careless, and I did irreparable damage to my own history. I returned to a Consilium that had never heard of me, to a wife that never met me and married someone else, and to...my daughter, who was never born. 'Outis' means 'No one,' because I don't have a life outside my Shadow any more. Being Interfactor is part punishment, part putting me to some sort of use. And when I looked at the door..."

I trail off, remembering the voices.

"I heard them, Gee. I heard my family, behind the door. It was never a door; it was a mirror."

I stand up, and offer her my hand.

"I know your pain. I've lived it. There's no punishment the Consilium can command that will bite more than what you already feel."

"You're free to go."

Lucretia, it's been seven months since you died, and I still see what happened every night. The other mages in the Ladder shy away from me, part ashamed of what they thought when Horatio told them I killed you, part afraid that I'm tainted somehow, that your death marks me. They're right.

It's taken over half a year, but I've persuaded Diamante to let me return to the Squat. I've told them that the door must be guarded until we can figure out a way to destroy it, to prevent what happened to us ever happening again. They're at a loss for anything else I can do, so they've agreed.

Outis says the place beyond the door contains whatever consumes our mind. I feared it, and those fears killed you. But he saw his loved ones, and recoiled at having his sacrifice undone.

It's taken seven months, going through Horatio's library, but I know what I must do.

I have these pages gathered here. I have poured time and power into them. I will gather these pages up and recall your last moments on this Earth, the feeling of the bond we had, severed. I will take these pages, and my memories, and I will use them. My emotions are great but my power and desire are greater. I will see you again, Lucretia. I know I will.

I will shut myself away from the Order. I will draw the signs on the walls and the floor that will aid me in my ordeal. I will say the words and push my will out and it will reach out across the worlds and call to you. You will hear me and you will answer me. You will come to me and I will hold you in my arms again and you will dry my tears. I will hear your sweet laugh and when I say something stupid, you will shake your head at me and roll your eyes.

I will hold your hand in mine. I will ask you a question and you will answer the Mystery that has plagued me all these days, since you left.

Why did I fail you, Lucretia?

APPENDIX ONE: SUPPORTING CAST

I have to believe in a world outside my own mind. I have to believe that my actions still have meaning, even if I can't remember them. I have to believe that when my eyes are closed, the world's still there. Do I believe the world's still there? Is it still out there? Yeah. We all need mirrors to remind ourselves who we are. I'm no different.

— Leonard Shelby, Memento

Sleepers

The Lie means it's rotten to be Awakened. It means it's rotten to be Asleep. It means that it's rotten in those cases when the Awakened accidentally, or purposefully, bother those who Sleep but cannot wake.

Curse of Quiescence

The Supernal makes up parts of the Fallen World, and those parts show up as messages and symbols direct from the source. But those messages come through the Abyss and are tainted by it. Sleepers, us — most of us anyway, every Joe, Joji, and Amina on the planet — see these warped messages instead of the Truth. A Sleeper's soul is given a choice, therefore, between a Truth

that cannot be understood and a terrible, impossible alternative as offered by the Abyss. Her choice is a non-choice, and so she Sleeps. That non-choice is the Curse.

The Curse Hurts

There's no right answer for the Sleeper when she is confronted with Supernal forces. Any time she is faced with this painful non-choice, as her mind and soul wrestle with conflicting and impossible messages, it hurts her deep inside. Some part of her breaks under the strain of wrestling with the impossible, and recovery from that may be an uphill struggle or frankly, never happen.

Sleepers witnessing an obvious manifestation of the Supernal or Abyssal always experience a breaking point against Integrity.

Before Curse, Comes Hubris

It is possible, depending on whom you ask, that the existence of the Curse is itself caused by hubris, a conscious and targeted desire to keep the masses ignorant. To believe the Diamond stories of the Exarchs entering the Supernal and closing the way behind them is to believe that the Curse comes from arrogance and pride itself. So it's no wonder that any time a mage afflicts the Curse's painful manifestation on a Sleeper, it violates his Wisdom as well as the Sleeper's Integrity.

Causing a Sleeper to risk losing Integrity because of your magic is an Act of Hubris for Enlightened and Understanding Wisdom characters.

Obvious magic

The Curse strikes a Sleeper when she sees obvious magic, either during the spell's casting or encountering its effects later. So what's obvious? The spell must be clearly, openly supernatural in effect, and the Sleeper must be both conscious and cognizant of the magic's impossibility. Spells that are not obvious at the moment they are cast escape the Paradox die bonus, but may be subject to Dissonance if they are obvious when a Sleeper later encounters them.

The Curse Feeds Paradox

Exposing a Sleeper to the Supernal means she must give thought to the twisted symbols from the Abyss, even if the symbol is pure and perfect (and therefore risks little or no Paradox on its own). By her inability to separate what the Supernal says from the alternate Lie the Abyss suggests, she brings a part of the Abyss with her, corrupting what the Awakened hope to do.

Any Sleeper witnesses to an obvious spell increase Paradox risk by a die. This may cause a spell that would otherwise not risk Paradox to do so.

Social Creatures

Human beings are social by nature, and we function best in groups. In the Fallen World, humanity shares the suffering of the Lie, and though Sleepers do not realize it and cannot discuss it, they share the burden soul to soul, and in the collective unconscious. This is how the Abyss is as strong as it is. Human interconnectedness powers, strengthens, and complicates the Lie. Without the ability to spread the burden around, though, the Lie would likely crush humanity one individual at a time.

Multiple Sleeper witnesses to obvious spells apply a dice trick to the Paradox roll rather than adding cumulative dice. A handful of people makes it 9-Again, urban foot traffic 8-Again, and a crowd gives it the rote action quality.

Dissonance Made Manifest

When a Sleeper struggles with the non-choice she's been given by reality, it creates internal conflict, and that cycles back into the system. This conflict, this discord between what can and can't be real, degrades not just her own soul and mind, but also symbols of the Supernal when she is exposed to them. The Awakened call it Dissonance, and it is the brutal aftereffect of the Curse on the magics they attempt to create. Dissonance does not only affect the spells of mages, but any exposure to the Supernal. Worse, it makes Abyssal entities *stronger*.

At the end of a scene in which a Sleeper witnesses obvious Supernal magic, roll her Integrity as a dice pool, Withstood by the spell's dots, the Rank of a Supernal entity, or a number set by the Storyteller for other magical phenomena. Dissonance against Demesnes is Withstood by the number of soul stones creating the Demesne. Multiple Sleepers do not roll more than once, but apply a dice trick to the roll in the same way as Paradox rolls.

Dramatic Failure: The phenomenon is unaffected, and the Sleeper suffers a breaking point against Integrity.

Failure: The phenomenon is unaffected.

Success: If the roll achieves successes beyond the phenomenon's Withstand rating:

- Spells: Each success reduces one spell factor by a level, primary factor last, to a minimum of the lowest level

of each factor table. If all factors have been reduced to minimum, any further success destroys the spell.

- Supernal Entities: The entity suffers lethal damage equal to successes.

- Demesnes: The Demesne is suppressed, ceasing to function until no Sleepers have been present for the roll's successes in weeks.

Exceptional Success: As above, and also;

- Spells: One Reach effect incorporated into the spell is removed.

- Supernal Entities: The damage inflicted is aggravated.

- Demesnes: The Demesne is permanently destroyed. This does not affect the soul stones, which can be used to build a new Demesne as per p.99.

Legacy Attainments and Emanation Realms are immune to Dissonance. Treat Abyssal beings as Supernal for the dice roll, but they do not Withstand successes and Dissonance *heals* the roll's successes in Corpus as well as giving the Abyssal entity successes in points of Essence.

Integrity

Instead of Wisdom, Sleepers, Sleepwalkers, and Proximi use an Advantage called **Integrity** which represents the health of their souls and senses of self. Instead of Acts of Hubris, Sleepers risk **breaking points** when they suffer psychological stress. Witnessing magic is always a breaking point, as is killing another human being; but the Storyteller and players should work together to define a few situations that would constitute a breaking point for each character.

Characters using Integrity roll Resolve + Composure when they reach a breaking point, with modifiers for high or low Integrity (8-10 gives +2 dice, 7-6 is +1, 3-2 is -1 and 1 is -2) or situational modifiers decided by the Storyteller. Whether the character succeeds or fails, reaching a breaking point applies a Condition such as Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked. Failing the roll means the character loses a dot of Integrity. Dramatically failing grants a Beat and changes the Condition to a worse one like Broken, Fugue, or Madness. Only exceptional success escapes a negative Condition; the character regains a point of Willpower and takes a Beat instead. Characters at Integrity 1 continue to suffer breaking points but cannot go to Integrity 0. Integrity may be raised after a protracted period of rest (and, potentially, counseling) for 3 Experiences per dot.

Letting Go

Simply put, a Sleeper cannot remember witnessing the Supernal and Abyssal after the fact. If there is grace written into the Curse of Quiescence, it's here. The mercy of forgetting is bittersweet. It means that the Sleeper protects the Lie and even feeds into it, preventing her own ability to Awaken. The alternative is too awful, though. If she could remember the event, she would be confronted with her conflict and suffer it all over again. This would mean each time she thought about the day, the people, the time, those symbols too painful to understand would cause her to break all over again. Forgetting entirely, or more commonly, self-editing the memories to remove Supernal and Abyssal influence, saves the Sleeper a quick trip to total mental collapse. Those mages who work closely with Sleepers sometimes argue that this forgetting is not a part of the Curse, but the resilient human mind finding a way to survive it.

In the scene directly following exposure to the Supernal or Abyssal, a Sleeper forgets what she saw, or else changes how she remembers it toward the mundane. Any serious attempt to prod at those false memories, bring them into question, or correct them with magic triggers a breaking point as if she were witnessing the traumatic event again for the first time, followed by the memory being removed again. It is as harrowing in memory as it is in reality; the conflict brought on by the Curse is that powerful. Quiescence, like Dissonance, is not limited to the spells of mages; Sleepers' memories are also clouded by the interior of ruins of the Time Before, the presence of the Mad, Emanation Realms, and sighting Supernal or Abyssal entities.

Mystery Cults

Sleepers who make themselves useful, happen to be useful, or can be made to be useful often wind up in Mystery Cults within and on the outskirts of Awakened society. All Orders use Mystery Cults to their own ends, and even some Nameless mages have reason to keep conspiracies on hand.

Being an active part of a Mystery Cult for a mage means buying the Mystery Cult Initiation Merit, (p. 106). Control over this cult is reflected by having high levels of the Merit; the mage character may not have assumed control from the get-go. An Awakened member of a Sleeper cult is a hanger-on who has not yet built the cult up around her yet, or who has not yet wrested control away from someone else. Most mages use the Mystery Cult Influence Merit (p. 103) instead.

Below are a few example cults to give an idea as to the variety of ways a Mystery Cult can manifest from inside the Orders and outside of them.

The Guild

There've been a few meet-ups where everyone met at Kyle's place, and people even flew in, but the Guild doesn't really meet in public. That's not where they work their magic. Nah. They raid. They raid like no other team Battle Sword Online has ever seen. They're universally undefeated in PVP, and the game makers raised the level cap twice for the sake of the Guild.

Raiding is a religion, sort of, and while these guys have jobs, and maybe even families – breakfast to bed, they're thinking about the next raid.

It's... Complicated, what use they are to the Libertine who is actually pulling the strings. "Kyle" is just a face, and a few different Libertines have actually showed up to be "Kyle" in the flesh. The study and manipulation of this cult is one part research and one part involved, long-term experiment meant to work through the Internet. The Guild is step one of this grand scheme.

Cultists: Only some of the Guild members are the oft-maligned, basement video-gaming troglodytes. Many of them are high-functioning members of the tech or creative industries, with well-placed positions in competitive businesses (which may be what gives them the force of will and skill set to excel in a competitive game). It also gives them a certain edge in being a part of the Libertines' grand scheme.

The Truthers of America Liberation Coalition

This astro-turf political bloc started out as a few desperate malcontents who saw themselves as patriots but had no unified purpose. Actually, they still have no unified purpose, and show up to protest a number of different political or community events in the few cities with active membership. The thing is, their protests often have nothing to do with the events, locations, or people they're protesting. They may show up at a Summer City Carnival put up by the local high school to protest abortion clinics opening, when there are no clinics scheduled to open. They may show up at town halls to demand better senior options at the chain of diners scattered across town.

The protests themselves have no purpose. The Guardians of the Veil keep the cult on hand for one reason only: to make people talk about anything but what they might have been talking about. The TALC is a cult whose sole purpose is to derail and disrupt conversations. They're sent to random locations to gain members and keep the appearance of a bizarre political faction up, but the Guardians' actual targets are usually events on the local political scene that could interfere with Awakened business as usual. Further, it works as an easy distraction to keep potential but volatile mages from finding their Path via temporal distraction. TALC operates on the very edges of the Labyrinth.

Cultists: Retirees, displaced vets, strong political extremists, and confused college students on all parts of the political spectrum might get pulled into TALC so long as they're willing to be loud and interrupt business as usual. The confusingly conflicted political opinions actually help the cult obtain its higher functions for the Order.

Sleep to Dream

It's a mistake to call Sleep to Dream a K-Pop band. They aren't all Korean, and they're so much more than a band. They're a phenomenon. Still a part of the local scene, Sleep to Dream has a growing cult rising up around them, their music, and their "mes-



sage.” The real world sucks; let’s all sleep and dream about a better place. It’s on t-shirts, it’s a part of all their lyrics, it’s a weird kind of mantra used by their crazed fan base. The fans dress like the wildly costumed members of the band. The band dresses like theatrical Jungian representations of dreams and nightmares. Wet Dream is particularly popular with the fans who favor him over the others.

In reality, one of the members of the band Awakened years ago and it didn’t work right. She realized everything was a Lie, but never gained the benefit of Wisdom to survive that realization. She’s a deeply broken person who wants nothing more than to fall asleep and never EVER wake up. And she wants that for her fans too. She’s working, instinctively, toward magic that will put her fans into eternal slumber. Worst of all, her music may be spreading her Banisher affliction to Awakened who hear it.

Cultists: Mostly, these cultists are teenagers and young adults who have sniffed out some part of the Lie, but remain asleep and afraid. Sleep to Dream provides them with comfort. They cling to the lyrics and the band’s theme, the music, the theater, and the dancing as ways to push back against the reality that there is something else going on in the world around them.

Punching Up: Playing a Sleeper

Not every chronicle can or even should include a Sleeper as a player’s character. It’s a divergent storyline that should be agreed to by the players and Storyteller involved, and a Sleeper’s player should understand that she needs to follow all the rules laid out in the Curse of Quiescence section above. The role will be

challenging, and often the player will be acting almost as a support to the Awakened characters and the Storyteller respectively.

While this section is written with a player character in mind, Storytellers should take note that they may be able to benefit from the considerations here when roleplaying regular Sleeper characters themselves.

Why, Who, and How

Almost all mages have strong ties to Sleepers and live very much in the Fallen World, no matter how lofty their ideals. But, if a troupe wants to deeply explore the idea of this delicate balance and drive home the realities of the Lie, having a player character or two who are only Sleepers could provide the troupe with deep and powerful stories worth the challenges involved. Any sort of character may work, so long as she has a deep investment with the mages and there is a solid reason why she needs to be kept around. Maybe she’s a friendly cop who’s helped the mages out from time to time, but demands to be around to investigate their situations if they want her help cleaning them up. Maybe it’s a fragile younger brother in danger from the cabal’s enemies who they have to keep around for his own safety. Maybe it’s an old friend who didn’t Awaken with the cabal. He’s weird, but mundane, and the cabal feels guilty leaving him (even more) behind. Practical or not, sometimes you just can’t let go of certain people, even if it makes your life harder. Keeping the Sleeper around and involved in scenes might be a great Aspiration for the Awakened characters, too, to incentivize keeping all of the characters in the action.

How to Forget

It would be impossible (and boring) if a Sleeper player character is never exposed to obvious Supernal or Abyssal powers. No matter how clever the Awakened characters are, sooner or later, and perhaps frequently, the Sleeper will be exposed to the Lie. This is not a bad thing on a meta level, and if the player characters are being especially careful and successful, the Storyteller ought to up the ante via her own characters.

Playing out forgetting entire scenes, and the fallout from that, has the potential to be some of the most powerful storytelling that can happen in a game with a Sleeper character. Internally, the fear of going past the surface understanding, and maybe a nagging sense that something is wrong, pressed up against the mind's desire to stay whole and intact and not delve into what has happened before, is powerful indeed. Externally, for an Awakened character, seeing his cohort or loved one forget over and over the most important things in the mage's life is both heartbreaking and dangerous. Does he take a chance, exposing her to more risk by straightening her out? Can he work against her mind's defenses to help her understand? Does he push her to Awaken herself? It's important that the frustration remain an in-character tool for drama and not just one player messing with the others; but so long as that's the case, forgetting should be great drama at the table.

Etiquette and Out-of-Character Considerations

Having a Sleeper character can bring drama and intensity to a game. It can also bring endless frustration to the other players if both Storyteller and players alike forget that the Sleeper character is not in the story to undermine all of the mages' accomplishments. Sometimes she may, but her main purpose in the story is to bring about stories of humanity and add dramatic tension. Just by being in the game, a Sleeper character makes things more difficult for the Awakened characters; but the Sleeper's player should never actively try to destroy their progress or throw monkey wrenches into their stories unless that's a desire shared by all players involved. If a Sleeper character says "It would be awesome if this went wrong because of me," and the other players agree, go with it. If not, don't.

Sleeper Merits

The following Merits are meant to facilitate play for Sleeper characters in a **Mage** game. While many of these Merits might seem designed to pit character against character, recall that mages tend to be a clever bunch. And while a Sleeper who makes Paradox around her worse could be a problem for the Awakened characters, it could be a worse problem for their enemies, if the Sleeper were utilized in the right ways. When using these Merits, always lean toward out of character agreement and cooperation for better stories.

Actively Oblivious (●●)

Prerequisites: Integrity

You've lived a hard life, and long ago learned that sometimes the only way to survive realities that are just too hard to face is

to not notice them in the first place. That's why you can smile while you patch up the hole in the kitchen wall and describe your dad as "strict" rather than abusive. Little do you know, this ability of yours allows you to ignore the greater magical truths of the world as well as the domestic ones.

Effect: By spending a Willpower point during an incident that might cause you to suffer a breaking point, you can actively ignore the event and not have to make the roll. This requires concentration. This active oblivious state also protects you from "seeing" events that relate to the Supernal. As a result, should you be successfully and actively oblivious, you do not count as a witness to Supernal magics and cannot be a part of a Paradox risk. (Though you do create Dissonance and suffer Quiescence as this cannot be kept up indefinitely.)

Drawback: Whenever you successfully ignore a potential breaking point, you suffer the Strained Condition.

Communal Sleeper (●)

Prerequisites: Integrity, Empathy ●●+

You are many. When surrounded by people just like you, you have a presence of personality and self that radiates beyond just yourself and those with whom you share time. You're a sort of crowd yourself, so long as there's anyone there to see you be boisterous and approachable.

Effect: When the character is leading, guiding, or otherwise protecting at least one other Sleeper, the dice trick applied to the Paradox dice pool is one step worse (so two or three Sleepers including the character use 8-Again, and light foot traffic uses the rote action quality).

Detail Oriented (●●)

Prerequisites: Integrity

A Detail Oriented character can pick up clues and details often missed by those characters who think big or are otherwise caught up in the Supernal.

Effect: Any time an Awakened or Sleepwalker character misses an Investigation- or Perception-based roll, if you attempt it, you get an exceptional success on three successes rather than five.

Liar (●)

Prerequisites: Integrity

Unfortunately, your very being strengthens the Lie. Your soul has been twisted by the Abyss and your presence warps the Supernal.

Effect: A character with this Merit increases Paradox risk around her by two dice instead of one, and adds two dice to Dissonance rolls.

Drawback: The character has the Open Condition against Abyssal entities, and suffers a -1 penalty on breaking point rolls caused by the Abyss.

Strained (●●)

Prerequisite: Integrity 5 or lower

You've managed to shrug off the mind-bending Truth of the world many times, and for now, you're holding it together. But you've weakened, and may be finding it harder to push things off.

Effect: When faced with an Integrity breaking point based on Supernal or Abyssal effects, you can instead take the Strained Condition.

Sleepwalkers

By its nature, the Lie is imperfect. As insidious as the Curse is, it is not flawless, and entropy works on everything given enough time. For these reasons, and in certain cases, out of very specific design, there are people who escape the Curse without fully Awakening.

Free of the Curse

Sleepwalkers don't suffer the Curse. They don't see the Truth the way that the Awakened do, they don't understand the Supernal, but it doesn't bother them the way it does Sleepers. They don't increase Paradox. They don't cause Dissonance, and they don't forget what they've seen.

All Shapes and Sizes

Some people are Sleepwalkers because they just don't experience the Curse. A minority, though, have their own unique powers and strange innate abilities that set them apart from humanity. Perhaps it's a connection to the Supernal that the human mind cannot fathom, even the Awakened mind. Perhaps they draw on a connection to some other source, and that shields them in some ways from the Lie. Maybe it's just that the strange accept the strange.

While not always brought into Awakened society, the Fallen World hides a wide spectrum of human beings who qualify as Sleepwalkers, though they may never have any run-in with direct evidence of the Supernal or Abyss. Any character possessing Integrity and a Supernatural Merit that reflects an internal talent or inborn ability is immune to the Curse. Having a cursed camera that shows you when people will die does not make you a Sleepwalker. Being able to know what a serial killer is thinking due to a strange ability to get in his head *does* push back the Curse. Drinking the blood of a vampire does not make you a Sleepwalker, but developing mystical powers from that bond would. Being a kin to shapeshifters and half-spirits would make you a Sleepwalker.

Sleeper to Sleepwalker

Forcing a Sleeper to become a Sleepwalker is possible with the Weaving Prime spell *Stealing Fire* (p. 169), something desperate or conniving Awakened have always known. It's a brutal experience, though, and is always considered an obvious Supernal power for the sake of determining if the spell causes a breaking point and Wisdom roll. Even if the spell is successful, the Sleeper is not a Sleepwalker until *after* it is cast. Even then, once the spell's duration expires, Quiescence takes effect on any memories of obvious magic the temporary Sleepwalker witnessed.

Aside from the brute-force method, mages don't know how to make people Sleepwalkers any more than they know how to make people Awaken. Any of the potential roads to Awakening

described in Chapter Two could, falling short of triggering an actual Awakening, coax a Sleeper into Sleepwalking. The Orders have dedicated countless studies to determine if being the blood relative of mages makes someone more likely to Sleepwalk, but if it does influence things it does so in such a subtle way that it's impossible to prove. The raw power of the relative has no effect; for every apprentice whose child sees her cast spells and remembers, there's a near-archmage with only Sleeping children and grandchildren.

Skilled, cunning, or otherwise powerful Sleepwalkers often have no problem fitting into Awakened society should they be allowed to know it exists. They make useful members of any cabal and Consilium, as they can do things mages are too preoccupied to handle or simply do not have the same affinity for. While it's unlikely that any Awakened polity would put a Sleepwalker in a position of absolute authority over cabals or have them make declarations about magical matters they cannot understand, that doesn't mean that some Assemblies, Caucuses, cabals, and even Convocations haven't found special positions of respect for qualified Sleepwalkers in their midst. Some Awakened sneer at this practice, or disallow it locally, but it does happen.

Moments of Genius

Some Awakened believe that a Sleepwalker who is exposed to Awakened society or magic on a secondary level is less likely to Awaken than, say, a totally ignorant Sleeper who just stumbled across the Truth. The logic goes that by regularly exposing them to the radiation of the Supernal, they'll tend to not have moments of complete Gnostic revelation, much like the Thai nuns who do not allow themselves to learn among the priests and believe that understanding and enlightenment will simply come to them while they go about their mundane tasks. There is no solid way to study this phenomenon, to prove or disprove it, and so it remains a traditional assumption, but one that is challenged from time to time.

Shield Maidens and Flag Bearers

The truth is, technically, anyone with a sympathetic tie to a mage can carry spells for her. The Diamond believe that in the

The Exceptional Sleepwalker

This section is meant to act as a guideline to reflect what happens most often in the Fallen World of the Awakened. These are trends. Some people buck trends, and sometimes trends are based on old data. If a player has had a Sleepwalker involved in the Consilium for decades, and wants that character to Awaken one day, a Storyteller should facilitate it in-game. "It doesn't happen because the books say so," should never trump player agency and the telling of a good story at the table.

Time Before, this was often an agreement between the Wise and their companions. Dissonance means that attempting this sort of thing only works with Sleepwalkers, and even attempting it with a Sleeper is considered a crime by most Awakened jurisdictions.

It works like this: Just as a Mage can maintain a number of spells herself, depending on Gnosis, she may place spells in keeping with a Sleepwalker if they have a connection and the Sleepwalker understands and agrees to what's going on.

The first part of the equation is based on familiarity and intimacy. Basically, a person with a Medium connection to a mage can hold one spell for her. A person with a Strong connection can hold two. The spells no longer count toward the mage's Spell Control (p. 118) but remain under her command and may be relinquished or canceled as normal. The Sleepwalker has no command over the spell, despite his soul holding it.

The second part is where things get hazy. Attempts to hang spells on unwitting assistants or associates fall flat and fail every time. Telling the Sleepwalker what is going on works. A full explanation of the inner workings of the Supernal isn't necessary, and many mages use the symbols of the Fallen World to great effect when trying to explain what they're doing. Couching these explanations in traditional religious practices, super technology, or philosophical dressing works so long as the basic truth remains. "I am using you to make me stronger," or "I will use you to keep me safe," for example, no matter how the explanations are spun otherwise.

From there, the Sleepwalker must agree of his own free will. Often, there is a bargain involved, but at the end he must agree without magical coercion. (Attempts to magically coerce in these situations mean the spell in question fails.) Some of the older, organized, and studious Sleepwalkers of the Mysterium surmise that these deals go back to some ancient covenant between the Awakened and those still Sleeping and hint that there are many such covenants that Awakened have simply never bother to explore.

Casting spells to be held by a Sleepwalker is a double-edged sword for both parties involved. Carrying the magical workings of a mage makes the Sleepwalker a target for her enemies, both to deny the mage of the resource, as well as turn the spells against her and take advantage of the sympathetic tie through the Sleepwalker. While a Sleepwalker needs to be made to understand, roughly, what she's signing up for, the Awakened do not always let their companions know the kind of magical target that will be painted on their backs as a result.

Archetypes and Concepts

What makes a Sleeper into a Sleepwalker? Is it more than just a coincidence or a hiccup in the careful plans of the Exarchs? That's difficult to say, and no formal studies have been (or even could be) done on the subject by Awakened scholars. That said, trends certainly exist. The following list of concepts and character inspirations are meant to give players and Storytellers ideas on how to populate their Fallen World with those tragically aware, and how they manage to survive and maybe thrive in a world that seems impossibly out of their grasp.

The Damned-sel

He's got "being a victim" down to a fine art. It started out in high school when he realized he could get out of a lot of classes by faking injuries or making minor injuries look much worse. By now, he's made more money on soft-tissue damage than most people without a degree in anything will make in their whole lives. He's also got an uncanny knack for being at the site of magical meltdowns and Abyssal explosions. He's been kidnapped by the Seers twice. Luckily, he's as good at minimizing danger to himself as he is at faking it. Currently, he's got plans in the works to blackmail a rival cabal's leader for violations against the Veil that he carefully engineered personally. His Awakened friends call him "a walking adventure hook" with great affection and more than a few scars.

Skills and Merits: The Damned-sel is always running a social game, so high Subterfuge is important. That said, he's found nothing works better with mages than telling them the truth, and he's sharpened his Wits to a razor edge. He's drawn to the Curse and has some low-level Supernatural Merit, or else the Sleepwalker Merit at one dot. Really, his edge is in how he plays the game, not any special power.

The Occult Investigator

Not everything occult is Supernal, thanks to the corruption of the Abyss and other supernatural influences on the Fallen World. The Occult Investigator is often called in when the Awakened have assessed a Mystery and discovered its source to be something in the occultist's area of expertise, or else to handle as much as she can when the Mages are otherwise occupied. She works closely with them and has a knack for analytical thinking in the midst of chaos and otherwise mind-warping terror. She may be pretty broken on the inside, but it almost never shows.

Skills and Merits: Naturally, the Occult Investigator has high Occult and Investigation. Before all this, she had some other occupation that exposed her to the world of the occult, and that other occupation gave her one other skill at a high rating. (As a medical examiner, she'd have Medicine. If she'd been a cop, maybe she's got Brawl and Firearms.) She may have retained Professional Training. She's a Skill-heavy character thanks to her years surviving by her wits. She may have become a Sleepwalker via frequent exposures to the supernatural. She is the very definition of Deadpan (see below).

The Hacker

His bosses are great with magic and sort of suck at life. It's complicated, but basically the cabal ran sloppy and caught the Hacker's attention. At first, he was just interested in stealing some easy money and getting a look at the curiosity. But the curiosity turned into a Mystery and that turned into real exposure to a world almost as interesting as computer science. So he tracked them down, showed him what he found about them, and how easy it was for him to dig in. The cabal's members saw the wisdom in getting the Hacker on their side rather than doing anything drastic. Now he's got bosses, more or less, and they know about as much of what he does as he knows what

they do. It's a good arrangement.

Skills and Merits: Computers, obviously, but the Hacker's not some Internet-forum wannabe; he's broken into half as many actual buildings as he has servers, and he has the Stealth and Larceny to show for it.

The Devil's Little Helper

She looks good in a dark hood, can wear a pentagram without a touch of irony, and is as fashionable as she is theatrically mysterious. She could have a pretty successful career as a small cult leader and freelance spiritualist, but she prefers to hire her talents out privately to cabals of mages. It's not that you think she's especially magical, though she claims to be a seventh-generation witch. She's just got a knack for time management and people skills. Sure, she's got a working knowledge of LeVey, Golden Dawn, Kabbalah, and ritual traditions not found on Wikipedia. But the real service she offers is talent with smartphones, scheduling, and HR-style public relations. So when the cabal has need of a powerful and intense ritual, they call the Devil's Little Helper; she activates the phone tree, and a coven of ready ritualists are on hand in under three hours.

Skills and Merits: The Devil's Little Helper actually has her own functioning Mystery Cult, and a handful of other Social Merits she can bring in when the cabal needs it. More than that, she's charming and likable, naturally talented with Presence and Socialize. She's not a complete phony, being a legitimate medium, but that comes up far less often than her other traits.

Sleepwalker Merits

The following Merits are intended for characters with a hint of the supernatural about them. All confer Sleepwalker status on the character, but are not permitted for Awakened characters.

Banner-Bearer (● to ●●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker

Any Sleepwalker can carry the burden of extra spells for an Awakened, but you are especially capable.

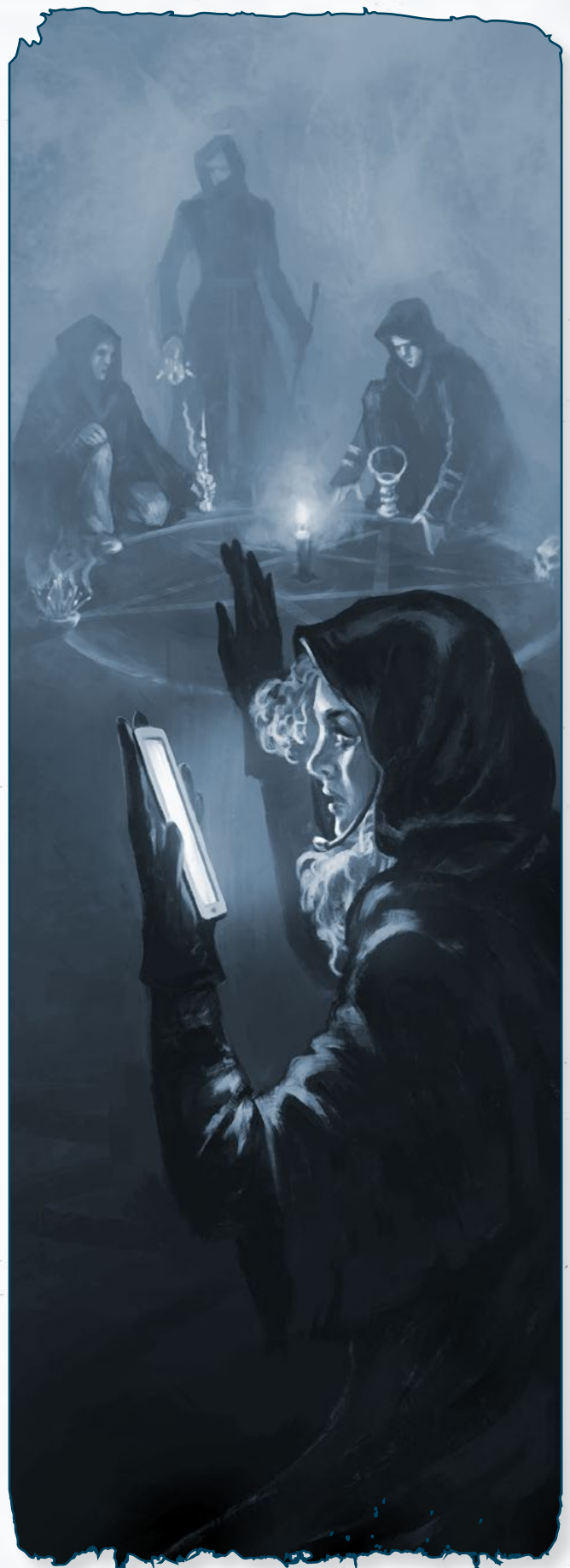
Effect: Through personal, inner strength, you are able to carry one additional spell for an Awakened mage per level of this Merit.

Deadpan (●●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker

All Sleepwalkers escape the Curse, but you've slipped free of horror itself; no matter what the Fallen World throws at you, you can meet it calmly.

Effect: No matter what faces you, if it's magical in nature, you never have to make rolls to resist fear or revulsion, and automatically Withstand spells that would impose it. This would include Mind effects made to scare you, or Life effects made to turn your stomach, anything so long as the fear is external. Should the attempts to frighten you play off of Conditions or vices you already suffer from, you *are* vulnerable, but treat your Composure as two dots higher than it is.



Fifful Slumber (●)

Prerequisites: The character has suffered three or more breaking points due to exposure to the Supernal or Abyss and is now considered a Sleepwalker, even if he did not start the game that way.

Effect: Because of the regular abuse, your character is able to resist breaking points triggered by all things Abyssal or Supernal with a +2 bonus.

Loved (●●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker

Something or someone loves you. It loves you with enough force and truth that it has changed the way magic flows to and from you. This Merit does not imply a return of these feelings or that you even are aware you are so passionately felt for.

Effect: So long as the person or thing that loves you continues to exist, nothing and no one else can create a Strong sympathetic tie with you, though you can form Strong sympathy with them. Additionally, if you are suffering wound penalties to rolls, or have spent below half your Willpower, the person or thing that loves you knows about it.

Proxy Voice (●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker, Mentor ●+

Your mentor does not always engage with Awakened society, though he or she has some weight there. You often act as a proxy, and are treated as if you speak on your mentor's behalf. Taking advantage of that, and how your mentor might react to misrepresenting him or her, is something that should be worked out with the Storyteller ahead of time.

Effect: You have access to a given Status Merit owned by your mentor. You can use it when empowered to do so.

Relic Attuned (●●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker

Effect: Your character is not Awakened, but can still access the magics stored in Artifacts. This usage is imperfect, however. Any single activation requires a point of Willpower. Activation rolls for Artifacts can use the character's Willpower, or the Artifact's activation dice.

Ritual Martyr (●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker

You have a rare and giving soul, or else some strong connection to the Abyss that the Awakened in your life can't totally reckon. As a result, during a ritual when things go badly, you are able to take the effects of Paradox onto yourself despite being "merely" a Sleepwalker.

Effect: First, the Paradox Condition must happen during a spell casting you are present for. Second, the Paradox that

happens must be one that would affect a Sleepwalker. Anything related to a Nimbus or other Awakened-only features can't be absorbed. You collect any Beats as well as the downsides, converting them from Arcane Beats to regular ones in the process.

The exchange is an intense one, and so long as you hold in the effects of the Paradox, the Awakened you liberated from suffering experiences the Humbled Condition toward you. You maintain the Paradox Condition until the Awakened in question resolves the Humbled resolution or you choose to release him from the Condition, whichever comes first.

Ritual Savvy (●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker, Occult ●●

You have a working knowledge of the tools and symbols in working magic, though you don't understand the Truth behind them. Despite that, you're able to gather, sort, and prepare ritual components in a way that increases the efficacy of any Awakened ritual that you help prepare and take part in.

Effect: Roll an appropriate pool to gather or prepare the ritual space: Intelligence + Computers for a Free Council Techné ritual, or perhaps Wits + Occult to gather secret ingredients for a Mysterium ritual the Sleepwalker hasn't been given all the details on. Once rolled, each success is considered one bonus spellcasting die that the Sleepwalker holds, which Awakened ritualists can then "buy" for Willpower. Each mage participating in the ritual may "buy" a single bonus die, each one depleting the Sleepwalker's "pool." The bonus dice from this Merit do not count toward the Yantra limit of mages' Gnosis.

Sleepwalker (●)

Prerequisite: Integrity

With this Merit, your character is considered a Sleepwalker.

Effect: The character is immune to the Curse, causes no Dissonance, and follows the other guidelines for Sleepwalkers in this section. **This Merit is not necessary for a character with any other Supernatural Merit involving an internal power, or any supernatural template.**

Slippery (●●)

Prerequisite: Sleepwalker

Your character knows how to coast, when to keep her head down, and how to dodge accusations. The Awakened around you may be doing some shady things, but you look clean and pure no matter what. When accusations fly, you're underestimated or assumed to be innocent, at least, more innocent, than your Awakened cohorts.

Effect: Spend a Willpower point to activate this effect. Awakened characters will first accuse another viable character if possible. This does not prevent that character from being proven innocent, and suspicion turning back toward yours. But it may buy some time to build a defense or to escape.

In the Blood: Proximi

Mages call Sleepwalkers who have powers close to true Supernal magic “Proximi.” A Proximus may very rarely have developed her talents spontaneously, but she usually comes from a long family line (or “Dynasty”) of Proximi that share her abilities. She is free of the Curse, but cannot yet see through the Lie. Her ancient blood roots in Supernal magic mean that she has special talents that other Sleepwalkers don’t possess. All Proximi have at least one **Blessing**, an inherent ability to cast a single spell.

Proximi are treated as Sleepwalkers except for the following:

Parent Path: Proximi are always linked to one of the five Supernal Realms, and except in extremely rare circumstances always become members of that Path if they Awaken.

Blessing Arcana: Proximi may purchase Blessings from their Parent Path’s Ruling Arcana and one other Arcanum, chosen at character creation.

Dynastic Blessings: Every Proximus has the *capacity* to learn up to 30 dots worth of Blessings, chosen from the three Blessing Arcana at character creation. Blessings may be based on any spell of up to three Arcanum dots. Proximi characters buy their Blessings from the list for their Dynasty as Merits.

Mana Capacity: Proximi have a Mana pool like a mage, with a maximum Mana capacity of 5. They can regain Mana by meditation at a Hallow like a mage, and every dynasty has at least one Oblation that can recover Mana in the manner of a Legacy, gaining a single point of Mana each time. Proximi may spend one Mana per turn (taking longer to cast in larger expenditures like a mage) to pay for Blessings with Mana costs and to mitigate Paradox dice.

Limited Casting: Proximi do not have Gnosis or Arcana ratings. They use their Willpower as a casting dice pool, penalized for spell factors. They may not use Yantras. Their ritual casting interval is five hours.

Reach and Paradox: Proximi gain one risk-free Reach on every Blessing, and gain one die of Paradox risk per extra Reach. A Proximus can’t attempt to contain Paradox like a mage can, but instead of warping the Blessing, any Paradox successes rolled while using a Blessing completely cancel the effect and cause the Proximus’ Curse (see below) to worsen. Obvious Blessings with Sleeper witnesses provoke Paradox Risk, trigger Quiescence, and are subject to Dissonance in the same way as Awakened spells.

Familial Curses

Each family line puts forward not just a talent for magic, but a sometimes-crippling curse that affects a Proximus’ whole life. This is one of the things that theorists point to when saying that Proximi must have been specifically engineered.

Functionally, a Proximi Curse is a two-part Condition. The first part is a lower-level difficulty that should come up in play, but is not crippling. This stage of the Condition is persistent and cannot be removed even by magic, but generates Beats when it impedes the character. Should the character be forced, by magic or otherwise, to try to escape the curse, the second part of the Proximi Curse kicks in and the character suffers from it until it’s resolved, earning a Beat when the curse reverts to the persistent form.

Family Lines

Many Awakened claim that Proximi Dynasties were created by ancient archmages and are tended to grow by modern mages. That may be true, but there is a growing body of evidence that suggests some Proximi lines do not have identifiable sources, and seem to have grown wild.

Proximi families are well maintained and tracked by various Orders, even actively *groomed* by them. The family lines are tracked closely whenever possible because not all members of a family will develop into full Proximi; Blessings can skip multiple generations before reappearing.

Place in Society

To the Seers, Proximi families are tools to be utilized and trashed when necessary. The other Orders are usually more humanitarian in their dealings with these strange bloodlines, but not always. Every Order considers at least a few Dynasties to be “theirs,” no matter what the individual Proximus believes; the Silver Ladder tracks the largest number of families. Proximi also appear to Awaken more often than other Sleepwalkers, which most Orders encourage and try to prepare young Proximi for.

At the moment of revelation, a Proximus loses her Blessings and familial Curse, though the Sanctity of Merits rule still applies. At the Storyteller’s discretion, some or all of the Blessings removed by an Awakening may convert into Arcane Experiences instead of Merit dots.

THE SISTERS OF THE MOUNTAIN

Despite ignorant stereotypes of inbred cannibals, the Appalachian mountains are home to simple, beautiful folk magic practices; sublime in a way, if not Supernal. The Proximi Dynasty called the Sisters of the Mountain are the strongest line of traditional witches still left out there, loosely affiliated with the Mysterium.

Mostly, their rituals and magic focus on health and longevity. They create genetic diversity for the families where it might be lacking, and ensure that the babies they deliver grow up strong and cunning.

Occasionally, a family of the Sisters will have a generation with too many strong girls born. At the time of her first blood, she's prepared, geared up, and sent off into the world to bring back knowledge and wisdom to her family. Boys often carry the blessing, but are sent out into the world less often, as they are thought to return less frequently. These pilgrims move into the modern world to gather whatever knowledge they can before a longing for the Hills overtakes them and they return to the fold. Some such sisters travel out into the mundane world a

few times in their lives, and most believe in a fair trade of their healing power for the wisdom they pick up in the outside world.

Nickname: Hill Hags

Appearance: A Sister of the Mountain lives close to the land of her birth – so much so that she is a walking extension of the land. All Sisters, women and men, have plant life living under their skin. Most of the time, it isn't especially visible, save for a slight greenish tinge anywhere the skin is especially thin. When they are stressed, practicing magic, or sleeping, though, the plant life pushes up against their skin like throbbing, twitching green veins.

When a Sister dies, the plant life inside of her explodes outward, creating a magical garden on the spot and consuming her body entirely. These death-gardens are nearly impossible to remove.

Parent Path: Thyrsus

Blessings (Fate, Life, Spirit) : Fate – Oaths Fulfilled (●), Exceptional Luck (●●), Shifting the Odds (●●), Monkey's Paw



(●●●), Shared Fate (●●●); Life — Cleanse the Body (●), Analyze Life (●), Body Control (●●), Lure and Repel (●●), Purge Illness (●●), Degrading the Form (●●●), Honing the Form (●●●), Knit (●●●); Spirit — Coaxing the Spirits (●), Gremlins (●)

Curse: Each Sister carries her home inside of herself. She is a garden growing inside herself. That garden has needs, needs it cannot always draw from the Sister's body. As a result, nightly, she must lay down on fresh, healthy soil, so that the plants inside can creep out through her skin to dig into the dirt and draw in the nutrients they need. In the morning, as the Sister wakes, the roots recede and her skin heals, more or less, but the presence of the plants does take its toll.

Persistent: The plant matter living within a Sister means that she always has one Health box marked with lethal damage. This lethal wound cannot be healed through mundane treatment, natural healing, or magic.

Beat: Outsiders just can't understand the way a Sister lives; when her garden is noticed or discovered and causes others to react badly, take a Beat.

Severe: When the Sister suffers a Paradox or cannot sleep in healthy soil, her unhealable internal injuries worsen. When her Curse worsens, every additional night she doesn't sleep properly, she suffers an additional unhealable lethal wound. When she does return to the soil, these additional wounds recede after a week per wound, until she is left with the persistent version of the Curse. The wounds gained from a Sister's Curse do not bleed out once they wrap into aggravated damage. Instead, she enters a coma-like trance and the garden takes over her body. It will use all of her magical abilities and physical prowess to get her to safe dirt to sleep on. She will actually dig down into the soil and partially bury herself, to sleep until all but the first box has receded.

Oblations: Tending wounds and offering succor. Experimenting with the human body. Gardening. Singing the old songs.

Character Concepts: Ancient garden, first-time pilgrim, lay midwife in a poor neighborhood, beautiful blue-eyed boy



Slaves of the Throne

While the Pentacle looks on Sleepers and Sleepwalkers as disadvantaged people in need of guidance or protection, however condescending that attitude can get it is better than the Seers of the Throne's reaction to the majority of humanity. Sleepers and Sleepwalkers are *resources* for the Ministries, blind cattle to lead deeper into the Lie or tools to be exploited by Seers. The Order is commanded to protect humanity from extinction, but that's in aggregate; the Exarchs are the symbols of tyranny, and tyrants require slaves.

Successful Seers enjoy a level of luxury and privilege in their mundane lives, supported by the temporal resources of the Ministries and their legion of Exarchal Mystery Cults, sycophants, and servants who have been paid, blackmailed, or simply bought. Particularly loyal Seers receive Artifacts to assist in their dominion over the Sleeping world, the most infamous being **Profane Urim**.

Profane Urim take many forms, but most are cloaks, robes, veils, or vestments the user wears. They allow the user to possess the body of any Sleeper she has a Medium or Strong sympathetic link to, and worse — grant the user a Connected sympathetic link while in use. Any Sleeper friend or lover of a Pentacle mage is potentially a puppet for the Throne, but as so many mages are capable of detecting the possession, Urims are mostly used when Seers find it imprudent to be physically present, or when they want literal human shields between them and hostile mages from other Orders.

Systems: a Profane Urim is a 6-dot Artifact capable of casting "Possession" using the Sympathetic Range Attainment. Other, rarer, versions of the Artifact exist with variant powers. Seer characters may combine their Merit dots to buy one.

Servitors

Beyond servants and puppeteer victims, the greatest Seer Ministries command *Servitors*, human beings twisted into forms pleasing to the Exarchs and granted to loyal Seers as rewards. Some Servitors are enslaved Proximi Dynasties, like the **Myrmidon** clan who serve Praetorian. Others were the creation of archmasters, like the **Hive-Souls**: clusters of identical bodies sharing a single mind and soul between them, allowing them to serve as couriers and spies for their Hegemonic masters. Most, though, are Sleepers and Sleepwalkers who have been forcibly transformed through closely-guarded means, like the **Grigori** and **Hollow Ones**.

Grigori

Rather than a ritual vestment, one variant of Profane Urim takes the form of a shroud or grave wrappings. Exclusively granted to Panopticon by the Eye, when a Sleepwalker is bound in the shroud he undergoes a horrific transformation. His body is placed into suspended animation, while his mind and soul are fused to create an ephemeral entity projected out into Twilight as an invisible watchdog and spy. When viewed in Twilight by Mind Mage Sight, Grigori resemble mummified, struggling humanoid forms covered in eyes and borne aloft by six wings made of smoke. Their comatose bodies, safely stored in secure locations, constantly whisper descriptions of what the Grigori see. Removing the Sleepwalker from the shroud is instantly fatal.

Systems: A Shroud of Observation is an 8-dot Artifact only available to Panopticon Seers of Seer Status 3+. The Artifact consumes one point of Mana a day to maintain the transformation, but is capable of absorbing it from a Hallow, so Panopticon usually keep "Grigori farms" in secure Hallows. The Grigori itself is treated as a Rank 2 Goetia with Influence: Watching, and Resonance with its body and a target set by the Seer controlling the Artifact. The shroud can teleport the Grigori to the vicinity of its target at the cost of one Mana.

Hollow Ones

The Paternoster Ministry is waited on by slaves who believe whatever their masters tell them, utterly and completely. Victims of human trafficking gangs secretly run by the Ministry as Mystery Cults are taken by Seers to a closely guarded, secret location in North Africa, a Sanctum housing an aberrant monster from the Lower Depths that "stings" Sleepers who see it, ripping their senses of self away. The results are assigned to high-Ranking Paternoster Seers skilled in Mind magic. Hollow Ones are "blank" human beings; their souls are stable in the state left to them, but without a repeated supply of Mana a Hollow One's memories and drives drain away to nothingness, leaving a blank canvas for a Seer to write on with spells.

Systems: Hollow Ones are treated as Sleepwalkers, with a few special rules; a Hollow One has a Mana capacity of 5, but cannot refill it himself; he consumes one point of Mana per day. If he has no Mana left to spend, his Mental and Social Attributes reset to zero, his Virtue, Vice, and Aspiration vanish, and he loses all skills. The Hollow Ones' minds are, however, pliable; Mind spells are automatically Indefinite on Hollow Ones without spending spell factors, Reach, or Mana, but are canceled if the Hollow One "resets." A Hollow One servitor may be bought as a 2-dot Merit by a Paternoster Seer character with Mind 4+ and Seer Status 3+.

APPENDIX TWO: LEGENDS OF THE FALL

Where Humanity gets it wrong, by your time, is in imagining Atlantis as having any kind of quantifiable existence. Which of course it hasn't; not in the way they imagine, anyway.

There have been an awful lot of Atlantises, will be quite a few more.

It's just a symbol. A symbol of the art.

The True Atlantis is inside you, just as it's inside all of us. The sunken land beneath the dark sea, lost beneath the waves of wet, black stories and myths that break upon the shores of our minds.

Atlantis is the Shadow-land. The birth-place of civilization.

The fair land in the west that is lost to us, but remains forever, true birthplace and true goal.

— Neil Gaiman, *The Books of Magic*

Atlantis was the greatest city that ever existed. Atlantis was the height of Awakened potential. Atlantis was the place where every mage could be her best self, reach for and attain her brightest dreams, make the stars themselves gasp in delight at the wonders performed below.

Atlantis is a Truth ringing deep within a mage's bones: the reverberation that thrilled through him the day his palm slapped against the base of the Watchtower; the flow of the ink or blood or tears he used to write his name — his *Name* — on its walls; the scrape of chisel on stone as he carved the letters deep.

Atlantis is a Lie the Awakened tell themselves.

Atlantis *was*, and then *was not*.

The Time Before

Mages have passed the story of Atlantis from mentor to eager student for as long as anyone can recall. Tales of the Golden City have simply always been told, though no definitive evidence of its existence has yet been uncovered. Sages speak of towers spiraling up and up, grazing the sky itself. *We were priests and viziers*, say the Silver Ladder. *We were the guards and peacekeepers*, say the Adamantine Arrow. And perhaps they would be, if it were more than a symbol. No consistent records survived the City's catastrophic destruction. No one has yet found the evidence that proves, beyond a doubt, that Atlantis existed.

What the mages have, what makes them cling so tightly to the idea of Atlantis-that-fell, are pieces that simply don't fit anywhere in this world. The Mysterium have a library full of explorers' journals, their pages filled with sketches of ruins whose civilizations never existed. In far-flung corners of the world, mages have visited the graves of kings who were never crowned on this Earth, dug up the bones of impossible creatures, spelunked into caves whose painted walls couldn't have been touched by human hands. Not according to the histories we know.

Sleeper technology is useless on these artifacts. Attempts at scientific dating yield unreliable results: This piece is from the Mesozoic Era, from 50 BCE, from the 13th century. It is a scant few seconds young and millions of years old. Should the machine be making that noise?

Mages using Time spells fare no better at tracing the origins of their colleagues' finds. Most are left with skull-splitting headaches for their efforts, and days or weeks of temporal confusion afterwards. The Earth is far older than humanity; no matter how far back a mage looks, within human history or far before it, Atlantis is nowhere.

The evidence from these ruins and artifacts can't be shaped into a single, consistent history. Tales of glorious cities and empires that existed in the time before time are sprinkled throughout world mythology. The Aztecs referred to Aztlán; the Mahabharata opens with the history of the Naga Kingdom; ancient Buddhist texts mention Shambhala. Call it Hyperborea



or Brittia or Paititi. Name its people Pelasgians or inhabitants of the Dreamtime. “Atlantis” is a catch-all term, suggested for its familiarity to the Diamond Orders whose origins lay in ancient Greece.

Over the last four millennia, the Awakened have chased these conflicting-yet-similar stories to tease out one larger truth: a world existed before this one. Little and less is known about the inhabitants of the Time Before, but the Orders do agree on a few key points.

The Awakened existed in the Time Before.

Stories about these mythical cities center around characters who were something *more*. Many of them mention feats performed by wizards, magicians, the god-blooded. Others focus on men and women who were faster, stronger, cleverer than their adversaries. Whether those superlatives were granted by the gods or the sheer force of the heroes’ wills, there is no doubt they were more than simply human.

The inhabitants of the Time Before dwelt within, or Ascended to, the Supernal Realms.

It’s there in the cave paintings, if you know what to look for. It’s in a line of hieroglyphs whose revelations the Guardians of the Veil were reluctant to divulge once they’d been deciphered. It’s in a snatch of song sung in the High Speech, recorded in a lonely ruin by a Libertine. The Awakened of the Time Before shed their mortal skins and returned to the Supernal Realm that birthed us all, becoming beings of pure magic.

Their actions drastically changed the universe.

Their Ascension broke the world. Legends talk of an ocean spire warped into a “Star Ladder,” a portal simultaneously in the material, Astral, and all the Supernal Worlds at once. The Mysterium has chronicles of wars in heaven, of desperate assaults by outcast Atlantean kings and the Exarchs stealing the thrones of the gods. The how of it is not as important as the conclusion drawn: The damage done by those original Awakened caused the Supernal Realm to drift out of our reach. It left humanity in the Fallen World, a shattered remnant of the Time Before, with the Quiescence settling over Sleepers and no easy way to reach across the Abyss and return to what once was. The effects of the predecessors’ actions were so devastating, they erased themselves from existence. The world that is now is the world that always has been: one where Atlantis is little more than a fairy tale. A myth. A legend. A Lie.

Ascension

Whether the Fall was orchestrated by the Exarchs, caused by a war between factions of mages, or whether the sheer amount of magical energy was too much for reality to handle is a debate that’s raged on for thousands of years, probably since the first Awakened left stranded in the Fallen World first picked themselves up and brushed the disappearing dust of Atlantis from their knees.

The cautionary tale here is not *do not seek Ascension*. It's *don't make their mistakes*. **Ascension** — the desire to cast off the trappings of the Fallen World and return to the Supernal World, to once more taste magic at its source and be a part of that source — is a desire that survived the Fall. The path to Ascension is neither easy nor straightforward. Willworkers have poured oceans of ink onto pages laying out the rumors they've heard of other mages who have achieved it for themselves. Rarely are these eyewitness accounts — the testimony of an apprentice, the careful notes of a peer within one's Order — but instead come from friends of friends, a Mystagogue who heard it from a théarch who overheard a pair of Arrows discussing what their archmaster saw.

As with the scattered tales of lost cities, there's truth to be gleaned from rumors of Ascended mages. No two legends are exactly the same, which is both heartening and despair-inducing for the Awakened who wish to bring their own about. With such differences, how can anyone know what's required of him? With no single, clear, way to attain the Supernal, *anyone* is a candidate for Ascension.

Just about every mage has heard an Ascension story. They're topics of philosophical discussion in Order sancta. Cabals debate details over bottles of whiskey late into the night. They whisper Shadow Names to each other, not their own, but the names of those mages who embodied magic itself. Mages who no longer exist in the Fallen World because they've become so much more. Their names and faces, the items their contemporaries associated with them or their magic style, are symbols now, contained within the Imagos conjured in the mind's eye when the Awakened cast their spells. Following are two names modern mages might have heard bandied about.

An Acanthus in the Silver Ladder, Xeras spent his life pre-Awakening studying string theory and special relativity. He never fully quit himself of his Sleeper life — his passions turned easily into Obsession, and he discovered you saw a whole lot more when you used Mage Sight to observe protons smashing into one another. Xeras saw time as a vine, sinking its roots deep into the soil, traveling and branching out below ground far from where the plant breaks the surface. He was last seen on his way to gain access to the Tevatron at Fermilab in Illinois, though no records exist of his presence there. Notes he left behind are a mix of complex Sleeper formulae, commentary in High Speech, and several pages written in a language whose origins are yet a mystery. Time mages have used vines, his name, and some of the symbols from his last set of notes to power their spells.

All stories about Phrygia are stories of lonesome roads late at night. She was a Nameless Moros, and in the early part of

the 20th century, she walked from one end of the United States to the other. Not quite a phantom hitchhiker, but perhaps the inspiration for the legend, the somberly-clad woman convinced many and more a driver to let go of the things that weighed heavy on their hearts. Phrygia was the passenger you unburdened yourself to as the clock swept on past midnight. After a ride with Phrygia, you were a better version of yourself. Lighter. She disappeared after the start of the Great Depression and hasn't been seen since. Her likeness appears in several Tarot decks made by Awakened crafters, on cards signifying upheaval and change.

Neither Xeras nor Phrygia, nor any other Ascended, are remembered by the Sleepers who once knew them. The Ascended slip out of Sleeper memory like water through a sieve. The Quiescence sits heaviest upon close friends and family. People who saw the Ascended every day, if she kept any in her life, wax nostalgic for a short while, as though their loved one had simply gone on a long trip. They quickly change the subject, and resist attempts to return to it. The more distantly a Sleeper orbited the Ascended's life, the foggier the memories get, until no one remembers her at all.

Mages, however, don't forget. They seek out evidence of the Ascended with as much fervor as they hunt for evidence of lost Atlantis. More, perhaps, in the case of mages who feel it's time to move on from what the Awakened *were* and focus on who they might best *become*. Finding proof of an Ascended mage's passage is akin to a Sleeper of abiding faith coming into the possession of a holy relic: What you hold ties you, even tenuously, to the Mystery.

Ascension is an act of transformation. When the mage's soul joins with the Supernal World, what she leaves behind at the moment she Ascends may be transformed as well. Bones turn to crystal. Locks of hair might become the finespun metal of her Watchtower, strong enough to string a talisman on and hang about one's neck. These *Sariras* are powerful Artifacts, sought-after by dedicated mages as signposts to escaping the Fallen World. The place where the Ascension happened might also be affected: The Fallen World grows thin in that spot, opening a Verge to a realm that reflects the mage's final moments. The environment itself can be profoundly, permanently changed — the waves of Life radiating outward from her body makes flowers bloom in the desert; the burst of Prime alters the area's Ley Lines.

Atlantis' fall put that reality out of mages' reach. It separated them from great feats of magic, set most of the world to Sleeping. But the Awakened haven't given up hope. The Supernal World is still there, the Watchtowers calling across the Abyss, *come home, come home, come home*. And the mages have heard the call.

APPENDIX THREE: CONDITIONS AND TILTS

The list below gives some common Conditions that can be applied to your characters during a chapter.

ADDICTED (PERSISTENT)

Your character is addicted to something, whether drugs, gambling or other destructive behaviors. Some addictions are more dangerous than others, but the nature of addiction is that it slowly takes over your life, impeding functionality. If you are addicted, you need to indulge your addiction regularly to keep it under control. A specific addiction should be chosen upon taking this Condition; characters can take this Condition multiple times for different addictions. Being unable to feed your addiction can result in the Deprived Condition.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity or Wisdom, lose *another* dot of Integrity or Wisdom, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point or Act of Hubris.

Beat: Your character chooses to get a fix rather than fulfill an obligation.

AMNESIA (PERSISTENT)

Your character is missing a portion of her memory. An entire period of her life is just gone. This causes massive difficulties with friends and loved ones.

Resolution: You regain your memory and learn the truth. Depending on the circumstances, this may constitute a breaking point.

Beat: Something problematic arises, such as a forgotten arrest warrant or old enemy.

BLIND (PERSISTENT)

Your character cannot see. Any rolls requiring sight may only use a chance die. If another sense can be reasonably substituted, make the roll at -3 instead. In a combat situation, she suffers the drawbacks of the Blinded Tilt (see p. 319). This Condition may be temporary, but that is usually the result of a combat effect, in which case the Blindness Tilt would apply.

Resolution: Your character regains her sight.

Beat: Your character encounters a limitation or difficulty that inconveniences her.

BROKEN (PERSISTENT)

Whatever you did or saw, something inside you snapped. You can barely muster up the will to do your job anymore, and anything more emotionally intense than a raised voice makes you flinch and back down. Apply a -2 to all Social rolls and rolls involving Resolve and a -5 to all use of the Intimidation Skill.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity or Wisdom, lose *another* dot of Integrity or Wisdom, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point or Act of Hubris.

Beat: You back down from a confrontation or fail a roll due to this Condition.

BONDED

Your character has established an extensive bond with a specific animal. She gains +2 on any rolls to influence or persuade her bonded animal. It may add your Animal Ken to any rolls to resist coercion or fear when in your character's presence. The animal may add your character's Animal Ken to any one die roll.

Resolution: The bonded animal dies or is otherwise parted from the character.

Beat: n/a

CHARMED

Your character enjoys the protection of magical good fortune. This may spare her from serious injury, ensure that she meets someone whose acquaintance will be valuable to her later, guarantee that she isn't the one who gets the short straw, or help her win an important game of chance. You may invoke this twist of fate at any time as a reflexive action. If used to avoid injury, resolving this Condition reduces the damage to 1. Otherwise, neither you nor the mage knows the exact nature this good fortune will take when it manifests – only that it will have a significant impact.

Possible Sources: This is commonly the effect of a boon granted by Fate magic.

Resolution: Your character narrowly avoids some misfortune or enjoys a lucky break; the Condition is resolved as described above.

Beat: n/a

CONNECTED (PERSISTENT)

Your character has made inroads with a specified group. While she has this Condition, she gets a +2 to all rolls relating to that group. Alternately, she can shed this Condition to gain a one-time automatic exceptional success on the next roll to influence or otherwise take advantage of the group. Once Connected is resolved, the character is considered to have burned her bridges and is no longer an accepted member. The character may be able to regain Connected with the specified group per Storyteller approval.

Example Skills: Politics, Socialize

Resolution: The character loses her membership or otherwise loses her standing with the group.

Beat: The character is asked to perform a favor for the group that inconveniences her.

DEFEATED

Your character has been beaten in the Duel Arcane, humiliated, and made completely open and exposed to an enemy. For the duration of this Condition, the character cannot spend Willpower or use magic in any way to harm the mage she was defeated by. Further, the mage who won the Duel has Strong sympathy with the loser.

Resolution: This Condition lingers until the character can greatly humble himself in public at great personal cost, or until the winner of the Duel takes advantage of the sympathy in a way that injures or abuses the loser. Take a Beat.

Beat: Take a Beat whenever your character is abused or humiliated as a result of her defeat.

DEPRIVED

Your character suffers from an addiction. She is unable to get her fix, however, leaving her irritable, anxious, and unable to focus. Remove one from her Stamina, Resolve, and Composure dice pools. This does not influence derived traits; it only influences dice pools that use these Attributes.

Resolution: Your character indulges her addiction.

Beat: n/a

DISABLED (PERSISTENT)

Your character has limited or no ability to walk. Her Speed trait is effectively 1. She must rely on a wheelchair or other device to travel. A manual wheelchair's Speed is equal to your character's Strength and requires use of her hands. Electric wheelchairs have a Speed of 3, but allow the free use of the character's hands.

An injury can cause this Condition temporarily, in which case it is resolved when the injury heals and the character regains mobility.

Resolution: The character's disability is cured by mundane or supernatural means.

Beat: Your character's limited mobility inconveniences your character and makes her slow to respond.

EMBARRASSING SECRET

Your character has a secret from his past that could come back to haunt him. If this secret gets out, he could be ostracized or maybe even arrested. If it becomes known, this Condition is exchanged for Notoriety (p. 317).

Resolution: The character's secret is made public, or the character does whatever is necessary to make sure it never comes to light.

Beat: n/a

ENERVATED (PERSISTENT)

The character is in the second stage of soul loss. Her instinctive efforts to shore up her Willpower by giving into her urges have failed, her Integrity has gone, and her Willpower is now fading. In addition to the effects of Soulless, she can no longer regain Willpower through her Virtue, only her Vice.

Indulging herself brings diminishing returns – whenever she does so, her permanent Willpower drops by one dot before she regains Willpower points to the new maximum. Mages lose a dot of Gnosis every time their Willpower drops, to a minimum of 0.

Resolution: This Condition is only removed if the character regains her soul.

Beat: You lose a dot of Willpower

FUGUE (PERSISTENT)

Something terrible happened. Rather than deal with it or let it break you, your mind shuts it out. You are prone to blackouts and lost time. Whenever circumstances become too similar to the situation that led to your gaining this Condition, the player rolls Resolve + Composure. If you fail the roll, the Storyteller controls your character for the next scene; your character, left to his own devices, will seek to avoid the conflict and get away from the area.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity or Wisdom, lose *another* dot of Integrity or Wisdom, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point or Act of Hubris.

Beat: You enter a fugue state as described above.

GUILTY

Your character is experiencing deep-seated feelings of guilt and remorse. This Condition is commonly applied after a successful breaking point roll (p. 299). While the character is under the effects of this Condition, he receives a -2 to any Resolve or Composure rolls to defend against Subterfuge, Empathy, or Intimidation rolls.

Resolution: The character confesses his crimes and makes restitution for whatever he did.

Beat: n/a

HUMBLLED

You have been reminded of the power of humanity, and your arrogance and pride crumble away. Any symbol or person that triggered this feeling in you creates a feeling of admiration that you are highly protective of. You cannot bring yourself to harm the source of your humbling, and treat it or him as a source of great wisdom and solace.

Possible Sources: Extreme sacrifice on your behalf. Certain Sleepwalker Merits.

Resolution: The character sacrifices of himself in dramatic fashion in the name of the person or symbol that humbled him in the first place.

Beat: Any time the character might act with hubris or arrogance, if the player chooses to take a dramatic failure on that roll rather attempt it, take a Beat.

INFORMED

Your character has a breadth of research information based on the topic she investigated. When you make a roll relating to the topic, you may choose to resolve this Condition. If you resolve it and the roll fails, it is instead considered to have a single success. If it succeeds, the roll is considered an exceptional success.

The roll that benefits from the Informed Condition can be any relevant Skill roll. For example, a character with Informed (Werewolves) might gain its benefits when using researched information to build a silver bear trap with the Crafts Skill. Combat rolls cannot benefit from this Condition.

Resolution: Your character uses her research to gain information; the Condition is resolved as described above.

Beat: n/a

INSPIRED

Your character is deeply inspired. When your character takes an action pertaining to that inspiration, you may resolve this Condition. An exceptional success on that roll requires only three successes instead of five and you gain a point of Willpower.

Resolution: You spend inspiration to spur yourself to greater success, resolving the Condition as described above.

Beat: n/a

LEVERAGED

Your character has been blackmailed, tricked, convinced, or otherwise leveraged into doing what another character wishes. You may have the Leveraged Condition multiple times for different characters. Any time the specified character requests something of you, you may resolve this Condition if your character does as requested without rolling to resist.

Resolution: Your character may either resolve the Condition by complying with a request as above, or if you apply the Leveraged Condition to the specified character.

Beat: n/a

MADNESS (PERSISTENT)

Your character saw or did something that jarred her loose from reality. This isn't a mental illness born of brain chemistry – that, at least, might be treatable. This madness is the product of supernatural tampering or witnessing something that humanity was never meant to comprehend. The Storyteller has a pool of dice equal to 10 - (character's Integrity or Wisdom). Once per chapter, the Storyteller can apply those dice as a negative modifier to any Mental or Social roll made for the character.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity or Wisdom, lose *another* dot of Integrity or Wisdom, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point or Act of Hubris.

Beat: The character fails a roll because of this Condition.

MEGALOMANIACAL

Your character is consumed by her own aptitude. She sees greatness in her every action, and that sense of greatness breeds righteousness. She cannot see her behavior as hubris, and she refuses to acknowledge any failings. After all, she's mastered the forces of the universe, right?

Your character automatically fails any actions using the Empathy Skill. As well, she gains an additional "Selfish" Vice and a "Dominate Others" Obsession that replaces one of her current Obsessions so long as she maintains this Condition.

Resolution: Hurt someone important to you in such a way that it risks further Wisdom loss.

Beat: N/A

MUTE (PERSISTENT)

Your character cannot speak. Any communication must be done through writing, gestures, or hand signs. Illness, injury, or supernatural powers can inflict this Condition on a temporary basis.

Resolution: The character regains her voice through mundane or supernatural means.

Beat: Your character suffers a limitation or communication difficulty that heightens immediate danger.

MYSTERY COMMANDS (PERSISTENT)

Your character hears the voice of the Exarchs, sees their words scrawled in her mind, and otherwise receives commands from deep within her Oneiros. Her Exarch's will becomes an additional Obsession, with all according benefits.

The Storyteller will occasionally give commands as part of this Merit. Additionally, your character can take actions in the name of her Exarch and reverse-engineer messages out of the context. Most any action that aligns with her Exarch's basic whims should apply to this Condition.

Resolution: Your character cuts off ties to her Exarch. Traitors are not tolerated, and other characters with this Condition will be sent to punish her, or kill her if she will not return to the Throne's service.

Arcane Beat: Your character faces meaningful setback, danger, or sacrifice on account of the commands.

NOTORIETY

Whether or not your character actually did something heinous in the past, the wrong people think he did and now he's ostracized by the general public. Your character suffers a -2 on any Social rolls against those who know of his notoriety. If using Social maneuvering (p. 215), the character must open one extra Door if his target knows of his notoriety.

Resolution: The story is debunked or the character's name is cleared.

Beat: n/a

OBSESSION (PERSISTENT)

Something's on your character's mind and she just can't shake it. She gains the 9-Again quality on all rolls related to pursuing her obsession. On rolls that are unrelated to her obsession, she loses the 10-Again quality. Obsession can be a temporary quality per Storyteller approval.

Resolution: The character sheds or purges her fixation.

Beat: Character fails to fulfill an obligation due to pursuing her Obsession.

RAMPANT

Your character is reckless and forceful with her magic. She will not hesitate to use it to solve any minor problem. If your character has a reasonable magical solution to a problem, to use a mundane solution requires a point of Willpower. This Willpower does not add to the dice roll. As well, she gains a "Wield Magic Indiscriminately" Obsession that replaces one of her current Obsessions so long as she maintains this Condition.

Resolution: Suffer a Paradox.

Beat: n/a

SHAKEN

Something has severely frightened your character. Any time your character is taking an action where that fear might hinder her, you may opt to fail the roll and resolve this Condition. This Condition can be imposed by undergoing a breaking point roll.

Resolution: The character gives into her fear and fails a roll as described above.

Beat: n/a

SPOOKED

Your character has seen something supernatural — not overt enough to terrify her, but unmistakably otherworldly. How your character responds to this is up to you, but it captivates her and dominates her focus.

Resolution: This Condition is resolved when your character's fear and fascination causes her to do something that hinders the group or complicates things (she goes off alone to investigate a strange noise, stays up all night researching, runs away instead of holding her ground, etc.).

Beat: n/a

STEADFAST

Your character is confident and resolved. When you've failed a roll, you may choose to resolve this Condition to instead treat the action as if you'd rolled a single success. If the roll is a chance die, you may choose to resolve this Condition and roll a single regular die instead.

Resolution: Your character's confidence carries him through and the worst is avoided; the Condition is resolved as described above.

Beat: n/a

STRAINED

Your character has narrowly avoided Integrity loss due to witnessing magic. Take -1 to resist the next time you suffer a breaking point and must roll. If you have the Strained Merit, you may opt to not roll, and the Condition will build: each consecutive time you avoid rolling a breaking point contributes an additional -1 to your next breaking point roll, to a maximum of -5. After -5, you can no longer push the horror away, your character snaps, and you automatically roll for the breaking point at -5.

Resolution: The character suffers Integrity loss. Take an additional Beat atop that of the breaking point.

Beat: n/a

SWOONED

Your character is attracted to someone and is vulnerable where they are concerned. He may have the proverbial "butterflies in his stomach" or just be constantly aware of the object of his affection. A character may have multiple instances of this Condition, reflecting affection for multiple characters. He suffers a -2 to any rolls that would adversely affect the specified character, who also gains +2 on any Social rolls against him. If the specified character is attempting Social maneuvering on the Swooned character, the impression level is considered one higher (maximum of perfect; see p. 215).

Resolution: Your character does something for his love interest that puts him in danger, or he opts to fail a roll to resist a Social action by the specified character.

Beat: n/a

SOULLESS (PERSISTENT)

The character is in the first stage of soul loss. Without a soul, she is more susceptible to possession — any dice pools to resist being taken over or possessed by another entity are at a -2 die penalty. The effects on Wisdom and Willpower, though, are more severe. For as long as she has this Condition, she does not regain Willpower through surrender or rest, and her use of Virtue and Vice is reversed. She may regain one Willpower point per scene by fulfilling her Virtue without having to risk herself, and regains full Willpower once per chapter by fulfilling her Vice in a way that poses a threat to herself.

Regaining Willpower through Vice, though, is now a breaking point against Integrity with a -5 penalty unless the character has reached Integrity 1, or an Act of Hubris (roll 1 die) unless she has reached Wisdom 1 for mages.

Resolution: Regain a soul.

Beat: You lose Wisdom or Integrity because you indulged your Vice.

SOUL SHOCKED

Your character has been killed while on a sojourn outside her physical body, resulting in a shocked sense of self. Upon gaining this Condition, roll her current Willpower points (not dots) as a dice pool. Ignore 10-Again on this roll, and do not roll a chance die if she has no Willpower left. She keeps one Willpower point per success, and immediately loses the remainder. While this Condition is in effect, your character does not regain Willpower from Virtue, Vice, or equivalent traits. She still regains Willpower from rest, surrender, and any other means of regaining Willpower.

Resolution: Regaining full Willpower.

Beat: n/a

THRALL (PERSISTENT)

The character has fully succumbed to the effects of soullessness. She may not spend Willpower points for any reason, may not use her Defense in combat, may not spend Experiences, and suffers all the effects of the Broken Condition (see p. 314) as well. Mages can no longer cast spells. The player should only continue playing a character with this Condition if she stands a chance of regaining a soul.

Resolution: Regain a soul.

Beat: Gain a Beat whenever the character is victimized as a result of her Condition.

TRIUMPHANT

The character has won a Duel Arcane and her triumph radiates through her Nimbus for any Awakened to sense. Until the Condition is resolved, the character gets an exceptional success on three successes rather than five on any Social rolls with anyone in Awakened society aware of the victory.

Resolution: The first time you fail a Social roll with a member of Awakened society, take a Beat, and the Condition ends.

Beat: Gain a Beat any time you throw your success in someone's face, even if it risks making him angry or resentful.

Tilts

The list below gives some common Tilts that can be used to model difficulties in combat or the effects of magic.

ARM WRACK

Your arm burns with pain and then goes numb. It could be dislocated, sprained, or broken: whatever's wrong with it, you can't move your limb.

Effect: If your arm's broken or otherwise busted, you drop whatever you're holding in that arm and can't use it to attack opponents — unless you've got the Ambidextrous Merit, you suffer off-hand penalties for any rolls that require manual dexterity. If this effect spreads to both limbs, you're down to a chance die on any rolls that require manual dexterity, and -3 to all other Physical actions.

Causing the Tilt: Some supernatural powers can cripple a victim's limbs or break bones with a touch. A character can have his arm knocked out by a targeted blow to the arm (-2 penalty) that deals more damage than the character's Stamina. A targeted blow to the hand inflicts this Tilt if it does any damage.

Ending the Tilt: If the Tilt is inflicted as a result of an attack, mark an 'x' under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack; the Tilt ends when the damage that caused it has healed. If aggravated damage inflicts this Tilt, the character loses the use of his arm (or straight up loses his arm) permanently.

BEATEN DOWN

The character has had the fight knocked out of him.

Effect: The character cannot take active part in the fight without extra effort. The player must spend a point of Willpower each time he wants the character to take a violent action in the fight. He can still run, Dodge, and apply Defense. If he wishes to take another action, the Storyteller should judge whether the action is aggressive enough to require the expenditure.

Causing the Tilt: The character suffers bashing damage in excess of his Stamina or any amount of lethal damage.

Ending the Tilt: The character surrenders and gives the aggressor what he wants. At this point, the character regains a point of Willpower and takes a Beat, but can take no further action in the fight. If the aggressor's intent is to kill or injure the character, obviously surrender isn't a good option.

BLINDED

The character's eyes are damaged or removed, or the character is placed in a situation where eyesight is eliminated (a pitch-black room or a supernatural effect).

Effect: The character suffers a -3 penalty to any rolls that rely on vision — including attack rolls — and halves his Defense if one eye is blinded. That penalty increases to -5 and losing all Defense if both eyes are affected.

Causing the Tilt: The most common means of inflicting the tilt is to severely impair the target's eyesight (using a blindfold, etc). An attacker can inflict temporary blindness by slashing at her opponent's brow, throwing sand into his eyes, or kicking up dirt. This requires an attack roll of Dexterity + Athletics with a -3 penalty; the victim's Defense applies to this attack. If it succeeds, the target is Blinded for the next turn.

Blindness can also be inflicted by dealing damage to the target's eyes — a specified attack with a -5 penalty (see *Specified Targets*, p. 220). A successful attack normally damages one eye. It takes an exceptional success to totally blind an attacker.

Ending the Tilt: If an attack against the character's eye does any points of damage, mark an "x" under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack. If the damage inflicted is aggravated the character loses vision in that eye permanently. Otherwise, the Condition ends when the damage that caused the Tilt is healed.

BLIZZARD (ENVIRONMENTAL)

Heavy snowfall carpets the ground and just keeps falling, whipped up by howling winds into a barrage of whirling white.

Effect: Blizzards make it very hard to see for any real distance. Rolls to see things close to the character's person, out to arm's length away, suffer a -1 penalty. Each additional 10 yards inflicts an additional -1 penalty (cumulative) on all visual Perception rolls. This penalty also applies to ranged attack rolls. Moving through snow is difficult. Every four inches of snow applies a -1 penalty to appropriate Physical rolls, including combat rolls, Athletics, and so forth. The Blizzard Tilt rarely applies by itself — the Storyteller may also inflict any or all of the Extreme Cold, Heavy Winds, or Ice Tilts (all found below).

Causing the Tilt: The weather is out of the control of most characters — but not necessarily mages. The Storyteller should telegraph an incoming natural blizzard before it hits, but some willworkers may be powerful enough to call down frozen hell from a clear blue sky.

Ending the Tilt: Without supernatural powers, characters can't "end" a blizzard. The best they can manage is to escape

the weather or wait for it to stop. Proper equipment (such as goggles and snow boots) can add +1 to +3 to a roll, offsetting some of the penalties. If someone is causing this Tilt through a supernatural power, it's possible that the characters could disrupt his concentration.

DEAFENED

The character can't hear. Maybe he's suffering intense tinnitus or can only hear the roaring of blood in his ears, or he just plain can't hear.

Effect: If the character is deaf in one ear, he suffers a -3 penalty to hearing-based Perception rolls. A character who is struck deaf in both ears only gets a chance die on hearing-based Perception rolls, and suffers a -2 penalty to all combat-related dice rolls—suddenly losing the ability to hear the people around you is tremendously disorienting.

Causing the Tilt: A particularly loud noise within 10 feet of the character may cause temporary hearing loss as though the character were deaf in both ears. Alternatively, a targeted attack on the ear—at a -4 penalty—can deafen a character. Supernatural creatures with heightened senses can be deafened by loud noises at greater distances.

Ending the Tilt: Deafness from loud noises fades after 10 - (victim's Stamina + Resolve) turns. If an attack against the character's ear does any points of damage, mark an 'x' under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack. If the damage inflicted is aggravated, the character loses hearing in the ear permanently. Otherwise, the Condition ends when the damage that caused the Tilt is healed.

DRUGGED

The character's mind is addled by mind-altering substances, such as drink or drugs.

Effect: A generic narcotic can be represented with one set of modifiers: The character suffers a -2 modifier to Speed (and static Defense, if used) and a -3 penalty to all rolls in combat, including Defense and perception. The character also ignores wound penalties.

Causing the Tilt: If the character has chosen to take drugs, then he suffers the effects. To administer drugs to another character is a Dexterity + Weaponry attack, suffering a -1 modifier for the improvised weapon. If the drug has to go in to a specific body part (such as an arm or mouth), it requires an attack against a specified target.

Ending the Tilt: A generic narcotic lasts for 10 - (victim's Stamina + Resolve) hours. This time is halved by medical help, such as pumping the victim's stomach or flushing his system.

EARTHQUAKE (ENVIRONMENTAL)

Everything shudders and shakes; huge rents and holes tear the ground wide open.

Effect: Earthquakes don't last long, but they don't have to. When the quake's actually occurring, all Dexterity-based dice pools (and Defense) suffer a -1 to -5 penalty depending on the quake's severity. Characters take between one and three points of lethal damage per turn of the quake's duration, though a reflexive Stamina + Athletics roll can downgrade that damage to bashing—or cancel it entirely on an exceptional success.

Causing the Tilt: Without tremendous supernatural power, it's almost impossible to cause an earthquake. A character who detonates a powerful explosive underground might simulate the effects over a city-block for a few seconds.

Ending the Tilt: Earthquakes are fortunately very quick events. It's very rare for one to last more than a minute (20 turns), so waiting them out is the best course of action.

EXTREME COLD (ENVIRONMENTAL)

Bone-chilling winds bite through the character, or trudging through knee-deep snow takes all of the sensation from his limbs. Any time the temperature gets down below zero degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit), a character can suffer from the cold's effects. This Tilt can sometimes be personal, either as a result of a medical Condition such as hypothermia or a supernatural power.

Effect: When the temperature is below freezing, characters can't heal bashing damage—the extreme temperature deals damage at the same rate normal characters heal it (a cut might turn to frostbite, for instance). Supernatural beings and characters who heal faster than normal instead halve their normal healing rate. For every hour that a character is continuously affected by this Tilt, he accrues a -1 penalty to all rolls. When that penalty hits -5 dice, he instead suffers one point of lethal damage per hour.

Causing the Tilt: A character can suffer this Tilt from being in a frozen environment—whether he's outside in the Arctic tundra or in a walk-in freezer. Inflicting the Tilt is reasonably straightforward: Throw the victim into a freezing lake or lock him in a freezer for long enough and he'll develop hypothermia.

Ending the Tilt: The best way to escape the freezing cold is to find a source of warmth—either a building with working heating, or warm bundled clothing. A character who has hypothermia requires medical attention.

EXTREME HEAT (ENVIRONMENTAL)

The character might be stumbling through the desert with the sun beating down on him, or running through the steam-tunnels surrounding an old boiler room. This Tilt can also be personal, the result of a debilitating fever that spikes his temperature far above the norm. Extreme heat is normally anything above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) – this includes both environmental temperature and internal body temperature due to fever.

Effect: When the temperature is far above normal, characters can't heal bashing damage – the extreme temperature deals damage at the same rate normal characters heal it (a cut might heal, but it's replaced by sunburn or sunstroke). Supernatural beings and characters who heal faster than normal instead halve their normal healing rate. For every hour that a character is continuously affected by this Tilt, he accrues a -1 penalty to all rolls. When that penalty hits -5 dice, he instead suffers a point of lethal damage per hour.

Causing the Tilt: This Tilt is usually caused by environmental factors – being out at noon in the desert or spending too long in a sauna or forge. Even a fever is the result of an infection, rather than something that an opponent can force on a character. It's possible to create this Tilt on a given character: securing someone to a chair right next to an old, inefficient boiler, or stranding them in the desert far from any shade.

Ending the Tilt: The key to ending this Tilt is simple: Get out of the heat. In a desert or similar environment, finding shade is paramount. Elsewhere, the character needs to escape whatever is causing the abnormal temperatures.

FLOODED (ENVIRONMENTAL)

Some liquid – brackish water, mud, gore, or raw sewage – is high enough to impede the character's progress.

Effect: Each foot of liquid inflicts a -2 penalty to all Physical dice pools. If the water goes up over her head, a character has to swim (Dexterity + Athletics) with a penalty appropriate for the speed of flooding. Alternatively, she can try to hold her breath (Stamina + Composure) if she cannot get her head above the rising waters.

Causing the Tilt: Normally, this Tilt is the result of heavy rain, sudden snowmelt, or a broken water main. Characters can cause this Tilt by smashing up a water heater or blowing up a small dam. Some supernatural creatures may be able to call floods down onto a region.

Ending the Tilt: Characters can escape flooding by getting to high ground, which is enough to mitigate this Tilt. A long-term fix would require draining the floodwaters, but each flood requires its own solution.

HEAVY RAIN (ENVIRONMENTAL)

Torrential rain lashes down in knives, bouncing high off the sidewalk. The sound of rain on the ground is a constant hammering rumble that goes on without end, like dropping ball bearings on a tin roof. Thick gray curtains of water obscure vision.

Effect: Heavy rains – approaching tropical storm levels or worse – cause a Perception penalty of -3 dice to both vision and hearing. Rain's hard to see through, but it's also *loud*. If the rains carry on for an hour or more, the Flooded Tilt will soon follow. This Tilt is often accompanied by Heavy Winds; a character trapped out in Heavy Rains might come under the effects of Extreme Cold.

Causing the Tilt: Short of supernatural power or a fleet of cloud-seeding aircraft, Heavy Rain is the result of natural weather patterns.

Ending the Tilt: The best way out of the rain is to get indoors. Unless it's the start of some sodden apocalypse, the characters can wait for the weather to ease.

HEAVY WINDS (ENVIRONMENTAL)

Howling winds buffet at the characters, whipping street furniture into the air, tearing the roofs from buildings. Powerful winds can toss cars around like toys. Anyone out in the winds feels like they're taking a beating just for walking down the street.

Effect: Heavy winds are loud, so characters suffer a -3 modifier to aural Perception rolls. Also the wind inflicts a penalty to all Physical rolls when out in the winds – including Drive rolls. Grade the wind from one to five – one is tropical storm level (around 40 MPH), three is hurricane level (around 80 MPH), and five is tornado level (150+ MPH). This is the penalty applied to Physical dice rolls. Characters outside in the maelstrom take damage from flying debris, taking bashing damage each turn equal to the wind's rating. Characters can make a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll to avoid damage.

Causing the Tilt: Heavy winds are a fact of life, from siroccos in the desert to tornados in the Midwest to wind shears everywhere.

Ending the Tilt: Getting out of the wind is the best way to end this Tilt. Sometimes that's as easy as sheltering in an automobile – as long as nobody tries to drive. Buildings provide more permanent shelter.

ICE (ENVIRONMENTAL)

The ground's covered in a mirror-smooth layer of ice that sends wheels spinning and people's feet flying out from under them. The ice could be so thin as to be nearly invisible or a thick

layer that's the only thing keeping the characters from sinking into a frozen lake.

Effect: When a character can't trust her footing, divide her Speed in half and all Physical rolls (and Defense) suffer a -2 penalty. Attempting to move at full Speed increases the Physical penalty to -4. Any dramatic failure on a Physical roll inflicts the Knocked Down Tilt.

Causing the Tilt: This Tilt doesn't just apply to icy conditions, but to any surface that's slick and slippery, including a spill of industrial lubricant or just a really well-polished wooden or linoleum floor. Characters can use a Dexterity + Crafts roll to cover an area in industrial cleaner or mix up cleaning chemicals into a lubricant. If the Extreme Cold Tilt is in effect, even covering the area with water would do the trick.

Ending the Tilt: "Get off the ice" is good advice, but that can take work. Characters can use heat or fire to melt ice, or throw down copious quantities of salt or grit to increase traction.

IMMOBILIZED

Something holds the character fast, preventing him from moving. This could be a grappling opponent, a straightjacket wrapped with heavy chains, or a coffin secured on the outside with a padlock.

Effect: The character can't do anything but wriggle helplessly. He can't apply Defense against incoming attacks and can't take combat-related actions. If someone's holding him down, he can spend a point of Willpower to deliver a head-butt or similar attack, but even that might not free him.

Causing the Tilt: The usual way to inflict this Tilt is through the Restrain grappling move. This often uses material means to prevent the victim from moving, such as binding limbs with duct tape or zip-ties, tossing the victim into a car trunk or similar tight space, or applying painful holds and joint locks.

Ending the Tilt: An Immobilized target can break free by escaping from a grapple or snapping whatever binds her. If grappled, the character can struggle as normal but can only select the Break Free move on a success. If held by an item, the character must make a Strength + Athletics roll penalized by the item's Durability. If a character's arms and legs are both bound, he suffers a -2 penalty; this increases to -4 if he's hog-tied. On a success, he snaps the bindings or breaks free. Each roll, successful or not, deals a point of bashing damage.

INSANE

The character suffers from a panic attack, sudden imbalance, or a full-on psychotic break. Her pulse races and her mind cannot focus. The world's an unstable place, and she's unable to keep her balance.

Effect: Someone suffering a psychotic break isn't the sort of person to go down without a fight. Her stated intent might be irrational or just plain impossible, and she might have fewer

ethical problems with using extreme violence to get what she wants. The character gains a +1 bonus to all combat rolls, but takes actions after everyone else (if two characters suffer from the Insane Tilt, both act after everyone else but compare Initiative as normal). A character suffering from this Tilt may spend Willpower, but the cost is two points instead of one for the same effect.

Causing the Tilt: Faced with extraordinary circumstances, any character with an appropriate Condition may gain the Insane Tilt. The Storyteller can call for a Resolve + Composure roll to resist a general anxiety that gnaws at the character's mind; if the character fails, he gains the Tilt. If the character witnesses something truly horrific — a daughter watches her father walk to the end of the garden and shoot himself in the head, smiling all the while; a man stumbles into the wrong office at work and sees his co-workers feasting on the intern's organs; a soldier sees her unit gunned down by a sniper while she can do nothing — the Storyteller can rule that the Tilt is unavoidable.

The Insane Tilt can also be triggered by a breaking point or Act of Hubris. If a character loses a dot of Wisdom or Integrity during combat, the Storyteller may apply the Insane Tilt then as well.

Some supernatural creatures possess mind-affecting powers that can apply this Tilt, even to characters who do not have an appropriate Condition. This includes mages using the Mind Flay spell.

Ending the Tilt: The specific effects of this Tilt don't normally last beyond the end of the scene. A character can try to force her mind to a state of balance, but it's not easy. She must sit and focus on blocking out the craziness. She rolls Resolve + Composure as an instant action contested by a dice pool of (10 - her Willpower). She can't take any other actions that turn and doesn't apply Defense against any attacks.

INSENSATE

The character shuts down, either due to extreme fear or sudden pleasure. He may huddle in a corner, cringe away from sudden noises, or stare into space as waves of pleasure lap over him.

Effect: The character can't take any actions until the Tilt is resolved. He can apply Defense to incoming attacks, and if he takes any damage from an attack, he's knocked free of whatever fogged his brain.

Causing the Tilt: Several supernatural powers can leave their victim in a trance-like state of heightened emotion, whether it's a vampire's mind-affecting tricks or the pants-shitting terror of witnessing a werewolf take on an inhuman form. A truly heroic amount of alcohol or a hallucinogenic drug might have similar effects; administering such a drug is a Dexterity + Weaponry attack, suffering a -1 modifier for the improvised weapon.

Ending the Tilt: The Tilt wears off at the end of the scene. The victim can spend a point of Willpower before then to act normally for one turn. A successful attack will also end the Tilt. If a character has been knocked insensible by drugs, this Tilt is replaced with the Drugged Tilt when it ends.

KNOCKED DOWN

Something knocks the character to the floor, either toppling her with a powerful blow to the chest or taking one of her legs out from under her.

Effect: The character is knocked off her feet. If she hasn't already acted this turn, she loses her action. Once she's on the ground, a character is considered prone. The character can still apply Defense against incoming attacks, and can attempt to attack from the ground at a -2 penalty.

Causing the Tilt: Some weapons list "Knockdown" as a special effect of a damaging hit. Otherwise, a melee weapon with a damage modifier of +2 or greater, or a firearm with a damage modifier of +3 or more can be used to knock a character down with the force of the blow. Alternatively, a melee weapon or unarmed attack can knock an opponent down with a targeted attack against the legs (-2 modifier). The attacker declares that he wants to knock his opponent down and halves the total damage done (rounding down). On a successful attack, the target is knocked down.

Ending the Tilt: The easiest way to end this Tilt is to stand up, which takes an action. A character affected by this Tilt who hasn't yet acted can make a Dexterity + Athletics roll, minus any weapon modifier, instead of her normal action. If successful, she avoids the effects of this Tilt altogether. On a failure, she falls over and the Tilt applies as normal.

LEG WRACK

Your leg feels like it's going to snap clean off whenever you move; when you stop moving, you feel a burning numbness that encourages you to avoid moving.

Effect: If your leg is broken, sprained, or dislocated, halve your Speed and suffer a -2 penalty on Physical rolls that require movement (and Defense). If both of your legs are wracked, you fall over – taking the Knocked Down Tilt – and cannot get up. Your Speed is reduced to 1; if you want to move at all, you cannot take any other action. Physical rolls that require movement are reduced to a chance die.

Causing the Tilt: Some supernatural powers can cripple a victim's limbs or break bone with a touch. A character can have his leg knocked out by a targeted blow to the leg (-2 penalty) that deals more damage than the character's Stamina.

Ending the Tilt: If the Tilt is inflicted as a result of an attack, mark an 'x' under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack. The Tilt ends when that damage that caused it has healed. If the damage that inflicts this Tilt is aggravated, the character loses use of his leg permanently.

POOR LIGHT (ENVIRONMENTAL)

Dim illumination, strobes, or flickering lights make it difficult to track movement and see clearly.

Effect: Affected characters suffer a -2 penalty to visual-based Perception rolls, including ranged combat, rising to -3 at medium range and -4 at long range.

Causing the Tilt: This Tilt applies to scenes of "natural" darkness with dim ambient light, such as the outdoors at night away from urban light pollution, and to disconcerting environments like a nightclub with its effects system on.

Ending the Tilt: Bring, find, or create a light source.

POISONED

You've got poison inside you. It's tearing you apart from the inside; burning like acid in your gut and making your head swim.

Effect: This Tilt applies a general sense of being poisoned to a character without worrying about Toxicity during combat. For the purposes of this Tilt, a poison is either "moderate" or "grave" – a moderate poison causes one point of bashing damage per turn of combat, while a grave poison ups that to one point of lethal damage per turn. If the Storyteller cares to continue the effects of the poison outside of combat, he can apply the standard rules for handling poisons and toxins when combat is complete.

Causing the Tilt: It's possible for a character to not know that he's been poisoned. It could be as innocuous as switching drinks with a pretty girl who is the target of a mob hit, or as simple as walking into a house with a carbon monoxide leak. That said, the main time poison comes up in combat is when one combatant inflicts it on another. Injecting your opponent with a syringe full of drain cleaner or snake venom is a Dexterity + Weaponry attack, suffering a -1 modifier for the improvised weapon.

Ending the Tilt: Short of immediate medical attention – and how many fights take place in an emergency room? – all a victim can do is struggle on. Roll Stamina + Resolve as a reflexive action each turn that your character is poisoned. If your character intends to act (meaning, takes a non-reflexive action), the roll suffers a -3 penalty. Success counteracts the damage for one turn only.

SICK

Your stomach churns. You retch and heave but only succeed in bringing up bile. Sweat beads on your brow as you spike a fever. Your muscles ache with every movement. You're wracked with hot and cold flushes as a sickness gnaws away at your insides.

Effect: This Tilt applies a general sickness to a character without worrying about the specific illness. For the purposes of this Tilt, a sickness is either "moderate" or "grave." A moderate



STUNNED

sickness, such as a cold, asthma, the flu, or just a bad hangover, causes a -1 penalty to all actions during combat. That penalty increases by one every two turns (the first two turns, the character suffers a -1 penalty, the next two turns the penalty is -2, and so on up to a maximum of -5 dice on turn 9). A grave sickness, such as pneumonia, heavy metal poisoning, or aggressive cancer, inflicts the same dice pool penalties as a mild sickness. In addition, however, the physical stress of fighting or even defending oneself from an attacker while gravely ill inflicts one point of bashing damage per turn of combat.

Causing the Tilt: It's not easy to deliberately make someone sick. Sure, if you can get your hands on a vial of smallpox or deliberately use a disease you've got to make someone sick (a breaking point, especially in the case of grave diseases like AIDS), then you've got a reasonable chance. Some supernatural creatures have abilities that can inflict diseases on others. Aside from that, you've just got to expose your opponent to the sickness long before you fight and hope for the best.

Ending the Tilt: This Tilt reflects the effects of sickness as it specifically applies to combat. Outside of combat, use the existing system for diseases (p. 223). The penalties inflicted by this Tilt fade at a rate of one point per turn once the character has a chance to rest, but any damage inflicted remains until the character can heal.

Your character is dazed and unable to think straight. Maybe her vision blurs. If she's stunned as a result of a blow to the head, she's probably got a concussion.

Effect: A character with the Stunned Tilt loses her next action, and halves her Defense until she can next act.

Causing the Tilt: A character can be stunned by any attack that does at least as much damage as her Size in a single hit. Some weapons have a "stun" special ability. These double the weapon modifier only for the purposes of determining whether the attacker inflicts the Stunned Tilt. Attacks against the target's head (see *Specified Targets*, p. 220) count the character's Size as one lower for the purposes of this Tilt. The Storyteller might determine that additional effects cause this Tilt, like being caught in the blast area of an explosion.

Ending the Tilt: The effects of this Tilt normally only last for a single turn. The character can end the Tilt during her own action by reflexively spending a point of Willpower to gather her wits, though she suffers a -3 modifier to any actions she takes that turn.

APPENDIX FOUR: SPELLCASTING QUICK REFERENCE

Summary

- Step One: Choose Spell
- Step Two: Choose Casting Method
- Step Three: Assign Reach
- Step Four: Set Spell Factors
- Step Five: Determine Yantras
- Step Six: Check Dice Pool
- Step Seven: Pay Mana
- Step Eight: Paradox
- Step Nine: Roll Spellcasting

Step One: Choose Spell

Select spell from examples or use Creative Thaumaturgy (p. 125). The character must have all Arcanum dots used in the spell.

Step Two: Choose Casting Method

Improved: Costs one Mana if spell includes Common or Inferior Arcana

Rote: Gains free Reach as though character had five dots in Arcanum. May use Mudra Yantras. If cast out of Grimoire, cannot use instant casting and doubles ritual interval. If cast out of Grimoire or by creator, gains rote action quality (p. 214) on spellcasting roll.

Praxis: Gains exceptional success on three spellcasting roll successes.

Step Three: Assign Reach

Characters gain free Reach according to dots in the spell's highest Arcanum:

Highest Arcanum dot used in spell	Arcanum rating of character				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	-	1	2	3	4
3	-	-	1	2	3
4	-	-	-	1	2
5	-	-	-	-	1

Assign any amount of Reach. Every Reach beyond free amount gains Paradox dice according to Gnosis (p. 86)

Common Reach Effects

Most spells list Reach effects, and several Attainments that modify spellcasting require Reach to use. In addition to these, one Reach may:

- Change the primary spell factor
- Move a spell factor from Standard to Advanced
- If at Advanced Duration, allow the spell to reach indefinite Duration (cost: 1 Mana)
- If at sensory range, allow the mage to cast on a subject she is viewing remotely
- Cast a spell when the mage has no Spell Control slots remaining (costs an extra Reach per spell already over)

Step Four: Set Spell Factors

All spell factors start at Standard version. Spend Reach to use Advanced version. After taking penalties as desired to advance spell factors that allow it, increase the spell's primary spell factor by Arcanum dots in primary Arcanum -1.

Casting Time

Standard

Character's ritual interval from Gnosis (p. 86)

Advanced

Instant

Range

Standard

Touch/Self

Advanced

Sensory

Potency

Standard: Potency 1, -2 dice per additional level of Potency

Advanced: As above, but +2 to Withstand Dispellation

Duration

Standard Duration – Transitory

Duration	Dice Penalty
1 turn	None (basic success)
2 turns	-2
3 turns	-4
5 turns	-6
10 turns	-8*

*Add an additional -2 dice penalty per extra +10 turns.

Advanced Duration – Prolonged

Duration	Dice Penalty
One scene/hour	None (basic success)
One Day	-2
One Week	-4
One Month	-6
One Year	-8
Indefinite	-10 (requires a Reach and 1 Mana)

Scale

Standard Scale

Number of Subjects	Size of largest Subject	Area of Effect	Dice Penalty
One Subject	5	Arm's reach from a central point	None (basic success)
Two Subjects	6	A small room	-2
Four Subjects	7	A large room	-4
Eight Subjects	8	Several rooms, or a single floor of a house	-6
16 Subjects	9	A ballroom or small house	-8

Advanced Scale

Number of Subjects	Size of Largest Subject	Area of Effect	Dice Penalty
5 Subjects	5	A large house or building	None (basic success)
10 Subjects	10	A small warehouse or parking lot	-2
20 Subjects	15	A large warehouse or supermarket	-4
40 Subjects	20	A small factory, or a shopping mall	-6
80 Subjects	25	A large factory, or a city block	-8
160 Subjects*	30*	A campus, or a small neighborhood	-10

*Add an additional -2 penalty for each extra 2 x subjects or +5 increase in Size of the subject. For example, a spell targeting 320 subjects, each up to Size 35 subject would levy a -12 penalty. Area of effect cannot be increased further.

Step Five: Determine Yantras

Characters may incorporate Yantras up to limit from Gnosis (p. 86). In instant spellcasting, only one Yantra may be reflexive. All others become Instant, and extend casting time by one turn. Maximum bonus is +5 *after* offsetting spell factor penalties.

Yantra	Dice Bonus	Notes
Demesne	+2	—
Environment	+1	—
Supernal Verge	+2	—
Concentration	+2	Taking non-reflexive action or damage cancels spell
Mudra	+Skill dots in encoded Skill	Only useable with Rotes
Mantra	+2	Cannot be used reflexively
Runes	+2	Breaking runes cancels spell
Path Tool	+1	—
Order Tool	+1	—
Patron Tool	Special	Requires Merit
Sympathy	+0-2	If casting with Sympathetic Range Attainment, mandatory but provides no bonus
Sacrament	+1-2	—
Persona	Special	Requires Merit

Step Six: Check Dice Pool

Ritual casting may extend casting time. +1 die per ritual interval, max. +5.

If dice pool after Yantras is -6 or less, spell is impossible. -5 to 0 becomes a chance die.

Step Seven: Pay Mana

Pay Mana required by spell, for improvising Common or Inferior Arcanum spell, for Indefinite Duration, and any intended to mitigate Paradox. Mana costs above characters max. Mana / turn (p. 86) extend casting time in instant spells.

Step Eight: Paradox

Determine Paradox Dice Pool

If Paradox pool never gains dice, skip to Step Nine. If Paradox pool is gained then removed by penalties, roll chance die.

Paradox Modifiers

Dice Modifier	Situation
Special	The mage has Reached beyond the free Reach granted by Arcanum. This adds the dice amount listed for the character's Gnosis for every Reach over the limit.
+2	Character is Inured to spell (p. 88).
+1	Per Paradox roll after the first made for the same caster within the same scene.
+1	One or more Sleepers witness an obvious casting of magic.
-2	Character uses a Dedicated Magical Tool as a Yantra.
-1	Per point of Mana spent on mitigation

Multiple Sleeper witnesses apply dice trick (p.115).

Contain or Release Paradox

Characters contain Paradox within themselves or release it. Characters with no souls cannot contain Paradox.

Paradox Roll

Dice pool as above.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The mage does not invoke a Paradox, regains a point of Willpower, and the next Paradox roll made for her in the same scene does not suffer the usual, cumulative +1 dice modifier.

Failure: The mage does not invoke a Paradox.

Success: A Paradox occurs, regardless of the spell casting's success or failure.

Exceptional Success: The mage gains a Paradox Condition and a Paradox occurs.

Released Paradoxes

Spend Paradox Successes to apply Paradox Reach to spell

Anomalies

Paradox	Effect
1 Reach	Undo or apply a single Reach from the Common Reach Effects list on p. 326 except Casting Time.
1 Reach	Impose a Condition on the subject of the spell.
2 Reach	Change the subject of the spell.
3 Reach	Create an Abyssal environmental effect (Tilt).
5 Reach	Summon an Abyssal entity of Rank 2. Further Reach may increase the entities Rank by 1 / Reach

Also apply Paradox successes as dice penalty to spellcasting roll. If spellcasting roll results in dramatic failure, apply Paradox Condition to caster.

Contained Paradoxes

Roll caster's Wisdom. Successes remove successes from Paradox pool, but inflict one resistant bashing damage to caster each.

If Paradox successes remain, apply Paradox Condition to caster. Do not penalize spellcasting roll.

Step Nine: Roll Spellcasting

Take dice pool from Step Six, apply any final penalties due to released Paradox.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The magic does not work. The caster gains a Condition based on the intended outcome of the spell.

Failure: The magic does not work, the mage's imagination is not made real.

Success: The spell's effect takes place as imagined.

Exceptional Success: The spell's effect takes place better than imagined. The character regains one spent point of Willpower, and the player may choose one of the following results:

- A bonus step in the primary spell factor.
- A Reach in the primary spell factor.
- A Condition which will give Arcane Beats when resolved, on either the mage or her subject.
- All Mana spent on the spell is refunded, and the mage receives one more point of Mana.
- The spell ignores any Withstand levels and takes effect at full Potency.

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MAGE

THE AWAKENING

SECOND EDITION

Shadow Name:

Concept:

Path:

Player:

Virtue:

Order:

Chronicle:

Vice:

Legacy:

ATTRIBUTES

Power	Intelligence	●○○○○	Strength	●○○○○	Presence	●○○○○
Finesse	Wits	●○○○○	Dexterity	●○○○○	Manipulation	●○○○○
Resistance	Resolve	●○○○○	Stamina	●○○○○	Composure	●○○○○

SKILLS

OTHER TRAITS

MENTAL
(-3 unskilled)

Rote Skill

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Crafts	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Occult	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Politics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Science	○○○○○

PHYSICAL
(-1 unskilled)

Rote Skill

<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Weaponry	○○○○○

SOCIAL
(-1 unskilled)

Rote Skill

<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Expression	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Persuasion	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Socialize	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Streetwise	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Subterfuge	○○○○○

ARCANA

Death	○○○○○
Fate	○○○○○
Forces	○○○○○
Life	○○○○○
Matter	○○○○○
Mind	○○○○○
Prime	○○○○○
Space	○○○○○
Spirit	○○○○○
Time	○○○○○

MERITS

_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Size: _____

Speed: _____

Defense: _____

Arcane: _____

Initiative Modifier: _____

Beats:

Experiences: _____

Arcane Beats:

Arcane Experiences: _____

HEALTH

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
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WILLPOWER

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GNOSIS

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

MANA

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WISDOM

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

CONDITIONS

ASPIRATIONS

OBSESSIONS

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • +1 to any one Resistance Attribute • Arcana 6 (none over three, minimum 1 in each Ruling, no inferior) • 3 rites • Merits 10 • Order Status 1, High Speech, and +1 Occult if in an Order • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = (Lower of Dexterity or Wits) + Athletics • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = 10

THE WORLD IS A LIE.

Humanity is cursed into a prison of Sleep, ignorant of the wonder and danger all around them. Ground down into slavery to masters they'll never see, beset by a plague of cares to distract them from the Truth.

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You were like them, once, but now you are Awakened. You see the world beneath the Lie's skin, and the Mysteries beckoning you into the shadows. Every day of your life, you hear the call of the supernatural, from the least ghost to the deepest cosmic enigmas.

You are a mage, one of the Wise. You see, know, and explore what others can't imagine, from the depths of the human soul to the hidden corners of reality. Armed with your spells, driven by an addiction to Mysteries, you delve into the secrets of the world. Knowledge has a price, and the dangers are many.

This book contains:

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- Reimagined Paths, Orders, and powers to create your Awakened characters and their allies, including an updated version of the most comprehensive free-form magic system in gaming.
- Five example settings across the world, from Los Angeles to Salamanca, each with a central Mystery.
- A brand-new look at all the strange places of the Fallen World, from the Lower Depths to the Emanation Realms, and what mages might find within.



MAGE
THE AWAKENING
SECOND EDITION

