
MAGE™
THE AWAKENING
A Storytelling Game of Modern Sorcery

*It has been said, "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is: infinite."*

*That is what you see now.*

*The eye of your soul — the ajna, the third eye — has opened. You see by the light of the Watchtower that stands on the infinitely far shore beyond the Abyss.* *You have Awakened* *and the Mysteries are unveiled before you.*

*Your imagination is as real as your fist, and your will is unfettered.*

*This is power.*

*This is magic.*

*With it you will remake the world.*

*— Arethusa, Ordo Scala Argentum*

For use with the
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MAGE
THE AWAKENING

# MAGE™
## THE AWAKENING



A
Storytelling
Game
of
Modern
Sorcery

MY OLD FRIEND OWAIN.

OR SHOULD I CALL YOU

MORVRAN.

THE NAME I'M SURE YOU WOULD PREFER THAT I USE?

BUT THEN, THAT WOULDN'T BE HONEST.

I KNOW YOU, GLAMORGAN, AND HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOUR NAME.

AND I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE GAVIN.

YES, I KNOW HIS NAME, TOO.

CONGRATULATIONS.

I HOPE YOU RAISE HIM TO BE A FINE, UPSTANDING MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY.

THE STRONGER HE GETS, THE MORE MEANINGFUL IT WILL BE WHEN I BREAK HIM.

AS YOU KNOW, I DO NOT LIKE TO BE THWARTED.

BUT I AM NO SHORTSIGHTED MANIAC, SPUTTERING TO GET HIS REVENGE.

NO, MY PLANS ARE MORE FAR-REACHING THAN THAT.

I HAVE PATIENCE.

I WILL TURN EVEN THIS SETBACK TO MY ENDS, REST ASSURED.

I DO SO HOPE THAT YOU WILL HELP THE BOY,

AND BE READY TO DEFEND HIM WHEN MY TIME TO MOVE COMES.

I WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO CRUSH YOU AS I TAKE HIS SOUL.

DO ME THE FAVOR OF STANDING IN MY WAY SO THAT I CAN RELISH THE EXCUSE.

GOODBYE FOR NOW, OWAIN.

YOURS,

ANGHARAD*

*OH, WHY USE FALSE NAMES WITH ONE ANOTHER?

YOURS,

EINAR.

P.S. I KNOW YOU STILL PLACE FLOWERS ON HER GRAVE,

AND THOSE OF THE LITTLE ONES.

IT'S TOUCHING, YOUR SENTIMENTAL RESPECT FOR MY FAMILY.

I CAN SHOW YOU HOW TO LET THEM GO.

I HAVE.

ALL IT TAKES IS A WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE THE UNEMBRACEABLE.

WHEN YOU'RE READY, LET ME KNOW.

## Where to begin?

I've never written a journal before. It's too much work, you know. Something you've got to do every day, come rain or shine, or else you start to feel guilty. Of course, that's why they tell me I've got to start one and keep it every day. Discipline, they say. It's what I need. Damn punk kid.

A "magical" journal, "a record of my magical findings."

Does that make sense? As weird as it is to admit, yeah, it does. It wouldn't have once. If you laid that load on me a few months ago, I'd have laughed in your face and probably begun plotting some elaborate prank that'd teach you not to go around spewing hippy bullshit. What can I say? I was young, stupid and Asleep. (Note Important Capital Letters. Magicians Use Lots of Capital Letters.)

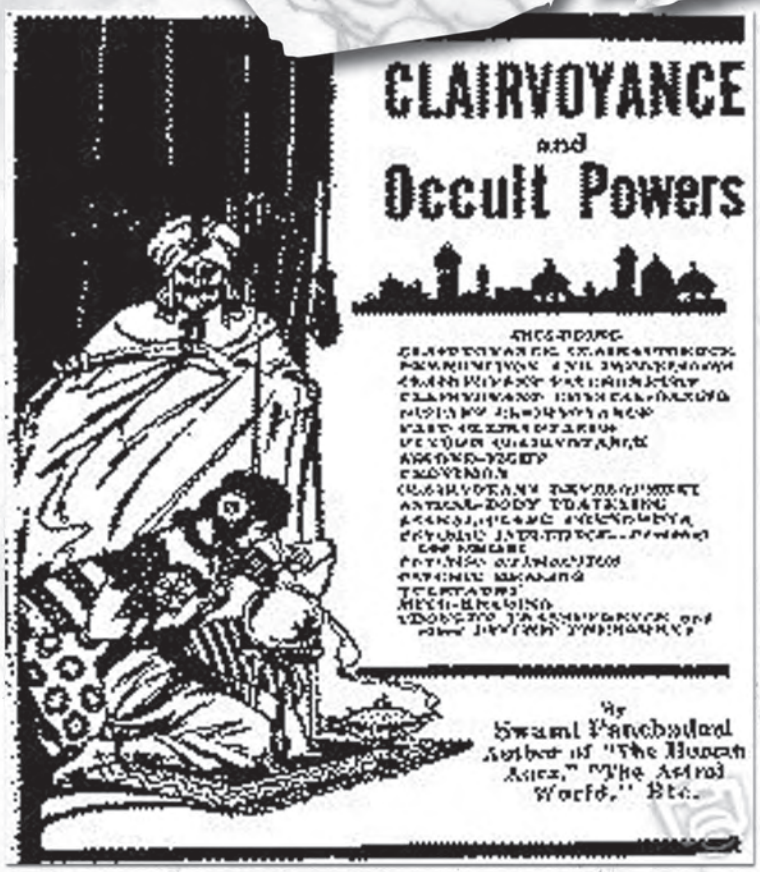
So, here it is. The journal. It's supposed to be just for me, never to be shown to anyone, but I know masters Aurem and Potestas (dig those names!) will sneak a peek, just to check on my progress. Hell, they might be watching now, for all I know. I don't have a spell up that'd let me know if they were, and if I started casting, they'd cancel the scrying window before I could see it. So, if you're reading this, honored masters,

**go screw yourselves.**

Scrying. The Arcanum of Space. I'm trying to learn it. I've got the basics down all that stuff about distance being an illusion, that everything is really one point, blah, blah, blah. I took basic philosophy in school Plato and all that shit but none of that comes close to the esoteric mindfuck of this magic stuff. The point is, I'm supposed to be keeping a "scrying record" along with this journal. You see, when you cast spells at things you can't see or hear, you have to reach out to their Patterns. Again, distance is an illusion (whatever ), so the difficulty is not the mileage but the picture you get in your mind about whatever it is you're affecting. The hazier the picture, the harder the spell.

A scrying record is a collection of photos (they work best) and drawings that act as "mnemonics" for reaching out to those things. Smart mages don't keep them; they've learned to keep it all in their heads. But kindergarteners like me need something to start with. That's why I've got to start keeping clippings and shit, to give me something to reference in case I need to view things from far off.

Master Aurem: "Don't trust your memory. Real power lies in subtleties, the things we often miss until we go back and review the details. That is why you must record these details, even if you think they are meaningless. You are entwined in threads of Destiny, Arctos, but this is not always obvious even to those with the eyes to see it. only by reading the record of days does the Pattern become visible."



**All right, enough digression.** I'm told I need to start with a summary of my life up to now, a "what I did with my summer vacation" essay, except that it includes my entire life up to now. Why? That's what I asked.

Arctos. "The Little Bear." That's what Morvran called me. My shadow name. You can't use real names in this business. Scrying again sympathetic magic, as it's called. If *they* know your real name, you're screwed. It's way harder to reach out to a Pattern if you don't know its name. So we use these handles and call names, like truckers on CB radios or fighter pilots or hell, superheroes, right? Most of us choose our new names, but I was too freaked out at the time. Morvran gave me mine. What the hell? I like it.

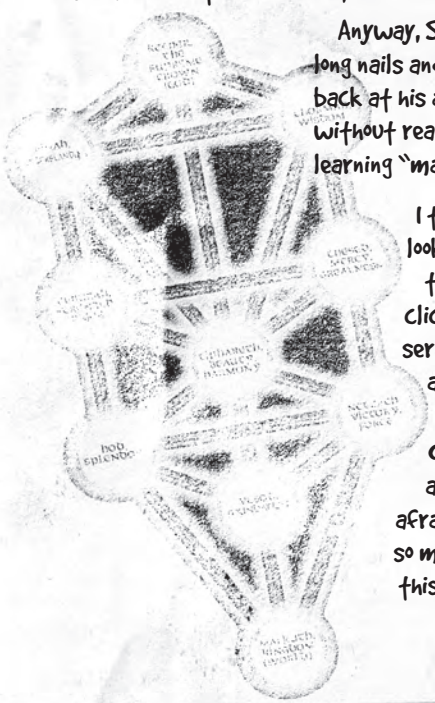
Morvran. He's this old Sean Connery type who saved my ass when I was having the worst bad trip in existence. He's the guy who brought me here, the guy who inducted me into the Mysterium. I'll talk about him some more later. If I'm going to do this thing, I might as well get things down in chronological order.

I was born 20 years ago, give or take a few years. (I'm not listing my birthdate, social security number or name all for the reasons I mentioned above.) My parents were mostly AWOL in the attention and affection department. They aren't bad people. Just narcissistic yuppies who became dot-commers and then Republican greed-heads.

"Threads of Destiny, Arctos, threads of Destiny."

I was often "left to my own devices" growing up, and developed a somewhat "erratic moral compass," as my school counselor said. I did the whole obligatory juvenile delinquent shoplifting thing, but I never got caught and so never "learned my lesson." I barely squeaked into college, mainly because my parents were too mortified to have a non-college-educated child. They threw money at the dean of this small urban arts college. (No, I'm not listing its name, either hire a private detective if you want.) I liked doodling enough, but I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my life.

That's when I met Sigmund. He was this weird outsider who was into "magic" and Crowley and other sorts of occult shit. I say "magic" in quotes because it wasn't magic, not really. It was what Sleepers think is magic it's what I thought was magic. It was cool and elitist and gave us all sorts of excuses to look down our noses at all the rubes who weren't clued in. God, we were such pricks.



Anyway, Sigmund was neo-Goth. He wore makeup and had long nails and had this keen ability to turn verbal assaults back at his attackers, making them say stupid things without realizing it. I started hanging out with him and learning "magic."

I thought I'd finally found *it* what I'd always been looking for but never knew it. Something about it the imagery, the ritual, the whole atmosphere clicked deep in a way nothing else ever had. I was in serious danger of losing my jaded, Gen-X credentials and actually becoming interested in something *meaningful* for once in my life.

One night, Sigmund started getting on my case, accusing me of being a lily-white shit who was afraid to evoke a Goetic demon. I couldn't let that go, so me, Sigmund and another kid who hung out with us, this twerp named Thomas, pulled out the Lesser Key of Solomon and started an evocation.



Things got strange. It was like shadows were cloaking the room, but not so you could point to. Everyone felt this presence. Thomas freaked and ran, but me, feeling cocky, I commanded the entity to help me pass my exams in the coming week. I got a definite sense of a response, and then it was gone. We laughed and went out for some beers, considering the whole thing a lark.

I was too lazy to study, and I knew I'd missed a lot of questions on the tests, but I still came through with A's. Weird. When Sigmund heard about it he demanded we do the ritual again, but this time, he wanted to bring along his "magus," the guy who'd introduced him to Crowley and magic. The next night, I met the guy or *queen*, more like: skinny, black-clad, and introducing himself as "Angrboda," this totally lame-ass Goth name.

He wanted to see how well I could perform evocations, and offered his own book of demons, one I'd never heard of. This wasn't your standard S.L. MacGregor Mathers or Golden Dawn stuff. More like Lovecraft: unpronounceable names and disgusting imagery. Angrboda pointed to this demon in the book and explained how its name was pronounced, and dared me to bring him forth.

I did the same thing as the time before, but with the new name. It wasn't like before at all. This huge crack appeared in the wall of the apartment and then widened as if shoved apart by hands I couldn't see. Something dark and blurry came out and fixed its bug-eyes on me. I swear fucking bug-eyes, like a fly or something. I almost busted out laughing, thinking it was a prank, but something in my gut clenched my ass so tight I almost puked.

Angrboda cried out: "This is your lord. Bow to him." The thing reached out something that looked sort of like an arm and I completely freaked out. I dodged behind Sigmund and the arm grabbed him instead. It flung Sigmund into the crack in the wall. He was screaming bloody murder. And me, for once in my life, I felt a real pang of guilt. I lunged over to the wall to grab him. He was hanging there *sideways* his hands barely holding on to the wall, this powerful wind yanking at him from somewhere inside. I tried to reach him, but he couldn't hold on. He was sucked away.

Gone.

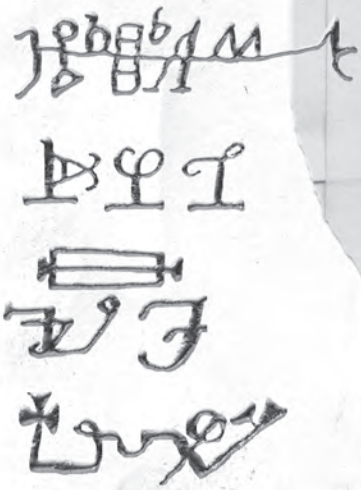
It's not easy to write that. I thought I'd gotten a handle on it, but now I had to fucking go and write about it.

Shit.









## okay. I'm going to finish this thing.

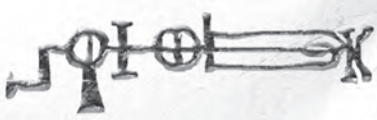
I heard something behind me, and turned just in time to get the hell out of the way of the bug-eyed thing as it tried to shove me into the crack. As I stared at it, still not really believing what was happening, I suddenly *knew* what it was. I got this vision  I don't know what else to call it  of this hierarchy of beings, from archangels on high to demons down below. And I somehow knew that the thing didn't belong to any of those levels. It wasn't from around here  it didn't belong here at all.

And as that sank in, that what was happening was more real than real and that the thing could snuff me out of this life and any life hereafter (and I didn't believe in that shit before!), my hair went completely white. At least, that's the moment I think it happened, looking back. My hair was black, but now it's stark white.

### And then I wasn't in the room anymore.

I was on this black, featureless plain, with dark clouds so low I wasn't even sure there was a sky. Before me was this skyscraper-like building, except it didn't have any windows. It looked like it was made of some dark metal  iron. The door was open and this faint light came from inside. I was in a trance, watching myself walk toward it. No, that's not it. It was more like a part of me *chose* to go in, but it was a part of me I didn't know, a part that knew better and didn't ask permission from the rest that normally made the decisions. The idiot rest of me that got me into that mess in the first place.

The inside looked like a torture chamber or dungeon, except bizarrely clean and, well, shining. Maybe it was more like a fetish room or something kinky like that,

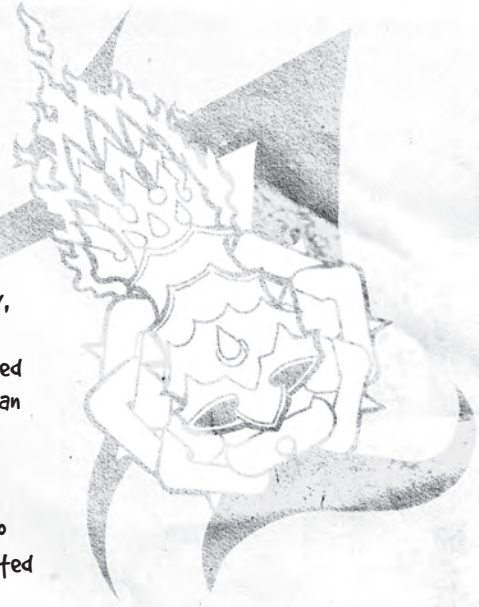


except it didn't feel that way. It was way more serious. There were chains and manacles on a wall, and dried blood all around them. In the wall itself carved into the *metal* for christ's sake were names. Some of them were in English, some in Arabic, and some in I don't know Chinese or Japanese or something. All sorts of languages.

Then I noticed this confessional, like you see in catholic churches. I went in and sat down. There was no priest, but I just started pouring it out, crying like a baby, letting out all the bad shit I'd ever done and begging for a second chance, knowing that the bug-eyed monster was going to eat me when it was all over. When I opened my eyes, the confessional and all the chains were gone. The place was pure and clean and there was a new name on the wall, carved in perfect lines.

My name.

Then I was back in the apartment, the thing coming at me like no time had passed at all. But I wasn't scared anymore. In fact, I wanted to kick this thing's ass.



Things were different

I knew it deep in my bones.

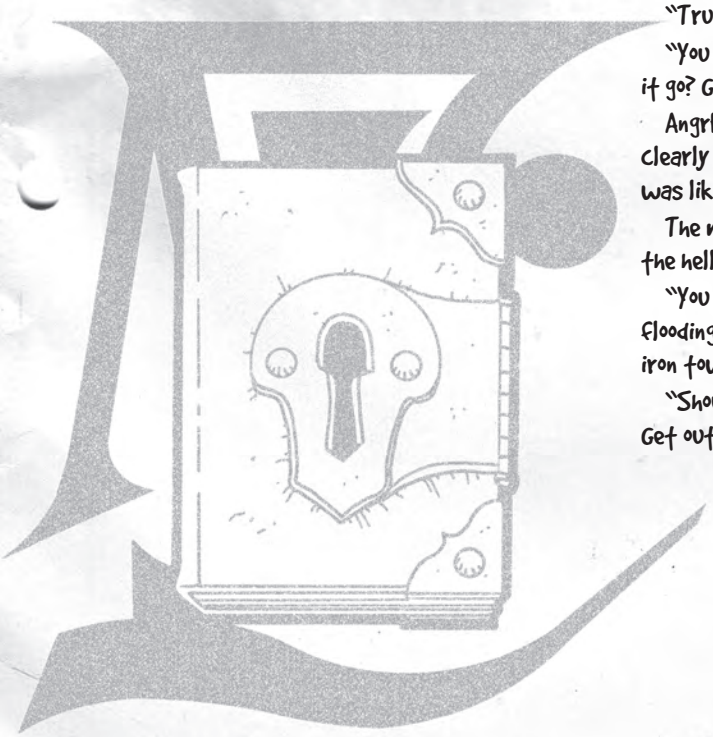
Deep in my soul.



That was when a guy on the motorcycle came crashing through the window. His bike hit the ground and twisted to a complete stop right as he raised this big fucking gun and shot the creature right in its "head." Pow. Perfect aim. But not with a bullet it looked like some sort of Star Wars blaster bolt or something. The thing *unraveled*. I mean, it literally fell to pieces and they disintegrated. The crack in the wall slammed shut with a boom.

The motorcycle guy pointed his gun at Angrboda, who scowled back.

"Fuck you, Angrboda," the guy said. I couldn't see his face behind the helmet visor.



"Truce, Zeno," Angrboda said. "I'll take the boy and go."

"You summon a goddamn Devourer on my turf, and I just let it go? Get the fuck out alone or we'll see who's top."

Angrboda glared at me, but left. He wasn't happy, but he clearly didn't want to take the new guy on. Who would? He was like out of a movie or something.

The motorcycle guy Zeno looked at me. "Stupid shit. Get the hell off my campus."

"You can't just leave me!" I cried, all the terror and fear flooding back all of a sudden. The high I got from being in the iron tower was gone.

"Should have thought of that before you ordered takeout. Get out." He pointed his gun at me, so I ran.

I'd never been homeless before. I had no idea how to go about it. (I still don't.) I wound up in the woods, curled up in a cave, freezing my ass off and whining in fear. Next thing I knew, this dude was tapping me with a walking stick. "Wake up, little bear. Hibernation is over."

Morvran, of course. He gave me some food and explained what had happened, and who I'd been dealing with. He knew this Angrboda guy from way back and had been keeping an eye on him. My head was swimming, but I knew this Aragorn-dude was telling the truth. He was a complete stranger, but I knew I could trust him. I didn't know why. I begged him to teach me how to defend myself against the demon shit, and babbled something about the iron tower, chains and manacles, confession and my name on the wall. He listened patiently and without surprise, and then shook his head.

"You have a destiny. I can see the mark on your soul. You Awakened at the Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet. Your Path is not the same as mine. But there are others of my order who can teach you."

And so he brought me here, to this elite private school. (Again, no names.) The headmaster  Master Aurem  didn't seem happy to see either of us, and even less happy when Morvran told him about my experience. "Boy, are you prepared to become something you are clearly not: a master of his own soul?" I knew what to say, even if I didn't know what the fuck was going on.

## So here I am.

Writing this journal, only a few weeks into my training as a mage of the Mysterium order. That's what I'm supposed to call myself now: a *mage*. one of the Awakened.

Before my name was written into the Watchtower, I was asleep. I was what people in this business call a Sleeper. Now I'm Awake. My name is etched into the substance of a *higher world*  the Supernal World, they call it. My Watchtower is just one of five, each of them in different places that all sound like they've come out of a fairy tale book. It's the other way around, though. Fairy tales and myths and all that stuff are just echoes of a reality that is more real than the world we live in. ours is called the Fallen World. Come on, we all know it deep down  this place is shit. Right? Religions have been saying it for years. We're living in only half a world, one that's missing its most vital component: soul.

That's what Awakens, they say. The soul. The part of us that belongs up there, in the higher world. It once came down here, in the material world, for shits and giggles, but it got trapped  we all did. The worlds were split apart and now there's this giant Abyss between them. That's what I looked into. That's where the creature came from.

That's where Sigmund went.








Shit. I'd do anything to get him back. The guilt is too much sometimes. I mean, he was a bit of a poseur, but so was I. He didn't deserve that.

Anyway, there's a whole occult underground of real magicians, not the fakes Sigmund and I were. Nobody knows about it, just us mages. Sleepers are ignorant, and there's some who want them to stay that way — unless they Awaken, in which case they're us. But until then, they're dangerous. They've got a piece of the Abyss in their souls, and it wants to drag us all down. If they even see us do our thing — magic — the shit hits the fan, making our spells go haywire, driving us mad, even altering reality around us in ways we don't want. When you reach up to the higher world to bring down a spell, you have to reach through the Abyss. Sometimes you bring some of it with you. Sleepers can make it happen just by watching you. Creepy. That's why they can't know. About us, about magic, about the deep shit the world is in.

Masters Aurem and Potestas don't want that Angrboda creep opening any scrying windows into this place. They've got wards up and all, but they worry that he'll keep watching me. They've got me practicing this thing called "occultation," the art of hiding yourself from magical spies. You learn how to cloak your aura — your magical signature, what your soul looks like — and keep people from getting a pinpoint on you from afar.

It means I have to cut myself off from my previous life. Hallelujah. I hardly ever saw my parents anyway. I didn't have a whole lot of friends, at least nobody close. It's all behind me now, occulted in obscurity. I don't exist, man. I don't even have a name (not one I'd write here).

**I'm a mage now.**

**I can do anything.**

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# MAGE™
## THE AWAKENING

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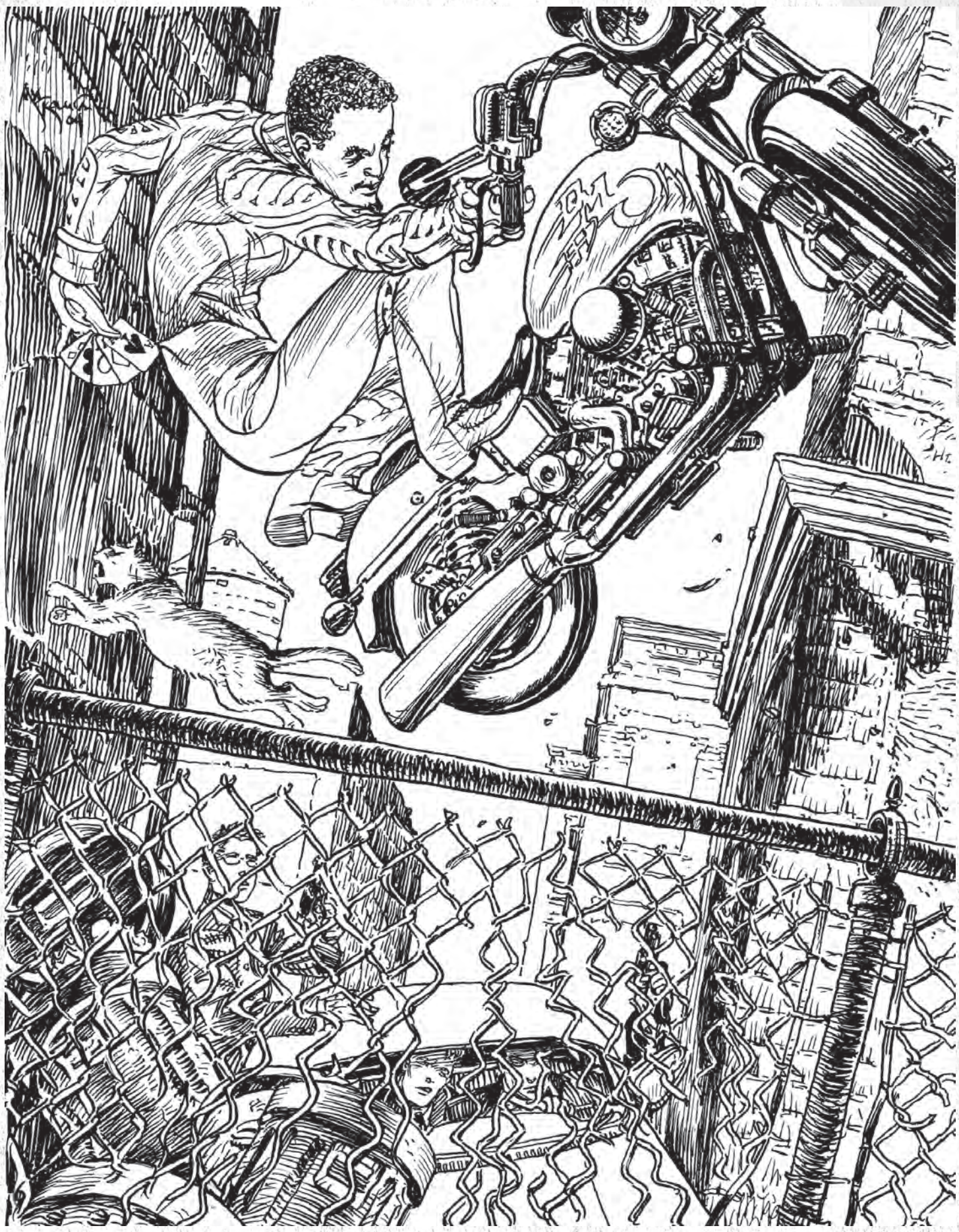
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# INTRODUCTION

*Bullets whizzed past Zeno's left ear, one of them close enough to nearly nick his lobe. He didn't flinch or give it any mind as he steered his motorcycle with one hand, the other clutching a spread of playing cards. He had a choice to make in the road ahead. Traffic had come to a complete halt, and the sidewalks were too crowded to allow him to leap the curb and evade his pursuers that way. That left him with one choice: Should he take the left-hand alley or the right?*

*As he concentrated, calling out to his higher instincts for an answer — they always had an answer — he noticed pedestrians turning his way, shocked by the sound of gunfire from behind him. He glanced over his shoulder and saw that the sedan had closed on him, going way faster than he expected. Damn, are they getting help from somebody? he thought.*

*He turned the handlebars to the right and gunned the engine, peeling down the alley. The choice had barely been conscious, a glimmer of knowing in which way the odds were stacked. He chose the more favorable option — and cursed as he saw a chain-link fence straight ahead. What the fuck—? Those assholes do have help!*

*He heard the squeal of tires behind him as the sedan pulled into the alley. Any second now, the guns would start firing again and his luck would run out. Time to try a different trick.*

*He reached out with his will and yanked his front wheel into the air as if an invisible crane pulled it. He then let it go and his body English did the rest, maneuvering over the fence as if it were the most natural thing in the world. My ma always hated Evel Knievel. She was afraid I'd try that shit myself. This one's for you, ma!*

**The materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances and the animal wants of man; the idealist on the power of Thought and Will, on inspiration, on miracle....**
**— Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Transcendentalist"**

Magic is something everybody dreams of but nobody seems to possess. The power to conjure something from nothing, to change a man into a toad, to curse one's enemies and their progeny, to call down lightning from the sky and lay waste to a city — all powers claimed by wizards in myth, legend and epic fantasy tales. We are drawn to these tales, however, not just because of the power displayed in them. Wizards present a different kind of allure: the desire for power *tempered with wisdom*. Demons and monsters have powers, but great limitations and curses, too. Mages have the power of knowing when and how to use power. While this can be a limitation, it is a self-imposed one, betokening a discipline rare in this world.

**Mage: The Awakening** is game about these kinds of mages, and the trials and temptations they face on the path of discipline and enlightenment. The allure of power constantly threatens to draw them from the path, away from wisdom. A mage is someone who has Awakened, whose soul has been freed of an ancient curse afflicting mortals. Most people's souls are asleep, unaware of the raw power they can tap to remake their world. The truth has been hidden from them many lifetimes ago; all they know is a lie. Mages can see through the lie and enact humanity's birthright: Magic.

## A Modern Sorcery World

Mages live in the here and now, in this world, just down the street. Although their society resembles more the feudal states of the past, broken into balkanized regions that remain largely incommunicado with one another, they still travel and use cell phones and the Internet like most modern people. But they live in a world of secrets, where the hoarding of secrets is a form of currency. Disagreements between mentor and student, master and adept, turn into rifts as apprentices accuse masters of withholding necessary knowledge, and masters declare most apprentices unworthy of it. When a mage can no longer work with his mentor, he leaves and seeks his own sanctum and cabal, a group of mages to whom he can trust his own secrets — or so the theory goes. In practice, cabals can be contentious, backbiting groups fighting over the same old theme: the ownership of secrets.

Mages travel from their sanctums only when necessary, to seek magical power or new mysteries, or to forge the occasional (often temporary) alliance with another mage who has something they need. The entirety of the spiritual realm may be open for their exploration, but mages usually see little of *our* world beyond their own chosen ground.

Humanity at large is ignorant of this occult underground. Sorcerers and witches live down the street and sometimes shop at the same stores, but the public is ignorant of this amazing truth. Even were the existence of mages to become known, most people wouldn't believe it, and those who did would see it as cause for alarm and fear rather than wonder and awe. Magic is afoot in the world, but most people resist it.

## High Magic

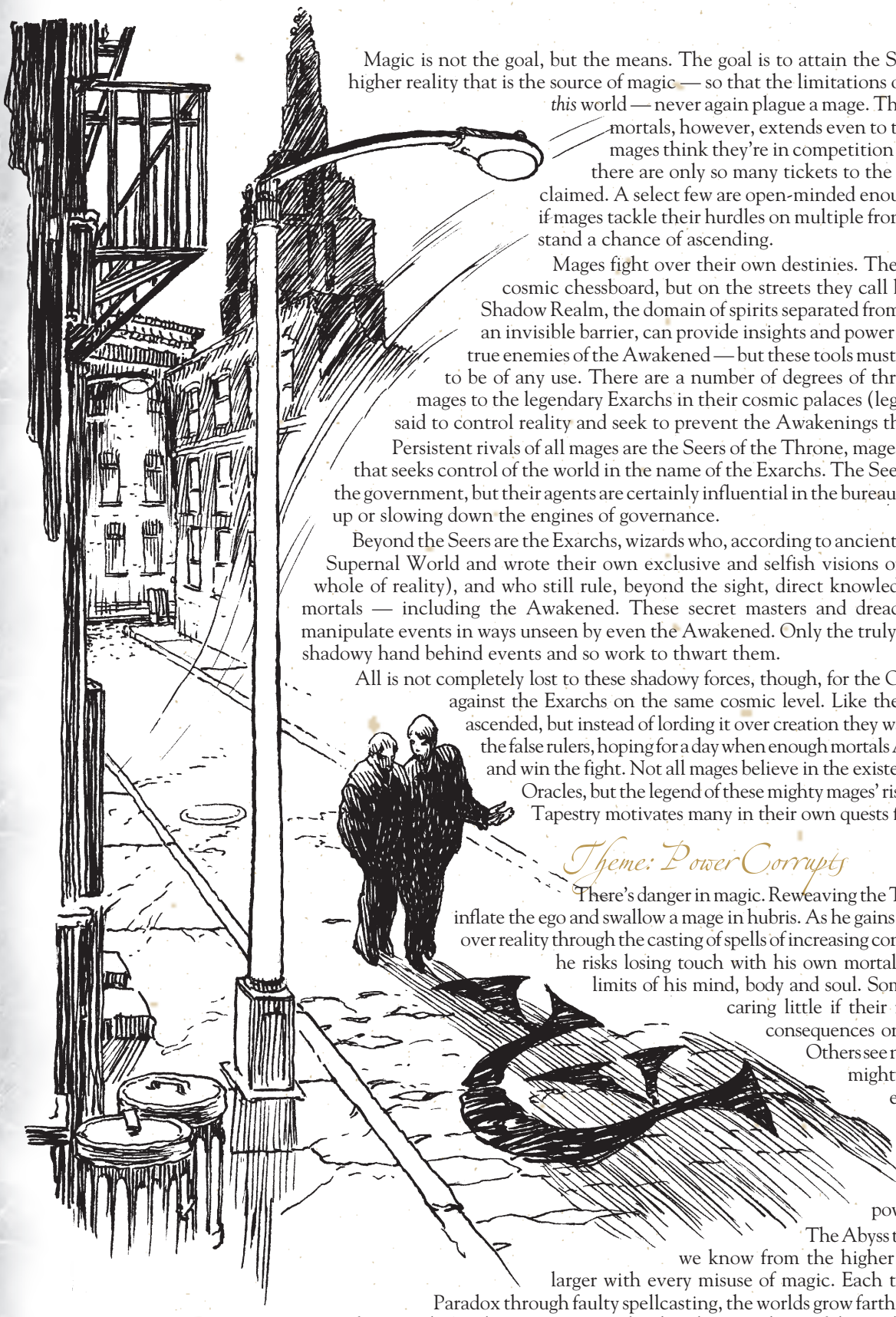
**Mage** presents a vision of magic somewhat different from that portrayed in most occult literature, although it incorporates many famous occult elements. **Mage** hearkens to stories of high magic, mythic tales of wizardly might and awesome hubris, but set in the here and now, not in some distant neverland. Instead of assuming a character is a practitioner of a known magical practice, such as voodoo, Cabalism, Hermeticism, Taoist exorcism or any number of other forms, **Mage** posits a mortal who has become aware of a more real world than the one we live in, one from which we all once came. This Awakened mortal performs magic by connecting to this invisible world. All the magical practices mentioned above hint at or in some way speak to the existence of this higher realm, but none of them fully prepares a magician to encounter it. For that, he must walk down paths of sheer Mystery, entering a reality unknown to mundane occult traditions, but one that completes and realizes their fragmentary knowledge.

Characters in **Mage** are not the stereotypical, solitary old men and women living in distant towers that most people think of. Characters in this setting form into cabals, groups of mages who recognize the need to work together, for few of the Awakened can master all the Mysteries of the Arcana. A group can pool its magical resources and lore to achieve what one mage working alone would need decades to accomplish. But working together isn't easy — each mage tends to have his own ideas on how things should work. Mages are used to getting their own way with reality and find it difficult to adjust to the expectations of others. The result is often a contentious existence in which everyone jealously hides the fruits of their labors and research from one another until it becomes absolutely necessary to reveal them. There's good reason for this paranoia, though, since mages have discovered many times to their past regret that secrets must be earned, not given away freely. Learning magic requires one to solve riddles and answers inscrutable questions. In the World of Darkness, knowledge really is power.

## The Age-Old Dream of Power

While a rare few mages might spend their days contemplating their navels and the awesome secrets of the universe, most mages are in the thick of things, always at ground zero for the next, great momentous event. They don't just think, they *act* — by casting magic.

Mages are among the secret movers and shakers of the world. Their actions affect the tenor of reality itself — for good or ill. And yet, they act unseen, their powers invisible to Sleepers, ordinary people who are shrouded in their curse, blind to the truth. Worse, if a Sleeper does get a glimpse of the truth, it taints the mage's spellcasting, increasing the likelihood that something terrible will go wrong — that a Paradox will occur, altering reality in ways the mage never intended.



Magic is not the goal, but the means. The goal is to attain the Supernal World — the higher reality that is the source of magic — so that the limitations of the Fallen World — *this* world — never again plague a mage. The small-mindedness of mortals, however, extends even to the enlightened. Many mages think they're in competition with one another, as if there are only so many tickets to the heavens waiting to be claimed. A select few are open-minded enough to realize that only if mages tackle their hurdles on multiple fronts does any individual stand a chance of ascending.

Mages fight over their own destinies. They do this not on some cosmic chessboard, but on the streets they call home. Journeys to the Shadow Realm, the domain of spirits separated from the material world by an invisible barrier, can provide insights and power — and glimpses of the true enemies of the Awakened — but these tools must be brought back home to be of any use. There are a number of degrees of threat, from neighboring mages to the legendary Exarchs in their cosmic palaces (legendary mages who are said to control reality and seek to prevent the Awakenings that rouse Sleepers).

Persistent rivals of all mages are the Seers of the Throne, mages from a mystical order that seeks control of the world in the name of the Exarchs. The Seers do not "own" or run the government, but their agents are certainly influential in the bureaucratic offices, speeding up or slowing down the engines of governance.

Beyond the Seers are the Exarchs, wizards who, according to ancient myth, ascended to the Supernal World and wrote their own exclusive and selfish visions onto the Tapestry (the whole of reality), and who still rule, beyond the sight, direct knowledge and reach of mere mortals — including the Awakened. These secret masters and dread archons are said to manipulate events in ways unseen by even the Awakened. Only the truly wise can discern their shadowy hand behind events and so work to thwart them.

All is not completely lost to these shadowy forces, though, for the Oracles are said to work against the Exarchs on the same cosmic level. Like the Exarchs, these mages ascended, but instead of lording it over creation they wage guerilla war against the false rulers, hoping for a day when enough mortals Awaken to turn the tide and win the fight. Not all mages believe in the existence of the Exarchs and Oracles, but the legend of these mighty mages' rise and usurpation of the Tapestry motivates many in their own quests for power.

## Theme: Power Corrupts

There's danger in magic. Reweaving the Tapestry of creation can inflate the ego and swallow a mage in hubris. As he gains more power — control over reality through the casting of spells of increasing control and complexity — he risks losing touch with his own mortal nature, forgetting the limits of his mind, body and soul. Some mages grow callous, caring little if their magic has unintended consequences on innocent bystanders. Others see no reason to curtail their mighty wills, and use spells for even the most banal and mundane tasks that the wise claim should be performed without recourse to Supernal power.

The Abyss that separates the world we know from the higher world is said to grow larger with every misuse of magic. Each time a mage invokes a Paradox through faulty spellcasting, the worlds grow farther apart, and fewer and fewer souls Awaken. One mystical order, the Guardians of the Veil, polices mage society, punishing those deemed to have broken the laws of silence and secrecy, damaging the very universe with egotistical practices.

Balancing power with wisdom is not easy — as can be imagined for anyone with the might to make his wishes come true. Beyond the alleged metaphysical consequences for misuse of power, there is the more

prosaic: everyone hates a jerk. A mage who can't control his will soon finds himself ostracized at the least, or murdered by another mage's magic if he can't avoid making enemies.

## Mood: Ancient Mystery

The true nature of reality is an enigma always beyond reach. The various mystical orders hold different beliefs, but none can ever prove them. In the end, Mystery prevails.

This cosmic Mystery has a powerful pull on the minds of the Awakened. They are drawn to seek it out and solve it, even if solving one aspect only raises a thousand more unanswered questions. This mood is a more metaphysical version of the theme of the World of Darkness as a whole — a dark, secret conspiracy beckoning those in the know. Instead of being a *theme* for **Mage**, it is a *mood*: a pervasive atmosphere of ciphers, secrets and looming cosmic revelations.

## How to Use This Book

The chapters within this book each present a different facet of the modern-sorcery world.

This **Introduction** is meant to give you a quick peek into the setting and its theme, and a sense of what sorts of things mages do.

**Chapter One** presents an in-depth look at mage society, including the Awakened's own mythology about their origins and the nature of the universe — the very thing affected by their spells. It introduces the Paths, the Consilium, the Lex Magicus and the Realms Invisible.

Characters are the focus of **Chapter Two**, presenting information on building a persona and girding it with rules traits so it can be played in conjunction with other players' creations.

By far the largest chapter in the book, **Chapter Three** presents the heart of a mage's concerns: magic. It's filled with spell descriptions for each Arcana, extensive rules for casting spells of all stripes, rules for the soul itself, and the supernatural world around a mage.

Storytelling is the focus of **Chapter Four**. Suggestions on running stories, dealing with themes, setting the mood, and defining conflicts are presented, along with a long list of possible antagonists that make life a challenge for any mage.

**Appendix One** introduces the Legacies, methods of soulcrafting by which a mage can step beyond spellcasting and become magical himself. These secret teachings are handed from mentor to apprentice, and allow a mage to grow in directions his Path and order alone cannot provide. A Legacy is a means by which a player can take his character to unique levels, even creating his own Legacies.

Finally, **Appendix Two** presents a sample setting using the city of Boston and its environs — including, of course, Salem. The area's unique supernatural secrets are introduced, along with many Storyteller characters who serve as caretakers.

## Sources and Inspiration

Mages, wizards, witches, sorcerers, enchanters — by whatever names they're called, people who can work magic are among the oldest legends in human history. The cave paintings discovered in Lascaux, France, depict a shaman and his power over the sacred hunt. Magicians have been with us ever since, and make appearances now and then in books and movies. The section below includes recommendations on various books, movies and music that can provide inspiration for a **Mage** chronicle. Not all of them deal with magic, but **Mage**'s theme and mood extend into any story concerned with metaphysical secrets and lies.

### Books

**Fiction**

*Promethea*, written by Alan Moore. This series of graphic novels tells the story of a girl drawn into an occult world that remains unseen by others. It serves as a great introduction to the Qabalah from an occult perspective.

*American Gods* and the *Sandman* series of graphic novels by Neil Gaiman. Magic and mystery in the modern world.

*The Earthsea Cycle* by Ursula Le Guin. Beginning with *A Wizard of Earthsea* and complemented more recently with *The Other Wind*, Le Guin depicts a fantasy world where wizards, not knights, are the main characters. (Ignore the television-movie adaptation.)

*Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* by Susanna Clarke. In an alternate 19th-century England, where magic once worked before the disappearance of the mysterious Raven King centuries ago, two gentlemen work to resurrect the art.

*Lord Darcy* by Randall Garrett. This book collects all of the stories Garrett wrote about Lord Darcy, occult investigator for the Duke of Normandy, set in an alternate modern era where the Plantagenet dynasty of Richard the Lion-Hearted still rules.

*The Illuminatus! Trilogy* by Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea. The classic from the '70s has yet to be beat for its sheer weirdness and counter-culture occultism.

The works of H.P. Lovecraft and other authors working in his Cthulhu Mythos. Cosmic horror that evokes the Abyss.

The works of Philip K. Dick. While he wrote science fiction, his visions of false realities and metaphysical paranoia prove to be quite influential to modern movies, especially *The Matrix*. No one has yet really captured on film his particular brand of Gnostic existential crisis.

**Non-fiction**

*The Dream and the Underworld* by James Hillman. The founder of archetypal psychology (inspired by the work of C.G. Jung) speaks on the soul and the gods that still haunt us in our modern lives.

*The Magician's Companion: A Practical and Encyclopedic Guide to Magical & Religious Symbolism* by Bill Whitcomb. For those interested in exploring occult symbolism and its correspondences to **Mage**'s Supernal World, this is one of the best all-in-one resources.

*Hidden Wisdom: A Guide to the Western Inner Traditions* edited by Richard Smoley and Jay Kinney. An excellent survey of Western magic and its many traditions. It's both readable and substantive, from the editors of *Gnosis* magazine (which would have made this list if it were still being published).

*Book of Lies: The Disinformation Guide to Magick and the Occult* edited by Richard Metzger. An intriguing primer on

modern magical thinking, from chaos magic to NLP, and how corporate logos can be a form of magical sigil used for subtle mind control.

*TAZ or the Temporary Autonomous Zone* by Hakim Bey. A fascinating expose of control and the means to elude it. Although this is a non-fiction manifesto, it fits right into the counter-culture world evoked by *The Illuminatus Trilogy* listed above.

### Movies

*Pi*, directed by Darren Aronofsky. An odd indie film about a mathematician who discovers the secret name of G-d in a mathematical formula — or does he? Conspiracy groups want it.

*Jacob's Ladder*, directed by Adrian Lyne. A masterpiece of metaphysical horror about a Vietnam veteran who is either losing his mind or discovering that reality isn't what it's supposed to be.

*Dark City*, directed by Alex Proyas. While this is really science fiction, it's an excellent and moody evocation of a world controlled by unseen beings and one man who has the power to see through the illusion — to literally remain awake.

*Memento*, directed by Christopher Nolan. Not about magic at all, but it provides some good ideas on what the Mind Arcanum can do to someone and how a story could be told from that perceptive.

*The Saragossa Manuscript*, directed by Wojciech Has. A strange old movie about mysterious encounters with spirits and cabalists.

*The Wicker Man*, directed by Robin Hardy. A thriller about a police officer who investigates the alleged disappearance of a little girl on a secluded British island. He discovers to his horror that the residents follow the Old Ways.

*The Devil Rides Out*, directed by Terence Fisher. A British Hammer film starring Christopher Lee. He plays a magician who helps foil a Satanic cult.

*Curse of the Demon*, directed by Jacques Tourneur. A classic horror film about a magician who kills through use of demon-summoning runes. "Dana Andrews said 'prunes,' gave him the runes, and passing them used lots of skill."

**Other Influences:** *The Fisher King, Naked Lunch, Re-Animator*

**Television**

*Neverwhere*. This BBC series was written by Neil Gaiman and depicts a secret underground world beneath London that most people cannot see.

*Carnivale*. This HBO series, set in the dust bowl of 1930s America, is about a conflict between good and evil in a time when strange things could still exist, before the first nuclear bomb test in New Mexico ended the enchantment. The main characters are much like mages, with gifts other men do not possess.

*The Prisoner*. The classic deconstruction of the spy thriller, revealing a world of conspiracies within conspiracies — all set on one little island.

### Music

The following suggestions help set the mood for a **Mage** game. Personal tastes vary widely, so use your own judgment.

Trance music by Sasha and John Digweed, such as *Communicate*, which includes discs by both djs.

The music of Nusrat Fateh ali Khan. The amazing qawwali singer's chants can set the mood for an exotic ritual.

*Night on Bald Mountain*, by Moussorgsky. Most of the movie-going public knows this as part of the soundtrack to Walt Disney's *Fantasia*, for the climax scene with the demon Chernobog.

Anything by Beethoven or Wagner. Both composers produced stirring, vigorous work that illustrates power.

The soundtrack to the movie *Sorcerer*, by Tangerine Dream. Weird, hallucinatory electronica.

## 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 *Watchtower* in this realm.

**Abyss, the:** The rift between the *Supernal World* and the *Fallen World*, said by some to grow wider with each *Paradox*.

**Acanthus:** A mage whose Path leads to *Arcadia*. Acanthus epitomize the tarot card of "The Fool."

**Adamantine Arrow:** A mystical order with roots in *Atlantis*. They were the warriors and soldiers of the Awakened City.

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

**Anomaly:** A *Paradox* where the local area around the caster is tainted by negative supernatural effects, most often by the imposition of a *Supernal Realm*.

**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 *Watchtower* in this realm.

**Arcanum (pl. Arcana):** A secret teaching of the *Mysteries*. The Arcana are the 10 elemental principles or substances believed to make up the *Tapestry* of Creation. The threads of a *Pattern* are made from the Arcana. A mage's Arcanum lore is the mechanism by which he draws down the laws of a higher realm. (His *Gnosis* provides his 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."

**Astral Space:** The internal landscape of an Awakened soul. There are three layers: the personal (individual) dream plane (an *Oneiros*), the collective dream plane (the *Temenos*) and the world soul (the Dreamtime). Astral Space is populated by denizens who represent aspects of a mage's individual or collective psyche.

**Atlantis:** In mage mythology, Atlantis was the Awakened City, the nation-state from pre-history that first codified the *Ars Mysteriorum*. Four mystical orders claim to continue its heritage.

**Attainment:** A power gained through the crafting of one's soul by way of a *Legacy*, a special mystical teaching from a mentor to a student.

**Bedlam:** A *Paradox* where the caster suffers a derangement, worsened by susceptibility to certain magics. In some cases, the derangement might be contagious, affecting one or more other mages.

**Branding:** A *Paradox* where the caster is inflicted with a supernatural physical disfigurement.

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

**Consilium:** The highest political body of the Awakened in a region. *Councilors* from various local *cabals* serve, making collective decisions as necessary that concern the Awakened as a whole, guided by a *Hierarch*.

**Councilor:** A member of the *Consilium*. There are usually no more than five, including the *Hierarch*.

**Death:** The *Arcanum* that governs darkness, decay, ectoplasm, enervation, ghosts and soul stealing.

**Demesne:** A place imbued with Supernal power by way of one or more *soul stones*. Vulgar magic cast within a Demesne is considered to be covert, unless witnessed by one or more *Sleepers*.

**Disbelief:** The power of a Sleeping soul to deny the existence of magic (causing a *Sleeper* witness to forget or misremember what he saw) and to unravel a vulgar spell that is persistently under Sleeper scrutiny.

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

**ephemera:** Spiritual substance, the thing of which spirits are made. Beings and objects of *Twilight* are made of ephemera, as is anything within the *Shadow Realm*.

**Exarch:** A mythical archmage who resides in the *Supernal World*, one of the victors in the Atlantean Celestial War. Exarchs are opposed by *Oracles*.

**Fallen World, the:** The prosaic world — *this* world, including both the *material realm* and the *Shadow Realm*.

**familiar:** A spirit aide to a mage, mystically bonded to his soul through use of *Spirit* magic. Familiars make excellent spies for those mages capable of casting scrying spells and sympathetic magic.

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

**Final Key, the:** The legendary state of understanding where a mage has solved the *Mysteries* and can ascend to the *Supernal World*.

**Forces:** The *Arcanum* that governs electricity, gravity, kinetic energy, light, physics, radiation, sound and weather.

**Free Council:** A mystical order that was officially formed at the beginning of the 20th century. It proudly claims no ties to *Atlantis* and seeks to modernize the craft of magic.

**Gauntlet, the:** The barrier between the *material realm* and the *Shadow Realm*. The strength of the Gauntlet varies in certain areas, and even disappears completely at a *Verge*.

***geas*:** A powerful Fate spell that forces its target to perform a certain deed or accomplish a certain goal. From the early Irish word for "taboo."

**Gnosis:** A mage's understanding of the *Supernal World*. This is not a conscious knowledge so much as an instinct. It is the core of a mage's Awakened consciousness, the means by which he can contact a higher realm. (His *Arcanum* lore provides the mechanism by which he draws down the laws of that higher realm.)

**goetic:** An adjective describing demons within *Astral Space*.

**Guardians of the Veil:** A mystical order with roots in *Atlantis*. They were the spies and secret police of the Awakened City.

**Hallow:** A place that collects and/or generates *Mana*.

**Havoc:** A *Paradox* where the caster loses control of his spell, causing it to affect a random target, and in some cases reverse the spell's effect.

**Herald:** An official role within the *Consilium*, representing a mage diplomat. Heralds are usually sent as messengers or ambassadors to member *cabals* or other Consilii.

**Hierarch:** The leader of the *Consilium*, usually one of the most powerful and influential mages in a region.

**High Speech, the:** The Atlantean language, woven into the *Tapestry* itself so that statements made with this tongue can alter reality. It is believed that this is because it was the native tongue of the *Oracles* and *Exarchs*, and their reign in the *Supernal World* gives their language power over the *Fallen World*. Although poorly understood by modern mages, it can be spoken to increase magical efficacy. *Sleeper* minds cannot process the language, and they mishear it as noise or foreign babble.

**Hubris:** An act or state of mind that causes a mage to stray from the path of *Wisdom* (i.e., to suffer Wisdom degeneration).

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

**Imperium Mysteriorum:** "Sovereignty of the Mysteries."

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

**Invisible Truth, the:** Awareness and knowledge of the supernatural world, especially the *Supernal World* and the *Mysteries*. Mainly used as a term that counters the *Lie*.

**Legacy:** A mystical teaching about the crafting of the Awakened soul. Legacies cannot be learned from books, but must be taught from mentor to student. Legacies allow a mage to acquire mystical *attainments*.

**Lex Magicus:** The body of law concerning magic and the Awakened community. Each *cabal* is expected to police itself within the bounds of this law, and the *Consilium* can adjudicate the law when a cabal does not honor it or comes into conflict with another cabal or mage.

**Lie, the:** The world of *Sleepers*, ignorant to magic and the supernatural. Conversely, it refers to the state of being ignorant of the *Mysteries*, as contrasted with the *Invisible Truth*. Also, any force that tries to hide the truth (i.e., the schemes of the *Exarchs*).

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

**magical tools:** Items a mage uses to help prevent a *Paradox* when casting magic. Tools can be chosen from the mage's *Path* or order lists.

**Mana:** Magical energy. A form of the *prima materia* (Prime), Mana is likened to the "water" or "liquid" state of that magical substance, as compared to *tass*, the "earth" or "solid" state.

**Manifestation:** A *Paradox* where a creature from the *Abyss* manifests within the caster's vicinity.

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

**Mastigos:** A mage whose Path leads to *Pandemonium*. Mastigos epitomize the tarot card of "The Devil."

**material realm:** The physical portion of the *Fallen World*, the only realm of existence known to *Sleepers*.

**Matter:** The *Arcanum* that governs alchemy, elemental air, elemental earth, elemental water, shaping and transmutation.

**Mind:** The *Arcanum* that governs communication, hallucinations, mental projection, mind control and telepathy.

**Moros:** A mage whose Path leads to *Stygia*. Moros epitomize the tarot card of "Death."

**Mysteries, the:** The ways of magic, especially concerning how the art and practice of magic can ascend the soul safely across the *Abyss*.

**Mysterium:** A mystical order with roots in *Atlantis*. They were the scholars and explorers of the Awakened City.

**Obrimos:** A mage whose *Path* leads to the *Aether*. Obrimos epitomize the tarot card of "Strength."

**Oneiros (pl. Oneiroi):** A mage's personal dream plane within *Astral Space*.

**Oracle:** A mythical archmage who resides in the *Supernal World*, one of those who held true to Atlantean ideals in the Celestial War. Oracles oppose the *Exarchs*.

**order:** A formal organization of mages that seeks to cultivate the *Ars Mysteriorum* 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 *Watchtower* in this realm.

**Paradox:** A temporary break in reality caused by the misapplication of magic. There are five types of Paradoxes: *Anomaly*, *Bedlam*, *Branding*, *Havoc* and *Manifestation*.

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

**Pattern:** The mystical "body" of a person, place or thing, describing the *Arcana* of which it is composed.

**Pentacle, the:** The loose alliance of the four Atlantean magical orders (*Adamantine Arrow*, *Guardians of the Veil*, the *Mysterium* and the *Silver Ladder*) and the *Free Council* order. This term also refers to Consilii in which all five of these orders participate.

**Practice of Knowing:** A body of knowledge associated with the first degree (1st dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can gain mystical knowledge and understanding of phenomena within the Arcanum's purview.

**Practice of Compelling:** A body of knowledge associated with the first degree (1st dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically nudge events or targets within the Arcanum's purview toward a desired outcome.

**Practice of Fraying:** A body of knowledge associated with the third degree (3rd dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically harm a target.

**Practice of Making:** A body of knowledge associated with the fifth degree (5th dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically create phenomena within the Arcanum's purview from nothing.

**Practice of Patterning:** A body of knowledge associated with the fourth degree (4th dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can significantly transform targets.

**Practice of Perfecting:** A body of knowledge associated with the third degree (3rd dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically bolster or improve targets.

**Practice of Ruling:** A body of knowledge associated with the second degree (2nd dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically command and control targets.

**Practice of Shielding:** A body of knowledge associated with the second degree (2nd dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically protect targets.

**Practice of Unmaking:** A body of knowledge associated with the fifth degree (5th dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically destroy targets or phenomena within the Arcanum's purview.

**Practice of Unraveling:** A body of knowledge associated with the fourth degree (4th dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can gravely injure or degrade targets.

**Practice of Unveiling:** A body of knowledge associated with the first degree (1st dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically perceive phenomena within the Arcanum's purview.

**Practice of Veiling:** A body of knowledge associated with the second degree (2nd dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically conceal phenomena within the Arcanum's purview.

**Practice of Weaving:** A body of knowledge associated with the third degree (3rd dot) of an *Arcanum*, describing how a mage can mystically alter a target.

**Primal Wild:** A *Supernal Realm* where the *Ruling Arcana* are *Life* and *Spirit*. Mages who walk the *Thyrsus* Path claim a *Watchtower* in this realm.

**prima materia:** The Supernal substance, also called *Prime*. In the *Fallen World*, the prima materia is known in two states, *Mana* and *tass*.

**Prime:** The *Arcanum* that governs *Hallows*, illusions, magical imbuement, *Mana*, *resonance* and *tass*.

**Provost:** An official role within the *Consilium*, representing a mage bailiff. Provosts are tasked with ensuring that the Consilium's rulings are carried out by those affected.

**Quiescence, the:** The curse that keeps most souls from Awakening, closing people's eyes to the truth of reality and indoctrinating them into the *Lie*.

**Sentinel:** An official role within the *Consilium*, representing a mage enforcer. Sentinels see to the military and martial tasks of the Consilium.

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

**Scelestus (pl. Scelesti):** "The Accursed." A mage whose soul is tainted by the *Abyss* or pledged to an Abyssal entity. A Scelestus is created through a *Legacy*.

**shadow name:** The moniker a mage adopts to hide his real name from mages who would use sympathetic magic against him or threaten his *Sleeper* friends and family.

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

**Silver Ladder:** A mystical order with roots in *Atlantis*. They were the viziers and priests of the Awakened City.

**Sleeper:** A mortal who is not Awake — the majority of human beings in the modern era. Sleepers suffer from the *Quiescence* and *Disbelief*, and worsen the chances of a *Paradox* if they witness vulgar or improbable magic.

**Sleepwalker:** A *Sleeper* who is not Awake but who does not suffer from *Quiescence* and *Disbelief*, and who does not increase the chance of a *Paradox* should he witness vulgar or improbable magic.

**soul:** The essential core of a human being, as distinct from the mind or psyche and the spirit (the subtle body). It is the soul that Awakens and yearns to ascend to the *Supernal World*.

**soul stone:** A physical piece of a mage's soul, voluntarily created at the cost of the mage's own magical potential, but which forms the necessary foundation of a *Demesne*.

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

**Spirit:** The *Arcanum* that governs exorcism, the *Gauntlet*, the *Shadow Realm*, soul retrieval and spirits.

**Supernal Realm:** A realm within the *Supernal World*. Mages know of five such realms, because of the *Watchtowers* placed in them.

**Supernal World, the:** The higher reality that was cut off by creation of the *Abyss* in the Celestial War of Atlantis. It is the source of magic and is believed to be the true home for all souls.

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

**Tapestry, the:** A metaphor for the whole of Creation, made up of many discrete *Patterns*.

**tass:** Magical substance. A form of the *prima materia* (Prime), tass is likened to the "earth" or "solid" state of that substance. It can be "broken" or "melted" down into *Mana*.

**Temenos, the:** The plane of the collective soul within *Astral Space*, likened to the concept of the Jungian collective unconscious.

**theriomorph:** A being with the ability to shapeshift at will into an animal (i.e., a werewolf), as distinct from someone who uses magic to shapeshift.

**thrall:** A mage whose *soul stone* has come into the possession of another mage. There are ancient customs governing what rights the possessor has, usually involving only three favors or tasks he can ask of the soul stone's true owner before he must relinquish possession.

**Thyrsus:** A mage whose Path leads to the *Primal Wild*. Thyrsus epitomize the tarot card of "The Moon."

**Time:** The *Arcanum* that governs divination, prophecy and temporal acceleration/deceleration.

**Twilight:** The state of existence within the *material realm* for most ephemeral beings that find themselves on the material side of the *Gauntlet*, including ghosts and spirits. Beings and things within Twilight cannot be seen or touched by those without the requisite spells.

**undead:** A once-living creature that continues to exist after death in an animate form. Includes ghosts, zombies and vampires.

**Veil, the:** The body of customs used to keep the *Mysteries* secret from those who could taint them, including *Sleepers*.

**Verge:** A place where the *Gauntlet* has no strength, so that beings can pass between the *material realm* and the *Shadow Realm* without need of magic.

**ward:** A *Space* spell that forms a barrier against Space magic, including sympathetic spells and scrying. Some wards called "Bans" act as a barrier against certain classes of creature or thing.

**Watchtower:** A mystical edifice in a *Supernal Realm*, erected by the Atlantean kings or *Oracles* to oppose the *Exarchs* and restore magic to the *Fallen World* after the creation of the *Abyss*.

**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, someone who "works his will" on reality.

**Wisdom:** The quality of understanding a mage possesses about the proper balance of magic and the mundane. Wisdom is hard to acquire and maintain when practicing the *Ars Mysteriorum*, but it is well worth the effort, for many mages believe that only the Wise can attain the *Final Key* to the *Mysteries*.

**witch hunter:** A mortal who seeks out mages and attempts to destroy or control them.

## Spellcasting Rules Glossary

These entries are provided as a rules reference during game play. If this is your first read of this book, you can skip them until after you've read **Chapter Three: Magic**.

**aimed spell:** A spell that manifests as a projectile or force directed physically at its target's body instead of mystically against the target's Pattern. Aimed spells cannot be *contested* or *resisted*, although they can be avoided like any ranged attack, using armor and/or cover.

**Arcane Experience:** A special type of experience point awarded for epiphanies about the supernatural world. Arcane Experience can normally be spent only to raise a character's Gnosis.

**aspect:** A spell's seeming or semblance, how it appears to onlookers and how acceptable it is to reality. A spell's aspect is either *covert* or *vulgar*.

**casting:** See *spellcasting*.

**combined spell:** A spell that combines two or more discrete spell *effects* into a single spell.

**conjunctional spell:** A spell *effect* that requires use two or more *Arcana*.

**contested resistance:** Some spells allow a *target* to make a reflexive contested roll to avoid the spell's *effect*. The dice pool is usually a single Resistance Attribute. Mages can also add their *Gnosis* to the dice pool.

**covert spell:** A covert spell's *effect* is hidden, innocuous or seemingly coincidental. Reality accepts the spell without complaint (there is no chance of a Paradox) and Sleepers likewise accept that its occurrence is not supernatural.

**Duration:** The amount of time a spell lasts.

**effect:** The description of exactly how a spell alters reality.

**factor:** A measure of a spell's *effect*. The three spell factors are *Potency*, *Target* and *Duration*.

**Improbable:** A *covert spell* that would seem highly unlikely or even supernatural to a Sleeper witness (and hence, might cause a Paradox). Most often, this is due to a series of magical coincidences stretched too far.

**improvised spell:** A spell cast using only the mage's raw Supernal understanding (*Gnosis*) and *Arcanum* lore. An improvised spell's dice pool = Gnosis + Arcanum dots. Compare with a *rote spell*, which requires training.

**method:** How a spell is cast, either as a *rote spell* or an *improvised spell*.

**resistance, automated:** Some spells allow a *target* a degree of reflexive defense from the spells' *effect*. Spellcasting dice pools are penalized by one of the target's Attributes (usually a Resistance Attribute).

**Potency:** A measure of a spell's raw power or amount of damage it inflicts, and also its resilience against attempts to dispel it.

**range:** See *sensory range* and *sympathetic range*.

**relinquish spell control:** A mage can relinquish control of an indefinite Duration spell by spending one Willpower. The spell no longer counts toward the total active spells he can maintain, but he can no longer control it; it is as if it were another mage's spell.

**Resistant Damage:** Damage that cannot be healed through supernatural means, such as Life magic. This damage heals at the normal rate.

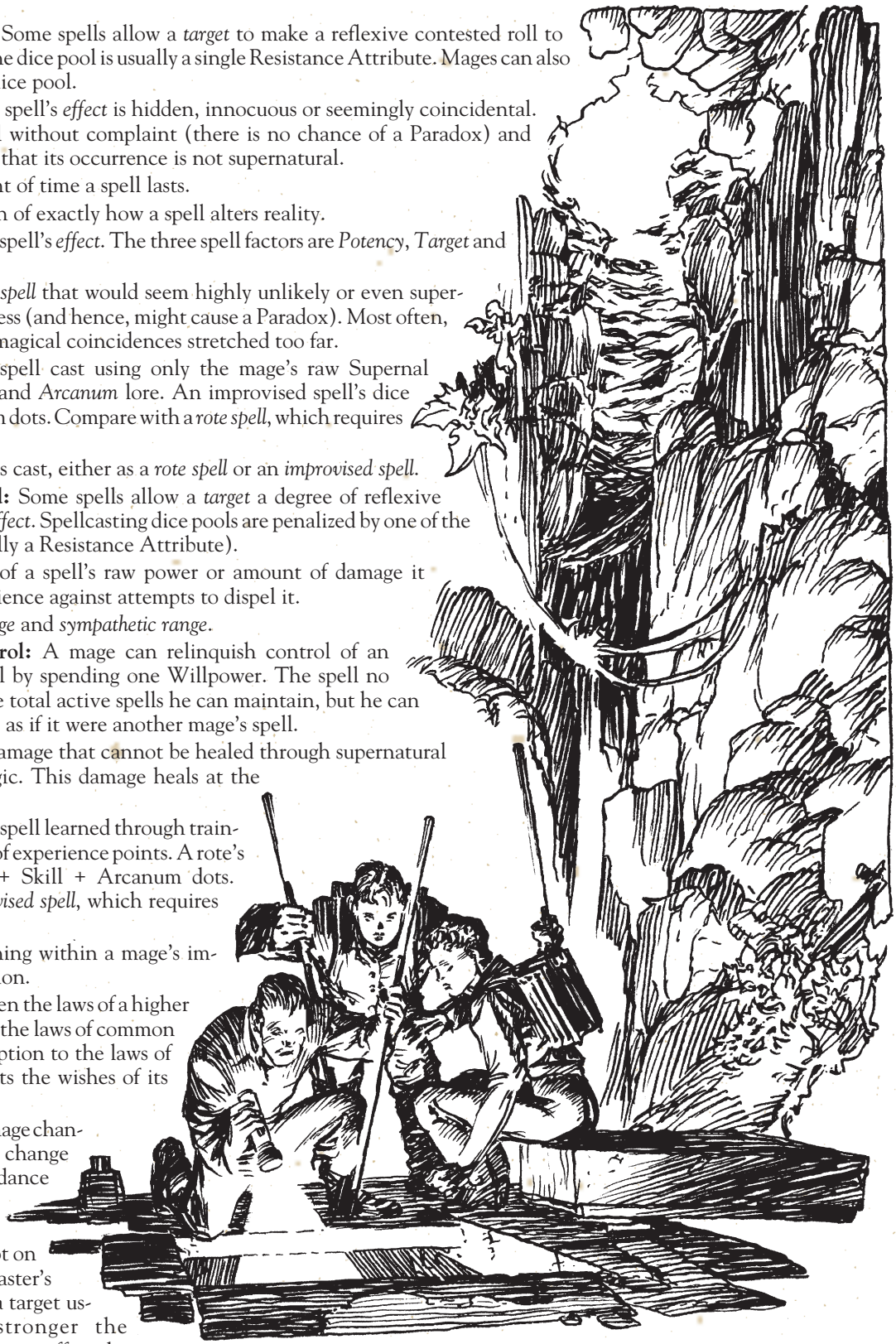
**rote:** A tried-and-true spell learned through training and the expenditure of experience points. A rote's dice pool = Attribute + Skill + Arcanum dots. Compare with an *improvised spell*, which requires no training.

**sensory range:** Anything within a mage's immediate sensory perception.

**spell:** What occurs when the laws of a higher reality are imposed upon the laws of common reality, creating an exception to the laws of physics. A spell manifests the wishes of its caster.

**spellcasting:** When a mage channels a higher reality to change common reality in accordance with his wishes. See *spell*.

**sympathetic range:** A distance that depends not on physical space, but on a caster's mystical connection to a target using Space 2. The stronger the connection, the easier it is to affect the target.



**Target:** The subject of a *spell*; the person, place or thing suffering or receiving the spell's *effect*.

**vulgar spell:** A vulgar spell's *effect* is obvious and/or impossible by the normal laws of reality. Vulgar spells risk a Paradox.



# ARCANUS MUNDUS
## (THE SECRET WORLD)

*"Atlantis?" Gavin said. "You're serious? I know that old fogy back at the sanctum buys into that, but not you. I mean, come on. It's so… New Age."*

*Morvran smiled and led the way through the woods, following a faint trail invisible to Gavin. "What's old is new again, yes? Atlantis has been spoken of for millennia, long before modern crystal worshippers claimed it. It was known to the kings of ancient Egypt, and through them to Plato. It has other names, you know, but Atlantis is the most well known."*

*"And these… Atlanteans… they had a big war and broke the universe?" Gavin said. "That's what you're saying?" He shook his head and threw up his hands. "So what? How does that have anything to do with us?"*

*"Knowing the how and why of the world is the first step to changing it." Morvran turned to look the young mage in the eye. "How do you expect to weave the fabric of Creation if you don't know what it's made of?"*

*"I thought that what's the Arcana were about. You know, the '10 substances of which the Tapestry is made.' How does an island that sank thousands of years ago have anything to do with that?"*

*"Ah, Arctos," Morvran said, addressing Gavin by his shadow name, "Where are the Arcana strongest? In the Supernal World. Where are we? In the Fallen World. How do we reach the Supernal World? By sympathy with the Watchtowers. What stands in our way? The Abyss. All these things came to be due to the hubris of Atlantis. The Celestial War for the Supernal World, when the Exarchs claimed the heavens and threw down the rest of their kind — us."*

*"So we're the fallen ones? The ones who got screwed and fucked by the Man? You know, Morvran, I respect you and all, but sometimes you can be such a hippy." Arctos pushed past the older mage to forge his own path through the tangled underbrush.*

*Morvran smiled. "What's old is new again. The cycle ever turns…."*

CHAPTER ONE

HOW TO CONVERT FABRIC OF CREATION

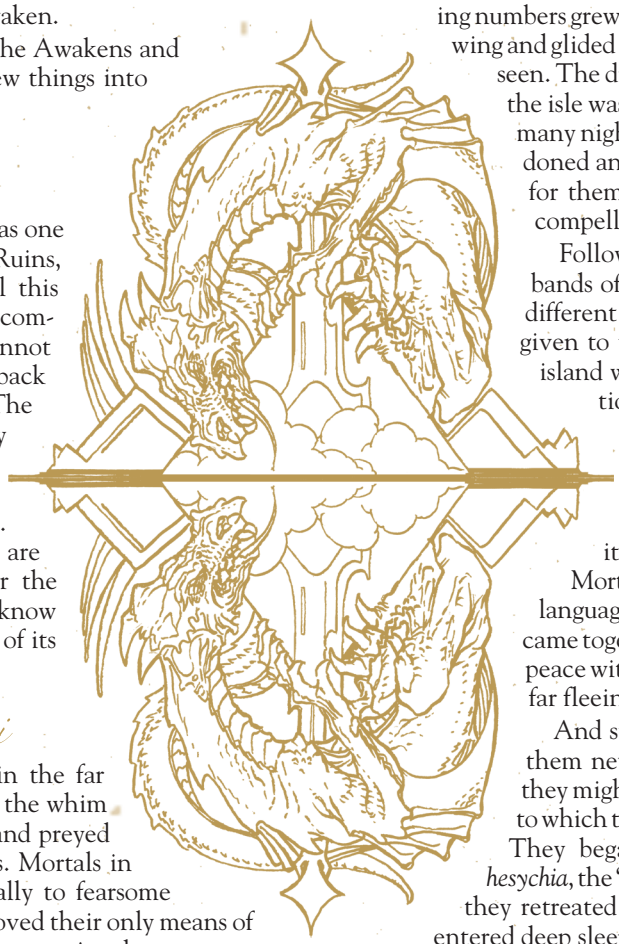
**There is in us a compulsion, an inner dynamism, propelling us toward divine wholeness. It must remain unconscious, and so compelling.... This compulsion may take the form of a need for a secret. Paradoxically, perhaps, this final wholeness necessarily remains unconscious, dark and hidden.**
**— Tom Cheetham, Green Man, Earth Angel: The Prophetic Tradition and the Battle for the Soul of the World**

We like to believe that we are thinking, rational beings, aware of the world around us to a greater degree than is possible for any animal. We fool ourselves. As mystics from cultures the world over have said from time immemorial, we are only sleeping, dreaming that we are awake. If this is true, then reality is not what we think it is. We see only that part of life that filters through to our dream. There is a greater world out there, full of things unseen and literally undreamt. To know it, we have but to Awaken.

That is what a mage does — he Awakens and begins to consciously dream new things into existence.

## Mythic History

The sea of time grows murky as one approaches the distant past. Ruins, artifacts, cave paintings — all this evidence of history tells an incomplete tale. Even master mages cannot part the curtains of time so far back to see what truly occurred. The magical orders have a mythology about their beginnings, the legend of a fallen civilization and a war for the throne of reality. The names for that civilization are many, most of them lost over the years, but even the Sleeping know one of them and seek evidence of its truth: Atlantis.



## The Island of the Magi

For many years uncounted in the far distant past, mortals suffered at the whim of monsters, hunted by spirits and preyed upon by bloodthirsty revenants. Mortals in those times adhered dogmatically to fearsome superstitious customs, which proved their only means of keeping weak spirits at bay while appeasing the strong ones. Beset by creatures stronger than they, culled by howling beasts whenever they migrated into territories whose borders they couldn't possibly perceive, mortals found it nigh impossible to advance above their need for survival, to envision ways of living outside of fear.

Then came the dragon dreams. Certain mortals, in lands scattered far and wide, began to dream of an island, a lonely land jutting from a windswept sea far from any known coast. A spire rose from the center of the isle, pointing at the pole star; it seemed to the dreamers that this was the axis of the world, the pole upon which the bowl of the sky turned. And upon this pole, at its apex, nested the dragons.

In the dreams, these great worms of legend would rise up into the winds, one by one, circle the spire with their beating leathern wings, and set off toward the infinite horizon, to places the dreamers could not imagine. No other creature stirred on the isle and no spirit hunted there; no being dared intrude upon the dragons' lair. As the dreams progressed, the dreamers came to realize that the dragons never returned. Each night, another dragon would leave, so that the remaining numbers grew small. Finally, the last dragon took wing and glided away, to the west, never again to be seen. The dreams continued to come, but now the isle was empty; nothing moved there. For many nights the dreamers saw the isle, abandoned and forlorn, and knew that it waited for them. The island had called to them, compelling them, seeking new inhabitants.

Following the lead of the dreamers, small bands of mortals set out to sea from many different lands, each following the vision given to them in dreams. They sought the island where, far from the lands of predation, they knew they would be free to forge their own destinies, unafraid of the night.

They came to the isle, following the pole star, and saw that it was exactly as seen in their dreams. Mortals from many lands, speaking many languages and following different customs, came together, and by silent assent settled in peace with no conflict, for they had traveled far fleeing from struggle.

And still they dreamed. The island sent them new visions, and showed them how they might learn to master the strange sights to which their sleeping minds had been privy. They began practicing the techniques of *hesychia*, the "stillness" or "incubation," in which they retreated into dark caves and their bodies entered deep sleep while their minds traveled to far astral realms beyond the ken of other mortals.

There they met the Others, the daimons of their own souls, the hidden twin of each soul traveler. These judges challenged them to prove by what right they came on astral roads to the Realms Supernal, and set them to a series of tests. Many failed, sent back to their bodies in sorrow, unable to again journey forth in dream. But some succeeded.

These few returned with their souls aglow, lit by a celestial fire. They could see into the Realms Invisible and ken the secret workings of Creation, the principles and substances from which everything was wrought. Through the sympathy their far-journeying souls now shared with the Realms Supernal, and the knowledge they gleaned from studying realms

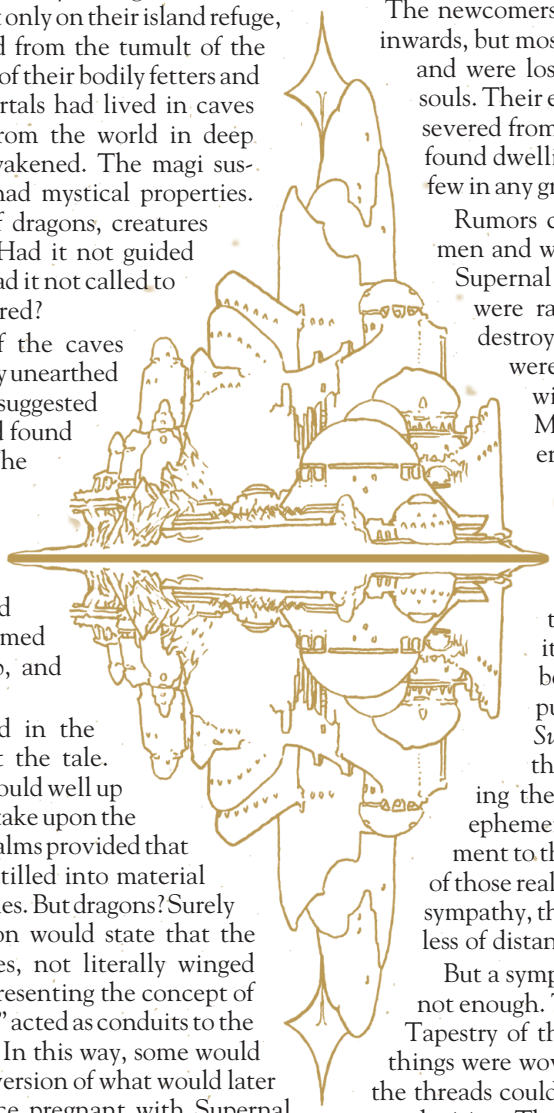
visible and invisible, they could call down the ways of heaven, the higher principles that ruled over the lower realms of matter and spirit. They made their very thoughts real, imagination rendered into matter and flesh.

They had discovered magic.

## The Dragons' Tomb

It was as if all mortals were asleep. Only the dreamers of the dragon isle who had returned victorious from their astral journeys were Awake. The magi dreamed with their eyes open.

They pondered how it was that they among all mortals had attained this gift. It seemed that only on their island refuge, within its deep caves removed from the tumult of the senses, could their souls fly free of their bodily fetters and touch the astral stars. But mortals had lived in caves before, and had withdrawn from the world in deep meditation, yet none had Awakened. The magi suspected that the island itself had mystical properties. Had it not been the abode of dragons, creatures made from the celestial fire? Had it not guided them there through dreams? Had it not called to them, and had they not answered?



Investigating the depths of the caves with their newfound vision, they unearthed huge crystals in shapes that suggested bones. Some believed they had found the remains of dead dragons. The power resonant in the crystals had called to sensitive mortal souls like moths to light. Was this the secret of the isle's power? Crystals that resonated with Supernal energy? They named the caves the Dragon's Tomb, and built their city atop it.

Later mages, skeptics raised in the modern world, would scoff at the tale. They would know that places could well up with magical energy, and even take upon the atmosphere of the Supernal Realms provided that a shard from a mage's soul, distilled into material form, anchored its higher energies. But dragons? Surely not. The defenders of tradition would state that the dragons were dream emissaries, not literally winged reptiles, but Supernal *ideas* representing the concept of magic itself. The crystal "bones" acted as conduits to the Supernal, the source of magic. In this way, some would say, Atlantis formed a natural version of what would later be called a "Demesne," a place pregnant with Supernal power where magic could be practiced as of old… before the Fall.

## The Awakened City

The loose confederation of immigrants to the island soon organized into a city-state led by the magi. They called it Atlantis, which in their polyglot tongue meant "the ocean spire." Over time, the enlightened founded separate orders to fulfill the roles of governance, from mystical militia to scholars to a priesthood of the Mysteries to guide them all.

The magi of Atlantis traveled once more to the forsaken lands from whence they had come, searching for new clues into the Mysteries, the tantalizing yet obscure secrets that ruled over everything that was, is and shall be. Mortals there witnessed their power, and word of them spread as rumors and legends. Many left their homes to seek fabled Atlantis, the island of the magi. Only a few found it; the rest wandered the ocean for years. No chart marked its place; the stars no longer guided mariners to its rocky shores. Only those who saw it in dream could find their way.

The newcomers went to the tomb and sent their minds inwards, but most of them failed the tests of their daimons and were lost in the uncharted wildernesses of their souls. Their empty bodies took days to die. Others were severed from their bodies by the terrible demons they found dwelling within their own dreams. Only a very few in any group could pass the tests and become magi.

Rumors came now and then of foreign sorcerers, men and women who had also attained the Realms Supernal on their own, far from Atlantis, but they were rare. These people more often than not destroyed themselves by misuse of their power or were killed by commoners who feared their wizardry. Only on Atlantis were the Ars Mysteriorum mastered and codified for others to learn.

## Thaumatology

The practice of magic was intertwined with the theory of magic — how it was that the mortal mind was able to will reality to do what it wanted. The Atlanteans believed that the practice of magic was the purposeful incarnation by a mage of the *Supernal* — the heavenly or celestial — into the lower, prosaic realms of matter, including the subtle realms of spiritual matter called ephemera. The mage, by virtue of his soul's attainment to the higher realms, could bring the rulership of those realms down into the common world through sympathy, the principle that like can affect like regardless of distance.

But a sympathetic connection through the soul was not enough. The mind had to understand the complex Tapestry of the universe, how the Patterns of various things were woven into a whole. Only by understanding the threads could a mage weave them into Patterns of his own devising. These threads were the 10 Arcana that comprised all of reality from high to low.

The Atlanteans also pondered the *reasons* behind their art. They knew with certainty that there was more to reality than what met the common eye, and that there was more than one state of existence beyond the material. They believed that behind the many forms and shapes of things, the world was in fact One, heaven and earth together in a single continuum. Subtle veils divided the realms and states of being from one another, separating high from low and creating the illusion of division.

Mortal souls originated from on high and descended to the lower realm seeking manifestation in flesh. Once their sojourn was accomplished, they would ascend again to their source to be renewed. On their descent, they would strip away their celestial raiment and don garments of clay, discarding memories of the Realms Supernal. They arrived in the lower world ignorant, like children eager and curious to learn anew. When their cloaks of clay finally crumbled, they would rise again as sparks from a flame, called by the stars to return in glory, mature with the wisdom they had gained during their time among the limited and uncomprehending forms of the lower realm.

So it is said that mortals came to be, clay bodies worn by luminous souls in forgetfulness. But the reason behind why mortal souls were forced to descend at all became a source of contention. Some magi claimed it was how the universe came to know itself. Others said it was a punishment levied by mad and cruel gods, a terrible cycle designed to keep mortals from becoming more than gods. Still others said it was a challenge meant to be overcome, a trial that only the fit could pass. Only those whose souls had journeyed inward to the Astral Spaces and who passed the tests put to them by their daimons could remember the truth and so ascend in life and escape the cycle of incarnations.



## The Celestial Ladder

The power to warp the very skein of Creation soon outstripped the wisdom of those who wielded it. The hubris of the magi rose unchecked. Many generations after the first had established Atlantis, their legacy turned sour. Mage turned on mage, and so was born the first wizards' war.

The victors claimed Atlantis as theirs, and drove the losers to the far corners of the earth. Then, combining their power, they wrought a great spell and erected a ladder to the Realms Supernal. They spurned the traditional astral paths by which a sorcerer could approach the higher realms by means of a soul journey, for they sought to walk the celestial reaches in their own bodies. They stormed the heights and claimed the thrones of the gods for themselves. Ruling from on high, no longer bound to earth, even their petty dictates and whims became real, for they stood over the lower realm and influenced it with their very thoughts. The subtle veils were rent, and the higher and lower worlds came together — the pure mixed with the impure, and the universe trembled.

Spurred by the imminent destruction and corruption of the world, the exiled mages banded together and assaulted Atlantis, climbing the star ladder and wrestling with the celestial mages in their heavenly palaces. Their struggles were terrible. The two sides clashed in a chaos of realms, and the losers — sorcerers on both sides — were flung from on high back into the lower realm.

## The Fallen World

The ladder shattered, disintegrating into dust, leaving the victors beyond the reach of the earthbound mages. Where the ladder had been, reality cracked and fell into itself, creating a rift between the higher and lower realms, a terrible void that sucked life and energy into itself. The Abyss divided the realms once more, keeping the high, pure realm from the taint of the low. But this was no subtle veil, permeable to returning souls. It was a gulf of unreality, an aberration that was never meant to be. What was before a single world became two worlds — the Supernal World and the Fallen World, with a vast Abyss between them.

The veil between the worlds of spirit and matter hardened, becoming the daunting Gauntlet, a barrier impassible except through magic. Shaken by the reverberations of the ladder's destruction, the foundations of Atlantis crumbled and the island sank beneath the waves. The mystical place that had birthed the magi was no more. The survivors would later wonder: Was this the primordial event that created myths of the Flood and the Tower of Babel? Perhaps. Or perhaps the war reverberated throughout Time itself, endlessly repeating its disastrous finale in every human civilization to come.

Once again, the enlightened escaped to the far corners of the earth and there began the long, slow process of relearning what was lost. Hunted once again by monsters, their progress was slow, for the needs of survival came before the slow study of the Mysteries. What's more, those souls that had not already been touched by the Realms Supernal grew dim, like cold lumps of coal hiding dim cinders within. Many forgot their magical heritage and their souls entered a slumber deeper than they had known before.

This great decline was known as the Quiescence, the Sleeping Curse. The Lie. Cut off from the higher realms, divided from their birthright by the Abyss, souls could not maintain their luminosity and so fell into Sleep. Worse — the gravity of the Abyss pulled on them and weighed down the lids of their inner eyes, causing them to refuse any vision of the higher world. The mages — those who remained Awake — could no longer work their magic before those who

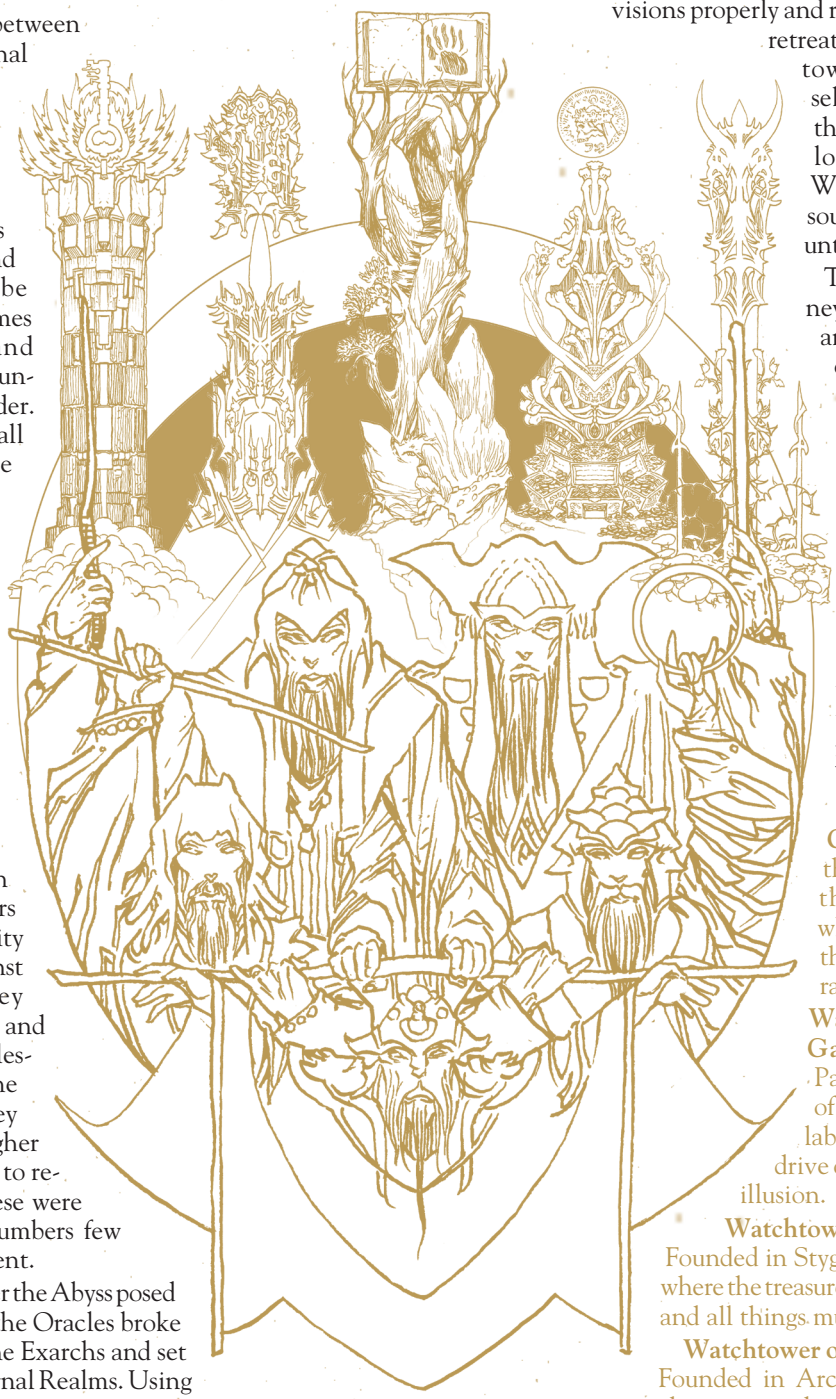
Slept without invoking the powers of the Abyss. Only a rare few in any place at any time remained Awake, tending the flame of Supernal knowledge, keeping the lore of magic alive.

## The Watchtowers

With the Abyss between them and the Supernal World, the source of magic, mages' power began to wane. It became harder and harder to draw the Supernal energies across the void, and when they could be drawn, they sometimes arrived warped and twisted, with effects unwanted by their wielder. In a number of years, all contact with the higher world would be gone and all of humankind would Sleep forever.

Then, one by one, the Watchtowers appeared, their flames sending beacons from the Supernal Realms across the vast night to the souls of the Awakened. Legends tell of five Atlantean kings, the mage heirs of the Awakened City who led the fight against the Exarchs. They climbed the ladder and dueled within the celestial palaces. When the Ladder shattered, they remained in the higher world and continued to resist the Exarchs. These were the Oracles, their numbers few but their powers potent.

Realizing the danger the Abyss posed for the lower world, the Oracles broke off their fight with the Exarchs and set off through the Supernal Realms. Using lore beyond the ken of the Exarchs — for they were royal heirs, privy to magical knowledge allowed to only nobles — they each erected by magic a tower in a single Supernal Realm, modeled after the tall spire that had guided the first vessels to Atlantis. Five towers from five kings. Each invested into their tower the virtues of their own souls and the sum of their magical knowledge, imbued into the very stones of the structures.



The Watchtowers sent visions across the Abyss to mages in the Fallen World, calling to them as Atlantis had once called to their ancestors. Those who interpreted the visions properly and remembered the old ways retreated to caves or secluded towers, sheltering themselves in the dark. They lay their bodies down and, following the lure of the Watchtowers, sent their souls onto astral roads long untrod.

Through harrowing journeys, some of them finally arrived in astral form at one of the five Watchtowers. There they carved their names into the foundation stones and awoke in their bodies. But they were no longer forsaken, for their names had been writ by their own souls. They once more claimed sympathy with the Realms Supernal, although each only in that realm in which her Watchtower stood.

**Watchtower of the Golden Key:** Founded in the Aether, the Realm of the Celestial Spheres, where lightning illumines the sky and magic falls like rain.

**Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet:** Founded in Pandemonium, the Realm of Nightmares, where the labyrinths of the mind can drive one mad and all paths are illusion.

**Watchtower of the Lead Coin:** Founded in Stygia, the Realm of Crypts, where the treasures of the earth are hoarded and all things must one day end.

**Watchtower of the Lunargent Thorn:** Founded in Arcadia, the Realm of Enchantment, where time runs strangely and a carelessly spoken word can rule one's fate forever.

**Watchtower of the Stone Book:** Founded in the Primal Wild, the Realm of Totems, where flesh is forever renewed and the ephemeral is as solid as matter.

### The Lone Watchtower

Some mages in later years claimed a secret teaching. They spoke to those they deemed worthy of another Watchtower — the first, they said — erected in a realm long forgotten and unreachable from this side of the Abyss. Only a very rare few can find their way there by strange astral paths and carve their name into that mysterious tower's foundation. What powers this Watchtower sends to its mages are unknown, for any whose name is written there do not reveal its secrets.

The modern magical orders have many legends and theories about the Lone Watchtower, but no evidence of its existence has ever appeared for public scrutiny.

## The Mystery Play

Without the mystical foundation of Atlantis, mortals could no longer willingly choose to set out on soul journeys to attain the Realms Supernal. Only those who were already mages could reach the new Watchtowers, and even then the journeys were hard and not all returned.

But Awakenings were not denied to Sleepers. By Oracular magic, miracle, happenstance, divine grace or sheer luck, a mortal's soul could stir and find itself at the gate of a Watchtower. If his will was strong enough, he could carve his name into the tower's stones, and so secure for himself mystical sympathy with the Watchtower and its realm. He would return Awakened, changed by his sojourn in a strange land.

As time passed and the Abyss widened, the journeys of the soul grew fewer, but Awakenings still occurred. Sometimes, the soul would not walk the astral paths during its trials but instead perceive the external world through Supernal vision, causing the mind to think it had gone mad, beset by hallucinations and devilry. Ordinary people and things became like actors taking the role of Supernal entities, enacting a mystery play for the soul's benefit. Those who could guess the plot of the play and take their proper role within it were graced with Awakening. Those who failed to anticipate the script or refused to take part soon returned to Sleep, their trial reduced to a memorable nightmare, no more significant than any other dream.

The actors recruited for such mystery plays were unaware of their parts. Only the Awakening could read the cipher of experience and discern the truth of what occurred. Everyone else went about their lives normally, unaware that they had been puppets of the divine. Or did mages merely project onto them their altered perceptions? Was it all in the subject's mind? Regardless, those who passed the trials of the soul could make what was in their minds real, and so the question was moot.

Where the Atlanteans could willfully enter the soul journey of Awakening in the Dragon's Tomb, mortals in the Fallen World Awakened only by strange happenstance, the causes for which are still debated by mages in the modern age. If only mages could know just who would Awaken, and how and when, they could more easily bolster their numbers and work to ensure the Awakening of humanity. But there seemed to be no such laws or guidelines. Even mages, masters of the miraculous, had to rely on rare miracles to maintain their lineage.

## The Hidden Hands Behind History

The Exarchs — the pretender gods — were largely forgotten. If they still existed, they remained unseen. If they acted upon the world, they did so in ways that could be interpreted as the works of Nature or the whims of fate — or, eventually, as random chance or natural law. No one remembered that their own kind had once become gods.

No one, that is, but mages. Cabals of the Awakened handed down their secrets to a select few, ensuring that their methods of casting the old magics remained true. They, of all people, suspected that the Exarchs still ruled in heaven. But they did not rule unopposed. The Oracles also existed in the celestial reaches, working to foil the selfish dictates of the first pretenders. Once in a long age, it is said, a mortal mage's soul may attain the Final Key to the Mysteries and ascend across the Abyss to the Supernal World and so become an Oracle — or Exarch — and impose his own will on the workings of the universe.

The mages who had survived the fall of Atlantis clung to the ways of the lost city with a religious fervor. Surrounded by Sleeping souls who could not remember any of the truths told them by the Awakened. The enlightened were forced to keep the magical traditions secret, to teach them to only those who proved they could accept the precious knowledge. Caretakers of the Mysteries, sorcerers swore to keep magic from the sight and misuse of the Sleeping.

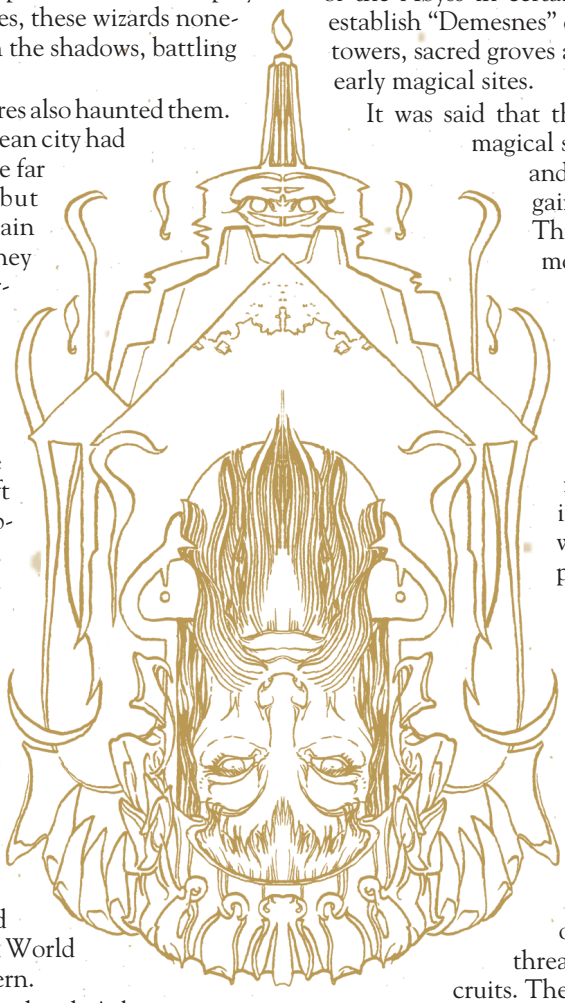
The Atlantean orders codified their stages and degrees of initiation to ensure that only proper initiates were given access to the Arcana, the ways of magic. Mages devised terrible punishments for those who would reveal the Mysteries to uninitiated Sleepers.

In the chaos of the escape from the ruins of the island, the Atlantean orders spread in all directions, finding new ports in nearly every part of the populated world. Sundered from one another, their once unified philosophy splintered, and each order's goals became exalted over the others. Where before each order served a purpose balanced by the other orders, playing one part in a whole, they all now tried to subsume the roles of the others into their own hierarchies, each seeing itself as the center or sole weave in the Great Pattern. Once sundered, each order, bereft of the proximity of fellows, came to view itself as the sole path to magic. Initiation soon became more than just a method of protecting secrets and hiding lore from unprepared eyes. It became a means of weeding out the undeserving and venerating the gifted.

Many ancient high civilizations were influenced by the Atlantean exiles: Vedic India, Ancient Egypt, the Mayans. Their monumental artifacts, such as the pyramids, are said to still hide Atlantean secret codes indecipherable in full even by their heirs, who hold but pieces of the puzzle.

In many places and many times, mages tried to recreate lost Atlantis, to guide the minds of Sleepers in erecting civilizations that sought to reclaim the ancient ways. Each attempt failed. Sleepers were creatures of urges, ruled by whims and unconscious yearnings. They had not the discipline or will to long keep what was good, just and beautiful. In the end, their civilizations each descended into decadence and decay. These untimely ends were, unfortunately, helped along by mages who could not master their own souls, who sought to use Sleeper institutions as a means to their own aggrandizement or power. Ever cautious to keep the secrets and display of their power away from the masses, these wizards nonetheless fought with one another in the shadows, battling over the courses of empires.

The legacy of Atlantis' own failures also haunted them. For too long, the sorcerers of the ocean city had ignored the plight of mortals in the far lands. Not just monsters, but willworkers had come to rule certain places with fear. The bitter seeds they had planted had grown into towering weeds of hatred. Mortals had been promised to demons, and Hallows of primal power had been poisoned. Barbarian mages resorted to human sacrifice to fuel their spells, ensuring that the world the others found when they finally left Atlantis was nearly beyond redemption.



## Shadow Diplomacy

The early mages did not adapt well to their exile. In some cases, they expected to be worshiped as gods, or at least great leaders. But the Abyss ensured the failure of these dreams, lashing mages with harsh, mystic punishments for their hubris — anomalous events later called "Paradoxes." The mystic thread of the Supernal World could not be woven into the Fallen World without risk of rupturing the Pattern.

What's more, barbarian mages vied with Atlantean exiles for Hallows and places of powerful resonance. These mages hated the Atlanteans, blaming them for the Abyss. Driven underground like all sorcerers, their cults died out or were subsumed by the Atlantean orders, but not after many magical battles for supremacy or revenge.

It has been from their place in the shadows, then, that the enlightened have affected the world. Mages have claimed for themselves many of the most remarkable innovations of history. The truth of these claims is nearly impossible to disentangle from the boasts made about them, for mages are a secretive lot, hoarding the truth. If they are quick to speak and tutor on a topic, then surely that topic is shallow and unimportant. They save the best material for initiates alone.

Many like to claim that the efforts of the Awakened have been in humankind's best interest, that they have been noble martyrs searching out occult secrets that might aid humanity and reunite the worlds. Unfortunately, overwhelming evidence runs counter to this claim. More often than not, mages have used their power to control others and play them as pawns in a vast contest for territory and might.

The Atlantean exiles refused to accept their ejection from the heavens, and so sought to find a path whereby they could ascend to its reaches once again. They broke off pieces of their own souls and charged them with the power to touch the Realms Supernal, allowing mages to overcome the lash of the Abyss in certain areas. Soon, all mages sought to establish "Demesnes" of their own. The legends of wizards' towers, sacred groves and cavernous shrines speak of these early magical sites.

It was said that the mage who could solve the most magical secrets, establish the best Demesnes, and wield the mightiest magic would gain the Final Key, and ascend to the Throne of Creation. Humans would once more shake off the clay that bound them and become as gods.

## Today

Magic does not sit comfortably in the modern world. A majority of the world's citizens would rather not have magic exist at all — unless, of course, it were placed firmly in their hands, in which case they would find it the most precious phenomenon known to man.

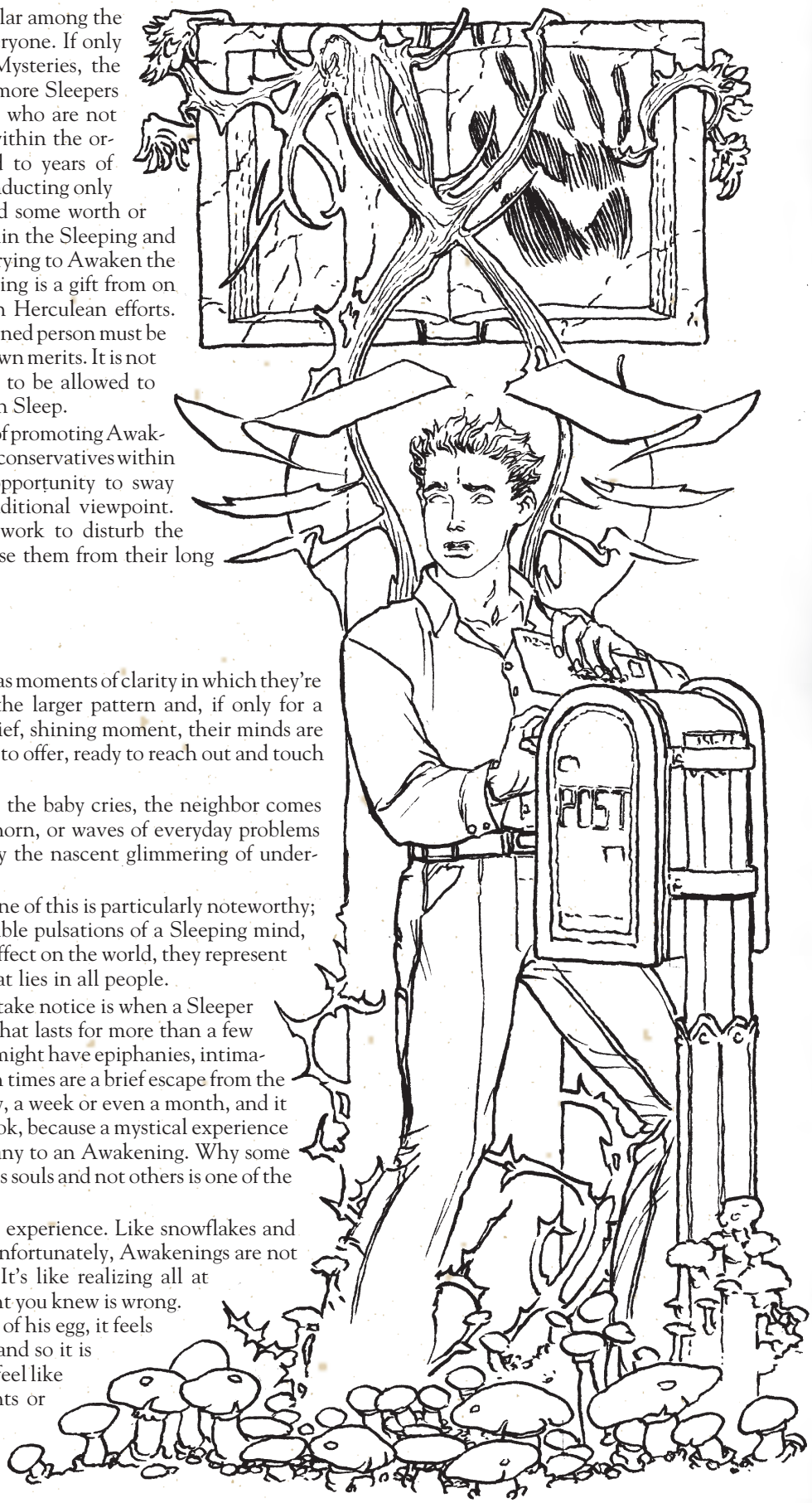
The secretive nature of magic cuts the Awakened off from one another, turning it into a furtive, shameful practice — far from the glory it held in ages past. Mages have argued over their modern dilemma. The Abyss grows wider, and fewer and fewer Sleepers now Awaken.

What are mages to do? Revealing the Mysteries to the uninitiated is not an option, while initiating only those who prove their mettle threatens to cull the numbers of new recruits. There are two responses to this dilemma that have gained many converts in recent years.

The first is the path of ascension. In the tale of Atlantis, the Exarchs seized the heavens and now control the universe from their unseen thrones. The Oracles, those Atlanteans who originally opposed the Exarchs, also exist in the higher realms, ready to aid those who strive once more for the heavens. This cause is supported by the magical orders, who have kept the stories of Atlantis alive throughout the ages of darkness. Just how mages are supposed to go about overthrowing an unseen, celestial foe is a matter for intense debate among the orders, but almost all agree that the place to start is through opposing the Exarch's puppets: the Seers of the Throne, an order of mages dedicated to serving the will of the Exarchs. They are labeled betrayers and tyrants by the Atlantean orders.

The other response, one popular among the more worldly, is to Awaken everyone. If only the Awakened can learn the Mysteries, the argument goes, then more and more Sleepers must be Awakened, even those who are not necessarily ready for it. Many within the orders resist this possibility, used to years of maintaining strict secrecy and inducting only a bare few Sleepers who showed some worth or merit. Some have come to disdain the Sleeping and abhor the idea of intentionally trying to Awaken the undeserving. To them, Awakening is a gift from on high, or the result of one's own Herculean efforts. Others counter that each Awakened person must be allowed to prove himself on his own merits. It is not for the orders to choose who is to be allowed to Awaken and who is to remain in Sleep.

For now, the progressive ideal of promoting Awakenings wins the debate, although conservatives within the orders wait for the right opportunity to sway opinion back to their more traditional viewpoint. Until that time, many mages work to disturb the dreams of the Sleeping and rouse them from their long night.




## The Awakening

From time to time, everyone has moments of clarity in which they're able to connect the pieces of the larger pattern and, if only for a moment, *understand*. For one brief, shining moment, their minds are open to all that the universe has to offer, ready to reach out and touch the Great Mystery…

…And then the phone rings, the baby cries, the neighbor comes knocking, someone honks her horn, or waves of everyday problems roll in unbidden and wash away the nascent glimmering of understanding.

From a mage's perspective, none of this is particularly noteworthy; these are the usual and predictable pulsations of a Sleeping mind, and while they rarely have any effect on the world, they represent the potential for Awakening that lies in all people.

When a mage does sit up and take notice is when a Sleeper has a moment of *understanding* that lasts for more than a few moments. By himself, a Sleeper might have epiphanies, intimations that magic is possible. Such times are a brief escape from the Quiescence. They may last a day, a week or even a month, and it is these cases for which mages look, because a mystical experience can elevate the Sleeper's epiphany to an Awakening. Why some experiences stir some individual's souls and not others is one of the great mysteries.

Awakening is a very personal experience. Like snowflakes and fingerprints, no two are alike. Unfortunately, Awakenings are not typically pleasant experiences. It's like realizing all at once that everything you thought you knew is wrong. When a chick pecks his way out of his egg, it feels like he is destroying the world, and so it is for a nascent mage. A mage may feel like he's crazy for having the insights or perceptions that he does. He might feel as though he's been plucked from the shallow end

of the pool and dropped into the open ocean, but before the mage can accept his new world, he must dispense with his old one, and that act often feels like a violent betrayal of his former self. Far more people *almost* Awaken than actually *do* Awaken, because the fear of leaving the world they knew causes many to retreat into black-and-white fundamentalism as they seek out any available anchor to cling to in a sea of shifting realities. A rare few souls exist who embrace the chaos of Awakening with *too much* zeal, dispensing with *everything* they once were — including their ethics, morals and sense of self.

Not surprisingly, then, Awakening is the sort of thing that people initially ignore and deny. As their moment of understanding grows imminent, they often fight it tooth and nail, right up to the terrifying, fateful moment when they give up and give in to enlightenment. The more stubborn an individual, the harder he's likely to fight his own understanding, and the more suffering and trauma his growing awareness causes — but the more powerful a mage he'll be once he's fully Awakened.

## Ordeals of Awakening

A soul, once stirred, is either sent in a dream or ecstatic vision onto strange astral pathways, or plunged into a "mystery play," a hallucinatory experience whereby the common, mundane phenomena of the world are transformed into highly symbolic and meaningful ciphers. A person experiencing an Awakening is called a seeker. Many seekers think they're going crazy, and in a sense they are. The insane sometimes perceive meaning in random events, but the mage sees how no event is truly random in a vast Tapestry woven by consciousness.

### Mystery Plays

Also called a "waking world dream," the seeker essentially experiences the real world as if it were a dream. People and places appear strange, and can even take semblances and roles alien to them, such as when a truck-stop waitress appears to be a shining maiden dressed in gossamer robes, bearing the ambrosia of the gods (in reality, a $1.00 slice of apple pie), or when the truck stop itself appears to be a filthy den of trolls, strewn with the bones of their kills.

For the seeker, this dream world is real: the ambrosial pie is truly divine, the trolls truly nasty. But only she experiences this "truth." To everyone else around, including any other Awakened mages, it's just a normal truck stop, with a dumpy, middle-aged waitress and a stale, two-day old slice of pie. To their eyes, the world is mundane. To the eyes of the seeker, it is alive with enchantment and pregnant with possibility. Every action, every thing, communicates the deepest truths about the universe and the seeker's relation to it. The seeker has but to play along to unlock the key to Awakening.

Anyone who doesn't realize that the seeker is experiencing an Awakening might think him crazy. When he begins addressing a homeless beggar as the King of the Elves, his friends think he's surely lost his mind. The seeker himself is usually unaware that he is undergoing a conversation with his soul. The Awakening's reality and verisimilitude is indistinguishable from normal waking consciousness.

### Astral Journeys

Those people who for various reasons refuse to see the world as full of enchantment might instead find it in their dreams. People often deny the call, but if the call is urgent enough, it cannot be avoided forever. In dream, deep meditation or the reverie of an ecstatic experience, the mage's consciousness is propelled across the Astral Threshold and into the vast infinities of his own soul. Although he does not yet know it, the path he follows leads to one of the five Watchtowers. Whether or not he reaches that tower before he is drawn back into bodily awareness is the challenge.

Inside the soul, the normal rules of reality do not apply. The environment could appear to be a featureless plain, a dense jungle, a shining cathedral or the depths of intergalactic space, and may change instantly. The same is true of the figures that populate this space, as people, animals, plants, spirits and objects may appear as they are normally seen, or transformed into something else. While such appearances and transformations may seem nonsensical, they are nonetheless bound to a kind of dream logic designed to offer the seeker a chance to raise his awareness.

## Initiation at the Watchtower

The ultimate end of both a mystery play and an astral journey is to deliver the soul to a Watchtower for initiation. The Awakening is sometimes named "the Call." It's the Watchtower that does the calling. The soul, hearing its name whispered from the Supernal World across the infinity of the Abyss, either responds and enters the trance of Awakening, or refuses the call and remains in Sleep.

In a mystery play, the Watchtower can be nearly anything in reality: a skyscraper, a phone booth or a grove in the woods. Its true form is evident to the seeker, but to no one else. It is the archetypal Castle Perilous, the tower of testing, before which the seeker might be found wanting. If he passes the tests — by proving his perseverance throughout the Awakening — he is admitted into the tower, where he sees a multitude of names carved onto its walls. With a knowing beyond reason, he recognizes the empty space reserved for his name and begins to write, carve or will his name onto the surface. Even the illiterate know how to do this, for the process of writing is an archetypal image, not a literal act of writing. It is the Awakened one's first spell, the declaration of his true self and his right to stand in the Supernal World. By virtue of this name and its expression within the Watchtower, the Awakened soul gains sympathy with the Supernal Realm in which his name is written.

Again, this process is archetypal and can take many forms. In a mystery play, the seeker might write his name into the ledger at a bank, although the clerks there might believe that he is merely signing up for a safe-deposit box, unaware that he now claims a much greater treasure than all the assets within the bank. Or he might instead sign his name outside the window of a lover he courts, initiating a marriage of his soul to the Supernal. The permutations are endless; the symbols mean the same: a divine initiation.

Once he has established his name in the heavens, the seeker returns to bodily awareness in the "real" world, no longer a Sleeper. He is now a mage.

## The Soul

Beneath the trappings and props of a person, beneath the gross elements of appearance and physicality, and beneath the subtler elements of beliefs, attitudes and memories lies the kernel of an individual that is the central stitch in his Pattern. Around that, the rest of his being accrues. This secret, sacred core is the soul.

Among academically inclined mages, few topics have been the subject of as much mystical exploration and discussion as the soul and its impact on being. And yet, no one has been able to explain it in any but the vaguest terms.

What is commonly known is that the soul is the vital element of a person's being. It is that ineffable portion of a person that is responsible for her liveliness, vitality, curiosity, sense of wonder and connection to the world. It is also the portion of a person responsible for the use of magic. The clearest way to see what the soul does for a person is to remove it. A person who has lost her soul still retains her identity, memories and personality, but she lacks vigor, vitality and conviction. In the absence of a soul, the soul-less one slowly loses her empathy for both herself and her fellows and becomes entirely inured to both the pain and joy of others.

No loss can compare to the loss of one's soul. The horror of watching yourself or someone close to you slowly degenerate into the husk of a human being is incalculable. Souls that have been severed are rarely regained; most are devoured or traded back and forth between spirits as delicacies or commodities. Mages versed in the ways of Spirit can track down a lost soul and reconnect it to a body, but there are too few such willworkers to prevent and cure all cases.

A mage who loses his soul immediately enters Sleep until it is restored. His ability to perform magic is gone. If the mage somehow gets his soul back, he needs a full night's sleep (to allow his soul to "reseat" itself) before he can use magic again.

## The Lore of the Soul

Some knowledge of the soul is relatively common, although not necessarily available to every mage. The prevailing theory among the orders, inherited from Atlantean lore, is that the soul is the Supernal spark of a person's being (and thus, supposedly, immortal). Since it is from the Supernal World, there is much that cannot be known about it to those in the Fallen World. It is a Mystery, eluding the attempts of the wise to encompass it with any single theory.

The soul is subtle enough that it is relatively hard to affect, making those few entities capable of tampering with it particularly frightening and reviled. The Tremere lichs (see pp. 363-367) are among this number, as are a handful of powerful spirits whose function in the world is to tend to souls. Most such spirits perform their duties properly. There are some, however, who have grown corrupt and no longer perform their obligations as they were charged.

In the grand scheme of things, a mage is less likely to lose her soul to a random spiritual predator than she is to bargain it away. Certain evil spirits are known to promise all manner of services and power in exchange for the souls they covet. That said, most souls are not worth much, and spirits (or "demons") are not likely to offer that much for them. Souls are valuable to whatever degree they are hard to come by. Corrupt souls are a dime a dozen. Only a particularly noble soul, or that of a powerful mage, is really worth the kind of effort on the part of a demon that the old tales recount.

## The Quiescence

The Sleeping Curse is an affliction of the soul. Mages believe the cause to be the Abyss, the void between the Fallen and Supernal Worlds. This vale of nothingness, this place of unmaking, dampens the soul spark of beings within the Fallen World, cutting them off from their source in the Supernal Realm. In a sense, the Abyss cuts off the oxygen that the fire of the soul needs to stay alive. It never completely diminishes the spark, but it quells it enough to keep most mortals from realizing the true nature of reality. Instead, they believe the "Lie," the falsehood shown to them by the Quiescence of their souls.

The Quiescence is even more pernicious, however, in that it actively seeks to keep Sleepers from Awakening. Any hint of the Supernal World is resisted. The very sight or sensation of magic causes a Sleeper's soul to flinch and the Abyss to stir. Many enlightened believe that a Sleeping soul has a certain magical sympathy with the Abyss, similar to how Awakened souls have sympathy with a Supernal Realm. For the Sleeper, this is not a formal initiation but a result of their own souls' unconscious desperation to return to the Supernal. They hover near the Abyss, savoring the far shores on the other side, but have not the strength to attempt the crossing — unless they Awaken.

There are a few mortals whose souls have stirred just enough to rise above the Quiescence, but not enough to be called Awake. They have not heard the call of a Watchtower, and remain ignorant about magic and the truth behind reality unless it is taught to them. These half-aware mortals are called Sleepwalkers, or sometimes "lucid dreamers." None can say just what causes some souls to walk in their Sleep, although mages prize such individuals. Willworkers often recruit them as assistants and acolytes, people who can work within the Sleeping world without attracting the attention of entities who are drawn to the Awakened. Some mages even try to create families with Sleepwalkers, in hopes that the odds of their progeny Awakening are higher than most. It is rumored that mystical orders like the Guardians of the Veil conduct breeding programs to encourage magical bloodlines and dynasties of the Awakened.

## Paradoxes

Magic is the act of drawing down Supernal reality into the Fallen World, and changing the mundane world by dint of higher laws, which hold precedence over lower laws. This is not a mechanical and efficient process. It's an Art, made challenging by a mage's degree of Supernal understanding, and mistakes occur. Therein lies the irony: The more a mage knows the Supernal, the less she heeds the Fallen World's precedents, and the more likely it is that she'll impose the higher upon the lower too forcefully.

Doing so can cause a break or rent in the fabric of reality, a hitch in the Tapestry. This flaw of *unreality* is called a Paradox. Mages believe that such flaws or holes in the Tapestry are filled immediately by the Abyss, but its attempts to mold itself into reality are a mockery, expressed through

twisted, catastrophic phenomena, from out-of-control spells to a spellcaster's bout of dementia to an alteration of reality itself to the malformation of the mage to the manifestation of an Abyssal creature. A Paradox is the punishment a mage suffers for misuse of magic.

The chances of a Paradox occurring increase dramatically whenever Sleepers witness an obvious or even improbable act of magic. Their souls recoil, and the Abyss stirs in response. If their exposure is prolonged, their very disbelief can unravel spells, like a mage versed in dispelling magic. Very few spells can withstand the long-term scrutiny of a Sleeping soul. Its threads fray and are soon unwoven. The things of the lower world taint the things of the higher world, and poison their enchantments.

For this reason, mages avoid casting spells before unenlightened eyes. It is considered a crime to work the Art before Sleepers, and a high crime to speak of the Mysteries to them, lest Supernal wisdom become tainted by Abyssal sympathy.

## The Awakened

Once the soul Awakens, a person can never truly be part of normal life again. His friends and relatives are still trapped in Sleep, unable to understand what he's going through no matter how hard they try. He can change reality with force of will, for he knows the truth behind the Lie, and can contact the higher world that is closed and unknown to those he loves.

It's little wonder that mages retreat into their own underground world of occult secrets. To those known in life before, a mage seems to withdraw into solitude or hangs out with a new group of friends that he never introduces to his old ones. He never calls anymore, or comes around for a beer. He drops out of their lives and is soon forgotten. He enters a new world, one fraught with the kind of socio-political snipping one would expect more from politics than mysticism.

Mages adhere to ancient forms of social interaction: the traditional master-apprentice relationship, the respect for those of higher rank (i.e., mystical attainment), and the obedience due one's betters. To most mages, democracy and other forms of social egalitarianism are fads, products of a world wherein one Sleeper is little different from another, at least when judged from a magical perspective. One mage can definitively demonstrate to another his superiority in the Ars Mysteriorum, so ideals of equality are meaningless. Nonetheless, modern mages come out of a world that has struggled for centuries to establish such values, so it is little wonder that they inculcate them into the society of the Awakened — a society normally more concerned with ancient Atlantean customs than modern values. For the first time in ages, the orders struggle with new ideals. To some, this is a breath of fresh air, hinting at new possibilities in a struggle long defined as nearly unwinnable. To others, it is a distraction from a mage's true purpose and another example of how Sleepers can taint even the souls of the Awakened.

All that aside, mages still share commonalities and customs. The most basic, foundational identity a mage can claim is the Path upon which he walks, the means by which he draws down the higher into the lower (or, as some mages prefer to describe it, opening the inner world to the outer world).

### The Paths

Every mage is said to walk a Path, one that leads through a Supernal Realm to a Watchtower. This is not a literal or physical route, but a metaphorical road or direction for the soul. Each realm has its own metaphysical laws that favor some principles over others. These laws are represented by the Arcana and their degree of power within a realm, described as Ruling (the principles represented by the Arcana are manifested in their most pure forms), Common (the Arcana are more powerful than in the Fallen World, but not as pure as the Rulers), and Inferior (the Arcana are still more powerful than in the Fallen World, but they exert little influence over the realm).

A mage's beginning Arcana, the magical lore he knows from his Awakening and immediate studies afterward, tend to be the Ruling Arcana for his realm.

#### Acanthus

A mage who walks the Path of Thistle that winds through the realm of Arcadia to the Watchtower of the Lunargent Thorn (the "moonsilver thorn"). Sleepers know Arcadia dimly through the legends of faeries, and the nymphs and dryads of the plant kingdom. In Arcadia, everything is enchanted, wearing a magical glamour of intense beauty — or ugliness. Things tend toward extremes; there is very little compromise in the abode of the Fae. Change is common and encouraged. Those who walk this Path tend to be fickle and ever eager to try new things.

The Ruling Arcana for Arcadia are Fate and Time. Fairy stories from around the world reflect the timelessness of the realm, as people who enter places under its influence and spend an evening often exit many years later, as time is measured in the Fallen World. Likewise, a promise or oath is binding, and none can betray it without terrible consequences.

Acanthus, also called "enchanters," are often thought of as the archetypal "divine fools," for they seem to achieve their goals by not trying or by waiting for things to come to them. Little wonder this, with the Fate Arcanum on their side. But this over-reliance on luck can be to their detriment, as they spurn patience and plunge into situations that are perhaps best tackled with some degree of foresight and strategy. They are the wild cards of the Awakened world, and both loved and hated by others for it.

#### Mastigos

A mage who walks the Path of Scourging through the nightmarish labyrinth of the realm of Pandemonium, at the center of which is the Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet. Pandemonium is also called the Realm of Nightmares, for its echoes appear to Sleepers most often in their most terrible and dreaded dreams, where they fall from endless heights, never to hit the ground, or run for what seems like hours but never make any ground. Their worst fears or repressed emotions are brought forth in places touched by Pandemonium, to be examined and judged by strangers, who mock and condemn them. Through such a gauntlet of humiliation and submission, a soul is scourged of its sins and is thus purified to reunite, cleansed and free, with the divine.

The Ruling Arcana of Pandemonium are Mind and Space. The darkest corners of the unconscious mind are readily apparent here, worn like badges, while all roads twist in upon themselves, leading a traveler to confrontations with his own failings.

While Mastigos "warlocks" are often associated with diabolists and demon-summoners (those who make deals with the Devil), they are more properly the masters of such infernal urges, those who by dint of will command that within them which is most unsavory. While all men sin, the Mastigos learn from the foibles of the mortal coil and use them to attain higher power.

### Moros

A mage who walks the Path of Doom, treading the barren wastes and black rivers of the realm of Stygia to attain the Watchtower of the Lead Coin. There is a price to be paid for entering places influenced by Stygia, and there are many tollgates on the road the soul must travel through death to attain new life. This price isn't in mundane lucre but in the treasure reaped by the soul during life. If its weight is light, like that of precious metals, the soul can rise above its death. But if it is heavy, like lead, the soul must remain in the abode of shades until it can relinquish its hold on life.

The Ruling Arcana of Stygia are Death and Matter, for it is the place of shells, whether the hollow shells of egos worn in life or the heavy shells of material greed. Whatever is most heavy falls to the influence of this realm. Ghosts who are anchored to the world they have already left, material treasures that distract the soul from its true work, and even darkness, which weighs down the light.

Moros necromancers are often stereotyped as dour and quiet, and there are certainly those mages who fit that description, but this image is based more on others' misunderstanding of what mages who work so close to death must be like. If a Moros is gloomy, it is because he is all too aware of the doom that others face, while he rises above it all, alchemically transformed by his sojourn in the undiscovered country to which all eventually travel.

### Obrimos

A mage who walks the Path of the Mighty, gliding on celestial winds through the realm of the Aether and the firmament of the stars to reach the Watchtower of the Golden Key. Only the elect can enter here, guarded by the Hosts with their swords of fire. Lightning strikes any who fly with false wings, like Icarus downed by his hubris. He who would wield the Flame Supernal must not flinch in the face of adversity, and cleave to one of the many visions of the divine.

The Ruling Arcana of the Aether are Forces and Prime. The very realm bristles with energy — sometimes too much energy, threatening to burn those not shielded by divine purpose. The raw power of the prima materia, the fire of Creation that fuels magic, is born here and meted out to the Tapestry by Providence.

Other mages often fear Obrimos theurgists for their temperaments as much as for their judgmental attitudes. Nonetheless, all admire their strength, and call upon them first when the need is dire.

### Thyrsus

A mage who walks the Path of Ecstasy, forging his own trail through the realm of the Primal Wild to discover the Watchtower of the Stone Book. Most of the hallmarks of civilization are but dreams not yet dreamt in this realm, where the world into which mortals were first born thrives in all its teeming grandeur and horror. This place speaks to the primordial in all beings, causing them to lose themselves to ecstasies of the flesh or spirit, exalting in the very act of being alive. Some claim that all wine is blessed with the taste of the Primal Wild, and that those who get madly drunk dance in its humid embrace.

The Ruling Arcana of the Primal Wild are Life and Spirit. The pounding drums of the heart and lungs, the surging blood in every vein, the tingling nerves and salty sweat — these things are an alphabet of desire presided over by this realm. Not just flesh, but ephemera, too — the instincts of beast and spirit alike are wrought in the Primal Wild's jungles.

Thyrsus shamans celebrate the moment and the sheer thrill of existence. Surrounded by Presences, they are never alone — there is always a partner ready to take up the dance anew. While some of them are looked upon by other mages as uncivilized louts, they are no "hippies." The Path of Ecstasy is also about pain, for life is there, too. Only the dead feel no pain. Thyrsus are often the first mages sought when the Realms Invisible intrude.

### Supernal Symbology

The modern scientific worldview tends to treat ideas as secondary realities, less real than matter. The magical worldview knows that ideas are *more* real than matter. What is merely a metaphorical idea in the Fallen World might well be a literal reality in the Supernal World. In other words, the *things* of the higher world can sometimes be known in the lower world through symbols.

Symbols are images or ideas with meanings that can't be exhausted through study or reduced to a single, simple concept through logic. Examples are mystical signs like the pentagram and the cross. Likewise, myths are metaphors that can refer to Supernal things or events. An event recounted in mythology might not have occurred literally in the Fallen World — where it is a metaphor for a psychic truth — but it might very well have taken place in the Supernal World.

Mystical symbols speak to the soul, reminding it of its heritage, even if this remembering never rises to conscious awareness for most people. An Awakened soul can consciously engage with a symbol to understand its Supernal meaning — the thing that it mirrors. Using symbols in magic strengthens a mage's sympathetic connection to the Realms Supernal. Indeed, it's part of the modus operandi of the Art, the reason for the occult's refulgence with mysterious and compelling symbols, signs and images. They speak to the truth of the higher world.

Even Sleepers pick up the importance of certain symbols, and the study of Sleeper mythologies and esoterica may yield real truths for those who can distinguish them. Mystical symbology serves as a background for learning the Mysteries. Mages are insatiably curious about occult knowledge, even

ideas seemingly created by Sleepers, for in their misunderstood dreams Sleepers can touch upon higher truths. Excavating these truths from the silt of unknowing is a challenge, but one that is rewarding to mages.

## Occult Correspondences

The Supernal sometimes seeps into the dreams of Sleepers, fertilizing their imaginations with images and metaphors from various Supernal Realms. These icons are filtered into religion, philosophy and occult systems the world over. Mages can sometimes discern the Supernal truth behind Fallen World symbols, and they find that incorporating these Sleeper occult systems into their rituals actually aids their magic, strengthening sympathetic ties to Watchtowers. Note that the relationship between the Supernal Realms and mortal religions does not demand a causal link whereby one creates the other. Both phenomena — Supernal Realms and mortal spirituality — seem to influence the other reciprocally.

Below is a short list of some of these correspondences. It's by no means exhaustive, and categories sometimes overlap. For example, Haitian voodoo resonates with both the realms of Pandemonium and Stygia. Mastigos and Moros might incorporate voodoo into their methods of casting, as a means of ensuring Supernal sympathy.

**The Aether (Obrimos):** Christian Gnostic and Cabalistic symbols, sky gods, Hermes/Thoth/Mercury, Norse Aesir, Zoroastrianism

**Arcadia (Acanthus):** Faeries and elves, Celtic magical symbols, druids, European witchcraft, Norse Vanir, the Eleusinian Mysteries

**Pandemonium (Mastigos):** Goetia, Middle Eastern myths of demons, Zoroastrian devas, Iblis and the *nafs*, Haitian voodoo

**The Primal Wild (Thyrsus):** Shamanic customs, Australian aboriginal myth, Native American myth, Candomble, indigenous myth the world over, the Greek Orphic and Dionysian Mysteries

**Stygia (Moros):** Egyptian and Etruscan religion, Hades, Greek eidola, Haitian voodoo, certain forms of Chinese ancestor worship

## Cabals

Mages are, by nature, strong willed and somewhat dogmatic individuals. Consequently, they don't always play well with others. The intense focus and study required to learn magic does not foster a great deal of social interaction among the enlightened. At first glance, it seems as though it would be more attractive for a mage to try to go it alone and establish a small sanctum of her own rather than put up with the distraction and competition of interacting with other Awakened individuals. Absent other factors, this would likely be the case, but other factors *do* play a part. A mage's chances of survival increase enormously when she puts her solitary inclinations aside and works with at least one other Awakened. Simultaneously, her chances of descending unchecked into the madness that magical power can cause drop significantly as well.

Most mages join a cabal, a group of other mages, usually peers at the same level of magical development. Nonetheless, some mages work alone. They are called "solitaries." If they once had a cabal that broke up or was destroyed, their reticence to join another gives them a certain amount of respect. Meanwhile, those who never join cabals are distrusted as antisocial freaks.

When working together, an aggregate of mages is known as a "cabal." In common parlance, the word can refer to any small group of individuals, but it most commonly denotes a group of conspirators. In the highly politicized world of the Awakened, either can apply.

Despite their frequent tendency toward individualism, mages on the whole are intelligent enough to realize that they're more likely to achieve their goals if they work in tandem. Any given mage has a slew of reasons to work with his fellow willworkers.

Cabals often have a mystical significance, chosen around a theme inherent to a group. Such *symbolic* cabals might base their theme on their number of members, the quality of their magical practice, their locale or any other factor that members' orders recognize as a proper magical correspondence. A cabal might be formed along an elemental theme, with one member taking the position of fire, another water, and so on, until all four (or five, depending on the paradigm) elemental roles are filled. Other cabals might use astrological signs or Arcana roles as their symbolic unifier.

## Symbolic Themes

Some examples of symbolic themes are:

**The Four (or Five) Elements:** Each member of the cabal takes the role of an element — earth, air, fire, water and sometimes spirit. In the East, the elements might be earth, fire, wood, water and metal. These roles don't simply mean that a member must perform magic using those physical materials. The elements are also conceptual. Earth = sensation, perception; air = thought, intellect, reason; water = emotion, instinct; fire = intuition, will.

**Astrology:** Members identify themselves with houses of the Zodiac or planets.

**Alchemy:** Members identify themselves with certain alchemical substances (gold, lead) or processes.

**Trees:** Each member aligns himself with a particular tree, such as in the Celtic Ogham alphabet used by Irish druids.

**Pantheons:** Identifying with deities is empowering, but cabals should be careful to honor the gods while doing so, lest they invoke divine ire.

**Deck of Cards/Tarot:** Members "rule" court cards or represent suits, or even Major Arcana figures from the Tarot.

**Totems:** Each member represents a powerful animal totem, or even a magical creature such as a griffin or chimera.

**Venomous Animals:** Members name themselves after poisonous creatures (toads, scorpions), or perhaps everyone is named for a type of poisonous snake. Such cabals often specialize in martial arts or assassination.

**Circus:** Members assumes roles from under the Big Top: ringleader, lion tamer, acrobat, clown.

**Baseball:** Members fill certain positions — pitcher, outfielder, catcher — and so explore how America's pastime really is a metaphor for the nation.

As evidenced by this list, the possibilities for symbolic cabals are nearly endless.

Due to their inherent nature as well as the uncanny events that tend to follow them around, mages attract supernatural attention — most of which is unwanted. Many Awakened can see through the disguises and illusions behind which other supernatural creatures hide. Those entities find the ability *intensely* disturbing, to say the least, and are likely to take whatever steps they deem necessary to maintain their secrecy. In the case of a vampire or savage lycanthrope, that generally means the death of the offending mage. A willworker is in a much better position to survive this attention if he is in a cabal. A vampire might be able to take on one mage or even two, but a whole cabal of practitioners of the arcane arts is a threat that even powerful supernatural entities would rather avoid.

Furthermore, mages might be inclined to set aside their differences if they share a single agenda. The most obvious of these is the defeat of a common foe, but other agendas that might draw a cabal together include exploration of some portion of the Shadow Realm, guarding a shared secret, or creating some great enchanted item. Given the abilities possessed by even a single mage, the tasks that bring a cabal together are often truly daunting.

Simple companionship might be enough to cause a mage to work with others. A lone mage is at great risk of falling prey to madness. As they say, power corrupts. In the case of mages, a Paradox can intensify that tendency by shrouding a sorcerer in various forms of madness. By recognizing the incipient symptoms of Paradox-triggered ailments, peers can intervene before the situation becomes critical. Even if a mage has already fallen prey, a trusted member of her cabal can be all that's needed to bring her back to sanity. In the World of Darkness, any mage who is *not* part of a cabal is immediately suspect because of that fact, and seemingly sane behavior is not a defense. A solitary Awakened who does not evince signs of madness is simply assumed to be mad in a deeper, more disturbing way.

## Reputation

Territorial politics among mages have a way of balkanizing the Awakened community. Mages are so focused on establishing and then defending their sanctums that they often neglect to work together for any sort of overarching goal. There is little more communication between mages on different coasts than there is between carpenters or hackers. That said, the Awakened community isn't *that* big, and a cabal whose actions are sufficiently noteworthy can gain a reputation.

A reputation can be a double-edged sword. While it might be nice to be recognized, it can also be dangerous. A cabal with a particularly good reputation is at greater risk of succumbing to hubris. One with a reputation for dubious ethics is more likely to attract the notice of those who want the group to engage in shady activities on their behalf.

Once a cabal has made a name for itself in the region in which it's based, that name spreads, one letter, phone call or mystic sending at a time until members are well known (at least in certain circles). Should that occur, the group needs to be very careful about whom it deals with and what kinds of activities it performs on others' behalf, keeping in mind that others may think of members primarily as tools for furthering personal agendas.

## Common Cause

Although rivalries and enmities certainly occur between cabal-mates, they usually take second stage when the circle's goals are at stake. In the dark years following the Fall of Atlantis, mage cabals often provided the sole unifying vision for otherwise disparate willworkers. Some goals were even regarded by members as high ideals to uphold, purposes worth dying for. Members put collective needs above their own. Or rather, the needs of the cabal became their own. The group gave a mage a source of identity and roots within a region or community. Solitary mages were often wanderers, forced from a region by local cabals and distrusted or shunned by foreign societies. Despite the more libertine nature of mages in the modern world, cabals today are much as they were in the past: single institutions that serve as sorcerers' homes and families in one.

## Protocols

Cabals are founded around a "protocol," the creed of a circle, and some have magical oaths to which members must adhere. A protocol is set in stone as an oath (even if it's not magically sealed as such), and can be changed only by the agreement of two-thirds of the group's membership.

Most cabals that follow Atlantean customs adopt a heraldic sign as a symbol of their word and authority, for use in magic and as a means of communicating certain concepts without resorting to words. For example, a wyvern on a crest

signifies a cabal prepared to match poison barb for poison barb.

### Networking

Cabals often engage in trading favors with other groups, both neighboring and foreign. Respective members are enlisted to live up to these favors. If one cabal owes another aid for service rendered in war (against Seers of the Throne or Banishers, perhaps), it is expected to respond when that other calls for help. One or more members are then sent out to render that aid.

Some cabals provide resources, not necessarily in money but in magic and lore, such as a well-stocked library. Allowing outsiders to use one's library is a good means of gaining favors, so a unique library is an asset not only to the members of the group, but to other mages as well.

Cabals tend to keep good records of who owes them favors and what kind, and also track what they owe to others and how they might least repay such debts. Among mages, debts aren't just handshakes or even legal contracts — they're most often magical oaths. There are consequences for refusing to repay a debt when it's called due. This usually takes the form of a curse, but there might be other repercussions. Demons or other spirits of vengeance might appear, for example. The punishment depends on the degree of magical power woven into the oath, and on the degree of worldly power the debtor can call upon in retribution.

## Mystical Orders

While some mages prefer to walk alone or spurn any form of society or stricture that might impede them in their quest for power, most are drawn to join one of the mystical orders. The ardors of Awakened life are too rigorous to trust to self-initiation. Once you know about the supernatural world, it knows about you. Mages need someone to watch their backs, and a cabal is not always enough. A mystical order provides a greater network for a mage, not only for defense, but also for the furthering of her power.

To join an order, a willworker must seek initiation. Initiation is a sacred ceremony that commits the applicant to the goals of the society, and the order to the fostering of the mage. It's a symbolic death of the newly Awakened mage as he leaves behind what he was and is reborn as a novice in the magical arts of his order.

The initiation process varies a great deal, even within an order. A Mysterium mage's introduction may be a prayerful, orderly rite of acceptance, a magical baptism, or a scholarly introduction into the esoteric elements of his order's practices. An Adamantine Arrow's initiation could be a trial by ordeal (like hanging from an ash tree as a sacrifice for Odin).

Once the process of initiation is complete, the initiate has access to the secrets of his new order (at least its readily accessible ones), including the steps of learning its rotes, its codified spells.

Mages are expected to promote the goals of their orders, which often means opposing the goals of other orders. The machinations of mystical societies might come as a shock to those expecting sedate, scholarly brotherhoods. And yet, the sheer conniving nature of Awakened politics is an obvious expression of the basic currency in which mages trade: power.

### The Caucus

A caucus is a meeting in which the disparate members of an order from a particular region gather to discuss issues of importance. Members are often spread across different cabals, so getting them together on a regular basis is not easy. Caucuses rarely occur more than once a month, and sometimes not even with the order's full local membership. The highest-ranking representative of the order usually calls for a caucus, although sometimes it's merely the mage who is most active or involved in achieving the society's ideals.

The meeting place is typically a well-guarded sanctum owned by the leading sorcerer or someone who volunteers use of his place. It could be a rented club, a small apartment, a secluded grove or even a chapter house specifically maintained for that purpose. In the last case, one or more members are wealthy enough to afford maintaining a permanent location, or members are expected to tithe to help with the costs. Such donations are the exception rather than the rule, however, since most mages have their own individual or cabal-owned sanctums to maintain, and don't see the need for another investment that is used only once in a while.

Topics raised at a caucus depend entirely on local context. For some orders, it might be a strategy meeting about how to gain more power, such as tactics for gaining the favor of one or more Councilors, or how to lobby for their own seat on the Ruling Council. For other orders, it might simply be a party or even a rote-training workshop. For all of them, at one time or another, caucuses serve as places to trade favors among order members.

### The Pentacle

The loose affiliation of the Atlantean orders and the Free Council is sometimes called the Pentacle, especially when referring to Consilii in which all five orders participate. Some mages believe there is magical power and strength in an alliance of five orders, for it mirrors the five-pointed Atlantean pentagram (see pp. 129-130). Others scoff, claiming that the age-old alliance of the four orders with true Atlantean heritage — sometimes called the Diamond — is the only proper basis for an alliance. Still others claim that no alliance should ever be enshrined with a title, lest it become magically binding on all parties, hindering the freedom of individual orders.

# THE ADAMANTINE ARROW

There are weapons that bring death, and weapons that grant life. The Adamantine Arrow embraces both. Every order practices essential occult defense techniques, but the Arrow goes further, internalizing the metaphor of war. It is the order's political stance and occult praxis. For some, it's a hard, ascetic path that burns away cowardice and encourages action over contemplation. Others see the order as the perfect platform to lead the Awakened's secret battles, selling services to the highest bidder or even seizing Demesnes away from the weak. Above all, the Adamantine Arrow *acts*. Members are not given to purposeless cloistering, navel-gazing meditation or weak pacifism. They know the Awakened are in the midst of an esoteric war, and bring a strong hand to bear for the right side.

But there's the question: Which side *is* the right side? Once, the Arrow protected Atlantis against all threats, internal and external. They were called the Ungula Draconis, the Talon of the Dragon. None could deny that this was righteous work, because it kept the flame of human power alive in an age rife with conquering monsters and renegade witches. When it came to Atlantis, there was no doubt and no compromise, even if the hinterlands suffered raids and ruins for its Awakened glory. In time the ideal turned to warmongering and conquest. A mere soldier in the gleaming streets of the city could become a god in the wilderness. And if there, why not in the heavens?

Arrogance led to the Fall, and the Fall led to the Exile. Atlantis fragmented and the Adamantine Arrow guarded the shards. The Arrow has always claimed to be above politics, devoted to the pure duty of defending the secrets of magic from its defilers. Now, however, doubt and opposition wrack the old orders. Every time an Arrow mage chooses a side, she shapes the political arena. It's little wonder that such mages often grow impatient with mere guardianship and strive to seize power for themselves.

## *Overview*

An Arrow is a warrior first, but this isn't as narrow a calling as many suspect. For every frontline fighter who rends the horrors of the Abyss with bare hands and soul, there's a strategist who sees and manipulates the secret, struggling patterns of the world. Economic, ecological and more esoteric conflicts are studied, mastered and beaten into any shape an Arrow desires. Mages see reality as a many-layered thing, full of signs and movements invisible to the uninitiated. The Awakened art of war follows these patterns using a thousand techniques.

The Adamantine Arrow is assured of its roots in Atlantis, but it does not claim any particular historical event as its own. Instead, it champions the common virtues of warriors from many cultures. An Arrow might insist that these virtues are the spiritual radiance of the order's legacy after the Exile, a torch burning to guide soldiers of all ages away from petty violence to a common ethic of justice. If this is true, though, it poses a contradiction, for the order carries within it the capacity for atrocity, rule by junta and a thirst for violent, self-justifying power. Like the occult art of war, this flaw can manifest in endless varieties, making it hard to detect and check. The Adamantine Arrow recognizes the essential problem, but is not always sure whether a particular action upholds its ideals or sins.

Warriorship is never its own virtue. Only righteous service gives an Arrow's life meaning. After the Fall, the order defended other mages from the new dangers of the Fallen World and swore oaths of loyalty. Today, this is still the Adamantine Arrow's primary role. Its mages defend Demesnes, sanctums and cabals as long as they are legitimate heirs to Atlantis. Some Arrows purportedly guard evil things that cannot (or because of some cruel fate, must not) be banished from the world.

When Arrows assume power, they claim to follow their ethos in spirit. Sometimes a threat arises that requires martial leadership. Sometimes an Arrow's charges are morally or mystically weak, and she feels the best way to uphold her oath is to take command. But while the Adamantine Arrow is respected, it cannot guarantee that its members are virtuous souls. Power, not prudence, motivates many members to take up the mantle of rule.

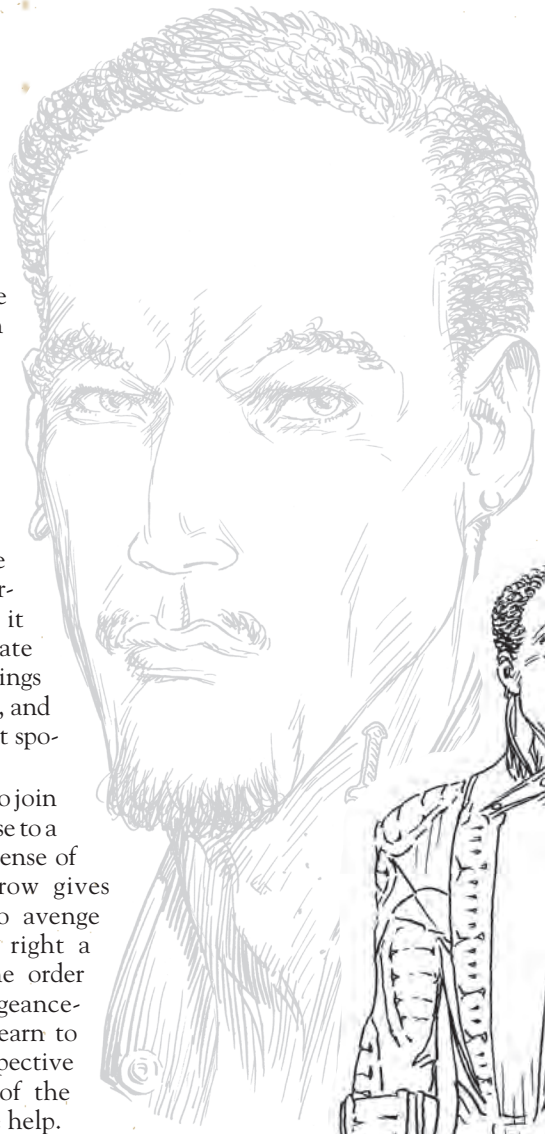
## *Members*

The Adamantine Arrow attracts a large number of young mages — impulsive, confident men and women who believe their Arcana automatically confer martial wisdom. These petitioners are quickly disabused of such notions. An Arrow trains to endure much and live simply. Arrow mentors dangle the secrets of battle magic before their eyes, only to deny teachings until a student has humbled himself with hard work, ascetic discipline or a tortuous quest. Some masters are incredibly harsh, and leave protégés with physical and psychic scars. Some never graduate beyond the petitioning stage, but in most cases mentors are loathe to let one of the Awakened waste her life. The best teachers create warrior-diplomats who can handle etiquette and bloody combat with equal confidence. The worst teachers turn out emotionally stunted guardians whose awkward, taciturn nature might be mistaken for quiet wisdom.

And some candidates don't need to be tempered. These are the natural tacticians and athletes that Arrow elders seek to train and — importantly — rein in before they can

endanger others. The Adamantine Arrow doesn't give these young mages a choice in the matter. While they learn battle spells easily enough and can fit their mind to a strategy with fluid ease, they need to be taught honor, discretion and a sense of responsibility for the rest of the Awakened. The order mourns when it fails to indoctrinate these initiates. It brings shame to kill them, and their names are not spoken again.

Old mages tend to join the order in response to a crisis, or out of a sense of outrage. The Arrow gives them the tools to avenge themselves or to right a wrong. Ideally, the order only accepts vengeance-seekers who can learn to broaden their perspective and see that all of the Awakened deserve help.



## Philosophy

The Adamantine Arrow practices what it calls the Brilliant Road or the Adamant Way. The Atlantean name had no precise translation and meant both "unyielding wisdom" and "light of thunder." The Adamant Way is divided into five precepts — the Hand. The human hand creates, communicates and destroys. It is always meeting, negotiating with and vanquishing the external world, and is one of the primary gates for the sense of touch. Accordingly, its five "fingers" represent the ideal ways for a warrior to conduct herself in the Fallen World. They are:

**Existence Is War**

All beings learn wisdom by first separating themselves from the unity of things, and then by separating the unity of what remains. Only by examining what has been broken can a mage understand its original wholeness. If she remained in original bliss, the unity of all things would be felt in much the same way a cell is connected to a greater colony of tissue: like a machine, without true understanding. Life is more than suffering: it is a continual test of will and creativity. In this scheme, even the Exarchs have their place. They separated the Supernal from the Fallen and created the ultimate test. Even though the Arrow honors lost Atlantis, the sundered cosmos gives it the opportunity to test itself beyond anything the lost city could provide. Practically speaking, an Arrow should be able to use any fighting method as an allegorical solution to a nonviolent problem, and any peaceful technique to win a war.

**Enlightenment Is Honor**

Mages know that everything has an esoteric meaning, so meaning alone cannot be a sign of wisdom. True enlightenment is the ability to create meaning as well as reflect it. Oaths are how an Arrow connects to the wider world, turning its lessons into unbreakable bonds of honor. An oath rewrites a mage's identity into something larger than herself. When she promises to protect a companion, she shares the meaning of her vow with her charge and her enemies alike. Oaths should never be broken, but they shouldn't be too narrow, either, lest a warrior place her judgment in formal words rather than in dynamic thoughts.

**Adaptability Is Strength**

An Arrow should never rely on magic alone, or pure power of any kind. If she uses magic, physical strength or cutting words habitually to prevail, she cleaves to one way of doing things and denies the lessons afforded by new tactics. Pragmatically, an enemy can pick up a warrior's habits and use them against her. Sympathetic magic is the root of many martial spells. Unless she sheds thoughtless habits, a mage will make herself vulnerable. While it's easiest to see the problems inherent in relying on magic (or one kind of magic) too much, the order also charges members with examining their mundane lives. Is a mage overly fond of material luxuries? Prideful speech? If so, she should correct herself. Some Arrows turn to ascetic living, but others careen from practice to

practice, ready to change their dress, manners and even names to ward off complacency.

**The Supernal Is the Self**

There's a reason only humans become mages. A human being is, in essence, no different from the cosmos. The body, mind and soul form a microcosm of a larger reality. Physical discipline is more than a matter of muscle and bone; it's a way to explore occult reality, which lies embedded in the flesh just as Atlantean wisdom can be found in the Fallen World. The mind's hidden depths and brilliant heights recall the Supernal World.

**Service Is Mastery**

Over the ages the Adamantine Arrow learned that the obvious ruler is rarely the true master of an occult hierarchy. Similarly, Sleeping governments rely on a web of hidden actors. It's obvious then that power comes from action, not passive contemplation or meaningless structure. A state or secret society benefits from its figurehead, who is the focal point of the group's ideals and the face of its hidden power. An Arrow should never seek power for herself, because she would only be promoted to an ineffectual, symbolic post. Instead, she serves a cabal as advisor and guardian. The ruler represents an ideal that the mage should strive to obey, even if the actual person doesn't always live up to it. In times of crisis, an Arrow may be the effective leader, but her actions should always be in service to that ideal rule, which is forever outside her dominion.

## Rituals and Observances

The Adamantine Arrow values efficiency, so it integrates its rites into the practical aspects of training and exercising the warrior's art.

**Oaths**

An Arrow is rarely without an oath to some person, cabal or ideal. An apprentice's first oath is to his teacher; he's expected to obey any order, no matter how ludicrous or dangerous. By putting himself at the mercy of a master, a mage is forced to strive beyond self-imposed limitations. After that, an Arrow finds his place in Awakened society by vowing to serve a person, organization or cause. Arrow mages' oaths are loose enough to allow plenty of room for interpretation and almost never require them to obey an order to the letter. Instead, the warrior promises to serve and the recipient of the pledge trusts him to make best use of his expertise.

**Order of Challenges**

Even though the Adamantine Arrow's mages are famous for their dueling skills, they restrict challenges within their own ranks. Martial wisdom is hard to acquire, but all one has to do to lose it is die. The order prefers to avoid wasting its skilled members on pointless duels. Traditionally, a challenger must defeat an Arrow's subordinates before being permitted to duel him. This hierarchy of justice (or revenge) keeps bad luck from destroying a lifetime of accumulated wisdom and discourages internecine assassination under the pretext of a duel. This rule does not apply to challengers from outside the order. Those, an Arrow must face alone, if at all.

## Titles and Duties

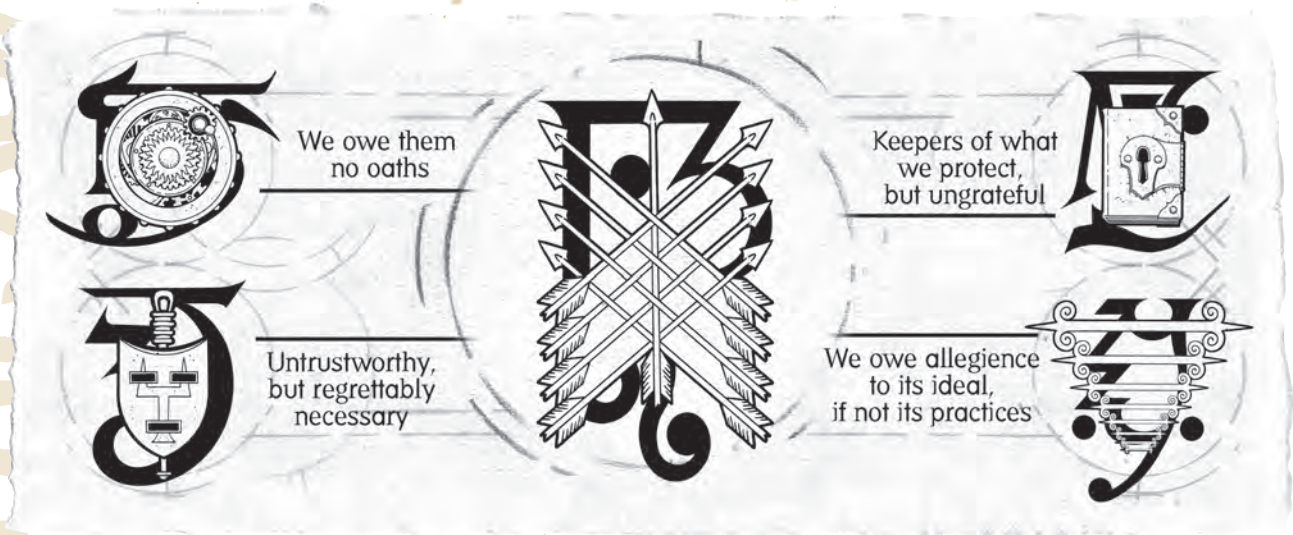
The Adamantine Arrow respects two relationships: student and teacher, and commander and subordinate. Within Arrow cabals these associations are normally one and the same, but outside of them the latter is determined by the nature of an Arrow's oaths, whether he's liege or vassal. Teachers and students do not have official names, but go by the vernacular of mages' common language.

**Banner Warden**

The appointed defender of a mixed cabal or the second-most senior member of an Arrow cabal takes this title as the symbol of her group's martial virtues. A Banner Warden considers it her prerogative to represent the cabal in any magical duel and to organize the group's defenses. This leaves her superiors safe to refine their rule, or (in the case of superiors within the order) to further develop the mystic arts of war.

**Adamant Sage**

War leaders and chief tacticians are given the title of Adamant Sage. In these fallen days the title is rare, since modern mages rarely fight in large groups. Adamant Sage is more often the unofficial leader of a Consilium or large cabal. Her title is technically that of a military advisor, but her guidance is the de facto rule of law.



# THE FREE COUNCIL

Can you feel it? Magic still exists, like a stunted tree twisted under the weight of the Abyss. Nations call fire from the sky when it's time for war. Voices drift on invisible waves from New York to Jakarta, from Mogadishu to Moscow. The world is full of sigils and runes. Men and woman will die for a flag or work themselves ragged for a brand. This is an age of power and opportunity. And the Awakened can see Supernal shadows overlaying it all… if they look at it the right way. But it's an age of horror, too, because power doesn't have an ethos. The tools of power are there for the taking, but the management is bad. Very bad indeed.

The Free Council means to change that. *This* age, this time of glorious chaos, needs to be translated into Awakened wisdom. In a new kind of alchemy, the Council will change the trappings of the Sleepers' Quiescence into its undoing.

Atlantis is a worthy dream, but to the Free Council, other mages make the mistake of casting their lot with the past, ensuring that they will always be lesser than their ancestors. The order sees the Awakened City as a spiritual ideal, but doesn't believe that its old rites are the best way to renew Awakened power. It holds that virtually any method, as long as it captures some genuine meaning, can be used to invoke the Supernal Realms. Humanity found the essential spark of Awakening in prehistory, and never forgot. The Quiescence can only subdue it; human beings recreate the signs of wisdom all around them. Even this Fallen World contains countless treasures for the Awakened seeker.

Arcane power is not wisdom. The Free Council discovered that truth when it questioned the Atlantean orthodoxy. For all their power, even great masters were blind to the new truths of the quickening age. It was time to drop the old hierarchies and seek the truth through democracy and consensus. Levels of initiation and secrets barred from the so-called unworthy were all the worse because they replicated the values of the Exarchs and their Seers of the Throne. The Free Council insists that humanity was never meant to abase itself for the sake of occult training. Magic exists now, and it's moving forward as swiftly as a thought. Cling to tradition, and you'll get left behind.

## Overview

Awakened society has always had its share of rebels and strange geniuses, mages who could never accept the easy answers of Atlantean tradition. The Silver Ladder cast them out, the Adamantine Arrow refused to protect them and the Mysterium expunged their words from history. But the Awakened have always been sensitive to the spirit of an age, and there have been times when the trickle of malcontent has grown to a flood. These eras have coincided with some of the greatest achievements in human history, but also with its wars and disasters. Do mages cause such events, or take their lessons to heart? So many layers of conspiracy exist between mages and Sleeping humanity that it's nigh impossible to tell who bears the burden of history, but during these pivotal periods, arcane knowledge increases. In the early 19th century, cabals across Europe expounded a startling theory: that upheaval led to genuinely new occult praxes, not mere shadows of Atlantis. Men and women were not as weak as the Exarchs supposed, and strained against their prison across the generations.

The new movement gave itself hundreds of different names based on everything from Sleeper inspirations to esoteric humor. Conflict was inevitable. It spanned the globe through the charms of the Boxer Rebellion, the guns of the American West and the bombs of London anarchists. Mysterium historians call it the Nameless War, for at the time, the other orders refused to even give the revolutionaries a common name. After all, names grant symbolic power. The heirs of Atlantis, for all their internal strife, wanted to see history bury these apostates.

The war left the rebels bloody but unbowed, and even increased their membership. Young members of the traditional orders defected, charmed by the opportunities offered by rebel factions. Even so, the Nameless rebels couldn't prove their worth to the ancient orders until they took a stand *for* something, instead of against tradition. The Great Refusal fulfilled this requirement.

The Seers of the Throne knew that the rebels presented a great opportunity. Nameless mages embraced the Sleeping world's technologies and fashions. They could be used to wipe out all memory of Atlantis. Together, the Seers and the Nameless could create a world where humanity could not even *conceive* of the occult, mending the final few flaws that remained in the world-prison the Exarchs had created. The Seers of the Throne sent emissaries to Nameless cabals, offering them wealth and power in exchange for an alliance that would wed technological and cultural magic to an agenda of control.

The Nameless order declined. They declined with guns, bombs and mind-crushing Arts. On New Year's Eve in 1899, the Great Refusal of alliance concluded with the official formation of the Free Council, members of which had finally discovered a common enemy. The spirit of the modern world would be liberty, not technocracy, and it was time to explore it.

## Members

The elder orders would have you think that the Free Council consists of poorly trained punks and political blowhards who endanger everyone around them with poorly wrought spells, and who defile the Supernal World with every ill-considered

touch. Sometimes, that's true. For their part, novice mages might speak up for the Free Council out of sheer contrariness, but might also seek to escape the burden of apprenticeship. Many mages treat their pupils as slaves and cannon fodder in battles for ancient lore. A few masters even cripple their apprentice's development because they're afraid of being surpassed. Resentment builds and apprentices leave.

The Free Council offers an environment in which young mages' ideas are debated freely, but novices who expect total license to act as they see fit are in for a surprise. The Free Council takes democracy seriously, but doesn't take to every notion — and there are many — that is flung on the table. Like mages everywhere, libertines lead dangerous lives fighting rivals and searching for magical power. They believe in security and mutual aid. Empty rebellion doesn't help either. After running the gauntlet of debate and the sporadic violence of Council missions, survivors are tempered into idealistic but *practical* occultists who have a flexible set of capabilities. Libertines tend to be generalists outside of their arcane specialties. Their intense interest in culture and technology, and their iconoclasm, makes the ideal member a combination of engineer, anthropologist and guerilla.

Young mages aren't the only ones who join the Free Council, however. Veteran sorcerers align themselves with the order to either reject their former, corrupt allegiances or to explore radical occult theories. Experienced defectors add political clout and arcane power to the cause.

Libertines all have a common interest in contemporary culture and tend to be skeptical of Atlantean heritage. Some of them doubt that Atlantis ever even existed. In any event, they believe that it's useless to limit themselves to tradition. If Atlantis existed in any age, it should be the future and should be a better place than any legend describes. Of course, Free Council members rarely agree on the best model for an Awakened — or mundane — society. Their sanctums ring with the competing voices of anarchists, free-market capitalists and partisans of countless other doctrines

## Philosophy

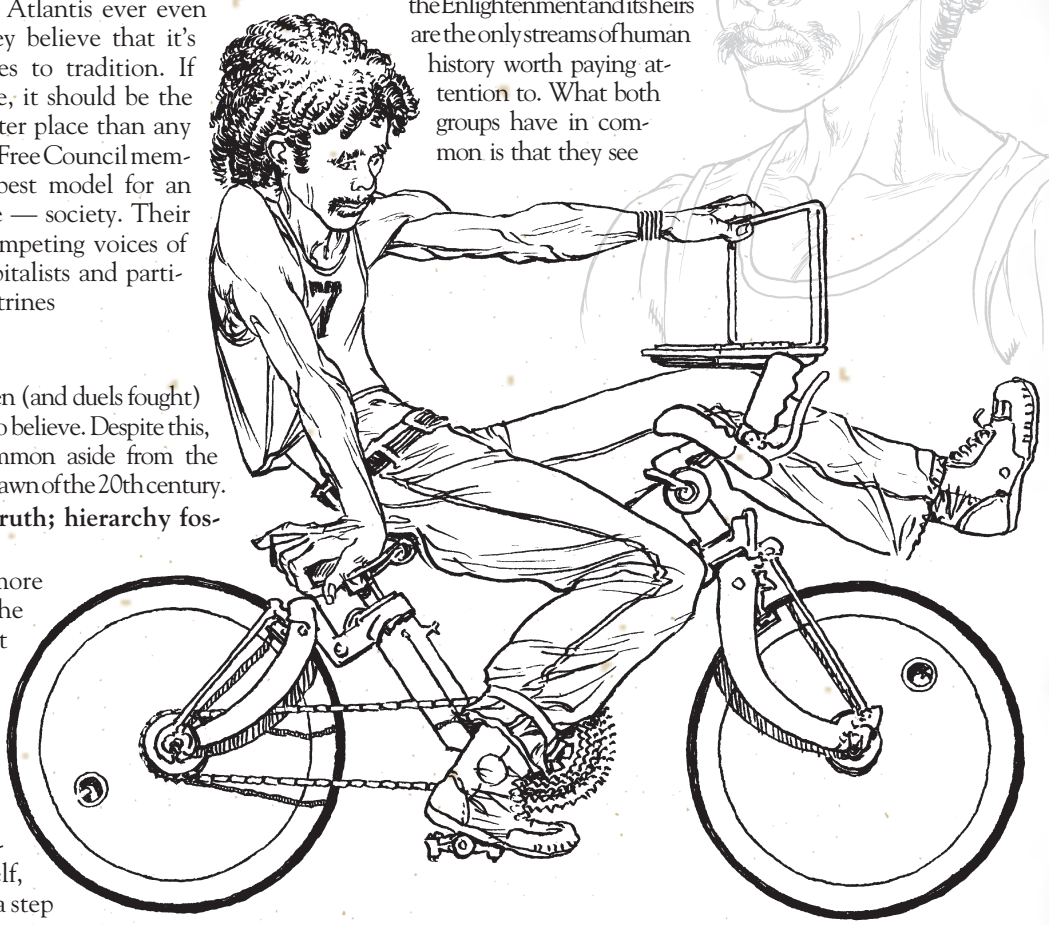
Volumes have been written (and duels fought) about what libertines ought to believe. Despite this, members hold little in common aside from the charter of unity forged at the dawn of the 20th century.

**Democracy seeks the truth; hierarchy fosters the Lie**

The Quiescence does more than blind Sleepers to the great truths of existence. It creates a way of thinking that causes them to lie to each other by diluting power through society's ranks, creating hierarchies to control the spread of knowledge. This is a radical enough claim by itself, but the Free Council goes a step further and postulates that even mages are cursed to trap their lore in hierarchies of mutual deception. Every generation loses a bit of lore that was concealed in the highest levels of initiation and never passed on. Subsequently, the secrets of Atlantis (if *it* isn't a lie) have been filtered through so many masters and apprentices that they're nearly useless. Only shared discovery and free debate can throw off the Lie.

**Humanity is magical; human works have arcane secrets**

The Free Council believes that humanity never really forgot the secrets of magic. Human beings instinctively create their own miracles. These are only shadows of the potential they could attain if they Awakened, but they point to new ways to understand magic. Technology and culture have their own secret laws and symbols, drawn from Supernal regions still waiting to be discovered. Libertines embrace a modern vision of magic drawn from human accomplishments, not hoary myths. This doesn't mean that magic comes only from modern technology and mass media, though. Many libertines believe that pre-industrial and developing societies have been making their own discoveries throughout Sleeping history and that it's a mistake to cleave too closely to modern Western values. Of course, other Council cabals believe the opposite: that the Enlightenment and its heirs are the only streams of human history worth paying attention to. What both groups have in common is that they see



these developments as new and vital in their own right instead of being scrambled memories of Atlantean glory.

**Destroy the followers of the Lie**

This is one of the most contentious points of agreement among Free Council cabals. While all agree that the Seers of the Throne are the most extreme proponents of the Lie, they do not have any consensus on how to reform Awakened society away from its authoritarian traditions. The most radical cells espouse revolutionary war against the Silver Ladder and their collaborators, but others believe that a peaceful campaign of cooperation and Consilium-level reform will gradually persuade mages to abandon their outmoded hierarchies.

## Rituals and Observances

The Free Council has existed for little over a century, so members know that the order's traditions were invented, not revealed. The spirit of invention and adaptation persists, so Free Council cabals regularly invent rituals and conventions that suit their own interests.

**Assembly**

Free Council cabals are run democratically, either by absolute consensus or majority vote. In addition, cabals often form regional Assemblies as an alternative to the local Consilium. Individual groups send syndics (see below) to the Assembly, who in turn formulate proposals to be voted on by every mage represented. Some Assemblies require members to forswear association with a Consilium, but most do not. Even so, the collective power of a well-run Assembly can decisively sway a Consilium, since all members share a commitment to a particular policy. A variation known as the Column organizes mages in battles against their enemies. While any democratically governed cabal is allowed to join an Assembly, libertine mages invariably make up the majority of their ranks.

**Lorehouses**

The Free Council's mission to renew the arcane arts can be realized only by the easy exchange of magical discoveries. The Lorehouse system assists that transaction by providing an open storehouse of magical knowledge. This doesn't always mean it's easy to get access to a Lorehouse; its controlling cabal dictates any requirements. Some Lorehouses use a free-market model, selling their stock to any mage who can meet the price in hard cash, Mana or barter. Others serve only cabals that profess an ideology acceptable to the Lorehouse's owners.

**Techné**

The order prefers to call its style of magic *techné*, a Greek word meaning a skill or art. Techné is not just an application of ancient Atlantean techniques, but a philosophy combining technology, art and culture to produce magic that is relevant in a modern context. While other orders cling to a tradition belonging to an ancient past, the Free Council forges ahead to new horizons.

## Titles and Duties

Free Council positions are selected democratically and exist to fill a pragmatic rather than ritual role.

**Emissary**

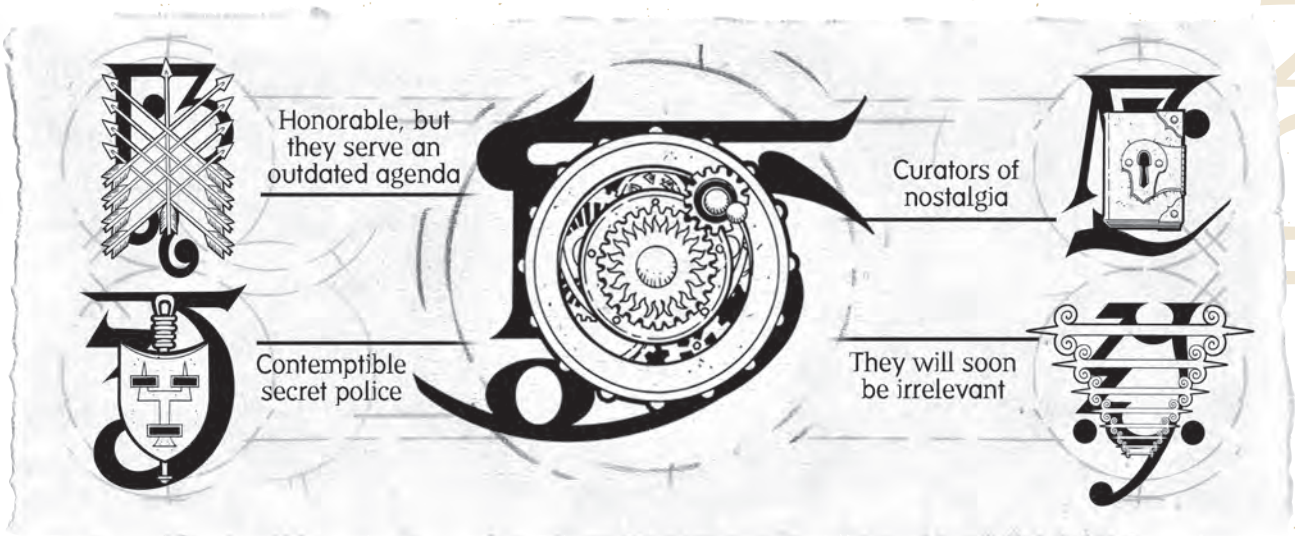
An emissary is a libertine who has been empowered by a Free Council cabal or Assembly to pursue diplomatic aims with mages from other orders. Emissaries are not permitted to espouse any positions or to make any offers that haven't been voted on by the mages they represent, unless their governing cabal or Assembly grants these powers beforehand. Cabals and Assemblies are, in turn, obligated to seek redress if any harm comes to their emissary.

**Strategos**

In a crisis, Free Council mages may voluntarily suspend their democratic rights to give a strategos the power to make decisions in all areas relevant to his area of expertise. Most strategoi are used to coordinate a libertine group's defenses, though a few decide upon affairs ranging from sanctum economics to metaphysical debates. Many Assemblies (including virtually all Columns) employ a strategos who is permitted to make decisions that affect all Assembly members. No matter what, the power of a strategos is formally limited to a single subject.

**Syndic**

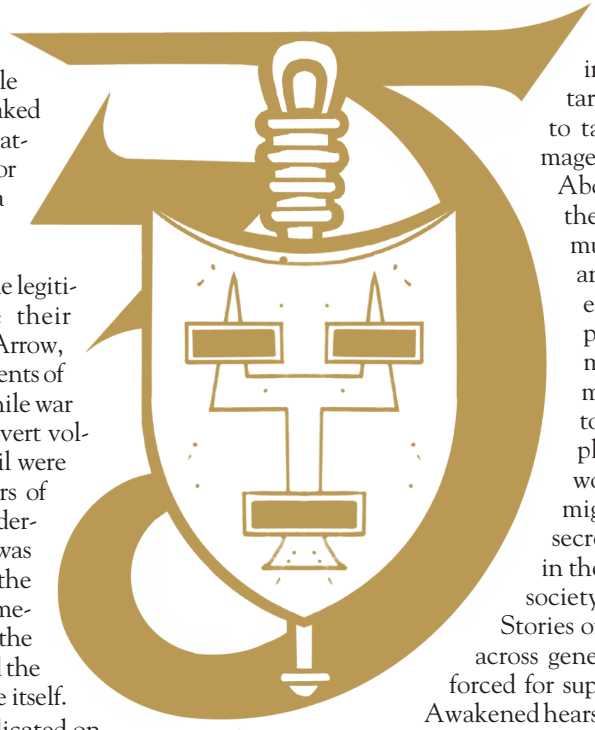
In regions where Free Council Assemblies hold sway, member cabals select one of their own as a syndic to represent them. Syndics do not make decisions. They debate other syndics and generate proposals on which all members vote. Syndics can acquire considerable clout. Their positions on various matters are normally upheld by their own cabals, if not others, and syndics' combined ability to render a complex matter down to a vote allows their perspectives to dominate any debate.



# Guardians of the Veil

Magic is a secret Art. The Guardians of the Veil keep it that way for a reason. The order believes that Atlantis was defined by its humanity. It rewarded the fruits of human brilliance and reflected its flaws. Atlantis was as close to Utopia as ever existed, but it was not perfect. The Guardians of the Veil say that perfection belongs to individuals. Societies are always flawed. Even Atlantis needed wardens, spies and killers. The Fallen World is no different.

The Guardians of the Veil, also called the Visus Draconis, or Eye of the Dragon, secretly protected Atlantis from internal strife and treachery. They say it was a thankless job in which mages underwent personal quests for enlightenment for the good of the Awakened City. Even in its greatest days, Atlantis had subtle enemies: great beasts, demons cloaked in human flesh and rebels who threatened the city out of madness or avarice. The order was hated as a matter of ritual, if not reason, because condoning the Guardian's role would question the legitimacy of Atlantis itself. Like their companions in the Adamantine Arrow, they were to be viewed as instruments of Atlantis — never masters. But while war was the province of honorable, overt volunteers, the Guardians of the Veil were charged with more subtle matters of state. If revealed, they would undermine the ethos that Atlantis was ruled by humans, without fearing the night or barbarous tyranny. Sometimes that ideal held true, but in the city's latter days, whispers accused the order of spying and killing to serve itself.



Atlantis' reign was partly predicated on the secret work of the Guardians. They discreetly removed foreign enemies where they could, moving beyond supernatural threats to press chieftains and lords for boons, and if necessary, toppling kingdoms by fanning the fires of insurrection from within. Some of these kingdoms did indeed threaten Atlantis, usually through the plots of non-Atlantean mages, but most only posed potential threats — potential that Guardian mage-spies expertly identified and then squashed, all without implicating Atlantis. If Atlantis seemed like a Utopia to its people, it was partly due to keeping down any power that could one day threaten it.

Even after the Exile, the Guardians practice their subtle arts on Sleeper regimes, spinning useful conspiracies and myths out of the loam of history, and using plots, lies and knives to protect mages from enemies both Sleeping and supernatural. Even though their aims are pragmatic, they are not without occult significance. The order believes that every Paradox widens the Abyss, so magic must remain hidden. Their own dark deeds are an occult sacrifice. They defile their own karma so that other mages may hone their own, free from witch hunters and other, fouler dangers.

## Overview

Save for the Seers of the Throne and the Banishers, no order is as hated as the Guardians of the Veil. Mages see them as a necessary evil — valued, but distasteful allies. Even the Free Council is more respected, because its own chaotic ethos still emphasizes discovery instead of repression. Awakened wills are trained to shatter barriers and seek freedom, so most mages have an inherent distrust of anyone who would shackle human desire.

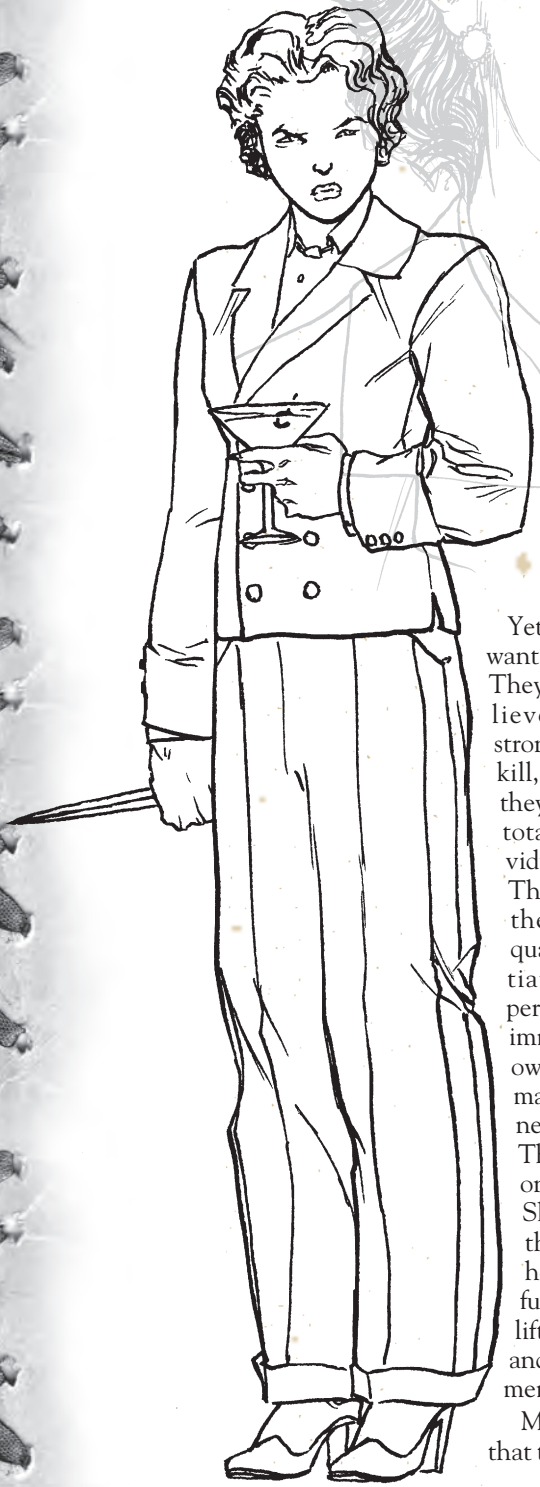
Still, the order has its uses, and despite the fact that many mages resent the Guardians, they still come to the group for aid — and the order demands aid in return. This is not always voluntary, but experienced Guardians learn to take stock of the skeletons in other mages' closets and leverage them expertly. Above all, the Guardians have mastered the art of moving among Sleepers in a mundane guise, planting useful stories and careful measures of magical influence to ward off magic's enemies while providing for their own interests. Rumors brag that the order once manipulated nations and civilizations to these ends. Even now, Guardians plant memes and secret signs in the world's cultures. Members of the order might receive assistance by uttering a secret word to a Sleeper, who learned it in the useless (but potent) rites of a secret society that the order created centuries ago. Stories of family lines bred to serve the order across generations and torture chambers reinforced for supernatural inmates fill the annals of Awakened hearsay. And for all anyone knows, half of the rumors may be the Guardians' own lies.

Where slow subtlety fails, invisible knives, silent guns and killing spells prevail, so that the Guardians of the Veil are feared assassins. Stereotype paints them as death-obsessed, remorseless killers, but again, these mages know their sins. This makes them even more dangerous. They are certain that every deed is absolutely necessary to the goal of Awakened stewardship of the world, and ultimately victory over the Exarchs.

## Members

The Guardians of the Veil choose their members carefully, through a process of slow indoctrination that begins as soon as the order senses a combination of Awakened potential and the necessary mindset. At first, they lure novices into a conspiracy filled with other Guardians and Sleepers. Senior members test a novice's ability to keep secrets from the unenlightened, and to commit questionable acts for a greater cause. This stage is called the Gray Veil, the least important curtain over a web of plots that test a mage's dedication and condition her ethics to accept the order's methods. The second stage is the Crimson Veil. Here, a mage must be

willing to kill for the conspiracy. Sometimes a sorcerer actually murders someone whom the order has already marked for death, but any demonstration of sincere intent does.



Yet the Guardians don't want mindless servants. They want mages to believe in an ideal so strongly that they will kill, lie and die for it, but they don't want them to totally abandon individual moral judgment. The final Black Veil therefore presents a quandary to the initiate, asking her to perform an act that is immoral by the order's own standards. If the mage obeys, she can never join the order. The secret society she once knew vanishes. She is not killed, but the Guardians watch her for life. If she refuses to obey, the order lifts the final deception and she becomes a true member.

Many people believe that the order prefers initiates who used to be spies, killers or conspirators in the Sleeping world, but this is based on a misunderstanding. The Guardians of the Veil use mundane intelligence agencies and secret brotherhoods as proving grounds, but most prospects are lured to join the order. Consequently, Guardians often come from innocuous backgrounds before the order takes them. The society would rather mold a moral, pragmatic factory worker into an accomplished spy than hire a government-trained psychopath.

## Philosophy

The Guardians of the Veil have few ancient writings, because writing is a secret shared with anyone who reads. They keep an oral tradition instead. This Law of the Mask is introduced among the earliest Veils, but is only taught completely to a mage who graduates to full knowledge of the order.

**Paradoxes strengthen the Abyss as punishment answers pride**

A Paradox is more than a discontinuity in reality. It is a flaw that opens the Fallen World to the poison of the Abyss. Guardians point to anomalies and manifestations as proof of this, as well as traditions that seem to show that astral journeys were once far less arduous. The order discourages vulgar magic; Guardians who casually fling reality-defying spells about risk censure or worse. Symbolically, the Supernal World itself is too pure to tolerate vain blandishments. Even as hidden masters, mages have a place in the cosmic order. If they cannot use subtle talents to subdue the Fallen World, their souls might let the darkness in.

**Sins for a just end grant wisdom to the Awakened**

Wisdom is a real force, not a subjective concept. The Guardians of the Veil hold that enlightenment is an impersonal entity that can be generated and transferred among Awakened seekers. Most mages hone their Wisdom by using magic carefully and clinging to compassion, because magic is the art of perfecting humanity — not abandoning it. Guardians take another path. Lies and killing are sins, but if they are offered up as sacrifices for the good of the Awakened, they create wisdom — for other mages. The order recognizes that their ways erode the integrity of their own souls, but they also provide safety and justice for the enlightened. Though the classical doctrine claims that there is an actual metaphysical transfer of merit, most Guardians are satisfied with knowing that their sacrifice helps mages.

**Merit must guide the Fallen World**

Rule falls to individual merit. The Awakened are wiser than Sleepers, and masters are wiser than apprentices. Mages should always foster greater wisdom among their charges, but never to the extent that they might overstep their bounds and endanger other quests for enlightenment. Arcane secrets and obscure symbolism must weed out seekers who aren't ready for the higher facets of mystic lore. Sleepers should not truck with the secrets of Atlantis or endanger mages. Mages should be sparing and even mysterious with their wisdom, and give humble but firm guidance to the less accomplished. This meritocracy has no room for chauvin-

ism; sex, sexuality, ethnicity and the like are almost never used to determine worth. Petty bigotry is beneath the Awakened perspective.

## Rituals and Observances

The Veils have already been described. The Guardians of the Veil have many other rites. Two of the most common are:

**The Masque**

The Masque is more than a new identity; it is a layer of false being that a Guardian uses to perform a particular task. There are said to be 49 archetypal identities, ranging from the Skull Priest who makes killing holy to the Scepter, who assumes command. History and culture provide numerous variations, including the Black Suit, Wise Merchant and Wounded Soldier. These roles are sometimes assisted with actual enchanted masks, and some of the order's positions traditionally require mages to don them. In an abstract sense, the Masque is a series of spells that conceal a mage's identity in such a way that she may easily assume a particular role. Guardians don the Black Suit to appear to be government agents who suppress evidence of the supernatural, or take up the Scepter to assume command of a corporate or government office. Symbolically, the Masque teaches a mage humility, because he must suppress his own egotism to fit the part.

**The Labyrinth**

The Labyrinth is one name for the web of secret societies, fifth columns and spurious cults that the Guardians of the Veil create to conceal magic from the unworthy and exert influence over Sleepers. A novice is initiated through the Labyrinth, penetrating the Veils of deception until he finds the true order. Such organizations rarely assert direct command over Sleepers. Instead, government money pours into black budgets, businesses can't succeed without the support of a certain private club, and Sleeper investigators are diverted to cults willing to ply them with voluminous, useless information. On the occult front, the order showers disinformation upon would-be sorcerers and invents prophecies that Guardians will later fulfill. It is all too easy for Guardians to lord it over their dupes. More than one mage has become obsessed with garnering temporal power through the Labyrinth.

## Titles and Duties

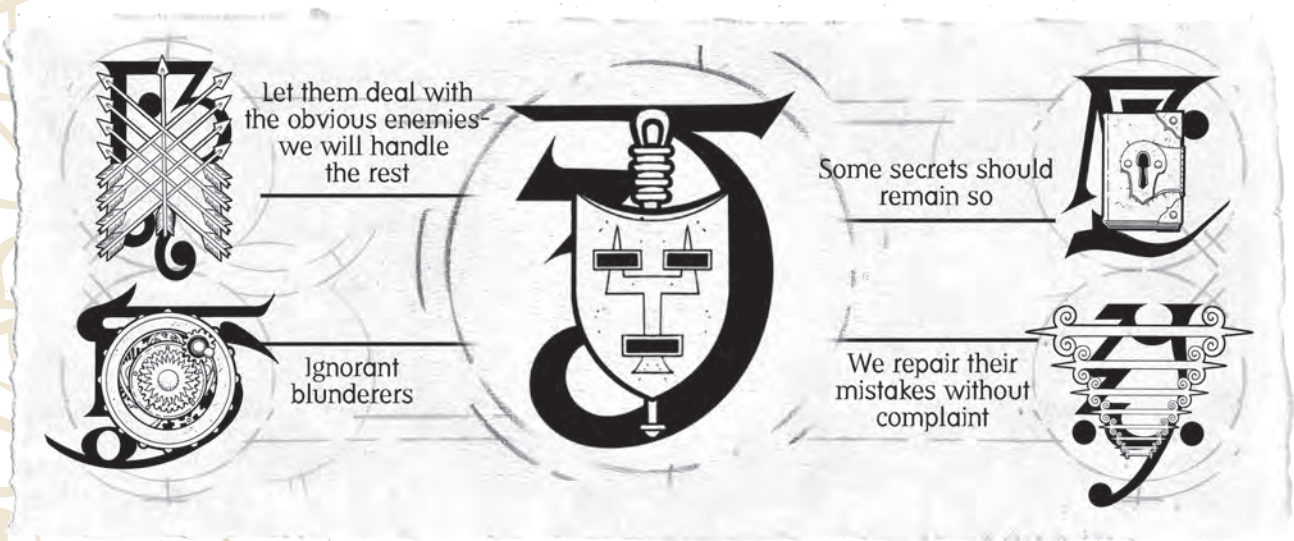
The Guardians of the Veil create many titles. Some are false elements of the Labyrinth and others exist only to deal with mages of other orders. In addition, the order may have secret ranks that are known only to its masters, who do not profane them by revealing them to the majority. Two titles are widely known.

**Interfector**

Interfectors are executioners and interrogators who serve a Consilium. At official functions, the Interfector is masked. Mages are expected to ritually deride her by refusing to touch her or step in her shadow. It is common to rotate mages through the position (each wears the mask of office) so that the role retains an impersonal quality. Interfectors are usually employed by very old or repressive Concilums. The office grows less common with each passing year, and many mages argue that it's obsolete.

**Epopt**

Epopts ("beholders") perform two functions. They manage the Labyrinth, upholding the order's network of influence and misdirection, and they recruit new members, sending them through the Veils. An epopt rarely works alone. She directs other Guardians to support conspiracies and initiate novices through the three Veils. Epopts are always experienced Guardians, but they rarely rise to the highest ranks of the order. The Guardians of the Veil value the Labyrinth, but try to keep its games at a distance. Epopts have a tendency to get enmeshed in the mundane politics of their office, and having tasted power over the Sleeping world are reluctant to abandon it for the more esoteric concerns of higher ranks.



# THE MYSTERIUM

Forget Fallen World governments and occult politics. Knowledge is power. Over time, mystic lore trumps worldly ambition. The members of the Mysterium believe their order to be the purest, because it shuns mundane power. These mages prefer to seek pure magical knowledge. That doesn't mean there aren't influential mystagogues, as mages of the Mysterium call themselves. The order does not dictate individual ambition, but members of the Mysterium seek out knowledge first. Power is the welcome side effect of holding the chief currency of the occult: sorcerous lore.

The stereotypical Mysterium cabal is a group of lonely sages minding mouldering grimoires and corroded Artifacts. There have certainly been occasions when this image rings true. Witch hunters and ignorance has, throughout history, forced the order to seclude itself, waiting centuries for human curiosity to defeat dogmatism. Old mystagogues still tend ancient library-fortresses, but the modern order is more adventurous. Today's mystagogue is an archaeologist, cryptographer and master of riddles who scours ruins. He soothsays the layout of city streets and programming codes. But aside from these puzzles, enemies threaten the Mysterium. Ancient curses and cultist bullets try to keep the secrets of Atlantis submerged and mages ignorant, and must be dealt with. The modern order values its scholar-adventurers as much as its librarians.



The modern world is a storehouse of secret lore, waiting to be retrieved, catalogued and developed for the good of the Awakened. Mysterium mages travel to obscure corners of the globe to add what lies there to the sum of occult knowledge. Don't assume, however, that the order freely shares its hard-won research. Some knowledge is too dangerous for general consumption or too valuable to just give away. Exploration takes its toll in money and lives, and the Mysterium needs *some* leverage to fund, staff and protect future quests.

## *Overview*

In Atlantis, the Mysterium's members were professors and librarians. Legends describe the Cenacle of Sighs, where mages could consult the ghosts of savants and vast libraries written in the tongues of fae, demons, angels and gods. The ancient order ventured into the hinterlands to learn the natural sciences and cull the innovations of barbarian states. These expeditions were almost as martial as they were scientific, because outlanders (and the night-horrors who often ruled them) feared and hated the Great City. The early mystagogues paid for their knowledge in blood, securing a place of honor in the city's silver halls.

Without the Mysterium, also called the Alae Draconis, the Wings of the Dragon, the ruling cabal could never have built the Celestial Ladder. The order grew nearly as mighty as the Silver Ladder, and restricted access to its collection to keep challengers from usurping its place. So the order became an architect of the Fall, and destroyed the libraries it created. Survivors dared to hope that the barbarians they once plundered had done the same to them, so that Atlantis' wisdom would spread throughout the world. Order mages founded their own traditions as they wandered, teaching the crafts of writing, poetry and storytelling, imbuing it all with vital magical symbols. They hoped that future generations would sift truth from fiction and Awaken to Mysterium secrets, renewing the Atlantean arts.

Modern mystagogues believe they are that future. The time has come to collect the secrets of magic from their prisons of ancient languages, myth cycles and forgotten crypts. This is the most important mission in the world to them. Though attitudes vary, the order as a whole has little patience for the sanctity of human history. All that matters is Atlantis, magic and the secret codes that lay hidden in the world. This is why other mages accuse the Mysterium of grave-robbery and plundering. But the order calls its accusers hypocrites, because they are all too happy to use the knowledge that Mysterium mages risk their lives to acquire.

## *Members*

Mysterium members are usually better educated than counterparts in other orders. The society doesn't reject talented, uneducated sorcerers, but such novices quickly learn the academic skills they need to identify and analyze arcane treasures. Educated mages aren't often spared further training, though, since they need to know how to survive in uncivilized places and discover occult ruins and well-guarded lore. Recently, the order has begun to delve into modern cities, applying the disciplines of sociology and even burglary to its research. Sleepers, enemy mages and supernatural monsters bring relics with them to museums, secret lodges and private homes. Rather than letting these artifacts fall into disuse or abuse, the order acquires them by expedient means. These situations require considerable street savvy, and some of the newest members are recruited to fill this growing niche.

The order also recognizes that knowledge doesn't just collect in dusty tomes and artifacts. The secrets of Atlantis are encoded in oral tradition and ancient customs. The Mysterium documents these where it can and scrutinizes every phrase and gesture for hidden meaning. The secrets of magic can even be found in modern architecture, film and in

the sprawling Internet. Investigators have to be careful here, because much of the time mass media carries arcane messages at the behest of hidden supernatural players. Tangential to this calling are the order's efforts to acquire secrets that other mages have intentionally suppressed. Mystagogues may have to play the part of spy, thief and even art critic to fill the order's libraries.

## Philosophy

The Mysterium's ethos revolves around its mission to locate and preserve Awakened knowledge. Order mages have written several treatises on the subject, but most of them can be distilled into the following three aphorisms.

**Knowledge is power**

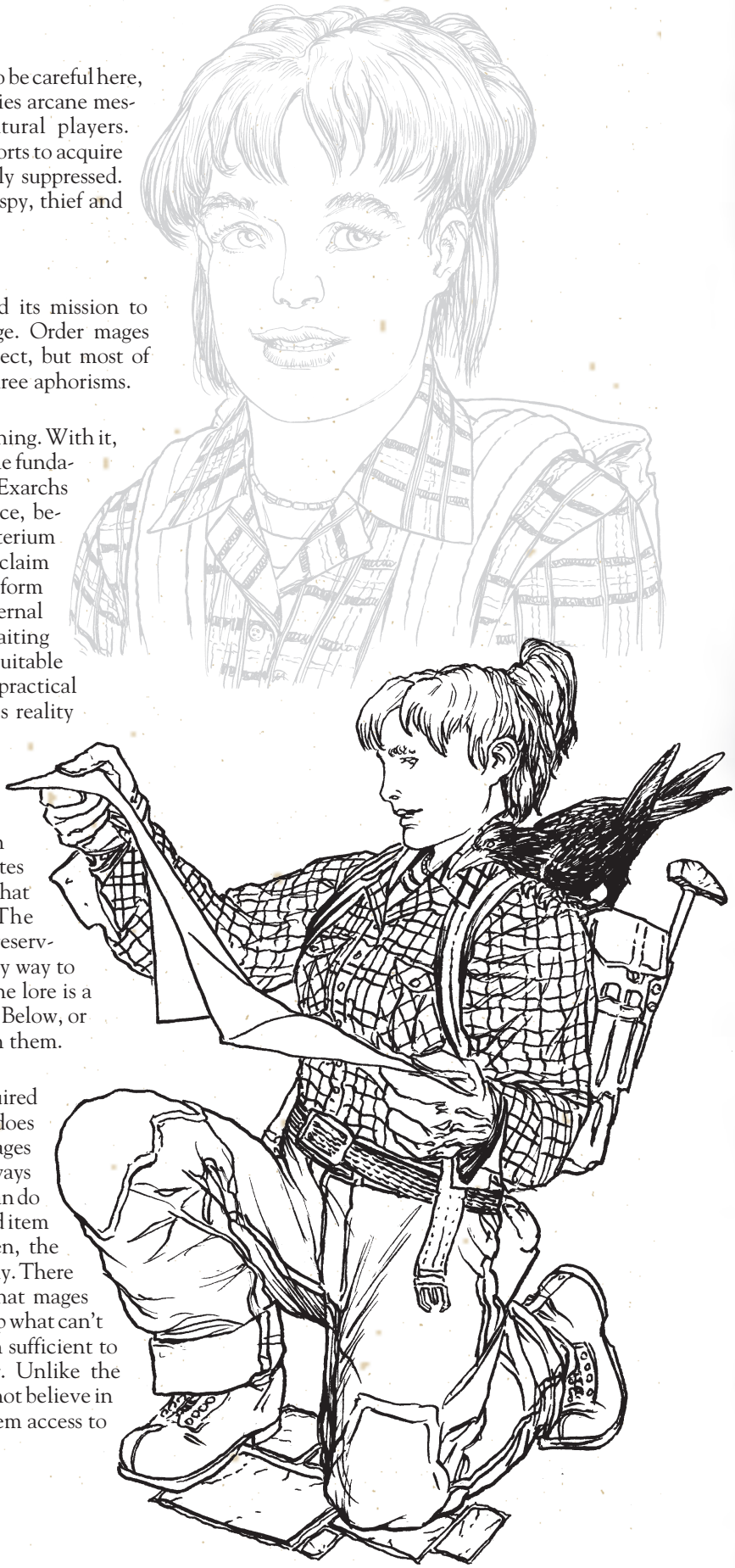
Without occult knowledge, a mage is nothing. With it, she knows the secrets of the universe and the fundamental problems affecting humanity. The Exarchs imprison the world by promoting ignorance, because they understand this truth. Some Mysterium philosophers would go even further and claim that knowledge is reality itself, either in the form of a mystical understanding of the Supernal World or as patterns of pure information, waiting to be programmed by the application of suitable spells. Ignorance, then, is more than a practical disadvantage. Believing the illusion makes reality weaker and the Abyss stronger.

**Knowledge must be preserved**

After Atlantis fell, humanity stumbled into an age of ignorance that crippled Awakened and Sleeper alike. The situation has degenerated to the extent that apostates and Free Council radicals sometimes claim that the Awakened City never existed! The Mysterium believes that uncovering and preserving humanity's magical tradition is the only way to transcend the Fall. Every fragment of arcane lore is a tool that mages can use to bind Above and Below, or at least slow the growth of the rift between them.

**Knowledge has a price**

Arcane lore is dangerous and is only acquired at great cost. Accordingly, the Mysterium does not share its secrets with Sleepers, and mages must meet certain standards. The order always demands payment. The best thing a mage can do is offer an uncommon grimoire or enchanted item in exchange for what he seeks. Even then, the Mysterium doesn't share its knowledge lightly. There are some books and some secret names that mages should *never* know, because they summon up what can't be put down or would constitute a weapon sufficient to destroy the Awakened balance of power. Unlike the Guardians of the Veil, the Mysterium does not believe in lying to the unworthy. It merely denies them access to what they unwisely seek.



## Rituals and Observances

Mysterium rites revolve around the acquisition and preservation of knowledge. Mystagogues are initiated into greater levels of trust as they advance, but are expected to uncover arcane secrets of equivalent value or to dedicate their lives to preserving them.

**The Athenaeum**

An Athenaeum is a Mysterium storehouse. Unlike Free Council Lorehouses, these are secret installations where mystagogues meet to secure and catalogue their finds. Athenaea are always protected with strong wards and are the direct responsibility of a Curator. When an outsider wishes to view material from the Athenaeum, she must have it brought to her. She studies it under guard. There is no chief Athenaeum; they are created whenever local members of the order feel the need to do so. Normally, the region governed by a single Consilium will either possess one of its own or be adjacent to a region that does.

**The Atlantean Mystery**

Even individual mystagogues are not granted full access to the order's collected lore. The Atlantean Mystery is a series of ritual initiations that uses divinatory magic to assess a candidate's suitability and what she must provide to prove her worth. Normally, a mystagogue is assigned a task or sacrifice appropriate to the level of initiation sought. These trials almost always involve gathering new lore for the order or confiscating dangerous or stolen occult materials. The highest lore of the Supernal World, the Abyss and certain summoning spells typically require the greatest degrees of initiation.

## Titles and Duties

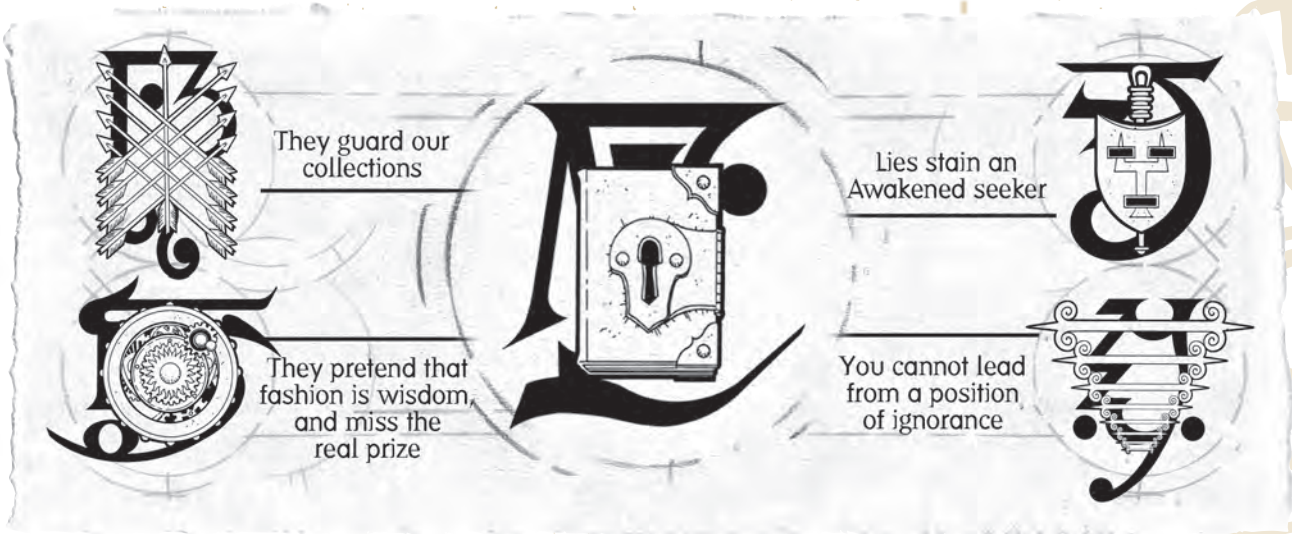
Every member of the Mysterium is called a mystagogue: one who has been initiated into the Mystery of the order's lore. The ranks of initiation have various symbolic titles for each of the five degrees, such as third-degree member. In addition, there are two other well-known titles.

**Censor**

Censors keep hidden lore secret. Other orders resent them, but acknowledge that certain spells and terrible names could shatter the Awakened world. The Censors are the most martial mystagogues, because they must disarm others of their secrets. The Free Council accuses these mages of being little more than self-appointed death squads that kill free-thinking mages. It is true that Censors have acted on political motives, but it's equally true that they have saved the lives of mages and Sleepers by suppressing destructive occult knowledge. Censors never destroy when they confiscate. Taken secrets are kept under lock, key and ward in an Athenaeum.

**Curator**

A Curator must be an accomplished mage (a second-degree adept or better) and accomplished academic. Curators who betray the order are killed. Incompetence is punished by stripping the offender of all her Mystery initiations, and condemning her to study only the lowest secrets of the order until she regains her former station.



# THE SILVER LADDER

Mages once ruled. Never forget that. Do not believe that hubris felled Atlantis, that humanity deserved to be cast into darkness. That is a subtle part of the Lie. Do not let the Exarchs imprison the dreams of mages as much as they imprison magic itself. The conquest of reality — the war for the Imperium Mysteriorum — proceeds as it should. Expand your perspective and see that the fall of the Awakened City was just a skirmish. A setback? Yes, but there are other battles to be fought — thrones to topple from the enemy's Supernal strongholds. Cast your lot with humanity and with Awakened destiny, and you will embrace the Silver Ladder.

It's a potent promise that has lasted through the ages, articulated even as the Exile forced the théarchs to gaze back at the ruins of Atlantis. They say it is fitting that such devastation should follow a struggle for the ultimate prize, but hardly discouraging, for the Silver Ladder has a potent weapon that the Exarchs can never possess: Sleepers.

For all their schemes, the enemy's minions, including the Seers of the Throne, are slaves concerned with keeping the Sleeping rabble quiet and ignorant. The Silver Ladder claims it supports unenlightened humanity and spreads the flame of Awakening as much as possible. The Quiescence makes this practice dangerous, so it is necessary to release a trickle of the truth so that dedicated men and woman follow it to the flood of full Awakening. Mages must be prepared to accept these new apprentices. They must cooperate to expand Awakened influence and train themselves for the battle to come. The Silver Ladder wants nothing less than an army swelled by Sleepers and forged by conspiracy before it builds a tower to the gods once more.

## Overview

The Silver Ladder is used to ruling mages. While they were not the official lords of Atlantis, they were advisors who held the balance of power, the Vox Draconis, the Voice of the Dragon. As priests, viziers and judges of old, the théarchs upheld the principles of law. To hold together an entire nation of mages is a feat that has never been matched since, and the order is rightly proud. When the Silver Ladder's judges ruled fairly, they maintained a balance of power between mages and an unenlightened humanity. As priests, they advocated a wise balance between material needs and spiritual desires. Of course, the théarchs had human weaknesses even then, and more than any other order were swayed by the promises of the Celestial Ladder. To put gods and demons under the reign of humankind — what greater promise than that?

Other orders were humbled by the Fall, but not the Silver Ladder. Although some of them still speak of balance between the material and spiritual, others use these as words to justify their desire to wrest the Imperium Mysteriorum for all humanity. But their enemies are no longer the inhuman powers of the world. The Exarchs have committed the ultimate sin and have revealed their weakness. By trapping humanity in the Lie of Quiescence, the Oppressors have shown the resurgent théarchs that they fear mortal men and women. If humanity is bound together to challenge the Exarchs, they will be toppled. And so the order bides its time, promoting the office of the sage advisor throughout the world, whispering instructions to princes, generals and ministers.

The Silver Ladder also binds mages together. It reformed the Exile into the Consilium system and rendered down countless interpretations of the Art into a set of customs that all mages may follow. The orthodox orders usually recognize the inherent worth of the Silver Ladder's direction, though none would be as vulgar as to call it control. Even when another order reaches ascendancy in a Consilium, the théarchs are there, offering skilled advice to Hierarch and council.

## Members

The order has little patience for error or excessive humility. Mages should not let arrogance blind their ability to assess a situation, but they should never make a fawning display of themselves by taking the blame for events outside of their control or bowing to an unworthy master. While this manner causes friction with other mages, it isn't always a bad thing. A certain amount of conflict keeps mages thinking.

Therefore, a successful théarch has a slightly brash but thoughtful personality that cloaks a will of iron. He is politically adept and his occult prowess is unquestioned. He does not dwell on the theoretical aspects of magic except where it would serve his practical needs, but he never uses that as an excuse to skimp on his studies.

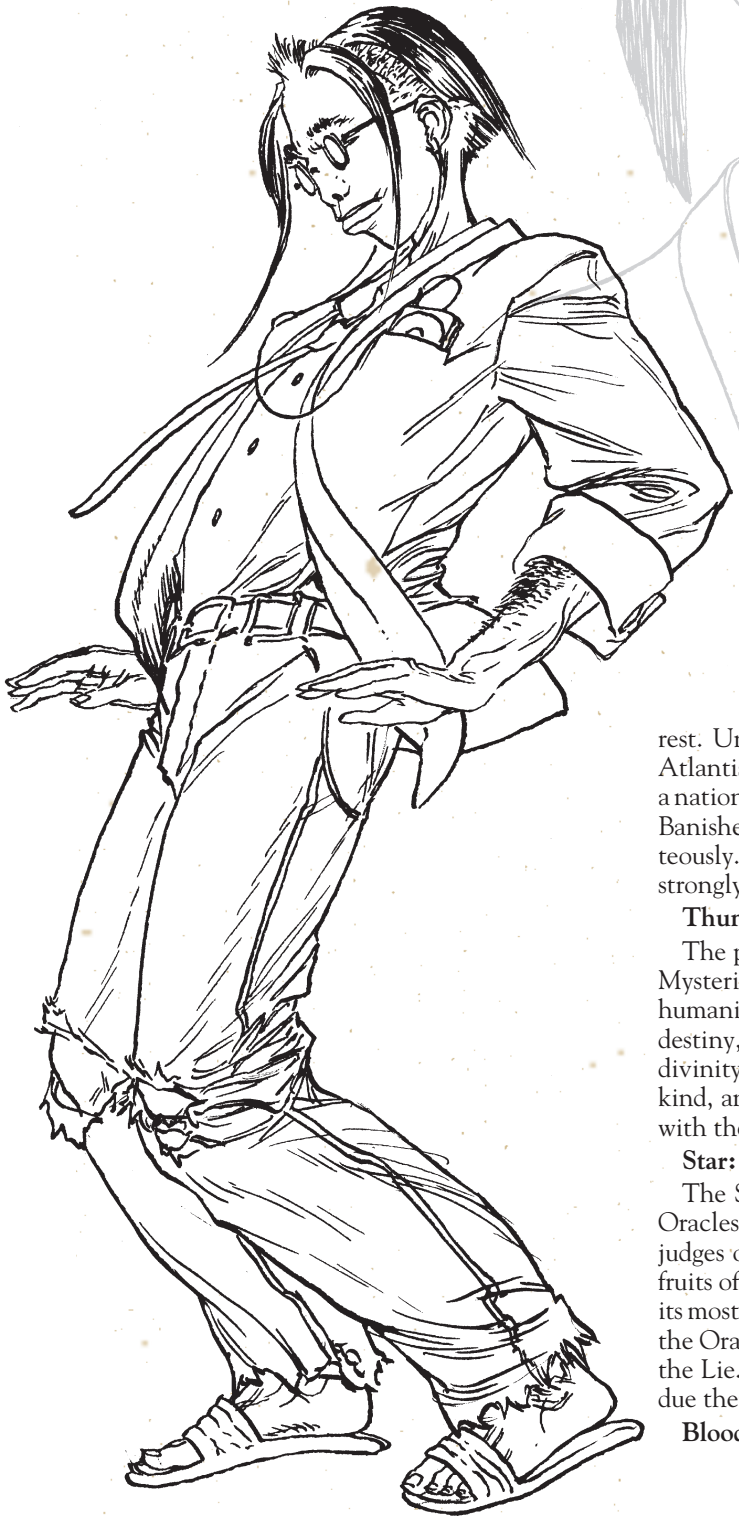
The Silver Ladder does not always prefer such forward tactics, but it is good for the order to project an image of strength. In other situations, a light touch is required, but this should never be applied in a way that calls théarchs' prestige into question. "Accuse publicly, apologize quietly," is a common maxim, but make no mistake: the quiet word is as carefully plotted as the loud one.

## Philosophy

The Elemental Precepts describe the legalistic philosophy that the Silver Ladder espouses. The order has spread this doctrine among Sleepers and mages for millennia. No authoritative text exists, and they are often taught as a series of parables or aphorisms.

**Diamond: The Awakened are one nation**

Diamond is the sanctified, transformed Earth in the Elemental Precepts, the base upon which all other achievements rest. Under this precept, mages have a common bond in Atlantis and the struggle to exalt humanity. This constitutes a nation, and mages are beholden to its laws. Traitors such as Banishers and Seers of the Throne may be punished righteously. Other mages must respect the Consilium more strongly than any Sleeper government.



**Thunder: Imperium is the right of humanity**

The purpose of the Awakened is to secure the Imperium Mysteriorum — the Sovereignty of the Mysteries — for humanity. No Exarch or god has the right to control human destiny, and even natural calamities are an insult to human divinity. Thunder is energized Air, the life-breath of humankind, and the moral duty to seize Imperium is synonymous with the right to life itself.

**Star: The Silver Ladder is the path to victory**

The Star is the sign of Supernal Fire, in the form of the Oracles' Watchtowers. Silver Ladder mages were the priest-judges of Atlantis, and it is their prerogative to direct the fruits of the Star against the Exarchs. The order claims that its most powerful members receive instructions directly from the Oracles. Théarchs pledge to arm the Awakened against the Lie. They therefore deserve the respect and obedience due the seneschals of the Oracles.

**Blood: The Sleepers follow**

Blood is living Water and heralds the birth of human beings, but it is also the sign of a wound. Sleepers are wounded by the Quiescence and need the direction of the Awakened to prosper. They must be healed and raised up to claim the Imperium Mysteriorum. This is a slow, careful process that must follow the traditional forms of apprenticeship.

## Rituals and Observances

The Silver Ladder's rites are well known because they are common to all mages. The order preserved the Duel Arcane and founded the first Concilii. Its conventions have become the norm. And yet, there are some traditions that the order reserves for itself.

**Convocation**

Every year, all deacons from at least two Concilii gather to set a common policy for the year to come. This is known as the Least Convocation. Lesser Convocations occur every three years, gathering all of the deacons in a larger region defined by geography and tradition. Theoretically, there are also Great Convocations (where every deacon on a continent meets) every five years, but these have not gathered in over a century (when the European deacons debated the order's response to the Free Council). A Grand Convocation of deacons from around the world is an unfulfilled dream, said to be the first step to creating a true Awakened nation.

**Lex Magica**

The Silver Ladder enforces a special legal code among its own ranks. This constitution governs everything from the proper relationships between mentors and apprentices to the circumstances under which a théarch may kill another mage or Sleeper. These laws are held to be enforceable regardless of Consilium policy on a given matter. Any théarch of superior station may pass judgment on minor affairs, but major crimes such as theft and murder are dealt with by a lictor.

## Titles and Duties

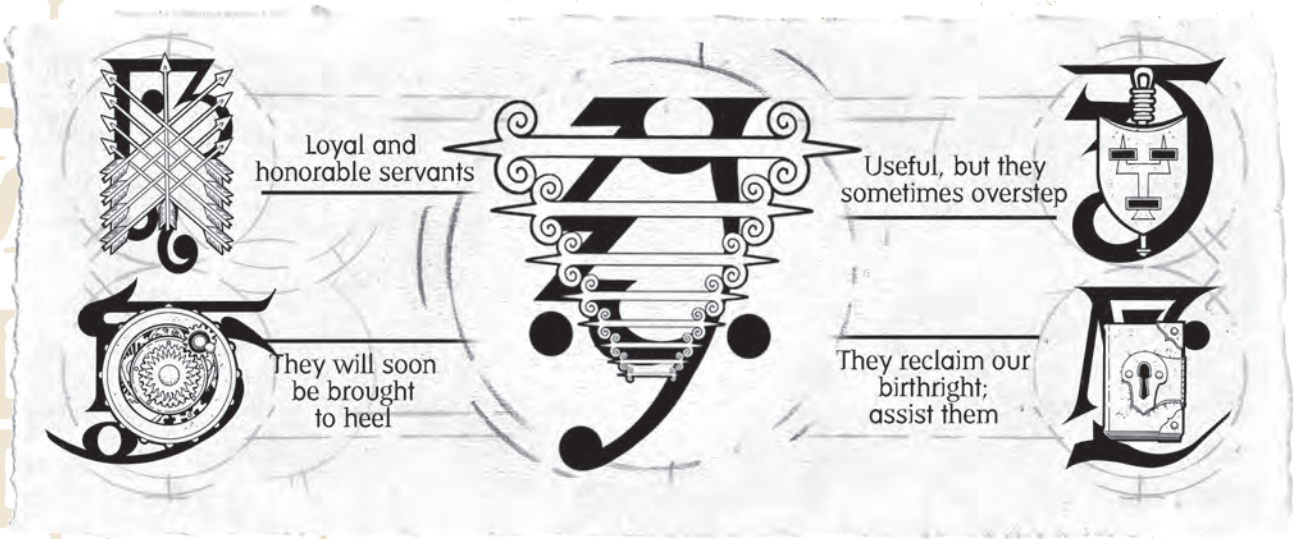
The Silver Ladder uses several titles to denote rank and function. Local tradition dictates many of these, but two are universal and well known.

**Deacon**

A deacon directs order affairs within a given Consilium's jurisdiction. Many deacons serve as Councilors on a Consilium's ruling body. Others do not, allowing another mage to speak for them; a few even conceal their true station. Aside from attending annual Convocations, a deacon enforces discipline and coordinates the Silver Ladder's local efforts to bring mages under strong, central rule.

**Lictor**

A lictor is a traveling official who enforces the Lex Magica, acting as judge and punisher. Lictors are invariably tough and magically adept. Most lictors travel a circuit and serve as an informal source of news and rumors about mages in other regions. A lictor's judgment is binding upon a Silver Ladder mage. There is no higher authority to which to appeal. This power is balanced by the fact that these rootless mages are forbidden to have apprentices (other than their replacements) or permanent sanctums until they resign.



## The Seers of the Throne

Consider this: The Awakened clutch the ragged threads of Atlantis ever more desperately or turn to infant theories to shore up wisdom and power long ago claimed by the Exarchs. Mages are losers. They dream of a time that can never come, or of a time that can never come again. To the Seers of the Throne, it is better to serve the victors than to clutch at empty dreams of ascension. Better to be a slave to a god than a beggar among the Sleepers. And it is good, so *very* good, to be on the winning side.

The Silver Ladder plays at government and the Guardians of the Veil spin together cults to confuse the unworthy, but the Seers of the Throne claim that these are only pale imitations of true power. When interrogated, they claim to have first served the Exarchs while Atlantis still smoldered. They did not claw their way across the Abyss to the Watchtowers — they were *pulled* there by the Exarchs and initiated as prison guards, informants and spies. Since then, they've grown and prospered, insinuating themselves into Awakened and Sleeping power structures. There, they bulwark humanity's Quiescence with their own projects, and block Awakened attempts to reclaim the Supernal World. They do not act out of charity, for they believe the Exarchs will reward their service.

Every member of the order believes in an elaborate conspiracy that stretches from the streets all the way to the Supernal Throne itself: a hierarchy to be climbed and offices to be won. Their loyal service is rewarded with more power as they move another notch up the pyramid. Seers believe that if they truly prove their worth, they can be promoted to Exarchy itself.

The conspiracy (and hierarchy) is endless, divided into true and false offices. Even Seers cannot readily distinguish between the two types. True offices are meaningful within the greater structure of the order, but false offices have been created by superior Seers to divert inferiors from the true path to power. Masters do not trust their lowest slaves, but allow them to manage affairs with a free hand by creating false stations. In time, the office's purpose is forgotten, leading to a profusion of titles and secret sects. At the lowest ranks, the value of a rank is very much a matter of opinion, so middle conspirators form other, informal associations to build and hold their power base. Secret names, signs and rites abound on all levels.

Nevertheless, there are regular rumors that give the rest of the Awakened some idea of the Seers of the Throne's structure. The order has modernized to a degree, combining contemporary titles with the honorifics of ages past. Individual cabals are called "pylons." They compete among themselves, but also serve a regional "tetrarchy." At the top lie the Ministries, concerned with portfolios instead of regions. Even the Seers do not know the name of every Ministry, but certain symbols and powers mark authentic representatives (or have been used as deceptions for so long they have *become* authentic). Two of them — the Panoptic and Praetorian Ministries — are responsible for espionage and war, and are infamous among outsiders.

The Seers of the Throne's mission is to enforce the Quiescence by preventing Awakenings, destroying magical knowledge and subverting or killing mages before they grow powerful enough to threaten the Exarchs. The easiest way to gain power in the order is by successfully suppressing magic, so members pursue it avidly. Seers do relent when they wish to employ mages to tip an internal struggle in their favor, and they hoard arcane lore for their own benefit. Ironically, one of their favored tactics is to provoke mages into casting vulgar magic in hopes of causing a Paradox. Like the Guardians of the Veil, the Seers suspect that Paradoxes widen the Abyss, and so make it harder and harder for souls to Awaken. The order is not all-powerful, but its network is vast. A skilled Seer can bring great force to bear against her enemies, though it may cost her favors and prestige. Otherwise, Seers spend this influence upon themselves, accumulating wealth and political weight in Sleeper political structures.

Even though Seers are the Exarch's willing slaves, the Exarchs themselves do not obviously influence the order's affairs. Seers believe that when they accrue enough power, the Exarchs will free them from the strictures of the Fallen World, and there are always whispers of Seers who have learned from the Exarchs themselves.

## Banishers

The Banishers believe that Awakening is a curse. They are a loosely organized order of mages who Awakened to horror or experienced a tragedy through magic and now actively seek to harm the Art and its practitioners.

Atlantean legends speak of a rebellious order that the formal orders dubbed the Timori, the "fearful." Although this group itself has not survived in any coherent form, its legacy is often taken up anew by those who hate their Awakened state or who seek revenge upon all mages. It seems there is at least one mage in nearly every generation who claims heritage to past Banishers, and who stirs the fires of hate again, organizing other scarred individuals or cabals into joining the cause. The goal is nothing less than the eradication of other mages and an end to the pernicious influence of the Supernal Realms over the world. The Banishers declare that they seek Sleep when their mission is done.

The average Banisher doesn't believe in Atlantis or the Exarchs or think that the Fall was justice from on high, bringing a prideful humanity down to its appropriate station. Defying the natural laws of the world through magic is dangerous, immoral or both. Thus, mages are naturally evil and cause disasters. Even so, the order embodies two ironies. The first is that their mages still learn the Arcane Mysteries to use against enemy sorcerers. The second is that certain Banishers have been among of the best known and accepted miracle workers in the world, because they tend to be formidable exorcists and purifiers.

Banishers usually cling to a religious or ideological position. A religious man may treat magic as a wicked tool that must be wielded to do God's will. An ardent materialist distrusts magic as an inexplicable force full of false metaphors, but admits that she must study it to contain it, or else it will pervert scientific progress. Rumors persist that religious authorities, corporations and governments secretly fund Banisher cabals. The Vatican is frequently accused of backing Banishers, but it's difficult to determine whether a

given priest is just a source of moral support or something more.

Many Banishers work alone, although they communicate to share hunting techniques, usually by phone, e-mail and other methods that allow them to stay a safe distance from each other. Banishers with a common set of beliefs hunt together or even form a loose cabal, but they do not easily cooperate in face-to-face situations, for they often suspect that their own comrades are actually the enemy.

Banishers regularly target sanctums and Demesnes, killing mages and destroying their works. They are enemies of all of the other orders, despised as a rule. Their Awakened hypocrisy especially draws other mages' wrath. To make matters worse, Banishers receive most of their magical training from the libraries of their victims, because most of them refuse to create their own grimoires. To study and *then* burn a book is a categorically corrupt act and effectively symbolizes why other mages hate them. Some particularly nihilistic Banishers go even farther by creating intentionally flawed manuals and other enchanted items to trick mages into destroying themselves.

## Society

As with any group, the Awakened have a culture of their own, with its own terminology, customs and mores. The cultural range covered by the various orders is wide. Even after several thousand years, the fundamental elements of this culture remain in place, and modern order mages are just as aware of them as their ideological precursors thousands of years ago. Mages from Haiti, China and the United States might not have anything else in common, but if someone refers to a "second-degree master," all three understand the concept.

Most orders' mentors include basic mage lore and culture — rank titles and a basic understanding of the Arcana model of magic — as part of the inculcation process for new initiates. After her initiation, a young mage takes on a new name for the purposes of interacting in the magical world. This is her "shadow name."

## Shadow Names

Words are powerful; any mage knows that. Names in particular have power, because they are a connection to the entity they denote. An enemy that can't be accurately named is an enemy that can't be easily targeted with magic. In response to this potential vulnerability, mages almost always take a shadow name at the time of their initiation, hiding their real name from enemies. A mage uses her shadow name the same way an attendee of a masquerade ball uses a mask. Not only does it hide her true self, it also facilitates the mage's taking on a different persona, ideally one that is better suited for working magic.

*Example: Tamara Hollister is initiated into the Free Council order. Her master tells her that it's good to avoid using her birth name in a magical context, because it makes her somewhat more vulnerable to those who might use her name to work magic against her. He recommends that she take another name. She asks him what her shadow name should be and he insists that she choose it herself. Her father was a mage and she wants desperately to follow in his footsteps. When she was young, he told her fantasy stories about a utopian kingdom where magic and science were one, ruled by the beautiful princess Glorianna. In honor of her father and his dream of a better tomorrow, Tamara chooses Glorianna to be her shadow name. Her master officially presents it to her during a naming ceremony.*

In some orders it is common for a mage's instructor to present the initiate with his shadow name upon indoctrination into the order, although it grows increasingly common for mages to choose their own shadow names. All orders use shadow names to one degree or another.

## The High Speech

Words of power and true names are intimately tied to magic. Magic can be expressed through language, but not just any language — only the High Speech of Atlantis can speak of the reality of higher worlds. Just as our mundane language influences our thoughts — favoring some concepts over others due to how much attention our language provides them — so were the Exarchs and Oracles influenced by their language. Since they are said to now reside in the Supernal World, working their Art to alter its realms, their native tongue wields power over the Fallen World.

The Atlantean tongue is a language from wizardry's golden age. It cannot be read or heard by Sleepers. Disbelief occludes their minds so that they see and hear only gibberish, or mistake it for another foreign tongue they don't understand. Only the Awakened can fully perceive its runes and understand its syllables. Even if Sleeper archaeologists were to discover a cache of Atlantean tablets or scrolls, they could not understand what they held and would probably store them in the backroom of a museum, awaiting a more thorough study that never occurs.

This "dead" tongue, however, is imperfectly remembered by even the Awakened. Much has been lost since the Fall, including complete fluency in the language of the Awakened's forebears. It does, however, provide tangible magical benefits when spoken in conjunction with spellcasting, for each spell can be spoken as a word or phrase, or written with runes. The language has specific words for entities and concepts no longer recognized by humans. Simply learning to speak or write Atlantean is a history lesson in the occult sciences. It is the ancient language of oaths and bindings, used to force demons and spirits into servitude or to extract unbreakable oaths from them.

Atlantean runes are also used to scribe words into talismans and amulets, for the runes give spells a lasting power. It is the language used to write rotes into a grimoire, since mundane languages usually lack the proper vocabulary and grammar to convey magical ideas.

All orders teach initiates the rudiments of the language as they learn the Arcana.

## Ranks

Mages judge one another by their knowledge and mastery of the Mysteries. The degree of respect shown to a mage is largely dependent on how powerful his magical understanding is. While rank is acknowledged in all orders, its purpose varies from order to order. Silver Ladder mages may see

gaining rank as the whole point, while Mysterium mages see it only as a byproduct of how long a mage has known how the world works.

Older mages are typically assumed to be more powerful, while younger ones are assumed to be less so (a dynamic that benefits those who Awakened late in life, but irritates the prodigies of the mage world).

The Silver Ladder introduced the general conventions of rank that are used by most (if not all) orders, for ease of communication if nothing else. These conventions are based on Atlantean traditions. Most orders also have their own intra-order ranking systems in addition to the one used across orders.

| Arcanum Dots | Rank |
|---|---|
| • | Initiate |
| •• | Apprentice |
| ••• | Disciple |
| •••• | Adept |
| ••••• | Master |
| ••••••+ | Archmage |

While becoming a master of an Arcanum is a formidable accomplishment, it's not the pinnacle of the mage ranking system. That comes only with mastery of multiple Arcana.

| Master of... | Rank |
|---|---|
| 1 Arcanum | 1st-degree master |
| 2 Arcana | 2nd-degree master |
| 3 Arcana | 3rd-degree master |
| etc. | etc. |

In truly formal titles, a mage's complete Arcana knowledge might be acknowledged. For example, Morvran knows Fate 5, Life 5, Mana 4, Mind 1, Space 2, Spirit 1 and Time 2. Hence, he is a 2nd-degree master (of Fate and Life), an adept (of Mana), a disciple (of Space and Time) and an initiate of Mind and Spirit. However, for simplicity's sake, he is most often referred to as a master, or sometimes (when he is among other masters) as a 2nd-degree master.

## The Consilium: The Politics of Power

Cabals often come into conflict with neighboring cabals. The wars of the past caused mages to establish a mediating body to prevent outright conflict whenever possible, and to police the Awakened community to prevent the Mysteries from being despoiled before the eyes of Sleepers. Each region thus has a Consilium, a judges' council. Since its original adoption by mages, the institution has grown into more than a mediating force. A local Consilium often coordinates the efforts of the Awakened, especially against the Seers of the Throne and other enemies.

More often than not, the Consilium oversteps its original charter and acts more like a central council commanding all its subsidiary cabals' councils. This practice, thanks largely to the need for a unified response to the Seers of the Throne and the Banishers, is not only accepted by most cabals, but their council members actually encourage it, hoping to one day be elected to the Consilium so that they can then wield unlimited power.

"Election" is not a formal process, but simply the consent of the governed. A powerful mage usually seeks the support of other cabals in declaring him the Hierarch of the Consilium. If they agree, he can legitimately claim the title. Contenders must then challenge him to the Duel Arcane if they wish to win his place, or else lobby the cabals to revoke their consent. In practice, few cabals ever defy the will of the Consilium Hierarch, for he is a powerful and ambitious mage, and is likely to remember any slights. No lesser mage wants to have to fend for his own political survival should his attempt to overthrow the Consilium Hierarch fail.

Council members are elected in a similar fashion to the Hierarch, although those not approved by the Hierarch rarely serve. In theory, member cabals can force the issue and demand that their candidates be allowed to serve, but again, few wish to defy the Hierarch so openly.

Of course, not all cabals accept the Consilium's edicts. Some are forced to concede to the sheer weight of numbers arrayed against them, but some cabals are powerful enough to resist, and many upstarts work under the Consilium's radar.

So far there have been few attempts to extend the power of a Consilium beyond its own region. Most alliances and mergers between the Consilii of separate areas do not last long, torn apart by the sheer amount of conflicting rivalries that come to head.

Atlantean customs still set the standard for most Consilii, especially in how they interact with one another. While this standard provides some degree of similarity in the workings of Consilii as far apart as London and Jakarta, there are nonetheless regional differences that might mask or hide commonalities from casual guests.

The Consilium, like all political institutions, is about power. It's where a mage goes to request favors for tasks he can't perform on his own. It also acts as a center of dispute resolution between outside parties, if the Consilium is respected by both parties and seen as just and objective.

### The Ruling Council

Most Consilii are oligarchies, run by the most experienced mages. Their dictates are law, although few mages are so foolish as to impose their will upon others without careful thought and just consideration. If a council is deemed to oppress the members of regional cabals, they can almost assuredly expect a revolt or assassination attempt to set things right. Hence, in practice, most Consilii seem more like representative democracies. In times of calamity or war, however, the council's word is not to be questioned, upon pain of expulsion or death.

There are a number of formal roles within the Consilium.

**Hierarch:** The leader of the council. In some Consilii, the Hierarch is the main authority to which other Councilors demure, while in others the Hierarch is merely the one who casts the deciding vote.

**Councilor:** A member of the ruling council. There are traditionally four Councilors, for a total of five officers including the Hierarch, although some Consilii interpret this as the need for five Councilors *in addition* to the Hierarch. Different Consilii use different schemes for choosing Councilors, although the tradition is to choose one mage from each Path, so that each Watchtower has a voice. Ideally, this also means one Councilor from each order, but all too often one order dominates with two or even three Councilors. Another means of election is by cabal, with each

Councilor representing one of the four or five major cabals in the region.

**Provost:** One or more mages tasked with ensuring that the council's orders are carried out. There is generally one Provost assigned to each Councilor, usually chosen by that Councilor, and one Provost who serves the Hierarch.

**Herald:** A representative of the Consilium to its cabals or to foreign Consilii. There are as many Heralds in a region as necessary, although this title usually goes to only those who are trustworthy, capable of putting the needs of the Consilium above their own.

**Sentinel:** An enforcer, either policing the Consilium's sanctum or Demesne or warring against the Consilium's rivals. As with Heralds, there are as many Sentinels as the Hierarch and Council feel is necessary for the operation of the Consilium.

## Lex Magica — The Body of Law

There are many laws by which the Awakened govern the practice of magic. For the most part, one mage does not dare to tell another how he should perform his Art, but when magic endangers others (or the political goals of a powerful mage or cabal), the practitioner might come under the eye of the law. Centuries of jurisprudence determine the customs by which a judge or ruling body, such as a cabal's leadership or the Consilium itself, can impose punishments upon a mage for the malpractice. The vast body of these guidelines is called the Lex Magica.

A mage could spend years studying the Lex Magica, poring over past trials and rulings, and still never completely understand the complex network of precedent laid down in centuries past. Cabal leaders and the Consilium council are given much leeway in determining the outcome of cases, based on local needs, but precedent can be brought in by an accuser or the accused to seek a different ruling. Mage advocates are generally disdained by other mages, because they are considered to waste time on legalisms rather than learning magic, but few mages spurn the need for one should he ever be accused and brought to trial before the Consilium.

The only general law that all mages must conform to is the law of secrecy. It is a serious offense to speak of true magic to the unenlightened or to openly practice it before their eyes. While the latter brings its own punishment — the lash of a Paradox — the former also has its consequences. The Quiescence curses everything it touches, dampening the spark of the Supernal. To speak of magic to Sleepers is to risk tainting it, making it banal through their disbelief. This is an extremely subtle process, one that mages became aware of over the course of many years. Some believe that certain magical powers that can be claimed only by modern archmages were once in the reach of masters or even adepts. As the secrets of the Arcana are revealed to the unworthy, they become increasingly unattainable by even the Awakened. There are many theories about why this is so, but they are unimportant. It is simply an ironclad law by which all mages must live.

The Consilium expects each cabal to police its own membership and levy punishments for those who reveal magical secrets. Truly grand betrayals might bring the judgment of a Consilium, especially if other mages or cabals are directly harmed by the offense. Am excessively vulgar display of spellcraft might anger a rival cabal, especially if it was performed in their territory, and they might lobby the Consilium for justice.

The degree of punishment depends on the offense.

- **Casting vulgar magic witnessed by more than one Sleeper:** A mild reprimand, accompanied by a form of penance, such as a night of watch duty or reorganizing the sanctum library.
- **Casting vulgar magic witnessed by one or more Sleepers who then tell other Sleepers about the incident:** A severe reprimand, with more extreme penance, perhaps including making good on one of the cabal's debts.
- **Casting vulgar magic that leaves behind enduring evidence of magic, even if Sleeper Disbelief eventually destroys such evidence:** The Consilium council might be convened (if someone files an official complaint) to decide the punishment, which might include a term of incarceration if the mage shows no remorse or regard for consequences.
- **Speaking about the Mysteries within earshot of Sleepers:** A mild reprimand, as above.
- **Teaching uninitiated Sleepers about the Mysteries:** A severe reprimand. This does not include intentionally diverting Sleepers from the truth, such as the Guardians of the Veils' fake cults and covens, used to baffle Sleeper attempts to discover the truth.
- **Publishing secrets that Sleepers might read, including dissemination on the Internet:** A Consilium might convene to decide the punishment. (Articles written in Atlantean do not count. It is considered a "safe" language, impossible for Sleepers to read.)

Note that repeated infractions within a short time period often lead to incarceration until the cabal or Consilium feels the mage has learned her lesson.

## The Magical Landscape

Although the Supernal Realms are beyond the reach of Sleepers and even mages (except during their Awakenings), that doesn't mean that the Fallen World is without its own enchantments. Certain places in the world attract supernatural creatures or cause supernatural events, and some even collect Supernal energy — what mages call Mana — like grass collects the morning dew. Even a mage's own home — his sanctum — can serve as a nexus for mystical activities.

### Sanctums

A sanctum is any place used as a headquarters, living quarters or work space by one or more mages. Sanctums can take a variety of forms and serve a range of functions, depending on the needs of the resident cabal (or cabals). They typically boast magical fortifications, but that's not always the case. The common image of a sanctum is that of a moderately sized Victorian house, but that paints a very limited picture. A sanctum can be anywhere: a monastery, a cave, an underground tunnel system, an industrial park. Any place a cabal of mages resides is, by definition, a sanctum.

In practice, however, that definition is somewhat simplistic. Most sanctums have been modified with magic to make

them safer and more conducive to the magic of those who live there. A small sanctum may house only a single cabal. The largest may provide a base of operation for many times that number.

Protection is only one of the advantages associated with living in a sanctum. Residents often have access to arcane libraries, laboratories, potential mentors and possibly even stores of tass.

Ideally, a sanctum is located on a Hallow in order to provide Mana for the resident mages, as well as to fuel any long-term spells on the structure itself. In the modern day, the increasing rarity of Hallows makes it difficult to construct new sanctums atop them, although masters of the Prime Arcanum have been known to use powerful magic to move an existing Hallow to a newly built sanctum.

Sanctums vary depending on their function. Not all serve the same purpose. The oldest of such places are generally ancestral, sacred sites that have been under the control of one family, order or cabal for generations. Ancestral sanctums are almost always the heart of a Demesne (see below). Many of the most sacred oak groves of the druids, for example, are still in the hands of mages who guard them with terrifying ferocity. Other ancestral sanctums are located in Asian monasteries, Turkish opium dens or even on Polynesian islands. Ancestral sanctums tend to be intensely conservative places, and the residents can be overprotective of their territory. Outsiders may be allowed in, but are rarely welcomed.

Some sanctums serve as common safe houses or defenses. Any city with a significant Awakened community is likely to have at least one. These places are essentially outposts in enemy territory. As one reflection of this fact, the outside of a defensive sanctum is as unremarkable as skill or magic can make it. Stealth spells are often used to minimize the safe house's visual or psychological impact. In small towns, the sanctum may capitalize on the superstition of the less sophisticated and appear "haunted" (although in some cases the haunting may be real). The entrance to an urban defensive sanctum may be located in a dark alley whose foreboding ambiance may have been enhanced through magic. Some sanctums find it best to stay out of sight completely, possibly even in tunnels under street level.

## Location

Cabals claim territory. Most often, they're not defined by land so much as affinity. Local art museums might be claimed by one cabal, while universities are the territory of another. Each cabal's sanctum *is* defined by where it sits and its relation to the land. Mages perceive the magical resonance of their environment and work to adjust it to their benefit.

If the city plans to build a new freeway right across a ley line, it's the cabal's job to halt that project. Ley lines can't simply be rerouted, while freeways can be. If the project goes through and severs the line, local Hallows might be affected and regional resonance will change.

Mages often defend a locale's magical integrity to prevent alterations from affecting spells and goals. Some Paths are more tied to the land than others. Acanthus and Thyrsus revere it, while Moros might ignore it.

In addition to the physical features of the land, there are also spiritual features. The Shadow Realm looms on the other side of the Gauntlet, and the actions of its denizens often affect the resonance — if not the physical features — of the material world.

## Sanctum Politics

Mages are willful individuals. They are often quite certain that their way of performing magic (or doing anything else, for that matter) is the one and only proper way. Putting several such individuals to a single location can be trying for all involved. Most mages recognize the advantages of sanctum life, but that only goes so far in alleviating the tensions that arise between them.

**Shared Sanctums**

There is safety in numbers, and in the World of Darkness safety is a rare blessing. In large cities, more than one cabal can reside in a single sanctum. The protocols of the cabals are usually designed to maintain order between the groups. While one or two members of a particular cabal might actually own the property, that cabal as a whole is considered the authority with regards to outside mages.

Building a decent sanctum can be difficult, particularly for a young or recently formed cabal with no track record. The irony, of course, is that young mages are the least capable of establishing their own sanctums and in the greatest need of the security they provide. Hence, initiates are the prime targets of established cabal recruiters.

## Rent

If a cabal establishes a sanctum on its own, it has only to keep the place up, maintain the structure's defenses (magical or otherwise) and repel those who might be inclined to take the place. Most of these tasks are handled by designated group members (or more likely retainers), but non-members can pay for the privilege of living there through the duties they perform for the group. In most instances, these duties are directly related to upkeep and defense — maintaining the wards on the sanctum's doors and windows, dealing with the thing that keeps trying to dig its way up from the sewers, repelling a cabal trying to access the Hallow. But under some circumstances, the resident cabal may ask its guests to perform some more significant deed or quest to earn room and board. Quests that could potentially fall under this rubric might include (but aren't limited to): bringing back a large amount of tass with a particular resonance, investigating the disappearance of another mage living in the sanctum, or obtaining an important magical text for the library. The larger, more prestigious or luxurious the sanctum, the more difficult the request could be. High-end magical lodgings are hard to come by, after all.

## Resonance

Few items or substances are regarded by a mage strictly for their material components. Everything has a subtle side, an esoteric spiritual or magical nature that defines it just as much as its physical aspect does. In the case of places, this ethereal element is called resonance.

Resonance is marked by certain *qualities*, most often characterized by emotions (hate, anger, joy, sorrow), or more rarely by concepts (logic, chaos, fascism, democracy). In other words, places resonate with emotions or concepts, influencing creatures that live within the place or who come into contact with it regularly. An asylum for the mentally troubled, for example, might resonate with a quality of *insanity*, ensuring that patients rarely get better. Meanwhile, an asylum across town might have resonance characterized by *love*, in which case patients tend to become empathic and happy.

Spirits in the Shadow Realm are attracted to resonance whose qualities are similar to their own natures. They tend to cluster on the other side of the Gauntlet from such places, influencing them with spirit powers.

Mages who seek to influence the world through Sleepers tend to pay a lot of attention to resonance, since it can go a long way to strengthening the sorts of qualities they want to foster. Magic cannot directly affect the resonance of a place (at least not for long), so sorcerers must work to indirectly alter it over time to achieve the qualities they want. A mage who seeks others to suffer as he has might torture and murder people in his basement, turning the place into a well of despair that attracts spirits of pain and suffering, who in turn work to influence the area to foster more of the nourishing pain. On the other side of the spectrum, a mage who seeks world peace might work to ensure that the resonance around the United Nations headquarters is calm and peaceful. (It's doubtful, however, that a place as prominent as the United Nations headquarters isn't watched over by a number of competing supernatural conspirators, each of which seeks to inject its own favored qualities into the place.)

## Hallows

Where the pure force of magic filters down from the Supernal World (or where pre-existing Supernal energy, trapped since the Fall, is regularly recycled), it saturates the local area, supercharging it with enchantment and turning otherwise natural locales into places where strange things happen. For those who know how to harness them, such places are invaluable.

Hallows frequently possess a strong enough flow of magic that even Sleepers can sense the power of the areas. Hallows often have a strong allure for both Awakened and Sleeper, although the latter don't really understand why. More importantly (from a mage's perspective) Sleepers are more likely to Awaken in these sacred places. Not all spots that evoke powerful sensations are currently Hallows, although many are, and many more have been in the past and have the potential to be again if they are properly reopened.

The sensation caused by a Hallow varies depending on the resonance of its energy. A religious shrine may instill a visitor with a sense of spiritual awe. A sacred grove might fill her with a deep reverence for nature. A site where the energy has been tainted might nauseate people or cause the hairs on the back of the neck to bristle. Hallows vary a great deal, but they all share a single tendency: they don't feel like mundane space. Fertile or fetid, holy or hellish, there's no mistaking a Hallow for any mundane place.

The strongest Hallows tend to be situated in high places, such as on mountaintops or the tips of towers. Other Hallows can occur anywhere, even in the dark between two clefts, or down a deep pit. There is no predicting where they will occur, although mages know that high places often host powerful ones, and so tend to search there.

### Hallow Resonance

The Mana flowing from Hallows is usually pure, though that is not always the case. Some Hallows have a unique resonance the moment they begin to flow. In such cases, the resonance is usually relatively weak, wild or vital. Hallows can take on another resonance, however, if strong magic is routinely performed in or near the vicinity. A non-resonant Hallow might quickly take on a serene or focused resonance if a mystic monastery is built atop it.

Hallows that gain resonance in this way can lose it as well if long stretches of time pass without some outside force reinforcing that resonance. A hundred years is usually enough time for a Hallow to lose any resonance it may have gained. If diametrically opposed magic is regularly performed near a Hallow with the express intent of changing the resonance, recovery time can be truncated significantly.

### Tainted Hallows

Hallows can be tainted, either through unconscious or accidental desecration, or deliberately. Strong infusions of negative emotions, toxic waste or even bad geomantic configurations (what certain eastern mages call bad feng shui) can result in a Hallow's primal essence taking on a charge that makes its energy unpleasant to work with, and that might even cause spells powered with that energy to manifest in a twisted fashion.

Tainted Hallows radiate poisonous magic into the surrounding countryside, curdling milk, blighting crops, sickening animals and children, attracting ghosts and corrupt spirits, and ruining television reception. Misfortune of all types is more likely to befall those in the vicinity of a tainted Hallow. Spontaneous fires destroy houses, pregnant women miscarry, and it's easier for malevolent spirits to enter the world.

### Ley Lines

While Sleepers have achieved some degree of mastery over electricity, there remains at least one type of energy that modern man has yet to understand, let alone recognize. Earth energies, called *leys*, run in lines and channels throughout the landscape and even under the sea. The orders claim that the Atlanteans harnessed this free-flowing energy to power their ancient machines and build wonders like the Sphinx and the pyramids.

Ley lines are often linked to Hallows, in that a strong Hallow is more likely to occur when two or more leys intersect (although this isn't always the case). Leys can be redirected or blocked by altering the geography in a region (this is often done inadvertently by Sleepers), which can in turn lower the strength of associated Hallows.

Mages knowledgeable in the Prime Arcanum can channel the flow of energy from ley lines (sometimes called "dragon lines") to facilitate its flow from one place to another. Leys

are important for those mages who practice geomancy or who need free energy, because they often influence the "tides" of resonance in a region.

## Demesnes

Every mage aspires to live in a Demesne. Demesnes represent the very pinnacle of what a sanctum can be: A place beyond the ordinary, free from Paradoxes, where all magic is covert. Through a mage's own soul sympathy with a Supernal Realm, a Demesne can itself become sympathetic with that realm, and so allow the working of magic more freely.

Demesnes are built on the foundation of one or more soul stones. A soul stone is created when a mage intentionally distills a piece of his soul into matter. By doing so, the mage hinders his own ultimate Supernal potential, but gains worldly power here and now. He erects a Demense with magic (or convinces a master to cast the spell for him with his stone as the basis). Mages usually combine their stones to create large Demesnes.

A soul stone exists as a physical object, placed somewhere within a Demesne (usually in the most defensible position). If another mage were to gain hold of a soul stone, he could use it to siphon Mana from its owner, and he would gain an astonishing degree of magical sympathy with the victim. No mage wants to be another mage's thrall, so soul stones are usually hidden and heavily guarded. They aren't always "stones." Some take the form of animal parts (such as a bear claw), books, paintings, jewelry or even children's toys. Each stone is unique to its owner.

On the grounds of a Demesne (an area determined by the number of soul stones in place), magic triggers no Paradoxes. Sleeper witnesses, however, can still cause a Paradox to strike if they witness the magic. Demesnes are usually heavily guarded from Sleeper intrusion.

A Demesne might take the form of a sprawling mansion, surrounded by a high wall to keep interlopers out, a penthouse suite reachable only with a special elevator code, a hidden warehouse, an underground tunnel system, or even a gated community where all residents are mages or Sleepwalkers.

## Tombs, Ruins and the Unexplored

Outside of well-traveled or civilized areas, there are many strange wonders to draw the curious willworker from his sanctum in search of power, knowledge or mystery. Although Sleepers like to think they've mapped the world and put everything in its place, they're unaware of just how much eludes them. Creatures never cataloged scuttle through the shadows of jungles, and even in modern suburbs. Ruins buried under millennia of silt or sea still await discovery, hoarding ancient items of power undreamt of by even modern mages.

During the dispersion from the Fall of Atlantis, survivors traveled in many directions, establishing colonies in different parts of the globe. Signs of their work appear in some accounts of the past, and are hinted at in ancient edifices



whose architecture baffles scientists today. They were seen as progenitors and fire-bringers to many, carrying the light of civilization long denied to the rest of the world. In some places, though, they were reviled as invaders and conquerors, usurpers of native power.

In every place they went, colonists left behind signs of their presence, although signs that could not always be recognized as such by Sleepers. Temples and libraries were hidden in deep caves and labyrinths, their existence unknown to those who lived above. Only the Mage Sight could reveal their entrances, and only the most clever could disarm all the mystical and mundane traps set to prevent intruders from gaining access. Some truly amazing places could even move — teleporting through elaborate Space Arcanum spells — if thieves ever penetrated their wards, and some existed (and are said to still exist) in bubbles of frozen time.

Mages, of course, would trade nearly anything to get into these lost places. The knowledge and treasures hidden there could promise enough answers to exalt any soul to higher understanding. Those who could attain the Final Key to the Mysteries would no longer be bound by the laws of the Earth, and could stride into heaven in their own bodies. Who wouldn't risk the legends of horrible, soul-severing traps or mind-altering runes to find these vaults of mystical plenty?

## The Realms Invisible

The physical world is not the only world. Existing within its same spaces, occupying the same geography, is a state of existence that is invisible and intangible to physical senses and bodies. This state is called Twilight. It refers to any ephemeral being or thing that exists on the same side of the Gauntlet as physical beings. Twilight ghosts hover over, beside and even in the same spots as Sleepers who carelessly tread upon spectral anchors, the places to which ghosts cling. Spirits that cross the Gauntlet and latch onto a fetter also exist in Twilight. While the occasional Sleeper might sense spirit presence as a chill or the hairs on the nape of his neck rising, he otherwise goes ignorant. Mages have a keener sense for these things. They know immediately when something strange is amiss, and can then cast Mage Sight upon themselves to identify and scrutinize the threat.

The state of Twilight, the spiritual barrier between the realms of matter and spirit called the Gauntlet, and the Shadow Realm of pure ephemera (the twisted reflection of the material realm) are all part of what mages call the Realms Invisible. Perceiving and interacting with these states and/or places, depending on how one wants to define them, requires magic. All Arcana provide some degree of Mage Sight, opening a mage's senses to the supernatural, but the Spirit Arcanum is the best for examining these phenomena.

Many mages don't concern themselves with the Realms Invisible, much as many urban Sleepers give little thought or care to rural or wilderness places. They simply aren't part of the city experience, and so do not justify any attention or time. The problem is, unlike animals in the wilderness, the beings of the Realms Invisible often come looking for mages, and not always in a friendly fashion. Some spirits sense Awakened souls and seek to be near them, like moths to a flame. Indeed, ghosts are often drawn to the "warmth" of an Awakened soul, hoping that it will help warm their chilled aspect. They might not even know why they come, or might intentionally haunt mages for their help in destroying anchors. Some might even have influence over mages' souls or be able to drain energy from them.

Because the unseen world is dangerous, mages need to be wary at all times. While not all mages can be experts in the Spirit Arcanum, it certainly helps to have at least one member in a cabal who is.

### Verges

Sometimes, the strength of the Gauntlet can become so weak, the barrier so thin, that it fades completely, creating a Verge, a place where the material realm and the Shadow connect with no barrier. Material beings can freely enter the Shadow, and spirits can freely enter the material world (although the latter become Twilight, unless they have powers that allow them to materialize into bodies).

Verges are almost always temporary phenomena, opening for an evening or even an hour and then sealing again. Those beings that wander across into the neighboring realm can be trapped on the other side.

No one can truly say what causes a Verge to occur, although they seem to be connected to certain times of the year, such as All Hallows Eve or the anniversary of a powerful spiritual event that occurred in the same place years ago.

### Loci

Loci (singular: locus) are places of spiritual power, where Essence — the food and fuel of spirits — is generated. They are sort of like watering holes for any spiritual fauna (both Twilight and on the other side of the Gauntlet). The spirits are attracted to the quality of spots' resonance, so they are dangerous places to those unversed in the lore of the Spirit Arcanum. Worse — werewolves often claim them as territory. Woe to the mage who inadvertently stumbles upon a locus without knowledge of the means for showing proper respect to a lycanthrope. Nonetheless, shamans often seek out loci as prime places for summoning or calling spirits.

### Hallows, Verges and Loci

A Hallow, a Verge and a Locus all are separate, distinct phenomena. While it is possible for all to occur in the same location, it is rare. Hallows are places that collect or generate Mana. Verges are places where the Gauntlet between the material realm and the Shadow is non-existent; they are usually temporary, occurring only at certain times. Loci are similar to Hallows in that they generate energy, but it is Essence, spiritual energy, not Mana. Those loci that occur in areas with a weak Gauntlet are more prized by spirits and werewolves, but it is uncommon for them to become Verges.

## Ascension

Mages rarely focus solely on their localities. They keep their eyes open to the big picture, to the metaphysical "geography" of the cosmos. While they exist within the Fallen World, they yearn for the Supernal World and spend their days trying to escape the chains that bind them to a darkening universe.

The Fallen World consists of two realms: the material and the Shadow. The Shadow is said to be the mirror or reflection of the material realm, but some say that this is revered, that the material is the reflection of the Shadow. Others say that the two realms are inter-causal. Each influences the other in a continual exchange. The barrier known as the Gauntlet separates the two realms.

"Above" the Fallen World, if such directions have any real meaning (some would say "surrounding" or "enclosing" instead), is the Abyss, the broken void of meaningless existence, a mystical black hole that devours ever more of the Fallen World with the passage of time.

"Above" (or "beyond") the Abyss is the Supernal World, the True World, the Way Things Are Supposed to Be. It is untouched by the Abyss and holds power over the lower world. Here is the true home of every soul, the light that draws and promises to renew them. The Supernal World is conceived of as endless and eternal. Five realms are known (the Path realms, described above), but many more are conjectured. These are known only by virtue of the Watchtowers, the magical edifices or talismans built by the Atlantean kings, the Oracles, to restore hope and power to mortal souls trapped in the Fallen World.

Some mages believe there is another world below the Fallen World, a place even further removed from the Supernal World. This place is called the Lower Depths. It is theorized that creatures from the Lower Depths might occasionally find their way to the Fallen World, where they probably need a lot of Mana to survive — Mana best taken from Awakened sources.

All of these worlds together comprise the Tapestry of Creation, the total universe. The goal of the Awakened soul is to ascend to the Supernal World and there struggle to free all the souls of the Fallen World, and so restore the cosmic balance that once existed before the hubris of Atlantis shattered reality.





# CHAPTER TWO: CHARACTER

*"I can't get a bead on them — they're moving too fast!" Glorianna cried, her automatic pistol outstretched as she tried to find a target.*

*"My sword's useless," Arctos said in frustration. "They're ephemeral, but we can still see them. What gives?"*

*"They're only warning us," Morvran said, standing next to the two young mages on the stairs of the ancient shrine. "If we keep going, they'll materialize and demonstrate their true powers."*

*"And those are…?" Arctos said, nervously watching the flying snakelike spirits flit about them in elaborate circles.*

*"I'm not sure," Morvran replied, seeming unconcerned. "The temple guardians bound to these places could have any powers their Awakened creators imbued into them. There's only one way to find out…." Morvan lifted his foot, readying to place it on the next step.*

*"Hold on!" Glorianna said. "Shouldn't we vote on this or something? We already have a nice chunk of tass to go home with. Do we really need to push it?"*

*Morvran smirked at his two charges. "This isn't a democracy — I outrank Arctos in our order. And you, Glorianna, were invited along under my leadership. Yes, we really do need to press on. Quite desperately."*

*Arctos and Glorianna exchanged glances.*

*"Uh… why?" Arctos said. "Is there something you're not telling us?"*

*"Remember the door we entered to reach this chamber?" Morvran asked.*

*"Yeah," Glorianna said. "The one with all those runes?"*

*"That wasn't a doorway, it was a Space portal. It closed behind us. I can't open it."*

*"What? You mean we can't go back?" Arctos demanded.*

*"Only forward," Morvran said as he placed his foot down on the next step, to the resultant hiss of a thousand snakes.*

**The ordeal of this penetration, comprising an experience of death and annihilation, is for man alone to attempt, and marks his hour of greatest peril. Either he will be swallowed up in dementia or he will rise again from it, initiated in the meaning of theophanies and revelations.**
**— Henry Corbin, The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism**

This chapter introduces the characters themselves, the mages who populate the occult underworld of the Awakened. The process of creating a character is presented, along with the traits and systems used to conjure him into being. The five Paths that mages walk in their Awakening are detailed, as well as the tools modern sorcerers use to work their Art.

## Character Creation

You are building a character to act as your persona in a Storytelling game, where the emphasis is on story, drama and, well, *character*. It is more important to craft the character around your vision of his personality, background and quirks — from his strange habits to his all-too-human flaws — rather than putting together the perfect wizard based on some tactical scheme on how to build the best flame-throwing witch or demon-conjuring sorcerer.

Your character's allocation of traits should illustrate who she is and where she's been in life — not just after the Awakening, but from before she knew she could make her imagination real. What were her hopes and dreams when she was a mere mortal, subject to the slings and arrows of misfortune? How has she changed since the Awakening? Does she use magic to fulfill her lifelong dream, or has she given up those goals to pursue new ones? The Storyteller can help you form your character by acting as a sounding board for ideas and questions.

### Character Creation Process

Use the character creation rules from the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, and add the following mage template to Awakened characters during Step Five.

Choose a Path (see pp. 92-106).

Choose an order (see pp. 38-52).

For beginning Arcana, allocate 2 dots in one Arcanum, 2 dots in a second Arcanum, and 1 dot in a third Arcanum. Two of these Arcana must be from your character's Ruling Arcana (based on his Path). Finally, allocate 1 additional dot in any Arcanum.

The character learns six dots of rotes. A rote's rating is equal to the highest Arcanum dots needed to cast it. The character can choose rotes from any of his Arcana, although no rote can be rated higher than the character's dots in that Arcanum.

Mages can have additional Merits from a special list (see pp. 80-89).

Morality is called Wisdom in **Mage** (see pp. 79-80).

### Step One: Character Concept

The concept that describes the character is the bedrock upon which he is built. No matter how complex or confusing his choices become over his career, you the player always have a guiding concept to fall back upon. The concept is a general idea that tells everyone just what your character is about.

A concept is generally an adjective and a noun — intrepid explorer, deviant librarian, callous detective, haunted survivor. It can be more detailed, if you so choose: "My character is an ex-cop who was discharged from the force for his anger management issues. He just couldn't stand to see crooks game the system and get off scot-free. He's got a real vigilante streak, and now that he can call upon magic, he's got some payback to dish out."

Your character's concept might include his Path and order, or you might decide she's too new to the Awakened world to have changed her basic foundation to incorporate those elements. If you're creating a prelude character who has not yet Awakened, you should devise a concept for a mortal who has no awareness of magic as a real force she can wield.

### Step Two: Select Attributes

Now you can transform your decision about character personality and background into quantitative rules by selecting her Attributes. These describe the character's natural capabilities. Is she strong? Smart? Charismatic? Stubborn? Characters have nine Attributes, divided into three categories: Mental (Intelligence, Wits, Resolve), Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina), and Social (Presence, Manipulation, Composure).

The first step is to decide which of these three categories is *primary*, the category in which the character most excels. Then decide which is secondary, the category in which she is fairly average. The remaining category is the character's weakest; it's tertiary. One character might be a natural athlete, with Physical as her primary, but who is shy and naïve in social situations — a tertiary Social category. Feel free to stymie expectations and play against stereotypes — your athlete might be strong (high Strength), but she's got no staying power (low Stamina), and although her Presence and Manipulation might be low, she could still have a decent Composure, meaning that she isn't too good at making friends but she's no dupe, either.

All characters begin with one dot in each Attribute, the basic human capabilities. Five dots are allocated in the character's primary category, four dots in her secondary category, and three dots in her tertiary category. For instance, the athlete has five dots to place among Physical Attributes, four dots among Mental, and three dots among Social.

The fifth dot in any Attribute costs two dots to purchase. If you wanted your athlete to have a Strength of 5, you need to spend five dots. (Remember, the first is free, the next three dots cost one dot each, and the final fifth dot costs two dots.)

### Step Three: Select Skills

Skills are divided into the same three categories as Attributes: Mental, Physical and Social. Mental Skills tend to represent knowledge and study of the world and are improved through further study and/or practical application. Physical Skills tend to represent training, improved through practice and repetition. Finally, Social Skills rely heavily on interpersonal experience and improve through interaction with others or through trial and error.

Like Attributes, Skill categories are prioritized into primary, secondary and tertiary choices. The primary category receives 11 dots, the secondary category gets seven dots, and the tertiary category gets four dots. Note that, unlike Attributes, characters do not begin with one dot in each Skill — it is possible to have no dots in a Skill, representing a complete lack of training in that area. Indeed, this is not uncommon, since mere mortals cannot learn everything. As with any trait, the fifth dot in any Skill costs two dots to purchase.

### Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

While characters might have considerable training in some field or activity, such as driving vehicles or the study of the occult, they excel in certain aspects of these. For instance, Jack "Snake" Turner might have a special proficiency with motorcycles, but not big rigs. He might be able to drive most vehicles, but most of his experience is with his Harley. Represented in game terms, such a character may have three dots in Drive, with a Specialty in motorcycles.

Choose three Skill Specialties for your character during creation. These should be very specific, though you may choose more than one Specialty for the same Skill. Using the previous example, Jack "Snake" Turner might have Specialties in both motorcycles and off-road vehicles.

### Step Five: Add Mage Template

When a character Awakens, her world changes and she can never be the same. She sees things no one else sees, senses unseen ripples in the currents of reality, and knows of a higher world closed to most mortals. Her Will is made manifest in the world — she *is* magic.

Note that a character cannot possess multiple supernatural templates, and some Merits are unavailable to supernatural characters. A vampire or werewolf cannot Awaken, and they cannot possess many of the magical Merits presented on pp. 80-89.

**Path**

A mage's Path represents his innate magical connection to a higher reality. It is a result of his Awakening. His soul has journeyed to one of the five Supernal Realms and his name has been written on the Watchtower there. By means of this sympathetic connection the mage can draw down the laws of that Supernal Realm, performing magic.

A character's Path colors the aura of his magic, and it often seeps into his dreams, influencing his imagination and even behavior at times. His Supernal Realm calls to him and he feels most at home amidst places or imagery that evoke its strange lands. Symbology and myths that hint at the places and presences of his realm are also important and vital to his method of practicing his Art.

Mages argue over theories about whether one's Path is predestined or is chosen by the soul's own free will. There is strong evidence for both sides, leaving most to shrug and say that all things are possible in the Supernal World.

Examine the five Path descriptions presented (see pp. 92-106) and determine to which Path you want your character to belong.

**Orders**

An order is a social organization for the furthering and betterment of mages, aiding them in honing their practice of the Art for the purposes and goals to which the order strives. Most orders claim a truly ancient pedigree stretching back to fabled Atlantis, although one of them is much more modern and seeks to unite the scientific and magical worldviews. While the orders often work together, each espouses its own goals and practices. These often cause conflict, especially where ownership of valuable magical resources is concerned.

Although a character can be initiated into an order during character creation, he can later leave that order and join another (or go it alone as an "apostate"). Mages who leave their orders, however, are often reviled by their previous order and might even be distrusted by members of a new order. If a mage cannot demonstrate the discipline to stay with those who first nurtured and tutored him after his Awakening, perhaps he lacks the necessary resolve to attain mastery of the Art. Such mages can endanger others, especially if they are so fickle as to accept any alliance offered to them. Mages do not make easy friendships; they rely on the wisdom of their orders to weed out those unworthy of their attention and time.

Orders teach special magical secrets to their members. These are similar to Skill Specialties except that they concern only the casting of rote spells, those spells that have been codified by a master and practiced diligently by a caster. When casting a rote that uses one of his order's Rote Specialties, a +1 dice bonus is gained on the spellcasting dice pool rolled for the character. Unlike Skill Specialties, Rote Specialties denote an entire Skill rather than a single specialized function of that Skill. Their benefits pertain only during the casting of a rote that utilizes the Skill. The Rote Specialties are:

- **The Adamantine Arrow:** Athletics, Intimidation, Medicine
- **The Free Council:** Crafts, Persuasion, Science
- **The Guardians of the Veil:** Investigation, Stealth, Subterfuge
- **The Mysterium:** Investigation, Occult, Survival
- **The Silver Ladder:** Expression, Persuasion, Subterfuge

**Favored Resistance Attribute**

The Awakening hones a mage's mind to razor sharpness, making him better focused at concentration or rendering him nearly unflappable by surprises. Mages gain a +1 bonus

to either their Resolve or Composure dots, depending on their Path.

| Path | Favored Resistance Attribute |
|---|---|
| Acanthus | Composure |
| Mastigos | Resolve |
| Moros | Composure |
| Obrimos | Resolve |
| Thyrsus | Composure |

**Arcana**

All the phenomena of the universe can be described by the actions of 10 different principles or elements — the Arcana, the secrets of Creation. The practice of the Arcana is the study of the Mysteries, the truth behind the illusions of the world.

A mage's understanding of the Arcana and their interrelationships is the mechanism he uses to alter reality in accordance with his imagination. The raw power to do so comes from his Gnosis (see below); the knowledge of *how* to work magic comes from his grasp of the Arcana.

Magic is the drawing down of the laws of a mage's Path realm, by virtue of that realm's Watchtower, and imposing them onto normal reality. Those laws differ among the five Supernal Realms. Each realm has a pair of Ruling Arcana, two poles of the same theme in its material and subtle manifestations. Each realm also has a single Inferior Arcanum, a principle that is especially weak in that realm. Mages cannot improve their understanding of their Path's Inferior Arcanum beyond the basics (two dots) without aid from a mage from another Path.

| Path | Ruling Arcana | Inferior Arcanum |
|---|---|---|
| Acanthus | Time/Fate | Forces |
| Mastigos | Space/Mind | Matter |
| Moros | Matter/Death | Spirit |
| Obrimos | Forces/Prime | Death |
| Thyrsus | Life/Spirit | Mind |

A mage can learn up to the fifth dot in a Ruling Arcana, or the first two dots in his Inferior Arcanum. To learn the fifth dot in any but his Ruling Arcana, he must seek instruction from a mage whose Path provides the Ruling Arcana. Likewise, to learn more than two dots in his Inferior Arcanum, a mage must seek instruction from another for whom that Arcanum is not Inferior. For complete information, see "The Laws of Higher Realities," p. 132. If, once a character's creation is complete, his Arcana dots exceed those allowed by his Path, it's assumed that he received instruction from a mage of another Path.

**Gnosis**

Once a character Awakens, he begins to understand reality in terms of its Supernal truths, seeing past the lie of Fallen World assumptions and paradigms. Gnosis represents his degree of Supernal understanding, his connection to the higher world and ability to channel its energies in the lower world. Gnosis *allows* a mage to work magic, although *how* he works magic depends on his Arcana lore.

A character's Awakening gives him one dot of Gnosis. Merit dots may be spent to increase it. The rate is three Merit dots per one additional Gnosis. In other words, you may spend three of your seven Merit dots for Gnosis 2, or six of your seven for Gnosis 3.

## Step Six: Select Merits

A beginning character has seven dots worth of Merits, which may be distributed at your discretion. These traits should fit the character's concept. A Thyrsus wilderness recluse is unlikely to have dots in the Fame Merit, unless it's part of his background. A Storyteller may encourage or disallow certain Merits or even provide a dot for free (perhaps representing a political contact crucial to the chronicle). The fifth dot in any Merit costs two dots to purchase.

**High Speech**

All orders teach their initiates the rudiments of the Atlantean High Speech. Each member gains the High Speech Merit (p. 84) at no cost. Apostates do not gain this Merit unless one of their initial seven Merit dots is allocated or experience points are spent to learn it.

See pp. 80-89 for additional Merits available to only mages.

## Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Rules regarding Advantages can be found on pages 90–105 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. What follows is concerned less with game mechanics and more with the importance of certain Advantages to mage characters.

**Willpower**

Spellcasting can be a tricky practice, and mages need all the focus they can bring to bear to make their imaginations into real things or events. Willpower is a boon to mages when situations reduce their spellcasting dice pools and they need a burst of concentration to boost them. As per the usual rules, spending a point of Willpower gives a mage +3 dice bonus to a roll.

Masters of an Arcanum can sacrifice a Willpower dot to create a rote, a tried-and-true spell formulation. Mages' experience points can be spent to recoup lost Willpower dots at a cost of 8 experience points per dot. See "Designing Rotes," p. 291.

You may spend Mana in the same turn in which you spend a point of Willpower. For more on spending Mana, see p. 77.

**Wisdom**

Once a person becomes Awakened, he risks losing equilibrium with the real world. His ability to literally make his dreams come true, to wield raw power over others, is a terrible temptation. Many succumb to the allure of power and use their magic for the most petty and banal of activities — telekinetically lifting the morning paper while magically brewing coffee — or for their own aggrandizement or wealth, casually controlling others' minds or turning lead to gold. Those who do not earn their way in the world, tempering hardship with lessons learned, risk falling from the path of Wisdom.

A mage's morality is not just a yardstick of his ethics or psychological stability before adversity. It's a measure of his ability to withstand the allure of his own magic, to use it wisely and only when necessary, and to avoid inflicting harm on others, especially those who have no awareness of or defense against magic.

As an optional rule, Storytellers may allow those players applying the mage template during character creation to trade dots of Wisdom for experience points. This trade-in reflects some hubristic behavior the mage engaged in and

learned from (accounting for the added experience points), but which also scarred her deeply (explaining the loss in Wisdom). Players may sacrifice one dot of Wisdom for five experience points, dropping their characters' Wisdom scores to as low as five (for a maximum of 10 extra experience points).

Note that reducing Wisdom in this way also reduces starting Mana points at character creation.

**Virtues and Vices**

For all his raw power and Supernal understanding, a mage is still human. He has all the same triumphs and foibles of a mortal. Mages have the same Virtues and Vices with which they began. They rarely change during Awakening, although the Storyteller might allow you to alter your character's Virtue and/or Vice depending on what happened during his Awakening. Although the essential nature of the Virtues and Vices does not change for mages, the stakes for engaging in them are higher. A mage who professes to spread Hope has an easier time doing so when he can spread wonder with a word or gesture, but his Vice of Envy is all the harder to dismiss when he has the power to cause a rival's downfall.

In addition, whenever a mage engages his Virtue or Vice, his nimbus — the expression of his magical aura — might turn visible to others, even Sleepers. See "Nimbus," pp. 90-91, for details.

### Trial by Fire

Storytellers may choose to allow players a certain number of experience points to spend before play begins to represent a portion of their lives between Awakening and initiation and the beginning of the chronicle.

| | |
|---|---|
| Amateur | 0 experience points |
| Established mage | 35 experience points |
| Veteran mage | 75 experience points |
| Mover and shaker | 120 + experience points |

## Step Eight: Awakening to Life

At this point your character is well delineated, at least in a rules sense. Now you need to flesh out just what the traits and dots mean. The essential part of your character isn't the rules terminology that describes him, but the dramatic details that bring him to life. What color is his hair? How would you describe his features? What mannerisms does he affect? Do strangers like him when he comes into a room, or does he go unnoticed?

All these elements can be answered with the support of the traits you've assigned. Does he have a high Presence? Then he attracts attention even when he's not doing anything particularly notable. Does he have a low Wits? Then he might take longer to decide what kind of coffee he wants to order, typically annoying customers in line behind him. Is his Composure remarkable? Then he's unflappable, letting insults slide off him or taking even shocking developments, like a nearby car wreck, in stride.

Beyond the traits and dots, however, there are quirks and habits everybody has that go a long way toward illustrating their uniqueness. Does your character smoke only clove cigarettes? Does he have a tattoo or body piercing, or is his grooming impeccable? Is he into the latest fashions or does he get his clothes from the Salvation Army?

Finally, how has his Awakening changed any of these elements? Has he given up smoking, or does he now smoke a pipe thinking it makes him look wise? Does he walk with a newfound confidence, or is he still the same old stuttering wreck? These sorts of questions can be asked in infinite varieties, and the answers you choose are unique to your character.

### Style & Substance

A mage's practice of magic isn't bland or without affectation. Each mage adopts a style, either one that is uniquely his own, one that is colored by his culture, or one that is representative of his Path or order. Most modern mages mix and match these influences, although some seek the "purity" of a single, focused style.

A magical style consists mainly of a symbol set, a group of signs, seals and symbols the mage likes to use as aids to his magic, in a similar way to how mudras are used to activate rotes: as mnemonics for the imagination. In the modern West, this usually means a hodgepodge of various occult symbols, from pentagrams to Tarot to Egyptian hieroglyphs — whatever the mage feels most comfortable with. These symbols are used to activate the imagination and help strengthen the mage's sympathy to his Watchtower. Symbols — even Sleeper created signs — are believed to resonate with certain Supernal Realms, as are certain belief structures and myth cycles. (See "Supernal Symbology," pp. 34-35.)

In some cultures, mages choose to work within the spiritual or supernatural traditions known to Sleepers of that culture. Mages were once Sleepers, too, and the meaning these roles and images still have for them was not erased with the Awakening — it was actually deepened. Hence, it is not unusual to encounter Christian mages who employ the more esoteric techniques of their religion, Amazonian shaman mages who speak with the same spiritual vocabulary as Sleeper *curanderos*, or even European mages who immerse themselves in Nordic runelore. What makes these mages different from their Sleeper counterparts (besides the fact that they're Awakened and can practice real magic) is their knowledge of the Supernal World and the Atlantean system of the Ars Mysteriorum — the truth behind the surface.

Your mage character will adopt his own magical style — even if it's just an eclectic mixing of all sorts of inspirations. He can choose symbols of personal importance to him (perhaps from before his Awakening), of significance to his Path's Supernal Realm (animal totem imagery for the Primal Wild, for instance), or symbols that exemplify his order (such as symbols associated with spiritual warfare for the Adamantine Arrow). The choice for your character is yours; no mage can tell another what style he should use (although that doesn't keep many of them from trying anyway…).

# Mage Template Quick Reference

For the beginning steps of character creation, see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 34–45. The Mage Template summarizes the changes made to an Awakened character.

## Path

Choose a Path, representing the Supernal Realm from which the character draws his magic. This also determines the character's ruling Arcana.

**Acanthus:** The Path of Thistle, Watchtower of the Lunargent Thorn, the Realm of Arcadia, Kingdom of Enchantment, abode of the Fae, ruled by the Arcana of Fate and Time. *Enchanters* epitomize the tarot trump of "The Fool," relying on luck and intuition to guide their way.

**Mastigos:** The Path of Scourging, Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet, the Realm of Pandemonium, Kingdom of Nightmares, abode of demons, ruled by the Arcana of Mind and Space. *Warlocks* epitomize the tarot trump of "The Devil," exulting in unfettered will.

**Moros:** The Path of Doom, Watchtower of the Lead Coin, the Realm of Stygia, Kingdom of Crypts, abode of shades, ruled by the Arcana of Death and Matter. *Necromancers* epitomize the tarot trump of "Death," remaining steadfast during change.

**Obrimos:** The Path of the Mighty, Watchtower of the Golden Key, the Realm of Aether, Kingdom of the Celestial Spheres, abode of angels, ruled by the Arcana of Forces and Prime. *Theurgists* epitomize the tarot trump of "Strength," pursuing a divine mandate.

**Thyrsus:** The Path of Ecstasy, Watchtower of the Stone Book, the Realm of the Primal Wild, Kingdom of Totems, abode of beasts, ruled by the Arcana of Life and Spirit. *Shamans* epitomize the tarot trump of "The Moon," following the allure of passion and impulsive action.

## Order

Choose an order, a mystical society of which your character is a member. If you don't want him to join an order, write "Apostate" on your character sheet. Orders teach their members to cast rotes more efficiently when using certain *Rote Specialties*. See "Rote Specialties," pp. 75.

**The Adamantine Arrow** defends sanctums and cabals with its combat magic. *Rote Specialties:* Athletics, Intimidation, Medicine

**The Free Council** seeks to escape the strictures of the past and modernize the craft of magic. *Rote Specialties:* Crafts, Persuasion, Science

**The Guardians of the Veil** protects the Mysteries from any who would despoil them or dare reveal them to the unenlightened. *Rote Specialties:* Investigation, Stealth, Subterfuge

**The Mysterium** searches for valuable lore hidden throughout the material and invisible worlds. *Rote Specialties:* Investigation, Occult, Survival

**The Silver Ladder** desires to establish a proper hierarchy of the Awakened — with its members at the top. *Rote Specialties:* Expression, Persuasion, Subterfuge

## Favored Resistance Attribute

Based on your choice of Path, give your character an additional dot in the Path's favored Resistance Attribute.

| | |
|---|---|
| Acanthus | Composure |
| Mastigos | Resolve |
| Moros | Composure |
| Obrimos | Resolve |
| Thyrsus | Composure |

# Mage Template Quick Reference

## Arcana

A character gains 2 dots in one Arcanum, 2 dots in a second Arcanum, and 1 dot in a third Arcanum. Two of these Arcana must be his Path's Ruling Arcana (see above). Finally, the character gains 1 additional to be placed anywhere. He can use this dot to learn a fourth Arcanum or to improve one of his three existing Arcana.

**Death:** Ghosts, decay and the Underworld.

**Fate:** Luck, chance, oaths and curses.

**Forces:** Fire, gravity, storm — energy in all its material forms.

**Life:** Power over the organic world of plants, animals and even humans.

**Matter:** Stone, metal, plastic — all the inorganic material substances.

**Mind:** The power to read and control thoughts and emotions.

**Prime:** Magic itself — Mana, illusions and enchantment.

**Spirit:** Communication with and control of spirits.

**Space:** Command of distance and space: teleportation and scrying.

**Time:** Clairvoyance of the past, divination of the future, and control over the passage of time.

## Rotes

Choose rotes. Spend 6 dots on rotes. A rote's rating is equal to the highest Arcanum dots needed to cast it. The character can choose rotes from any of his Arcana, although no rote can be rated higher than the character's dots in that Arcanum. For example, if he has Mind 3, Space 2 and Forces 1, he could choose one Mind 3 rote, one Space 2 rote, and one Forces 1 rote. Alternatively, he could choose three Mind 2 and/or Space 2 rotes, or two 2-dot rotes and two 1-dot rotes, or six 1-dot rotes, from Mind, Space or Forces in any combination.

## Gnosis

A character's Gnosis, his enlightened will, begins at 1, but Merit points may be spent to increase it. The rate is three Merit points per extra Gnosis dot. In other words, you may spend three of your seven Merit points for Gnosis 2, or six of your seven for Gnosis 3.

## Mana

A character's starting Mana points equal Wisdom.

## Merits

Awakened characters who are members of an order gain the High Speech Merit at no cost. They may also purchase the following special Merits: Artifact (••• or higher), Destiny (• to •••••), Dream (• to •••••), Enhanced Item (• or higher), Familiar (••• or ••••), Hallow (• to •••••), High Speech (•), Imbued Item (•• or higher), Library (• to •••••), Occultation (• to •••), Sanctum (• to •••••), Sleepwalker Retainer (• to •••••), Status (• to •••••; Consilium or Order), Thrall (•••)

## Experience Point Costs

| Trait | Experience point cost |
|---|---|
| Attribute | New dots x 5 |
| Skill | New dots x 3 |
| Skill Specialty | 3 |
| Ruling Arcana* | New dots x 6 |
| Common Arcana* | New dots x 7 |
| Inferior Arcanum* | New dots x 8 |
| Rote | 2 points per dot** |
| Merit | New dots x 2 |
| Gnosis | New dots x 8 |
| Wisdom | New dots x 3 |
| Willpower | 8 experience points*** |

* The categories of Ruling, Common and Inferior are determined by the character's Path. See "The Laws of Higher Realities," p. 132.

** Rotes are rated by the highest Arcanum dot used, so a Forces 3 rote would cost six experience points to learn.

*** Experience points can be spent on Willpower only to restore dots lost through sacrifice (such as when a mage creates a new rote, p. 291, or performs some other feat that requires such a sacrifice).

## The Prelude

An optional method of play that allows you to get to know your character better, the prelude depicts the scene leading up to your character's Awakening, when his life changes forever. It's commonly a one-on-one gaming session between you and the Storyteller, and has the advantage of allowing both of you to gain a better understanding of the character and how he'll be played.

You build the character normally, but leave out Step Five — he's not a mage yet. You can even, with the Storyteller's permission, go ahead and allocate all your Merit dots, with the expectation that you can rearrange them after the Awakening — any old Allies, Contacts or even Resources he has might evaporate along with his old life once he enters the occult underworld.

### Storytelling the Prelude

*Your alarm wakes you, but by the time you groggily turn it off you realize it's been beeping for over 10 minutes. If you don't hurry, you're going to be late for work. You rush through a shower and grab a stale donut as you walk out the door, digging the keys to your car out of your pocket. As you get to the car, you stop in your tracks and can't help cursing out loud as you see spray-painted graffiti scrawled all over the hood, doors and roof. Your Beemer looks like something you'd see in a ghetto — except that the graffiti doesn't look like gang signs. It's weird — skulls and pentagrams, with odd letters from an alphabet you've never seen.*

Preludes bring verisimilitude to your character's beginning, immersing him in the mundane world in which we all live. He isn't even aware of the existence of true magic yet. While some characters might have a familiarity with the occult, it's the sort of stuff anyone can learn from the New Age section of a bookstore. It's of little direct consequence to the world he's about to enter.

The important thing at the beginning of a prelude is to bring your character and his environment to life, to give him many chances to display his unique quirks. The Storyteller can impose decisions to force the prelude along, but he should let you make choices about your character in reaction to the events presented. You might find out that the character likes burgers over chicken. Although this seems trivial, it determines his choice of lunch venues, adding atmosphere to what might become the scene of a crime or the place where an antagonist first singles your character out for trouble.

*Once you get into the office and turn on your computer, you realize that you can't get the strange graffiti images out of your head. You decide to ignore the report you're supposed to complete and start surfing the web, looking for anything like what's been painted onto your car. After nearly two hours of fruitless effort, you come across a page with the familiar skull and pentagram, depicted exactly as on the hood of your BMW. "The Lodge of Luminous Night." What they hell kind of cult is this? To your surprise, there's an address — three blocks from your house.*

**Mage** preludes should provide a hint at the sorts of activities your character can be expected to pursue during the course of the chronicle. In a sorcerer's case, he has to track down mysterious clues and suggestive images, trying to find their meaning or connection to something of importance to him. Fights and combat might also play a part, but they're not the main focus of **Mage** — magic is. The prelude should foreshadow the secretive world of ciphers into which the Awakening flings your character.

*As the moon rises, you wish you'd stayed home to watch* Seinfeld *reruns. But then you see someone enter the lodge — the door is clearly unlocked. It's a woman, dressed pretty well. Not the sort of cultist you'd expect. You climb from the bushes and walk casually up the stairs and through the unlocked door, as if you belong there. There's a big hall inside, lined with pews. At the far end is an altar of sorts. The woman, half way up the aisle, turns to look at you, smiles, and then turns back and keeps walking toward the altar. You move forward, faster. You feel sweat on your forehead, but you have no idea why — the temperature is normal. Your heart's beating fast, as if you're anticipating an assault, but nobody is there except the woman. She reaches the altar and steps behind it, raising a silver cup. She smiles at you, not a friendly smile but a smirk. She's been expecting you. You stop and start to back away, hair standing on end for no rational reason. You feel like an animal backed into a trap. She tilts the cup and water spills out. As it hits the altar, your entire world is torn away, leaving you falling into a gulf of nothingness. In the distance, you hear sounds of laughter. You scream out in anger and rage — and find yourself standing at the foot of a tall tower made of iron....*

It sometimes takes but a simple gesture or whispered word to vault a Sleeper's consciousness across the Abyss and to the Supernal Realm of his Awakening. But even that gesture and word is steeped in an atmosphere of meaning — even if its exact significance is unclear to your character. A mood of numinousness — deep spirituality — prevails, even in the most infernal Awakenings.

The Storyteller decides, based partly on your character's choices, whether the Awakening is a true soul journey (the mage's consciousness leaves his body for an eternal moment to stand in the Supernal Realm to which he will be bound), or if his Awakening is a mystery play (his consciousness remains in his body, but the world around him is altered according to his Supernal perceptions). Both types are equally valid, and the choice depends more on mood than anything else.

The culmination of the prelude is the character's Awakening and the very first steps he makes with his eyes fully open. It is the most meaningful moment in his life, and it provides tantalizing glimpses at the themes, images and destinies he will pursue for the rest of his magical career.

### Question and Answer

Following your character's prelude, you'll want to finish out the whole process by answering a few questions about your character, to firm up choices that have been made and to clear up areas that haven't yet been decided.

- **How old are you?**

*What year were you born and how old were you when you Awakened? Did your Awakening make you old beyond your years or are you emotionally a child? Do you look your years?*

- **What was unique about your childhood?**

*What were your early years like? Did you get along well with your family or were your relations troubled? Did you like school, and if so, why? Did it challenge you or insult your intelligence? Did you fit in the high school pecking order or were you ostra-*

*cized? Or did you create a clique of your own, foreshadowing the members-only world into which you've stumbled? What about life after school? Was there college or did you go straight into the work force? Are or were you married? Do you have any long-term friendships or just acquaintances?*

- **What kind of person were you?**

*What were you like before Awakening? A chivalrous example to all, or a cad? Are you likable to strangers or do people have to get to know you? Are you rude to those who disrespect you or do you turn the other cheek?*

- **What experiences of the supernatural have you had?**

*When did you first feel the brush of magic? Was it an unlimited sense of wonder or a nightmare you're still trying to forget? Have you seen a spirit or a ghost, or witnessed someone do something that can't be explained away by the normal laws of physics? Do you believe the occult to be synonymous with Satan, or are you more open minded?*

- **What was your Awakening like?**

*If there's no prelude to illustrate it, was your Awakening a journey of the soul to a Supernal Realm, or a waking dream in which the world seemed to turn upside down and become unreal? Was it enlightening or scary (or both)?*

- **Who was your first mentor?**

*Who was the first mage to find you upon your Awakening? Was he helpful or abusive? Did he offer his aid or did you have to beg him for it? Or did you refuse his offers? Does he hold political power among the Awakened, or is he a pariah? Are you still loyal to him or do you prefer to forget him?*

- **How was your cabal formed?**

*Were you brought together by chance, design or destiny? Do you follow a symbolic theme, or have an alliance of mere convenience? Are you friends or cautious acquaintances? Is there a rival in your cabal (for power, affection or leadership)? How loyal are you to your fellow cabal members? How loyal do you think they are to you?*

- **Do you maintain a sanctum?**

*Do you have your own sanctum? If not, where do you live and work your magic? Or do you share a sanctum with others, such as your cabal or your mentor? Where is it and how obvious is it? Are you attached to it or are you looking to move the first chance you get?*

- **Do you retain any connections to your Sleeper life?**

*Do your parents and friends still know you? Do you visit them frequently? What about talking to them over the phone? How do explain your strange absences and new obsessions? Do you involve them in your new work? Do other mages know about them?*

- **What motivates you?**

*What are your goals? Revenge for a past slight? Mastery of an Arcanum or Arcana? To become Hierarch of the Consilium? Or do you spurn power for wisdom and spiritual awareness, preferring knowledge to conflict and wealth? Do you desire to mentor other mages? Do you want others to Awaken? If you could have anything you wanted (which isn't beyond possibility for a mage!), what would it be?*

## Adopting a Shadow Name

Mages rarely use their given names among other willworkers. It presents a means of magical sympathy to enemies (it's harder to work magic at a range against mages whose names you don't know), and a means for them to track down family or bank records. If identity theft is a potential problem for most Sleepers, it's a dire problem for mages. For these reasons, sorcerers adopt a "shadow name," a moniker or call name by which others address them and which they use in their magical work.

The variety of shadow names and the schemes for devising them are endless. Generally, a mage takes a name (or accepts one from his mentor) that is important to him, representing a concept, person, place or event that gives him strength, hope and resolve — "Aurora" for the dawn, "Gray Fox" for an animal totem, "Ten Thunders" for strength. It might be an endearing term used by a mentor, representing an achievement of note or a failure from which your character learned a lot — "Grasshopper" (of course), "Arctos" the little bear, "Glorianna" the little princess. The shadow name is often a foreign word in Latin, Greek, Egyptian, Persian or some other ancient tongue — "Avesta" the eternal flame, "Valetudo" the healthy. Mages are not above naming themselves after great philosophers, gods, heroes or even monsters — "Zeno" the Greek philosopher renowned for his paradox, "Hecate" the witch, "Tlaloc" Aztec lord of the waters. Some even create "fantasy" names like those in novels.

As part of his initiation into an order, a mage is expected to present his shadow name. Even apostates adopt shadow names to protect themselves from sympathetic magical assault.

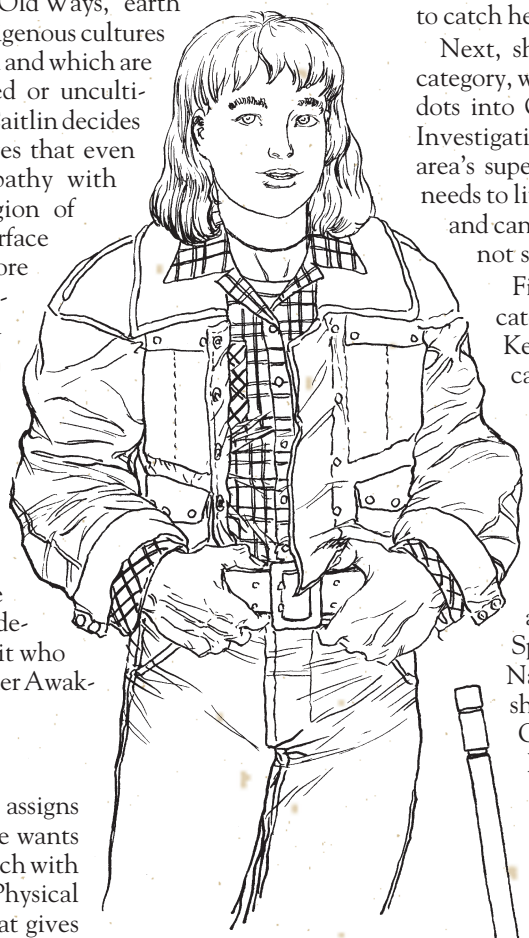
## Example of Character Creation

Sam invites Caitlin to play in his **Mage** chronicle. It's set in Boston and involves the fracturing of ancient alliances in that city due to mysterious magical events. While the old guard protects what's theirs and works to foil rivals from coming to power, somebody has to find out what's really going on. What is the whispered Secret Compact and why is it fraying? Strange things occur across the countryside, and unless mages unclouded by political concerns can find the source, the city threatens to become a magical dead zone.

Sam gives Caitlin a blank character sheet, and she spends some time thinking about what sort of character she wants to play before she begins writing on the sheet.

### Step One: Concept

Caitlin decides she wants to play a character who is obsessed with the "Old Ways," earth wisdom known to the indigenous cultures that once lived in the area and which are now left largely untended or uncultivated by modern mages. Caitlin decides that her character believes that even those who profess sympathy with witchcraft and the religion of Wicca only touch the surface of the sort of chthonic lore her character tries to uncover. She calls herself a true witch who speaks to the ancient spirits of the land from before European colonists arrived.



Caitlin decides that her character's birth name is Elizabeth Daring but her shadow name is Maculda, a word she made up, but which she decides is the name of a spirit who spoke to Elizabeth before her Awakening.

### Step Two: Attributes

Caitlin prioritizes and assigns Maculda's Attributes. She wants her to be earthy and in touch with her body, so she makes Physical her primary category. That gives her five dots to allocate. She puts three into Stamina, giving Maculda four dots (she begins with one dot in each Attribute); she is hardy and rarely gets sick. She puts one dot in Strength (for two dots total) and the other dot in Dexterity (also for two dots total).

Caitlin then chooses Social as her secondary category, figuring that Maculda prefers dealing with others — including spirits and animals — over the sorts of analytical abilities that Mental Attributes imply. She allocates four dots among these Attributes: two into Presence (for three dots), one into Manipulation (for two dots), and one into Composure (for two dots). Maculda has a strong force of personality and a well-rounded ability to interact with others or resist their attempts to sway her through peer pressure.

Finally, she allocates three dots among her tertiary category of Mental Attributes: one into Intelligence (two dots total), one into Wits (two dots), and one into Resolve (two dots). Maculda's well rounded here, too, with no exceptional talent or lack thereof.

### Step Three: Skills

Caitlin next prioritizes her Skills in a similar manner to her Attributes. She again chooses Physical as her primary category, distributing 11 dots among those Skills. She places four dots into Survival, three into Stealth, three into Athletics, and one into Brawl. Maculda knows how to live off the land if she must, to move quietly through woods without alerting man or beast, and can run for miles without stopping to catch her breath. She can also defend herself if necessary.

Next, she distributes seven dots among her secondary category, which she decides will be Mental. She places three dots into Occult, two dots into Crafts and two dots into Investigation. Maculda has read as much as she can about the area's supernatural history, knows how to make what she needs to live without need of the modern consumer culture, and can search for clues to secrets her occult studies have not solved.

Finally, she allocates four dots among her tertiary category of Social. She puts two dots into Animal Ken and the final two dots into Expression. Maculda can stare down a wild animal or heel a tame one, and she likes to sing the old songs the land wants to hear.

### Step Four: Skill Specialties

Caitlin now declares Maculda's three Skill Specialties, areas of notable expertise. She puts one Specialty into Occult: Maculda knows a lot about Witchcraft. Caitlin declares her second Specialty in Survival: Maculda knows the tricks of Navigation in the wild, finding exactly the place she's looking for without need of compass or map. Caitlin puts her final Specialty in Investigation: Maculda knows something about Artifacts of the past.





## Step Five: Mage Template

Caitlin now deals with Maculda's Awakened self — what sort of mage she becomes. Her concept already leans heavily toward the Path of Thyrsus, with its emphasis on spirit magic. She declares that to be Maculda's Path.

Since Maculda is obsessed with the past and its secrets, Caitlin thinks she'd best excel in the Mysterium. She can use that order's resources to aid her search, and she already has good scores in two of that order's Rote Specialties (Investigation and Survival).

The favored Resistance Attribute for Thyrsus is Composure, so she adds one dot to that, bringing Maculda up to three dots in that trait.

Now she chooses Maculda's Arcana, the heart of how she'll work magic. She places two dots in Spirit, the Arcanum most representative of her character concept, and two more dots in Life, an Arcanum with strong resonance to witchcraft. She places one dot in the Space Arcanum. Since two of these are her Path's Ruling Arcana, she fulfills the minimum Path requirement. For her final dot, she adds it to Space, giving her two dots in that Arcanum — Caitlin wants Maculda to be able to cast sympathetic magic from a distance.

Caitlin can now choose Maculda's rotes, the spells she has trained hard to learn. While she can cast any spell as an improvised casting, her rotes are easier to cast and require less exertion of magical power. She gets six dots of rotes. She is limited to choosing rotes that use the first or second dots of Life, Space and Spirit; she can't have a rote rated higher than two dots (since she has only two dots in each Arcanum).

For her first rote, she chooses the "Second Sight" Spirit 1 spell, which gives her the Mage Sight, allowing her to see supernatural phenomena and study them. Her second rote is the "Spirit Tongue" Spirit 1 spell, which allows her to speak with spirits (her order calls this the "Fleshless Speech" rote). Her next rote is the "Gossamer Touch" Spirit 2 spell, allowing her to touch ephemeral spirits and things.

She decides to turn to her other Arcana for her remaining dots. She chooses the "Self Healing" Life 2 spell, a literal lifesaver in times of danger. That's all six dots allocated.

Maculda's Gnosis begins at one dot. Although Caitlin hasn't yet reached the step where she chooses her Merits, she decides now that she's going to spend three of her seven Merit dots to raise Gnosis to two dots.

Maculda's Mana points begin at seven, equal to her Wisdom.

## Step Six: Merits

Caitlin has only four dots left, since she already spent some on raising Gnosis. She uses all four on the Familiar Merit to purchase an embodied familiar. She decides that it is a crow (although badgers are meaningful animals for her, she thinks it would be hard to travel with one), and she allocates its traits in a similar manner to her own. See "Familiar," pp. 82-83.



### Step Seven: Advantages

Now that all of Maculda's other traits have been allocated, Caitlin can figure out her Advantages. Adding Maculda's Resolve and Composure, she records a Willpower score of five dots on the character sheet. Maculda's Wisdom begins with the standard seven dots, and Caitlin decides that her Virtue is Fortitude (her ability to stay the course against the pressures of the modern world) and her Vice is Pride (she's a bit full of herself about being chosen by spirits).

Adding Maculda's Size factor of 5 to her Stamina of four dots gives her nine dots of Health. Combining Dexterity and Composure, her Initiative is 5. Her Defense is 2, the same as her Wits and Dexterity. Finally, Caitlin adds Maculda's Strength + Dexterity + 5 for a Speed of 9.

### Step Eight: Awakening to Life

Caitlin now has a good idea of just who Maculda is — at least, who she is at the moment. She thinks about her past and what brought the character to her current identity. She decides that Maculda was raised in an upper-middle-class home in the country. Her parents would commute into the city while she walked across fields and woods to the local school, sometimes arriving late and muddy after playing near ponds and streams, and with a frog in her pocket. Just as she was entering high school, her parents divorced and Elizabeth (Maculda's real name) went to live with her father in the city. She hated it. The traffic, the lack of greenspace, the horribly polluted harbor — it all left her yearning for home in the country.

She began to dream about the meadows and woods, and in her dreams a she-badger would come to her and show her all manner of Native American crafts and lifeways. She later researched these in books and found out that they were true — she had learned through dreams a set of skills that most modern people had forgotten. She became obsessed with these ways, and entered college to study archaeology and anthropology. But she was too much the nonconformist to remain for long in the ivied halls. She quit school and moved out near Salem, where some friends had gotten involved in Wicca.

She found peace in the religion, but it seemed to offer more than any of her teachers could deliver, a promise that seemed impossible in the modern world. She was contacted by a small coven that worked outside of the local community, an elite group that practiced only with those who had been invited, those who had shown some of the serious potential they sought. They brought her to an old mound they claimed had been used by the indigenous people to mark the equinoxes. A tight passage led underground to a small cave that supposedly caught the moonlight perfectly upon a stone-carved pictogram. She crawled inside to investigate — and screamed when the others sealed the passage shut behind her. Trapped in total darkness, weeping from anger and humiliation at her foolishness, she heard a scuffling sound nearby. Scared at what might be in there with her, she fumbled for a lighter and



flicked it on — to see the she-badger from her dreams, her nose twitching as she took in Elizabeth's scent.

Relieved to see her childhood friend, but worried that she had passed out and was hallucinating, Elizabeth nonetheless followed the animal through a tiny passageway. It was like a womb and she began to feel it closing in upon her, suffocating her. She cried out in pain and anger — and spread wide her arms. She stood in a wide cave, the air stirring from some distant wind. Before her was a flat wall painted with ancient pictograms — she knew these to be names. The badger poked a piece of fire-burned charcoal at her with its paw, waiting. She picked it up and began to

write her name on the wall, the book of stone, drawing her name not with letters but with an image: a badger.

Elizabeth woke up in the woods near the mound, with a vague memory of following a passage she now couldn't find anywhere. She scowled, looking for any sign of the coven that had trapped her, but it was gone. By the entrance to the mound was an envelope addressed to her with a strange sign stamped upon it. The image was a bound and locked book with a visible keyhole in the cover.

Elizabeth was soon initiated into the Mysterium and took as her shadow name the name of her patron spirit, the she-badger Maculda. She learned that there were other places like the mound throughout New England, forgotten and abandoned, some hidden under modern developments. She knew that someone had to find them and uncover their ancient secrets. It seemed like something she'd been preparing for all her life.

And so Caitlin's character is ready to go, and Sam is ready to begin the chronicle.

# Traits

Upon Awakening, mages gain new abilities unknown to Sleepers. Some of these are supernatural while others represent learned abilities that only the Awakened can train.

## Rote Specialties

Orders cultivate certain Skills for rote-casting, bequeathed by their founders. These Skills represent transcendental knowledge about a mage's relation to the Mysteries, the intersection between his common expertise and cosmic understanding. Just as a Zen master can see the divine in the ordinary activities of everyday life, a mage sees the supernatural in the natural.

Whenever a mage's Rote Specialty is used in rote casting, his player gains a +1 dice bonus to his casting dice pool. Each of the orders has the following Rote Specialties.

- **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

These Rote Specialties can be marked on your character sheet by underlining the Skill title or by drawing an asterisk next to it.

Rote Specialties are "coded" into rotes by the creators of those rotes. Only someone trained in that order's Rote Specialties can activate that portion of the rote's code when casting the rote. See "Designing Rotes," p. 291. If a mage leaves his order, he still retains his Rote Specialties, but they apply only to rotes created by masters of that order.

## New Advantage: Gnosis

Those who Awaken to the Mysteries can work their will on the fabric of reality. This magical, empowered will is measured by Gnosis, the quality separating the Awakened from Sleepers. Gnosis marks a mage's connection to the Supernal World and his Path's Watchtower. It is the mechanism by which he can contact a higher reality.

As part of the Mage Template, mages receive one dot of Gnosis as a result of their Awakening. Additional dots may be acquired with the expenditure of experience points, or initial Merit dots can be spent to add extra Gnosis (see p. 66).

A Sleeper whose soul flickers is said to Awaken. He receives a blinding flash of insight, but does not gain a Gnosis rating. This Awakening is temporary unless it is cemented by the nascent mage's successful attainment of a Watchtower. If he fails its tests, his insight fades and he falls back to Sleep. For those who do succeed and become mages, further increases in Gnosis come with hard work and dedication (i.e., the expenditure of experience points).

### Effects of Gnosis

Gnosis is a trait rated from 1 to 10 dots. As the measure of a mage's magical will, Gnosis has the following game effects.

- Players roll Gnosis + Arcanum when casting improvised spells. Gnosis is the "raw ability" of this formula. While a mage's knowledge of a particular Arcanum may vary, her Supernal power remains a constant. Mages with a high Gnosis rating are more proficient and powerful improvisational spellcasters. See "Spellcasting," pp. 110-129, for complete details.
- The higher a mage's Gnosis, the more quickly he can cast elaborate or powerful spells. See "Extended Casting," p. 121, for more details on how Gnosis affects the time per roll.
- Gnosis affects a mage's ability to quickly muster his innate magical energy, governing how many points of Mana a player can spend in a single turn. Gnosis also limits how much Mana a mage can hold within his Pattern. The higher his Gnosis, the more Mana he can store. See the "Effects of Gnosis" chart.
- Mages with Gnosis 6 or higher can increase their Attributes and Skills past 5 dots. The potential of the mage's Pattern is increased beyond the mundane, allowing him to bolster his Mental, Physical and Social capabilities to inhuman degrees.
- Mages can maintain only a certain number of active spells simultaneously, equal to Gnosis +3. The more potent their Supernal will, the more spells they can keep active. A mage cannot exceed this limit. If he has already reached it, he must cancel one of his active spells before he can cast a new spell.
- Mages can combine spells into a single casting. The total number a mage can combine into one casting is limited by his Gnosis. (He must also have a higher degree of Arcanum competence than normally required.) See "Combined Spells," pp. 128-129, for complete rules.

### Drawbacks of Gnosis

- Gnosis determines a character's potential to gain mastery of an Arcanum and even master successive Arcana. It also determines his potential for archmastery. See the "Arcana Mastery" chart.
- The higher a mage's Gnosis, the harder it is for him to cloak or hide his personal or magical resonance from others.

Anyone scrutinizing the mage or his spells might gain a bonus to observation rolls; see the Gnosis chart.

- A mage's odds of causing a Paradox with his magic increase as his Gnosis rises. His very will is increasingly out of synch with the Fallen World as his understanding of the higher world grows. See "Invoking a Paradox," pp. 123-125.

## Effects of Gnosis

| Gnosis | Attribute/Skill/ Arcana Maximum | Max Mana/Max Mana per Turn | Aura* | Base Paradox Dice Pool | Time per roll** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 10/1 | — | 1 die | 3 hours |
| 2 | 5 | 11/2 | — | 1 die | 3 hours |
| 3 | 5 | 12/3 | — | 2 dice | 1 hour |
| 4 | 5 | 13/4 | — | 2 dice | 1 hour |
| 5 | 5 | 14/5 | — | 3 dice | 30 minutes |
| 6 | 6 | 15/6 | +1 | 3 dice | 30 minutes |
| 7 | 7 | 20/7 | +2 | 4 dice | 10 minutes |
| 8 | 8 | 30/8 | +3 | 4 dice | 10 minutes |
| 9 | 9 | 50/10 | +4 | 5 dice | 1 minute |
| 10 | 10 | 100/15 | +5 | 5 dice | 1 minute |

* Bonuses apply to anyone who magically scrutinizes the mage or his spells.

** For extended-action spellcasting. See pp. 120-121.

## Arcana Mastery

The chart below lists the maximum dots a character can have in an Arcanum per dot of Gnosis that he possesses. Two of his first three Arcana must be from his Path's Ruling Arcana.

| | Arcana | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gnosis | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th | 6th | 7th | 8th | 9th | 10th |
| 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 6 | 6* | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 7 | ** | 6* | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 8 | ** | ** | 6* | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 9 | ** | ** | ** | 6* | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 10 | ** | ** | ** | ** | 6* | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |

* Six dots represent archmastery of an Arcanum. See "Archmastery," p. 290.

** Little is known among the orders about the potential of a mage with this degree of enlightenment.

## New Advantage: Mana

Mana is the fluid form of Prime, the prima materia, Supernal energy filtered down into the Fallen World. Some of it is residual energy left trapped when the Abyss formed, recycled over the millennia into a thousand forms, but some of it is fresh, brought into the world by a mysterious form of grace from on high.

Mana is an Advantage trait for mages. A mage can hold up to 10 points of Mana in his Pattern, and he can hold even more with increasing dots of Gnosis, as illustrated on the "Effects of Gnosis" chart, p. 76.

Mana itself is normally invisible and intangible, undetectable to those without Mage Sight. Any mage standing in a Hallow can sense its ambient Mana with a successful Wits + Occult roll. Mages perceive Mana in many different ways. It is most often described as a fiery, fluid energy, either pure white or prismatic, containing all the colors of the spectrum. Some mages perceive Mana as another sort of power or force, in accordance with their own Path. The particular Arcanum a mage uses for his Mage Sight often colors the experience.

Mages study the Prime Arcanum to better understand Mana and learn how to manipulate and use it in their magic. To some degree, all mages wield the power of Mana, but some are better at storing and using it than others.

The Mana Advantage is rated in points rather than dots. Mana points measure the Mana resources currently available to a mage. Players spend points of Mana to allow mages to perform various feats of magic, including the following:

- **Improvised Magic:** Casting an improvised spell requires the expenditure of a point of Mana, unless the primary Arcanum used is one of the mage's Path Arcana. See "Improvised Casting," p. 111.
- **Sympathetic Spells:** Casting a spell upon a target beyond sensory range requires the expenditure of a point of Mana. See "Sympathetic Magic," pp. 114-115.
- **Aggravated Damage:** Mages must spend a point of Mana for a spell to inflict aggravated damage. The mage must first have the prerequisite Arcana dots to cast an aggravated effect, as described in the spell descriptions.
- **Power:** Certain spells that significantly alter the laws of nature or physics might require the expenditure of Mana, as described in the spell descriptions.
- **Pattern Restoration:** Mages can infuse Mana into their physical Patterns to heal wounds. The cost is three Mana points per one bashing or lethal wound. This is an instant action. Those mages unable to spend more than three Mana per turn can take as many *consecutive* turns performing this action as they need, until they've spent all three points. (It will take at least three turns for a mage with Gnosis 1, two turns with Gnosis 2, and one turn with Gnosis 3 or higher.)

This is a reverse effect to *Pattern scouring* (see below). The number of times a mage can spend Mana to restore his Pattern within the same 24-hour period depends on his Gnosis. At Gnosis 1-4, he can do so only once. With Gnosis 5-6, he can perform two Pattern restorations per day. With Gnosis 7-9, he can do three, and Gnosis 10 allows him to perform up to four restorations per day.

### Qualities

Mana is rarely neutral. It is most often stamped with the tenor or character of a particular type of resonance — its *quality*. The place where the Mana is found or wells up usually determines its quality, but some Mana might be so strongly stamped that it continues to bear its quality even amidst conflicting aspects. Mages can attempt to change the resonance of a place and so change the quality of Mana that wells up there. See "Resonance," pp. 277-280.

A character's own Mana takes on the quality of his nimbus, colored by his Path. See "Nimbus," pp. 90-91.

### Spending Mana

A mage's ability to spend stored Mana is measured by his Gnosis: one point per turn per Gnosis dot that he has. A mage with Gnosis 1 may spend one point of Mana per turn. Therefore, the mage may cast an improvised spell, but it cannot be a sympathetic spell or one that delivers aggravated damage. All those additions would exceed the amount of Mana that can be spent in the casting.

Mages who reach their spending limit cannot spend any further points of Mana that turn. Any actions requiring Mana spending are then impossible.

### Regaining Mana

The majority of Mana in the world is bound up in existing Patterns. "Free" Mana is rare. It is found in Hallows, places that collect it like dew. This makes Hallows extremely valuable to the Awakened. Mages have fought wars for control of various Hallows, and still struggle to control the precious Mana they offer.

- Mages who perform an *oblation* (a ritual function associated with Path) at a Hallow can gain Mana points. Doing so requires an hour of uninterrupted ceremony and a Gnosis + Composure roll. Each success provides one Mana. Mages cannot gain more Mana per day, however, than the Hallow's rating. (See the "Hallow" Merit, pp. 83-84, for information on Hallow ratings.) The ceremony should express the symbology of the Path, such as a ritual to recognize the solstices and equinoxes for Acanthus, or a rite of remembrance for the ancestors for Moros. See "Occult Correspondences," p. 35, for ideas on culturally specific myths or religions upon which a mage could base his oblation.
- Mages can *scour* their own Patterns to free up Mana. A mage elects to degrade one of his Physical Attributes by one dot in return for three Mana points. The lost Attribute dot is restored one day (24 hours) later. He might burn muscle mass (Strength), transform nerve impulses (Dexterity), or convert adrenaline (Stamina). It takes a full turn to perform a Pattern scouring, during which time the mage can do nothing but move his Speed.

This is a reverse effect to *Pattern restoration* (see above). The number of times a mage can scour his Pattern within the same 24-hour period depends on his Gnosis. At Gnosis 1 to 4, he can do so only once. With Gnosis 5 to 6, he can perform two Pattern scourings per day. With Gnosis 7 to 9, he can do three, and Gnosis 10 allows him to perform up to four scourings per day.

A mage can elect to instead scour his Health. He suffers one lethal wound of *Resistant Damage* and gains three Mana points. Magic cannot protect against this Resistant Damage, and it cannot be healed by Pattern restoration or any known supernatural power, although it does heal naturally at the normal rate (see "Healing," p. 175, in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). See "Resistant Damage," p. 124, for details about how to mark such damage on the character sheet.

Unlike the scouring of Attributes, there is no limit to the number of Health scourings a mage can perform in the same day. The mage can even kill himself by scouring, inflicting a lethal wound on his last Health box, although he can't use the Mana he gains unless he has some means of staying conscious while he spends the next minutes dying (marking his wounds as aggravated until he is dead; see "Incapacitation," pp. 173–174, of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

• Mages don't like to talk about it, but there is an unsavory practice that can also yield up Mana to a mage: the blood sacrifice of a living creature. Animals of cat-size or larger (Size 2 or more) provide one Mana each, although only one such killing per day provides Mana. A human provides one Mana per Health point (an already-wounded victim has less Mana to yield than a healthy one), but the victim must die; he cannot be bled until he is close to death. The mage must inflict the killing blow to gain the Mana — he cannot stumble across a freshly killed body and claim it as a sacrifice. Nor can he claim Mana from an accidental death (such as if he witnesses a fatal car wreck). Only the mage who delivers the killing blow gains the Mana; other mages who participate in wounding the victim gain nothing. The killing mage gains the Mana in the subsequent turn, but it requires an instant action during which he can move only up to his Speed as he soaks in the escaping energies (he also loses his Defense). If he does not perform this action, he does not gain the Mana and it is lost.

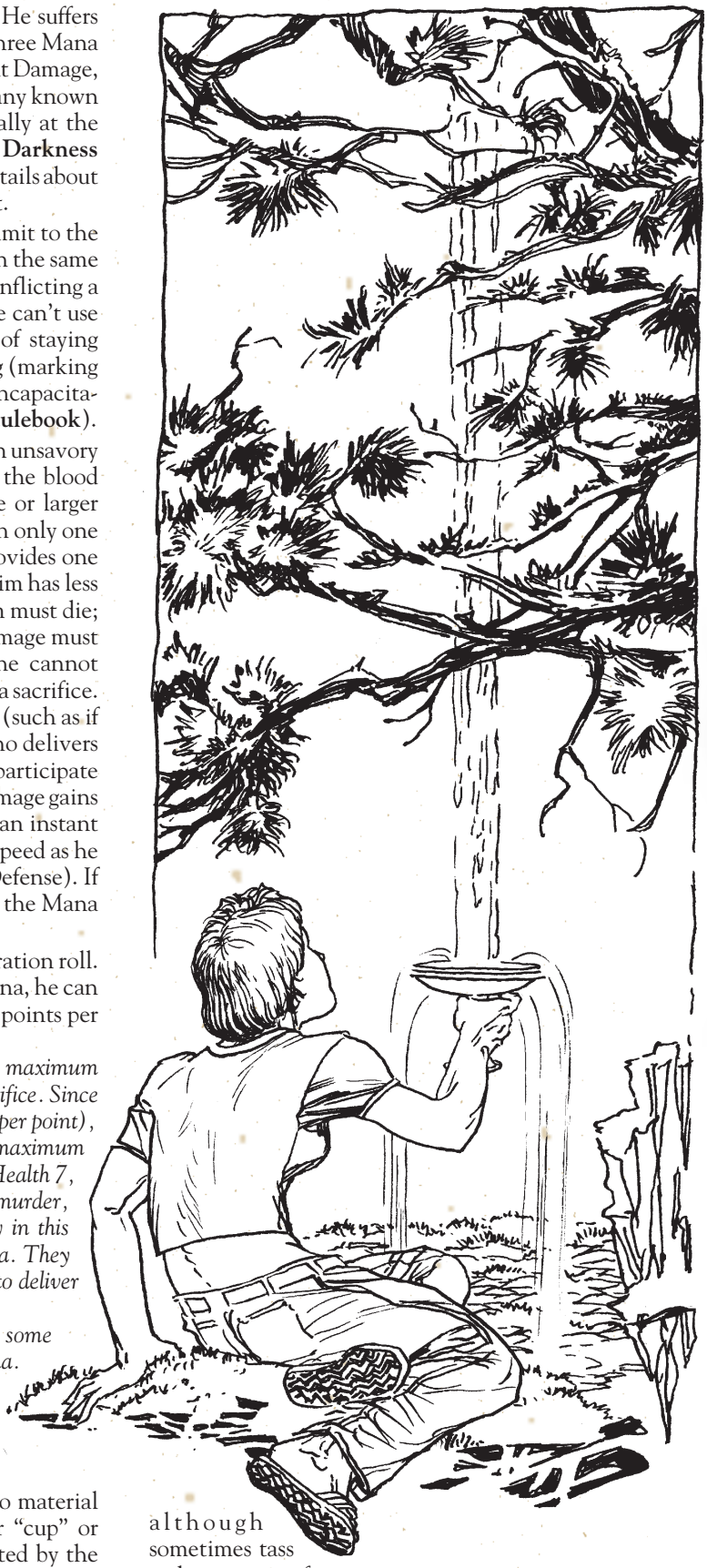
This practice is sure to cause a Wisdom degeneration roll. While a mage can go on a killing spree to reap Mana, he can only reap a total amount of blood-sacrifice Mana points per day equal to twice his Gnosis dots (Gnosis x2).

***Example:*** *Angrboda, with Gnosis 5, can gain a maximum amount of 10 Mana points per day through blood sacrifice. Since the average human has Health 7 (yielding one Mana per point), he'd have to kill at least two people to gain his maximum amount. Even though the second victim might have Health 7, Angrboda would gain only three Mana from that murder, since he can gain a maximum of 10 Mana per day in this manner. The victims cannot be bled for partial Mana. They must each be killed, and Angrboda must be the one to deliver the killing blow.*

• *Mages with dots in the Prime Arcanum have some additional options for regaining and tapping into Mana. See the description of the Prime Arcanum on pp. 219-232 for more information.*

## Tass

On occasion, Mana congeals or crystallizes into material form, known as *tass*, from the Arabic word for "cup" or "goblet." Tass has no set form. Its shape is dictated by the nature of where it forms and other unknown currents in reality. Tass nearly always forms in or around a Hallow, although sometimes tass is the remains of a Hallow gone dry and vanished from reality.



Tass might be found in mushrooms growing at the edges of a magical glen, in the fruit of plants in the midst of a Hallow, in crystals, or soil, or water from a sacred spring — any of an endless array of forms. Whatever its apparent shape, all tass is fundamentally the same: Prime made manifest in solid form, convertible to Mana and usable by those who understand how.

Edible or drinkable forms of tass are the most prized, for a mage can convert them to personal Mana points simply by ingesting them. (It generally takes one hour after ingesting solid tass before the points are available, or 10 minutes after drinking liquid tass.) Some mages cultivate gardens near Hallows or tass-prone spots to take advantage of their fruit or vegetable yields, or they regularly collect the suffused spring water in jars for later drinking. Like all growing things, however, these manifestations of tass vary in potency. Some are large and full of Mana, while others might be stunted or bruised, lacking vital essence. The Storyteller judges how much Mana any particular mushroom, apple or draught of water yields. A general guideline is one Mana point per pound of tass food or for every 16 ounces of tass drink.

Tass that can be ingested may be stored for later use, although fruit must be dried and water sealed or else it rots like normal fruit or becomes stagnant if left in the open. This bounty does not last forever, though. It loses its potency at a rate of one Mana per week after the first week of storage.

The ability to utilize tass in non-edible sources (such as tass congealed into rocks or tree bark) comes from the Prime Arcanum. A mage with Prime 2 can draw the Mana bound up in tass for personal use, either replenishing his Mana points or using the tass's Mana directly for magic. Unlike organic tass, object tass doesn't lose its potency over time and can be stored indefinitely until its Mana is tapped.

## Modified Advantage: Wisdom (Morality)

The Morality trait for mages is characterized as Wisdom, the ability to balance the needs of this world with a yearning for the higher world. For the Awakened, morality is the quest to attain the Mysteries without perishing in their crucible. Mages who are true to themselves and keep their pledge to the Mysteries can free their souls from the trap of the Fallen World. Those who betray themselves or the Mysteries fall deeper into Endless Night, the maw of the Abyss.

The Awakened have seen a glimpse of the Invisible Truth, which makes them what they are. Wisdom is the quality keeping them from mistaking that glimpse as the whole truth. In many ways, Wisdom is acknowledging how much a mage *doesn't* understand or know. It's the drive to keep searching, the ability to remain humble while wielding the power of the gods. Mages failing to comprehend these lessons fall victim to their own hubris.

### Hubris

When a mage acts against Wisdom, it's called an "act of hubris," because the equilibrium of the Tapestry is momentarily obscured by the mage's own ego. These are also called "acts of blindness," because a mage is blinded to the repercussions of his desires. Acts of hubris are sins against the Morality of Wisdom. See below for the acts a mage must beware of. In addition, mages are still mortal and must abide by the same moral tenets as any human, as outlined in the various sins against Morality in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 91. These sins are reproduced on the chart below, to emphasize that they, too, are transgressions against Wisdom.

As with all transgressions against Morality, if a mage commits an act of hubris, a degeneration roll must be made for him to see if he loses a dot of Wisdom. Mages feel the tug of their own conscience when they are about the commit an act of hubris. Their arrogance may allow them to overlook it, but the Storyteller should always inform a player when a chosen course of action constitutes an act of hubris for the character, allowing the player to change it if desired.

A failed degeneration roll means the mage's player must also make a Wisdom roll to resist acquiring a derangement. See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 96–100, for information on derangements. The new derangement is linked to the lost dot of Wisdom; it persists until the character recovers the lost dot, regaining his moral center and sufficient Wisdom to overcome the personal flaw.

| Wisdom | Acts of Hubris |
|---|---|
| 10 | Using magic to accomplish a task that could be achieved just as well without it (i.e., boiling tea with Forces instead using the nearby stove). Selfish thoughts. (Roll five dice.) |
| 9 | Magically coercing another so that he acts against his own free will (he does not want to perform the actions the magic makes him do). Minor selfish act (with holding charity). (Roll five dice.) |
| 8 | Magically coercing another so that he violates his own moral code (i.e., he is forced to make a degeneration roll). Injury to another (accidental or otherwise). (Roll four dice.) |
| 7 | Laying a curse on someone. Petty theft (shoplifting). (Roll four dice.) |
| 6 | Forcibly binding an unwilling sentient being or spirit to a place (such as through Mind or Spirit magic) or task (such as casting a Fate *geas* upon a subject). Grand theft (burglary). (Roll three dice.) |
| 5 | Magically transforming a person into a lesser being (turning a man into a pig) against his will. Intentional, mass property damage (arson). (Roll three dice.) |
| 4 | Using magic to harm someone. Draining another's Mana against his will. Creating a soul stone (and hence, limiting one's Gnosis potential; see "Soul Stones," p. 277). Impassioned crime (manslaughter). (Roll three dice.) |
| 3 | Forcefully abducting and/or exiling another person (mage or Sleeper) into the Shadow Realm, or causing her to become possessed by a spirit against her will. Planned crime without using magic (murder). (Roll two dice.) |
| 2 | Intentionally preventing an Awakening. Using magic to murder someone. Casual/callous crime (serial murder). (Roll two dice.) |
| 1 | Stealing a soul. Utter perversion, heinous act (mass murder). (Roll two dice.) |

### Effects of Wisdom

• A mage with a high Wisdom radiates a certain trustworthiness to spiritual beings. A mage with a Wisdom of 9 or 10 gains a +1 bonus on Social rolls when dealing with spirits. Likewise, a mage with low Wisdom exudes perfidy and selfishness. A mage with a Wisdom of 1 or 2 suffers a –1 dice penalty on social rolls when dealing with spirits.

• A mage with a Wisdom of 9 or 10 gains a +1 dice bonus when contesting or countering the supernatural powers of Abyssal beings. Likewise, a mage with a Wisdom of 1 or 2 suffers a –1 dice penalty when contesting or countering Abyssal powers.

• Wisdom helps a mage combat the effects of a Paradox. The higher the Wisdom, the lower the Paradox's duration and the greater the odds that its effect won't be worsened. See "Paradoxes," pp. 268-273.

• Mages with good Wisdom ratings have a better chance of being accepted for apprenticeship by other mages. Most mages spend time watching a prospective pupil before they commit to teaching. They don't want their power to be misused, so the candidate must display a proper respect for the Mysteries and their use. If a mage should suffer Wisdom degeneration during this time of observation, the teacher might levy a disciplinary practice or task for the pupil to perform before he is allowed to begin his studies. If the pupil had gained a derangement with his Wisdom degeneration, the teacher is within rights to summarily deny apprenticeship.

### Regaining Lost Wisdom

When Wisdom is lost through degeneration, the mage must struggle to regain his equilibrium. Experience points must be spent to raise his Wisdom. He cannot be awarded a dot for good behavior or moral acts of contrition, unlike Sleepers.

Once the Inner Eye of Gnosis has been opened to the Mysteries, the repercussions for one's actions can no longer be excused through ignorance. The mage's soul now weighs heavily with the burden of his choices, and the scales of merit — the principle of cosmic Judgment as depicted in the Tarot — can no longer be balanced by naïveté and innocence. The mage makes his own karma; it is no longer rewarded by luck or grace.

## Merits

Mages are mortal, lacking the supernatural strengths that inhuman monsters possess. Surrounded by shadows and deception, they rely on Awakened insight to see forces that the rest of humanity cannot comprehend or oppose. Modern mages must rely on their own talents to survive in such a world. In game terms, these talents are defined by a character's Merits, complete with game rules to aid and protect the mage who has them.

Several of these Merits describe a mage's connection to time and the cosmos. Higher powers guide some; deeper truths lead others. Great heroes answer the call of destiny, or follow the guidance and wisdom of their dreams. For wizards who pursue a higher cause, strength often lies in cosmic forces beyond their ken, but not beyond their calling. Because they reflect the unique relationship mages have with magic, the Merits in this section are available to only willworkers.

Mages who employ their Merits have a greater chance of surviving a world set against them. Dark and powerful creatures roam the Earth by night; uncaring and unaware Sleepers meddle in their affairs by day; rival orders contest with them for power around the clock. Whatever a mage's opposition may be, the Merits listed here aid him in his insights, actions, and defense… as well as in his journey into deeper Mysteries.

### New Traditions, New Innovations

Many of the Merits described here are easiest to understand when described in terms of classic archetypes. The idea of a sorcerer sequestered in his sanctum, consulting musty tomes of lore under the guidance of his white-bearded mentor is an easy stereotype to imagine. Part of the challenge of playing a modern mage, however, is finding new ways to interpret and envision these scenes. In the modern age, old truths have assumed new guises. As old methods of magic evolve, Merits take on new and unusual forms — even while the game rules behind them remain the same.

For example, a Free Council mage's Library may defy all expectations of magical craft. Instead of a cellar full of dusty tomes written in dead languages, it might consist of files copied onto networks accessed remotely and protected by arcane firewalls, complete with encryption routines, compressed archives, and high-powered search engines. The Free Council mage might never actually see his Mentor face-to-face, relying instead on e-mail and chat rooms, or he may dare to contact her through an intensely secure webcam.

No matter what a mage's lifestyle or philosophy, the core rules of his Merits remain the same. A sorcerer doesn't have to live like a modern-day Merlin. Instead, he may enjoy a life of wealth and power sequestered in a Park Avenue penthouse... or under a bridge, where he prattles like a madman to any who listen.

### Artifact (●●● or higher)

**Effect:** Your mage has an item that originated in a Supernal Realm or that has been directly touched by Supernal power. Artifacts cannot be created by mages — their manufacture lies beyond the power of anyone in the Fallen World.

An Artifact's powers mimic those of magical spells, and they can sometimes be mistaken for imbued items.

An Artifact's base Merit dot cost is equal to 2 dots plus the dot-rating of the Arcanum power it mimics, plus one dot per additional power. If it has more than one power or simulates a conjunctional spell, use the highest Arcanum dot-rating simulated.

Base Cost: 2 + highest Arcanum dots +1 dot per additional power

Artifacts have the following properties:

**Legendry:** Every single Artifact is unique and legendary, meaning that it has a historical or mythical significance that can be researched, even if its origin or use is obscure and largely forgotten in modern times. Some rare Artifacts are new enough to be unknown to most mages, but even these sometimes appear in others' dreams or prophecies.

A known Artifact can bring its wielder a degree of renown — either good or bad, depending on the Artifact's legendry. This can act at times like one dot in a sort of Status Merit (see pp. 88-89), although it applies only when the Artifact is of interest to the person its wielder tries to influence, such as a master with whom an audience is requested. The Status lies with the Artifact, not the bearer; if others desire to see it, they might grant the mage audience.

The drawback of this legendry is that others might lust for the Artifact and seek to take it from the mage.

**Awakened use only:** Only mages can use Artifacts. Sleepers and most other supernatural creatures lack the necessary sympathetic connection to the Supernal World.

**Unbreakable:** All Artifacts have a Durability that's two points higher than normal for their materials and manufacture.

**Function:** Persistent or contingent.

A *persistent* power is always active. The power does not have to be cast by the user to take effect; he simply needs to hold the Artifact or wear it. These include talismans of protection against spirits, mirrors that reflect the Shadow Realm version of whatever room they're in, or cloaks of invisibility, hiding any portion of the wearer covered. The user must use or wear the Artifact to benefit from the power, but the power cannot be turned on or off with a switch or command word. If one or more of the Artifact's powers is persistent, add one dot to its total cost.

A *contingent* power needs to be activated for each use. It might be a sword that becomes supernaturally sharp when it tastes blood, a carpet that flies when the proper words are spoken, or even a gun made of bones that fires enervating Death energy with each pull of the trigger. The effect's Duration depends on the default Duration of the spell it mimics, usually transitory (one turn) or prolonged (one hour/scene). Once this period expires, the mage may use the same trigger to use the power again. A trigger is an instant action and can be defined as anything performed within the proximity of the item: verbal commands, gestures and so on.

When a trigger is activated, the Artifact's spellcasting dice pool is rolled. It is equal to its wielder's Gnosis + the highest Arcanum dot rating used to determine the Artifact's Merit dots, based on the highest rated power (as described above).

**Mana:** Some powers require Mana. Use the descriptions for the spell mimicked to determine any possible cost. All Artifacts hold up to 10 Mana points + 1 per spell (so an Artifact with three powers holds up to 13 Mana). A user can draw points from the Artifact to fuel its powers rather than spending his own. This pool is self-replenishing; they are restored at a rate of one point per Merit dot per day, although a mage can spend his own Mana to restore the points more quickly, or use Prime magic to transfer them from a Hallow or some other source. (See the "Channel Mana" spell, p. 224.)

The wielder can also use the Artifact's Mana to power his own spells, as if he were drawing on his own Mana reserves (he is still limited by his Gnosis for the amount he can spend per turn). He does not need to use the Prime Arcanum to acquire them, but he does need to be in contact (physical or sympathetic) with the Artifact.

**Paradox:** Artifact powers can invoke Paradoxes just like the spells they mimic, and vulgar effects that are witnessed by Sleepers invoke Disbelief (see p. 274).

***Example:*** *The Cave Lord's Talisman is an Artifact in the form of a medallion that allows its wearer to grow bear claws upon activation (a contingent power). This mimics the Life 3 "Transform Self" spell, p. 187. It would be rated at five Merit dots (2 + 3rd-dot Arcanum = 5). Remember, though, that the fifth dot costs two dots, so the total cost would be six Merit dots.*

Acquiring an Artifact once play begins does not cost Merit dots; characters must gain them through roleplaying actions. If an Artifact is ever lost, stolen or destroyed, the player loses the Merit and the points he spent to gain it.

### *Destiny (● to ●●●●●)*

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

**Effect:** Your character's thread stands out in the skein of fate. It may be cut short through tragedy or catastrophe, but until then, she has the ability to weave it into a sound pattern of her choosing. She is fated for great triumphs, and this Merit helps her achieve them. Like any true hero, she finds success a little more easily than mere mortals. In true heroic fashion, she also has a fatal flaw — no matter how strong her Pattern might be, it has one weakness others can use to tear it apart.

For each chapter in a story, you have a pool of "destiny dice" equal to twice the number of dots your character has in this Merit. For instance, a character with 2 dots of Destiny has four dice in his destiny pool.

Each time you use one of these destiny dice, you can add it to any one dice pool. You can use them all on one dice roll, or split them up between different dice rolls. Either way, once you use them, they're gone until the next chapter or game session. For example, a player whose character has Destiny 3 (giving him six dice) might choose to add two dice to a Brawl roll and then four to an Occult roll. The next game session, he might apply six dice to a single Intimidation roll. The bonus can apply to Mental, Physical or Social rolls, or to spellcasting rolls. You can even use these dice on a Skill for which your character has no training (although she still suffers the penalties for untrained Skill use).

**Drawback:** Your character's blessing has a price: her *bane*. There is one type of person or situation that can bring her down. This bane can be summed up in one sentence, generally describing what her downfall will be. The Storyteller must either declare or approve this bane during the course of

the game. For instance, a hero may have been told to "Beware the Queen of Hearts" (perhaps a reference to the woman who will seduce and destroy him), while another may be warned, "Wolves will devour your soul." The reference may be literal or figurative, but it should never mention a specific time or place.

Whenever the bane comes into play, the character's dice pools are penalized by one die per Destiny dot he possesses. This applies only to dice pools for directly dealing with the bane or for resisting its attacks, spells or even Social rolls to intimidate or persuade the character. For example, if the character's bane mentions wolves, anytime he encounters a "wolf" (whether that's an actual werewolf or a "wolf in sheep's clothing," depending on how the Storyteller interprets the bane), dice pools are penalized.

### Dream (● to ●●●●●)

**Effect:** Your character has a connection to primordial forces in the world, ancient truths that can be seen and comprehended only in dreams. He gains insight into secrets through reverie and visions, finding answers to questions he couldn't normally get by mundane means. This might be through the collective unconscious, universal mind, poetic reverie or even an imagined journey to a fictional dreamscape. Through effort of will, he can even channel this insight into action. Behind the lie of the so-called real world, dreams reveal the world as it really is… from a certain point of view.

Once per game session, your character can use his Dream ability to gain a supernatural insight concerning a question or topic. Activating this ability requires at least one hour spent in sleep, trance or an activity exclusively focused on accessing an altered state of consciousness. The Storyteller then rolls the character's Wits + Composure in secret. The results are:

**Dramatic failure:** A nightmare. The character can interpret it any way he wants, but it probably leads to more trouble than solutions.

**Failure:** Meaningless images.

**Success:** One or more clues (one per Dream dot), although they must be interpreted.

**Exceptional success:** One or more clues (one per Dream dot), and a suggestion about their interpretation provided by the Storyteller.

The information conveyed is hidden behind allegory, symbols and archetypes. Dreams rarely answer questions directly, typically relying on symbolism and imagery to convey information. A mage seeking a specific person's location wouldn't see his address, but landmarks nearby could lead the way: a river, a tower or even the face of a man walking by at dusk. The answer has the potential to resolve the problem. It's a tool for the Storyteller to help drive events of the story.

### Enhanced Item (● to ●●●●●)

**Effects:** Your mage has an object whose properties have been supernaturally altered, either for increased Durability, Structure, Size or an equipment bonus, or to give it some special property, such as to make steel transparent or flexible. Enhanced items are made with the Matter Arcanum (see pp. 194-204). Any special properties that would require the use of other Arcana (such as Forces to make a sword that glows) must be achieved by imbuing the item instead; see "Imbued Item," below.

The cost depends on the enhanced item's properties.

| Property | Merit Dot Cost |
|---|---|
| Increased Durability | 1 dot per +2 Durability |
| Increased Structure | 1 dot per +2 Structure |
| Increased Size | 1 dot per +2 Size |
| Increased equipment bonus | 1 dot per +1 dice modifier* |
| Special property | 1 dot per Arcanum dot needed to achieve the property |

* If the enhanced equipment bonus is more than double the item's normal equipment bonus, the enhanced item causes Disbelief when Sleepers witness its use.

Enhanced items have the following features:

**Function:** Persistent only. A *persistent* power is always active (i.e., of indefinite Duration). The user simply needs to hold the item or wear it.

**No Paradox:** Enhanced items' properties do not invoke Paradoxes, although they might invoke Disbelief in Sleepers if their properties are clearly impossible.

***Example:*** *A katana normally has a +3 equipment bonus, but Zeno carries a special katana. It sports a +2 enchanted equipment bonus (for a total bonus of +5 dice) and a +2 Durability (for a total of Durability 6). It costs him 3 Merit dots.*

An item can be both enhanced and imbued. See "Imbued Item," below. Simply add the cost of all enhancements and imbuements together to determine the item's total Merit cost.

Acquiring an enhanced item once play begins does not cost Merit dots; characters must gain such items through roleplaying actions. If the item is ever lost, stolen or destroyed, the player loses the Merit and the points he spent to gain it.

### Familiar (●●● or ●●●●)

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

**Effect**: Your character has a magical bond with a spirit that aids him, one that is either in Twilight (that is, immaterial and invisible) or embodied. Twilight familiars have no bodies: they are spirits existing in an ephemeral state of existence called Twilight. Embodied familiars inhabit a physical body in the material world.

A Twilight familiar is bought for three dots; it is a spirit originating in the Shadow Realm, also known as a "fetch." Twilight familiars can temporarily manifest like ghosts (see "Manifestations," p. 210 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), but their ephemeral bodies are otherwise invisible and intangible to the physical world. A Twilight familiar must manifest or use Numina to affect anything in the physical world — except for its bonded mage, whom it can touch at will (its mage can also see and speak with the familiar even when he is not using a spell that allows him to see Twilight). Twilight familiars exist on the material side of the Gauntlet, although they can accompany their masters across into the Shadow, or travel there themselves if their Numina allow it.

An embodied familiar is bought for four dots. It takes the form of an earthly creature. Many of the legendary stories of sorcerers with cunning animal companions — cats, rats, bats — are actually references to embodied familiars.

## Familiar Traits

Whether immaterial or embodied, a familiar is considered to be a rank 1 spirit (a "squire"; see "The Spiritual Hierarchy," p. 317). The Storyteller designs the spirit's traits. Each familiar begins play with at least one dot in each Attribute, with extra dots as listed below. See "Spirits," pp. 317-322, for rules concerning spirit traits.

### Twilight Familiar Traits

**Attributes:** 3/3/2 (allocate dots in any order among Power, Finesse and Resistance)
**Willpower:** Equal to Power + Resistance
**Essence:** 10 (10 max)
**Initiative:** Equal to Finesse + Resistance
**Defense:** Equal to highest of Power and Finesse
**Speed:** Equal to Power + Finesse + "species factor" (same as its earthly counterpart)
**Size:** 5 or less (same as its earthly counterpart)
**Corpus:** Equal to Resistance + Size
**Influence:** 2 dots (choose one)
**Numina:** Choose one
**Ban:** The fetch has one Ban, chosen by the Storyteller

Most mages with a fetch have a respectable command of Spirit Arcanum, since its spells are useful for influencing the familiar. It is possible to have a fetch without knowledge of Spirit magic — or even knowing what the fetch really is — but such a relationship may torment the mage more than it helps him.

When a fetch manifests, use the following modifiers:

| Location | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Wilderness | +3 |
| Demesne | +3 |
| Hallow | +2 |
| Place associated with the spirit's Influence | +2 |
| Ley line nexus | +1 |
| Handmade structure (wooden bridge, shed) | +1 |
| Parking lot | −1 |
| Modern commercial building | −1 |
| Modern industrial building | −2 |
| Modern laboratory | −3 |

### Embodied Familiar Traits

Attributes: 5/4/3
Skills: 9/6/3
Willpower: Equal to Resolve + Composure
Essence: 10 (10 max)
Initiative: Equal to Dexterity + Composure
Defense: Equal to lowest of Dexterity and Wits
Speed: Strength + Dexterity + "species factor" (based on its animal type)
Size: 5 or less (based on its animal type)
Health: Equal to Stamina + Size
Influence: 2 dots (choose one)
Numina: Innocuous (see below), and choose one more
Ban: The fetch has one Ban, chosen by the Storyteller.

Embodied familiars live in the material world in a physical body, although it might be a rather strange body. They are often clever and loyal animals, the black cat or cunning rat of sorcerous legend.

All embodied familiars have the Innocuous Numen (see pp. 321-322). It is very good at not being noticed by others. Anyone but its bonded mage suffers a −2 penalty on perception rolls to notice the familiar, unless it does something to draw attention to itself.

A familiar's bonded mage is considered to be its anchor to the material world, although there is no limit to how far a familiar can travel from its mage. It does *not* lose Essence for every hour it spends in the physical world or Twilight. It must follow all the other rules concerning Essence, however, including spending one Essence per day. If it is reduced to zero Essence, it falls into slumber (see "Essence," p. 319), but it is not transferred back into the Shadow Realm as long as the mage-familiar bond still exists. Like other spirits, it can gain Essence by being in proximity to something that it reflects, or its mage can spend Mana points to give it Essence.

The master and familiar have an empathic connection; each can automatically feel the emotions of the other. (Magical effects that damage or manipulate the familiar through an emotional attack don't damage or manipulate the master.) All familiars have a Sensory sympathetic connection to their bonded mage, meaning that a mage's scrying spells can use the familiar's senses in place of a scrying window, with no sympathetic penalty. This makes familiars superlative spies. Even more useful, however, the mage can spend his familiar's Essence points as Mana points, no matter how distant the familiar is from the mage. He can also spend his own Mana points to give his familiar Essence.

**Improvement:** To improve a familiar, a mage's player must spend some of his character's experience points on the familiar.

### *Hallow (● to ●●●●●; special)*

**Prerequisite:** Sanctum

**Effect:** A Hallow is a nexus of magical energy, a place that generates Mana each day. Such locations are vital to mages. Your character has one within his sanctum's premises. The sanctum's security determines how well it is guarded from access by uninvited mages.

Hallows tend to be situated in high places, especially where the stars are visible at night. Mana seems to flow readily there, although that isn't always the case; dark glens and hollows covered by a canopy of trees or steep peaks can

still host such energy. Nonetheless, they occur most often on mountaintops, hills or at the tops of skyscrapers, giving birth to the legend of mages in their towers.

A Hallow generates a number of points of Mana equal to its dots each day. A mage can transfer the power from his Hallow to replenish his own Mana points by performing an oblation (see p. 77) or using a Prime 3 spell**.** Each Hallow is tied to a particular time of day when this replenishment can take place — sundown, sunrise and midnight are the most common.

If this Mana is not harvested, it congeals into tass, usually in the form of spring water or growing plants, or it's imbued into stones or other objects. Some mages forbid others from harvesting free Mana, cultivating it into tass that can be stored and used later. See "Tass," pp. 78-79.

A Hallow's Mana shares the place's quality of resonance. Resonance quality in opposition to a spell's effects — calm resonance for an attack spell, violent resonance for a healing spell — might levy anywhere from –1 to –2 penalties on spellcasting rolls. For this reason, mages do not let their Hallows become polluted with foreign or impure auras. They work to maintain proper resonance quality.

Additionally, a Hallow's close vicinity (five yards per dot rating) is always suffused with power. This power obviates the need to spend one point of Mana for any mage within the vicinity. Essentially, mages need not spend that one point even when it's required, such as for improvisational spellcasting, but must spend any points in excess that are still required, such as when casting an improvisational spell that inflicts aggravated damage. This example would normally cost two points, but it costs only one within the Hallow's vicinity. This suffuse power cannot be siphoned into something else using Prime magic or into the mage's personal store of Mana.

**Special:** Characters who share a sanctum can also share Hallow dots, with each contributing to its power. Cabals that do this usually work out a schedule by which each member can access the Hallow's Mana, ensuring that none takes too much. If they suffer a falling out, one or more might be banned from access to the Hallow. Those who are banned lose whatever dots they contributed.

Shared Hallows should be marked with an asterisk (*) on your character sheet. See the description of the Sanctum Merit for details on how to allocate dots.

### High Speech (●)

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

**Effect:** Your character knows the rudiments of the Atlantean High Speech. He can utilize it in spellcasting for a burst of power (see "Words of Power," p. 117), as well as to extend a spell's Duration using runes (see "Atlantean Runes," p. 119).

If your mage begins play as a member of an order, he learns this Merit at no cost. If he is not a member of an order, he must purchase this Merit using his initial Merit dots or with experience points (assuming there is someone who can teach it to him).

High Speech can be spoken and comprehended only by the Awakened. Sleepers' minds cannot process it. They might hear an Atlantean phrase as a series of nonsense words, or even silence (the speaker's mouth moves but no sound comes out). Particularly willful Sleepers might catch bits of it, but even then it might sound like a tape played too slow with the bass turned way up.

### Imbued Item (●● or higher)

**Effect:** Your mage has a magical item with one or more powers. The Prime Arcanum was used to imbue a spell into the object so that its wielder has that power at his disposal (see pp. 225-226).

An imbued item's base Merit dot cost is equal to one dot plus the dot rating of its Arcanum power, plus one dot per additional power. If it has more than one power or uses a conjunctional spell, use the highest Arcanum dot rating involved.

Base Cost: 1 dot + highest Arcanum dots + 1 dot per additional power.

Imbued items have the following properties.

**Function:** Persistent or contingent.

A *persistent* power is always active. The power does not have to be cast by the user to take effect; he simply needs to hold or wear the item. These include amulets of luck, magical body armor or goggles that let the wearer peer into the Shadow Realm. The user must use or wear the imbued item to benefit from the power, but the power cannot be turned on or off with a switch, command word or the like. If one or more of the imbued item's powers is persistent (i.e., of indefinite Duration), add one dot to its total cost.

A *contingent* power needs to be activated for each use. The mage squeezes the gun's trigger or utters the staff's magic word and calls forth its magic. Duration depends on the default Duration of the spell mimicked by the effect, and is usually transitory (one turn) or prolonged (one hour/scene). Once this period expires, the mage may use the same trigger to use the power again. A trigger should be an appropriate instant action, anything performed within the proximity of the item: verbal commands, gestures and so on.

When the trigger is activated, the imbued item's spellcasting dice pool is rolled. It is equal to its wielder's Gnosis + the Arcanum dots used for the power.

**Mana:** If a contingent power requires Mana, the item must either have its own Mana pool or the mage must supply the points himself. Some imbued items have their own Mana pools. This costs an additional Merit dot and the item holds up to 10 Mana points + 1 per spell (i.e., an imbued item with two spells can hold up to 12 Mana). Its user can draw points from the imbued item to fuel its powers rather than spending his own. This pool is not self-replenishing. Once the points have been used up, the mage must spend his own Mana to restore the imbued item's points, or use Prime magic to transfer them from a Hallow or some other source.

Unlike an Artifact, an imbued item's points can be used only to activate its powers, unless the mage uses the "Channel Mana" spell (see p. 224) to place the item's points somewhere else.

**Sleepers:** Even a Sleeper can use an imbued item. If its power is persistent, he need only hold or wear it. If it's contingent, he need only perform the proper trigger. The



spellcasting dice pool rolled is equal to the highest Arcanum dot rating used to determine the Imbued Item's Merit dots, based on the highest rated power (as described above). Since Sleepers do not have Gnosis, it cannot be added to the dice pool. Needless to say, Sleepers must rely on an item's own Mana pool to fuel its powers.

**Paradox:** Imbued items' vulgar powers can invoke Paradoxes, even when wielded by Sleepers. The dice pool is equal to half the item's Merit dots (round down). (If the item is created during play with the Prime 3 "Imbue Item" spell, pp. 225-226, the Paradox dice pool is based on the Gnosis of the imbued item's creator.) Items that produce vulgar effects before the eyes of a Sleeper witnesses will also invoke Disbelief (see p. 274). His own inability to accept the magic undermines the magic.

***Example:*** *A ring that allows a mage to turn himself invisible on a contingent basis would cost four dots (1 + a 3-dot Forces spell), while a sword with a persistent power that allows it to cut through iron would be rated at five dots (1 + a 3-dot Matter spell + 1 dot for indefinite Duration).*

An item can be both imbued and enhanced. See "Enhanced Item," above. Simply add the cost of all imbuements and enhancements together to determine the item's total cost.

Acquiring an imbued item once play begins does not cost Merit dots; characters must gain these items through roleplaying actions. If an item is ever lost, stolen or destroyed, the character loses the Merit and the points he spent to gain it.

### *Library (• to ●●●●●; special)*

**Prerequisite:** Sanctum

**Effect:** Your character maintains within his sanctum a personal collection of useful information, which can help with both natural and supernatural research. Whether it's in the form of musty occult tomes, encrypted computer files, sacred scrolls, visual art or stranger media, this library includes reference works that can help the mage understand the realm surrounding him. The library also offers insight into supernatural and occult topics that mortals cannot comprehend. In both fields of knowledge — mundane research and occult lore — this collection relates to one or more fields of specialization.

Each dot in this Merit represents one field of study or area of knowledge in which your character has a wealth of tomes, computer files or scrolls, and from which he may draw information. If he has Library 3, his dots might be assigned to demons, cryptozoology and Greek mythology, respectively. Topics can include arcane lore that most people don't know about or that has been forgotten since antiquity.

Ordinary people have libraries as well, of course, dealing with less exotic specialties. The study of the supernatural is different from ordinary research, however. Many occult tomes refer to magical insights that only mages understand, allegories to magical philosophy, ciphers and diagrams that make little sense to Sleepers, or even inscrutable incunabula that can be deciphered only by willworkers with certain Arcana. Aging magical tomes don't typically use indices, keywords or cross-referenced page numbers — they're as arcane as the mages who use them.

Gaining information from a library is a research task, as described on pp. 55-56 of the **World of Darkness** rulebook, except that a mage spends only 10 minutes per roll when researching from his library. Success doesn't guarantee exactly the information for which she looks. Libraries aren't all-knowing, and they don't always provide one definitive answer to a question, since multiple authors may have different points of view on the same subject. The Storyteller is perfectly justified in saying that a particular library simply doesn't reveal something.

Any mage may allow another mage the privilege of consulting his library, but unless this consultant has put points toward the Merit, 30 minutes are spent per roll researching his topic.

A library is located in a sanctum and is protected by that sanctum's security. See the "Sanctum" Merit, pp. 86-87.

**Special:** Characters who share a sanctum can also share Library dots, with each contributing to its areas of knowledge. These characters each receive the full benefits of the library, and may invite others to use the facility, so long as all parties agree. It may happen that mages suffer a falling out, in which case one or more might be asked to forfeit their library privileges by the others. Those who are banned lose whatever dots they contributed, unless an agreement is worked out to split the library, allowing outcasts to take their areas of knowledge with them.

Shared libraries should be marked with an asterisk (*) on your character sheet. See the description of the Sanctum Merit for details on how to allocate dots.

### *Occultation (• to •••)*

**Prerequisite:** Awakened, no Fame Merit dots

**Effect:** A mage's spells come with a mystical stamp of his personality — his aura. Mages with this Merit "hide their light under a bushel." Their resonance is so subtle that only expert or extended scrutiny can root it out. This effect even extends into the mundane world, making a mage incognito to Sleeper society.

When a sorcerer attempts to read the aura of one of your character's spells, subtract a number of dice equal to your character's dots in this Merit. This same penalty applies to any roll to analyze the aura of your character's magic. See "Resonance," pp. 277-289.

In addition, Occultation protects your character from spells that attempt to directly affect him at sympathetic range. His Occultation dots are subtracted from the caster's dice pool. See "Sympathetic Spells," pp. 114-116.

At the Storyteller's discretion, this Merit can also affect other supernatural abilities to find the creator of a magical effect. For example, a vampire using Spirit's Touch to analyze the results of a magical spell should have difficulty finding the occulted mage who cast it. When this trait applies, subtract a number of dice equal to the mage's Occultation dots from the activation roll for that supernatural ability.

Occulted mages tend to live on the fringes of mundane reality, as though they are an anomaly or aberration. Sleepers have trouble keeping track of their identities and activities. Records regarding an arcane mage tend to get lost, and the authorities are challenged to investigate his activities. Since most Sleepers find it hard to gather information about the mage, they won't know many details about him. This also makes it harder for *mages* to research information about the mage through mundane sources. Whenever someone makes a roll to gather information about your character, your Occultation dots are subtracted from the researcher's dice pool.

**Drawback:** If your character ever becomes well known to the public (such as getting caught on camera and being shown on television night after night), he loses his Occultation until the public at large forgets him (which could take many years, depending on how famous or notorious the mage became). Likewise, if he maintains a public persona at all among Sleepers, even to the degree of having many Sleeper friends, he cannot maintain his Occultation. The mage must constantly cultivate this Merit, working to remain away from the attention of Sleeper society. It does not affect his standing in Awakened society.

### *Sanctum (• to •••••; special)*

**Effect:** A sanctum is a mage's stronghold, a place where he can practice his Art away from the eyes of Sleepers and spies. Legends tell of wizard's towers, witch's huts and sorcerer's caves, but the reality is usually more prosaic: a penthouse apartment, an old estate or even a nondescript suburban tract house.

All sanctums are not created equal. A warehouse might have sufficient space, but it might not be secure against unwanted visitors. A hidden cave has adequate security, but it might be dark and cramped. Great time and effort is spent finding suitable sanctums, and their value is represented by two factors — size and security. Players who choose this Merit must also choose how to allocate these two factors when spending dots. For instance, two dots may be spent on Sanctum Size, with a third spent on Sanctum Security.

Sanctum Size is important to characters who need a place to safely store their possessions and valuables. A sanctum with no dots in Size is just large enough for its owner and perhaps a single companion, with minimal if any storage capacity — a cramped apartment. By spending points to increase a sanctum's Size, a player allows for accoutrements and personal effects. Larger sanctums can be anything from mansions to mountain hideaways to vast subterranean catacombs. Note, however, that sanctums of considerable size are not necessarily easy to maintain.

- • A small apartment or underground chamber; 1-2 rooms
- •• A large apartment or small family home; 3-4 rooms
- ••• A warehouse, church or large home; 5-8 rooms, or large enclosure
- •••• An abandoned mansion or network of subway tunnels; equivalent of 9-15 rooms or chambers
- ••••• A sprawling estate or vast network of tunnels; countless rooms or chambers

Of course, Sanctum Size does not prevent intrusion by Sleepers (police, criminal organizations, social workers). Players wishing to ensure privacy and safety may choose to spend dots on Sanctum Security, thus making it difficult for

others to gain entrance. Sanctums with no dots in Sanctum Security can be found by those intent enough to look, and offer little protection once they have been breached. Each dot of Security subtracts one die from efforts to intrude into the place by anyone a character doesn't specifically allow in. This increased difficulty may be because the entrance is so difficult to locate (behind a bookcase, under a carpet) or simply difficult to penetrate (behind a vault door). Also, each dot of Security offers a +1 bonus on Initiative for those inside against anyone attempting to gain entrance (good sight lines, video surveillance).

Characters for whom no points are spent on Sanctum at all might have their own small, humble chambers, or perhaps they share the space of a master or order. In any event, they simply do not gain the mechanical benefits of those who have assigned Merit dots to improve the quality of their homes.

Each aspect of the Sanctum Merit has a limit of 5. In other words, Sanctum Size and Sanctum Security may not rise above 5 (to a maximum of 10 points dots on this Merit, total).

**Special:** It's possible for the Sanctum Merit to be shared among characters in a close-knit group. They might simply be devoted to one another and willing to pool what they have, or perhaps their mutual reliance on an individual or trust could bring them together to share what they have in common.

To share this Merit, two or more characters simply have to be willing to pool their dots for greater capability. A shared rating in the Sanctum Merit cannot rise higher than five dots in any of the two aspects of the trait. That is, characters cannot pool more than five dots to be devoted to, say, Sanctum Size. If they wish to devote extra dots to the Merit, they must allocate those dots to Security.

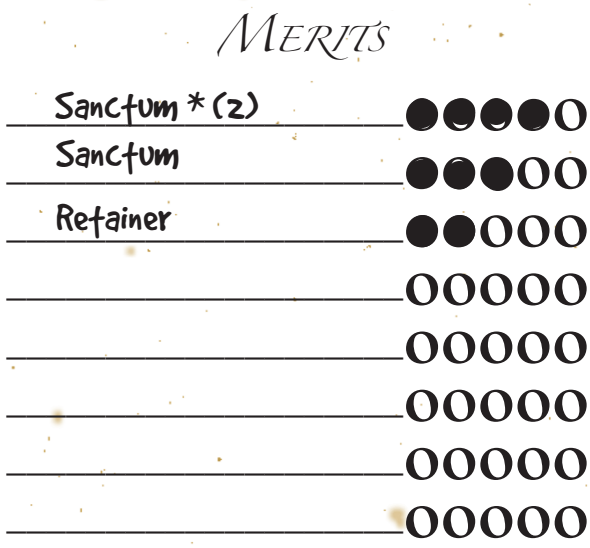
Shared Sanctum dots can be lost. Cabal members or associates might be abused or mistreated, ending relationships. Group members might perform actions that cast themselves (or the group) in a bad light. Money might be spent or lost. If any group member does something to diminish the sanctum, its dots decrease for all group members. That's the weakness of sharing dots in this Merit. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The Storyteller dictates when character actions or events in a story compromise shared Sanctum dots.

Characters can also leave a shared sanctum. A rift might form between close friends. A character might be killed or lost in the Shadow Realm. Or one could be kicked out of the sanctum by the others. When a character leaves a shared-sanctum relationship, the dots he contributed are removed from the pool. If the individual still survives, he doesn't get all his dots back for his own purposes. He gets one less than he originally contributed. So, if a character breaks a relationship with his cabal, his two Sanctum dots are lost by the group, but he gets only one dot back for his own purposes. The lost dot represents the cost or bad image that comes from the breakup. If all members agree to part ways, they all lose one dot from what they originally contributed.

The Storyteller decides what reduced dots means in the story when a character leaves a shared sanctum. Perhaps no one else picks up the character's attention to Sanctum Security, leaving that score to drop. Maybe a portion of the sanctum falls into disuse or even collapses, causing an effective drop in Sanctum Size. Whatever the case, a plausible explanation must be determined.

A character need not devote all of her Sanctum dots to the shared Sanctum Merit, of course. A mage might maintain a separate sanctum outside the communal one represented by the shared trait. Any leftover dots that a character has (or is unwilling to share) signify what she has to draw upon as an individual, separate from her partners. For example, three characters share a sanctum and expend a group total of five dots. One character chooses to use two other dots on a private sanctum. Those remaining two dots represent a sanctum entirely separate from what she and her partners have established together.

To record a shared Sanctum Merit on your character sheet, put an asterisk next to the name of the Sanctum Merit and fill in the total dots that your character has access to thanks to his partnership. In order to record his original contribution, write it in parentheses along with the Merit's name. It is not important to note on which aspect of the Sanctum Merit those points are spent; this allows greater flexibility should a character ever decide to withdraw from the community arrangement. The result looks like this:




In this example, the character shares a Sanctum Merit dedicated to the cabal's communal shelter. He contributes two dots to the relationship, and the group has a total of four dots that are made available to each member. The character also has his own private Sanctum Merit rated 3, which he maintains by himself. And, the character has Retainer rated 2, which is also his own Merit.

### Sleepwalker Retainer (• to •••••)

**Effect:** Your character has a single Sleepwalker who has been magically initiated into the secrets of the order. He is aware of the existence of magic, and your character has recruited him as an assistant. Your character can openly practice magic in his presence without fear of betraying the Mysteries.

This Merit works the same as the "Retainer" Merit (p. 116 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), except that the mage's retainer is a Sleepwalker.

For details on Sleepwalkers, see p. 334.

### Status (• to •••••)

While certain Merits detailed in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** focus on recognition in mortal society, certain Status concerns itself with the social orders of the Awakened and represents recognition among other mages. Status is divided into two areas — Consilium and Order. Players must choose one of these two areas for each Merit dot spent. (Enterprising Storytellers may come up with additional types of Status, and clever players might have unique applications as well. As such, Status is designed as a sort of "umbrella" Merit under which new types can be created.)

*Consilium Status* represents a vested responsibility and according acknowledgement in the affairs of the Consilium of the region. Certain individuals rise to the top of the social strata, exemplary because of their efforts in the name of their cabal, Consilium or in the area as a whole. Hierarchs, Heralds, Sentinels and other "officers" fit this description, but the Merit can also apply to mages who are popular but who eschew politics. Their opinion holds sway even if they don't involve themselves in a particular Consiliar function.

Consilium Status is most often based on accomplishment. A character must earn his way into the title or esteem of his fellow mages. While this often involves being recognized for worthy deeds, it can also be a result of careful politicking and gossip. In general, mages of other cabals recognize a mage's Consilium status and give him respect (although they do not necessarily heed him or reveal secrets).

- • "Rising star"; Leigeman (or —woman)
- •• "Accomplished individual"; Sentinel
- ••• "Much deserved reputation"; Herald
- •••• "Example to the Wise"; Provost
- ••••• "Benefactor of the Awakened"; Hierarch or Councilor

*Order Status* represents rank, achievement and responsibility in a magical order. It is concerned with the order's goals and accomplishments. It is not enough to be powerful or exemplary of the order's ideals. The group is concerned with what its members have done to benefit its cause and combat its rivals.

Those mages who enjoy the greatest order-based recognition are often the core members of their order in a given region, those who call the local caucuses and around whom others rally. These mages instigate or mediate conflict with other orders or cabals, generally looking to further certain idealistic goals and to establish themselves or other members in positions of influence in the Consilium hierarchy of their region.

A character must have at least a single dot of Order Status in order to gain the benefits of any special abilities of that society. In other words, a character must have at least one dot of Order Status in order to learn the rotes of her order. (A character's beginning six dots worth of rotes are an exception. They were presumably taught by the order to win the mage's loyalty). If a character leaves an order after learning some of its secrets, she does not lose any of those abilities for which experience points were spent, such as rotes or Rote Specialties, but she may not learn additional abilities without finding a new teacher. In addition, some orders punish those who violate their oaths and spread their secrets.

Order Status is not so specifically tied to certain titles. It is more a notion of an individual's accomplishments.

- • The character is known to a select subset of the order — a spy network, perhaps.
- •• The majority of the order in the region recognizes the character's face and can recall her exploits.
- ••• The character's deeds are known to all in the order, even in nearby regions. Many members of other orders recognize her face.
- •••• Word of the character's exploits has traveled far, and her name is known in cities around the country.
- ••••• The character's name and face are synonymous with her order; her exploits are taught to new members of the order.

Status can serve as a mixed blessing, however. Those who enjoy the most renown might be able to use it to their advantage, but they are also visible targets for their enemies. High Status dots make it almost impossible to pass unnoticed, but they can open doors that would otherwise remain blocked.

Status works like a "social tool" in that it adds to dice pools for Social interactions between members of the sub-groups given. That is, Order Status adds to dice pools for interactions with members of the same order, and Consilium Status affects those who are recognized residents of the given region. Consilium Status, however, may be ignored by enemies of the Consilium. Status does not add to die rolls predicated upon magic, only for mundane social actions.

Dealing with Status can be a mire of responsibility for characters, though clever characters can turn it to their advantage. They may actually have a variety of Status. It is not uncommon for someone to have Consilium Status and Order Status.

A character may, on occasion, have more than one form of Order Status. This occurs almost exclusively at low levels, where a character is often beneath the notice of most other members of his group. A character may never have more than three dots total in Order Status among multiple orders. A double agent, for example, might have two dots worth of Order Status (Silver Ladder) and a single dot of Order Status (Adamantine Arrow), representing his true allegiance to the Silver Ladder and the fact that he's in on the ground floor of the Adamantine Arrow. (He can feed information back to his Ladder fellows.) A character may even have a single dot of Order Status in three different orders — perhaps he's somewhat accomplished in each, but has yet to determine

where his true loyalties lie. Naturally, a character with Status in only one order is not beholden to the three-dot limit.

A character with dots of Order Status in multiple orders does indeed gain access to those groups' special benefits. Orders expect certain things of their members, however, and if other mages find out that the character plays multiple sides against the middle, he might see that Status vanish in a single day when he's called upon to account for his treacheries. Such is also the reason that cumulative Order Status is limited to three dots. By the time a character gains a certain degree of Status in a single order, he sticks out like a sore thumb if he turns up among another order's members. (An exception to this might occur if the character is truly some sort of deep-cover agent or other mole, but that circumstance is best handled at the Storyteller's discretion.)

### Thrall (●●●)

**Effect:** Your mage physically controls another's soul stone (see p. 277), making that willworker his thrall. By custom, your character can demand up to three favors before he must return the stone. These favors can be as weak or as daunting as he desires, although if they are particularly difficult or dangerous the thrall can petition the Consilium for redress.

Possession of a soul stone gives your mage an Intimate sympathetic connection to its owner and allows him to tap the owner's Mana without casting a Prime spell. Roll Gnosis + Presence – the soul stone creator's Resolve and take one Mana per success. Such theft can be done only once per day, and is considered one favor toward the three allowed.

The Storyteller works with the player to determine who the thrall is. The more powerful or politically connected the thrall, the more potent the favors he can provide, but the more dangerous it is to anger him. One day he will be free of his obligation, and although by custom he cannot seek direct revenge or demand a duel, he almost surely manipulates events to enact his vengeance for him. Conversely, if your character's favors benefit the thrall and don't violate his dignity, he might gain a grudging respect.

After the three favors are completed, your character is expected to return the soul stone to the rightful owner, freeing the thrall. If he does not free his thrall after the three favors are completed, he can be punished freely by any other mage, even a mage not of his order or the Consilium.

Some mages set daunting favors, ensuring that their thralls will almost certainly never complete the requirements for freedom. Doing so is considered bad form. The thrall can take his case to the Consilium, but most officers hesitate to intervene unless the thrall's master endangers their interests or challenges their authority through his flaunting of custom. More often, mistreated thralls must rely on their own cunning to turn the master-thrall relationship.

## Magical Tools

While mages can work magic with but a thought, it's harder to seamlessly weave Supernal realty to Fallen reality without some means of focusing the Will. This involves a tool that gives a mage a better degree of sympathy to his Path's Watchtower.

### Path Tools

Each Path allows a mage to use any of the five Atlantean tools of magic. The Atlantean kings imbued the Watchtowers with the virtue of these tools, making them efficacious in altering reality. While the five types of tools are common to all Paths, the materials from which they can be constructed differ.

**Wands and Staves**

Associated with the element of fire.

**Acanthus:** Glass, crystal, plastic, silver

**Mastigos:** Iron, brass, leather

**Moros:** Lead, bone, precious gems

**Obrimos:** Steel, petrified wood, gold

**Thyrsus:** Wood, copper, stone

**Weapons**

Associated with the element of air.

**Acanthus:** Knife, rapier, bow and arrow

**Mastigos:** Knife, scimitar (or other curved sword such as a katana), whip

**Moros:** Knife, hammer, mace

**Obrimos:** Knife, spear, broadsword (or other double-bladed straight sword such as a Roman gladius)

**Thyrsus:** Knife, spear, axe, sling

**Cups**

Associated with the element of water. Materials are the same as for wands and staves.

**Pentacles and Coins**

Associated with the element of earth. Materials are the same as for wands and staves, although they must be marked with the Atlantean star (five-pointed pentagram).

**Mirrors**

Associated with the element of soul. Materials can be polished or burnished versions of the metal or glass materials used for wands and staves.

### Order Tools

The magical tools preferred by orders come with no metaphysical mandate (unlike Path tools). They act as foci for a mage's Awakened will and imagination, studied through the order's unique practices.

**The Adamantine Arrow**

- Any weapon can be dedicated as a magical tool.
- Any protective item (such as a shield) or armor (such as a flak jacket) can be dedicated as a magical tool.

**The Free Council**

- Any technological item, from a computer to a car, can be dedicated as a magical tool. It must have a complex mechanism (like a clock or a gun) or run on electricity to qualify as "technological" for magical purposes.

**The Guardians of the Veil**

- Cloaks (including long coats or hoods), veils (including scarves) or masks can be dedicated as magical tools.

**The Mysterium**

- Books, scrolls or written talismans can be dedicated as magical tools.

• A key can be dedicated as a magical tool, but it must be made from a rare or precious substance such as silver, gold, ivory or ruby. Common house keys won't do.

**The Silver Ladder**

• Any badge of authority (such as a police badge, government ID or even corporate-lounge pass) can be dedicated as a magical tool. This includes secular or religious symbols of authority, such as a judge's robes or a priest's collar.

**Seers of the Throne**

• A Seer can devise a word or phrase of power that is his magical catchword. He can paint or engrave this onto any of the types of items listed for the other orders, after which that item can be dedicated as a magical tool. The word must be visible to others if they were to scrutinize the tool, although they don't necessarily have to understand it (it can be in a foreign or nonsense language). (Note: A Seer cannot dedicate a tool that has already been dedicated by another mage.)

**Banishers**

None. The Banishers do not teach their own methods of tool use and rely on the Path tools instead.

## Arcana Tools

As with order tools, there are special tools a mage can use to help focus his will when using an Arcanum. Some suggestions are provided below. The Storyteller can allow other tools, as long as they represent the theme of the Arcanum used.

**Death:** Bones, shroud, today's obituary column, Ouija board (the mage must use the planchette during casting)

**Fate:** Playing cards or dice (the mage must draw or reveal a card or roll the dice during casting)

**Forces:** Battery, flashlight, taser gun

**Life:** Blood (freshly drawn; does not need to be dedicated), prominent tattoo, flowers (freshly picked; does not need to be dedicated)

**Matter:** Precious metals, rare isotopes

**Mind:** Rorschach inkblot, crossword puzzle, personal diary

**Prime:** Precious gemstones, pure crystal

**Space:** Ruler, tape measure, wheel, sextant, mathematical equation

**Spirit:** Drum, rattle, flute, animal token (tooth, claw, feather or pelt)

**Time:** Clocks, watches, hourglass

## Dedicating Tools

A magical tool must be dedicated to the purpose of spellcasting by a mage. He cannot just pick up any stick to use as a wand; he must attune his chosen tool to his own aura. A mage cannot have more than one dedicated Path or order tool. Magic is not an assembly-line process. He can, however, have one dedicated Arcanum tool for use with each Arcanum; each tool can only be used with the Arcanum to which it is dedicated.

Should a mage lose or break his dedicated magical tool, he can perform a dedication ceremony on a similar tool. This involves a short meditation upon a new tool as he holds it or is within close proximity to it. This ceremony is an extended action using Gnosis + Composure. It requires five accumulated successes, and 10 minutes is spent per roll. Most mages advise purifying the item with incense or smoke, anointing it with oil, or at least doing a full diagnostic check on it before proceeding.

### Nimbus

A mage's Path colors the aura of his magic. Every time he casts vulgar magic, his nimbus blooms forth, creating subtle effects unique to his Path. This nimbus and its effects are visible to only those beings endowed with some means of perceiving magic, such as Mage Sight. Sleepers go oblivious.

Whenever your character casts vulgar magic, describe how his nimbus appears, based on the suggestions presented with each Path's description. You should add individual touches to your character's personal nimbus, so that his uniqueness can be seen in his magic. If the Storyteller feels you are not providing the right sort of dramatic feel for the moment, he can suggest a nimbus for your character.

#### Uncloaking the Nimbus

A mage can intentionally reveal his nimbus to others, even those without Mage Sight. If a reflexive Composure + Occult roll succeeds, his nimbus becomes visible in a subtle way for that turn. This roll can accompany an instant Social action, such as an Intimidation or Expression roll. At the Storyteller's discretion, successes on the uncloaking roll might add dice to the accompanying instant action, or even an action that takes place in the following turn. The mage can uncloak his nimbus this way only once per scene. Successive attempts can be made, but they cost one Mana each, whether or not the roll succeeds, and they suffer the usual penalties for successive attempts (see p. 132 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

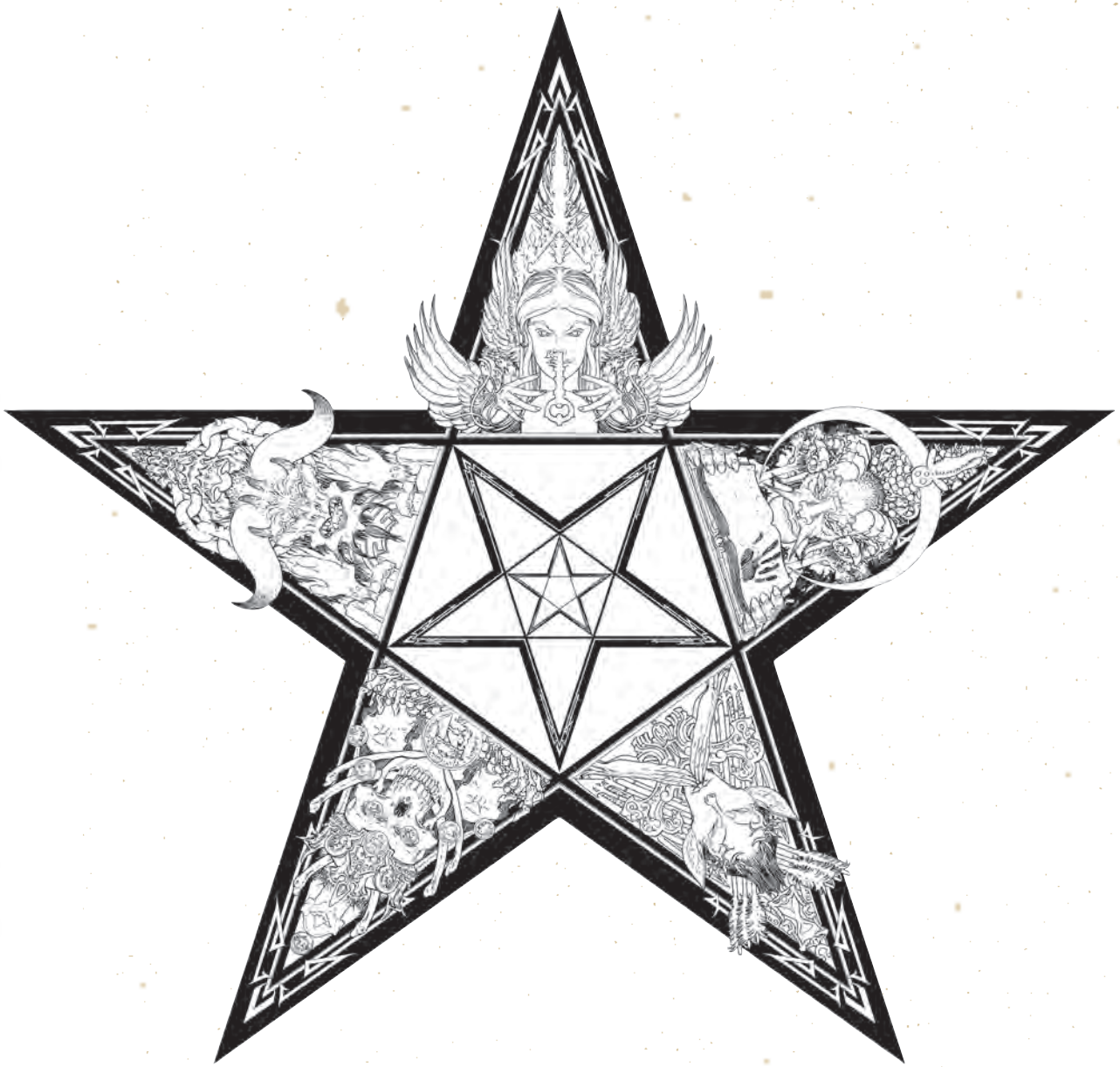
An uncloaked nimbus is not as strong as the nimbus that accompanies spellcasting. It is subtle, less obviously magical. It might be a matter of shadows appearing for one moment where there should be none (but they lasted long enough to boost an Intimidation Skill roll made for the mage). The sun might seem to come out from behind the clouds for a moment and bathe the mage in a radiant glow (boosting his player's Persuasion or Socialize roll). Faint, distant animal howls or human screams might be heard, seeming to come from the direction of the mage, but they last only a second or two (onlookers are rattled enough that the mage boosts his Intimidation Skill roll).

Sometimes, a mage cannot contain his nimbus. It might blossom forth to awe or scare onlookers. Whenever a mage engages his Vice (i.e., he gains a Willpower point from his Vice), a reflexive Composure + Occult roll is made. If it succeeds, the mage's nimbus remains cloaked. If it fails, his nimbus is visible for a turn, which might adversely affect the mage's Social rolls (–1 die) with any onlookers for the next scene. He's really freaked them out. When he enacts his Virtue (i.e., gains Willpower from his Virtue), another roll is made, although a failure (uncloaking the nimbus for a turn) might make the mage seem saintly or angelic to onlookers.

## Legacies

The mentor-apprenticeship relationship is a well-known wizardly stereotype. Like many stereotypes, it's based on a kernel of truth. A mentor can teach an apprentice to craft his soul by way of an archetypal mystical calling. This teaching is called a Legacy. Those mages who dedicate themselves to a Legacy learn its attainments, powers that can be achieved without the need of casting spells — in other words, without any chance of causing a Paradox.

Each Path lists a number of associated Legacies. See Appendix One: Legacies, for more details.



# Acanthus

Enchanters on the Path of Thistle,
Scions of the Watchtower of the Lunargent Thorn in the Realm of Arcadia, Kingdom of Enchantment and Abode of the Fae

The mages of the Lunargent Thorn have a reputation as the most capricious of the Awakened. To their friends, that makes them "free spirits," or "a breath of fresh air." Their detractors are more likely to apply terms such as "unstable," "immature" or "childish." Many mages see something fey or otherworldly about the Acanthus, and the Enchanters themselves are hardly in any position to deny it.

Maturity and stability are not the strengths of those on the Path of Thistle. They are visionaries with extraordinary insights into events both past and future, but they may not always make as much of their insights as they could — much to the chagrin of other mages. Their peers accuse them of being flaky or even irrational, but those allegations seem not to phase the Acanthus in the least. Many reasons have been put forth for their odd behavior. Some have suggested that those on the Enchanter's Path are so inundated with the endless branches of the time stream that nothing seems impossible and no decision seems irreversible. In their defense, the Path of Thistle truly does promise much more than a mage can handle until she grows into her magic.

Because so much of her magic takes the form of uncanny good fortune, it's possible for a mage on the Path of Thistle to imagine herself merely extraordinarily lucky, and many show a tendency toward superstition even in their magic. For this reason, many believe that Acanthus epitomize the tarot trump of "The Fool," relying on dumb luck to guide their journeys. Their sense of wonder and endless possibility often inspires hope in others, for to an Acanthus, the odds are never unbeatable and there are always second chances.

Acanthus are drawn to crowds, but they seem destined to be stuck on the edges of any crowd they hang with, always "the new guy" no matter how long they've been with a group. Their charming ways often make great first impressions, but charm goes only so far, especially once the going gets rough and the Acanthus expects others to pick up his slack.

**Orders:** Some orders are cautious about taking on Acanthus, feeling that they're too mercurial and unfocused to be proper members. Given the tendency of Enchanters to feel they can get out of anything at any point they so choose, many orders are concerned with their level of commitment.

That said, when they *do* join orders, those on the Path of Thistle show a slight preference for the Free Council, where their nimble minds are free to innovate as they see fit, and for the Mysterium, where they are free to test their wits against ancient lore.

Enchanters have a love/hate relationship with the Silver Ladder. While they are lukewarm about the order's goals, they are fascinated by the power and resolve it fosters.

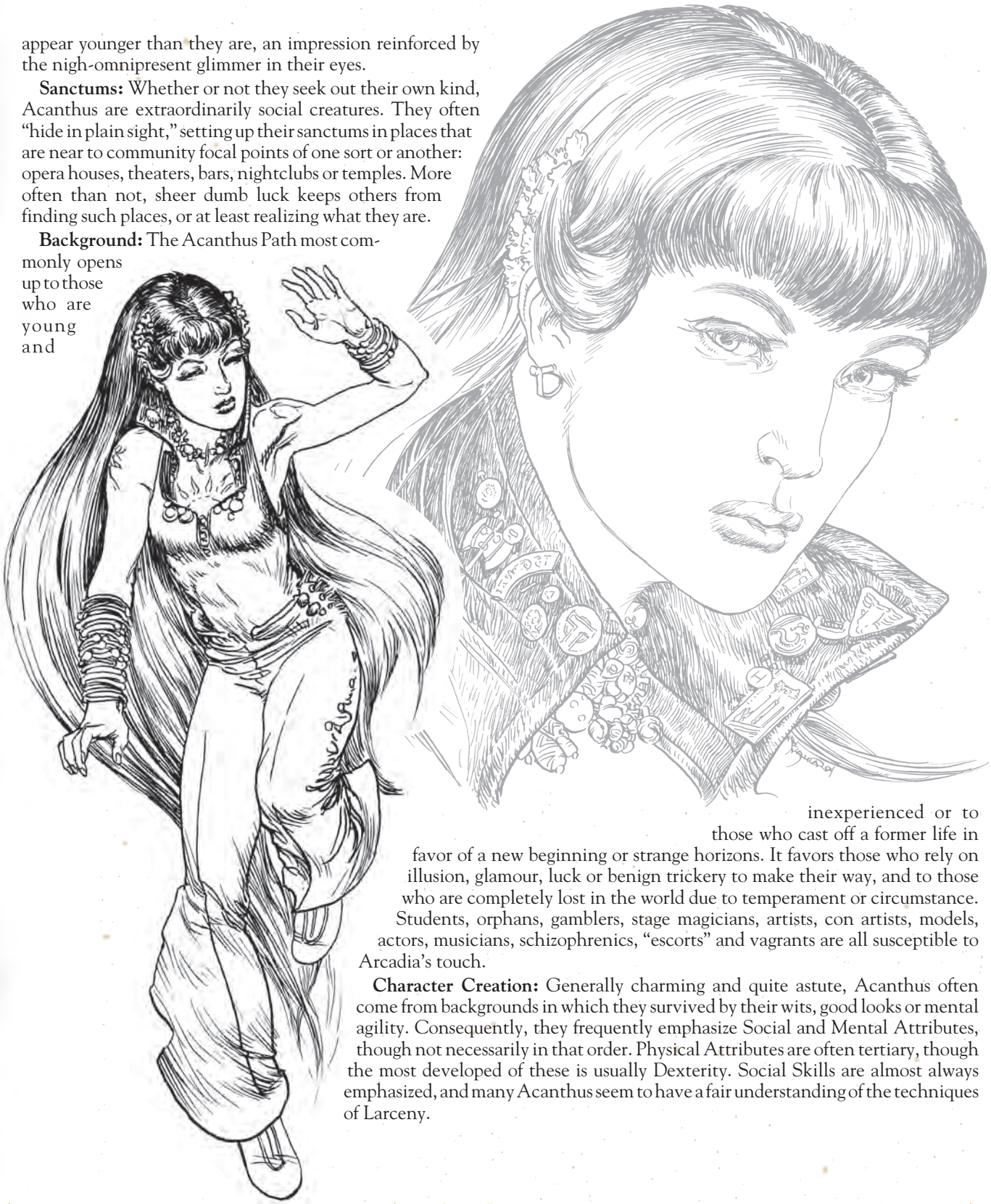
The Adamantine Arrow recruits Acanthus for the sheer strategic value they bring to the order, but war is not a popular pursuit with Enchanters. The Guardians of the Veil also try to bring in more Acanthus, because their luck and insight is invaluable in the defense of the Mysteries, but many Acanthus find the work of the order to be dull.

**Appearance:** Mages on the Acanthus Path often have attractive features, though their eyes often take on a crafty, vulpine quality over time that others may interpret as shifty or somehow dishonest. They often

appear younger than they are, an impression reinforced by the nigh-omnipresent glimmer in their eyes.

**Sanctums:** Whether or not they seek out their own kind, Acanthus are extraordinarily social creatures. They often "hide in plain sight," setting up their sanctums in places that are near to community focal points of one sort or another: opera houses, theaters, bars, nightclubs or temples. More often than not, sheer dumb luck keeps others from finding such places, or at least realizing what they are.

**Background:** The Acanthus Path most commonly opens up to those who are young and inexperienced or to those who cast off a former life in favor of a new beginning or strange horizons. It favors those who rely on illusion, glamour, luck or benign trickery to make their way, and to those who are completely lost in the world due to temperament or circumstance. Students, orphans, gamblers, stage magicians, artists, con artists, models, actors, musicians, schizophrenics, "escorts" and vagrants are all susceptible to Arcadia's touch.



**Character Creation:** Generally charming and quite astute, Acanthus often come from backgrounds in which they survived by their wits, good looks or mental agility. Consequently, they frequently emphasize Social and Mental Attributes, though not necessarily in that order. Physical Attributes are often tertiary, though the most developed of these is usually Dexterity. Social Skills are almost always emphasized, and many Acanthus seem to have a fair understanding of the techniques of Larceny.

Hope is the ideal Virtue of Enchanters, for even those who don't aspire to it as their guiding principle tend to respect those who do. Sloth, on the other hand, is the Vice elders warn younger mages about, but many still seem to succumb to it.

The Danger Sense Merit (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 108) is especially appropriate for mages on the Thistle Path, and any of the Social Merits are also good picks.

**Favored Resistance Attribute:** Composure

**Ruling Arcana:** Time/Fate

**Inferior Arcanum:** Forces

**Nimbus:** "Fey." Things seem enchanted or pregnant with the possibility of magic. In some cases, a greenish glow might highlight metals or reflective surfaces, and eerie, strange singing can be heard from afar. With powerful magic, fogs and mists might rise to cloak the ground. Time condenses into the present moment; concerns about the past or future seem less pressing, less real. Everyone's heart seems to beat in synch, although the silence between beats hints of eternity. Things sometimes seem to move in slow motion, with sublime grace and beauty.

**Associations:** "Amiable anarchy" is about as good a description of Acanthus organizational principles as you're likely to get. They don't view others in terms of powerful or weak, superior or inferior or even good or evil, but rather as charming or tedious. Those who "get" them (i.e., those who can tolerate their caprice and maybe even go along with it to an extent) they get along with famously. Those who can't they would rather avoid if at all possible. Just as they dislike others telling them what to do, Acanthi would never presume to tell another mage what to do, and so most interactions between Acanthus are pleasant if somewhat shallow and transient. On occasions where such mages are obligated to work together, their interactions are often surprisingly awkward and uncomfortable.

**Legacies:** Walker in Mists, Skald, Tamer of Winds

**Concepts:** Charlatan, karmic enforcer, schizophrenic, contemporary bard, gypsy prophet, lucky ne'er-do-well

## Stereotypes

**Mastigos:** Powerful, yes, but they think in terms of masters and slaves and don't notice things that don't fit within their framework.

**Moros:** I pity them. I would no more trade my quicksilver for their lead than I would trade a daydream for a nightmare.

**Obrimos:** So rigid, and in kind of a pushy, arrogant way, too.

**Thyrsus:** A little rough around the edges perhaps, and, yes, many of them are mad as hatters, but they're good allies most of the time.

***

**Vampires:** Dangerous without a doubt, but not always so clever as they like to think they are.

**Werewolves:** Irrational beasts, they are best avoided, because once they get angry there's no reasoning with them.

**Sleepers:** How they endure such a tedious, banal existence is beyond me.




*The meaning of the cards is clear —*
*you will suffer a tragedy soon.*
*There is, however,*
*someone who can avert your fate.*
*For a price, of course. . . .*

# Mastigos

**Warlocks on the Path of Scourging,**
**Scions of the Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet in the Realm of Pandemonium,**
**Kingdom of Nightmares and Abode of Demons**

Those Awakening to the alluring nightmare of the Path of Scourging are fated to be among the least trusted mages in existence. Their connection to the Kingdom of Nightmares bestows upon them a creeping, seductive urge toward manipulation and subversion. Despite the constant temptation they experience, however, they remain in full control of how they express that urge. While many Mastigos grow into their bad reputation over time, many take pains to use their extraordinary talents in ways that ultimately serve the common good. Some see themselves as serving a Darwinian role. By honing in on others' flaws, they prod people to be more self-aware of their weaknesses and so work to shore them up. Although this seems rather ignoble to some, many Awakened judge things more on their evolutionary results rather than on a merely ethical basis. When the end goal is ascension to the Supernal World, one's weaknesses can prove to be fatal. It's better to have a friend in the role of catechist than an enemy.



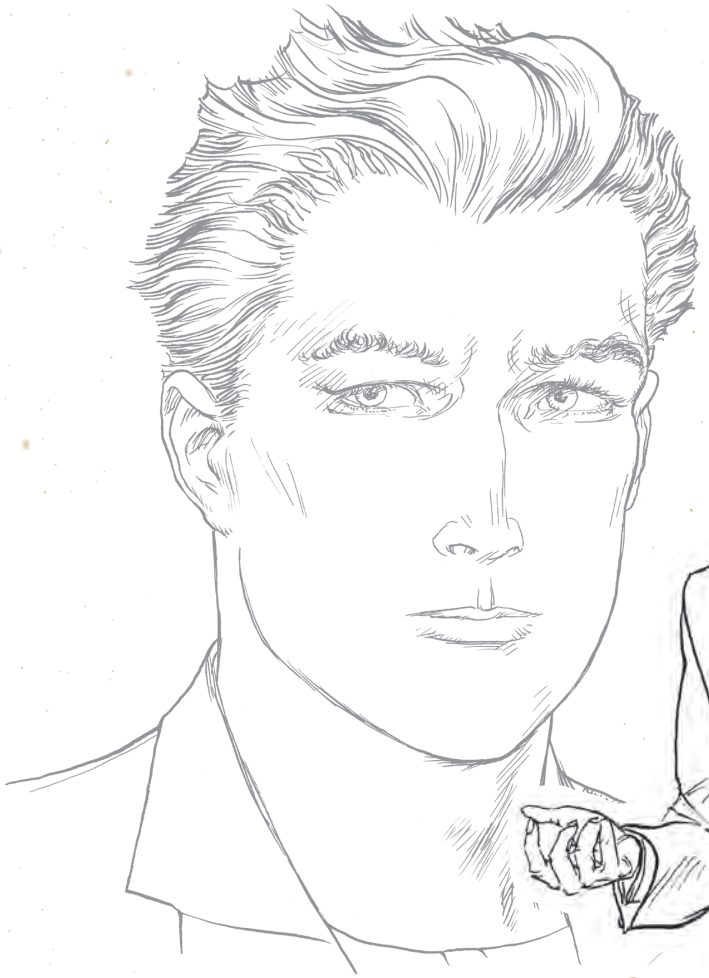
One of the problems Mastigos frequently encounter in the earliest stages of the Path is the impression that they are surrounded by people hiding secrets. Certainly, the Mind Arcanum *does* leave them with the sensation of being surrounded by other presences, all of whom have their own secrets. This sometimes makes Mastigos suspicious and leaves them with a proclivity for spying and manipulation that serves them in good stead — but for which their reputations suffer.

Mastigos acknowledge none but themselves as masters. They eschew any code of behavior that they did not establish for themselves. In some cases, this results in hyper-strict codes of conduct that one would expect more from an ascetic monk than from a Warlock, but others on the Path of Scourging use their particular brand of nihilism as an excuse to indulge in any behavior that feels good — regardless of the consequences to themselves or others. Many associate them with the tarot card of "The Devil," a powerful will unfettered by moral concerns.

Magically, the hallmark of the Mastigos is subtlety. Their magic is rarely flashy or blatant, and many on this Path are acutely uncomfortable using any kind of obvious magic.

Many other mages assume that all Mastigos are inherently corrupt, but this conflates Warlocks with the lowest applications of their philosophies. It is true that a mortal who is already inclined toward mayhem can make the most of that inclination once he Awakens as a Mastigos, but it is just as true that an inherently beneficent mage can exert his will for the common good with equal facility.

**Orders:** Due to both its attitude toward power and the Arcane Skills it teaches, the Silver Ladder is the favored order of mages on the Path of Scourging. Nearly as favored are the Guardians of the Veil, whose subtle ways and Arcane Skills resonate agreeably with the Mastigos Path. Coming in



a distant third and fourth, respectively, are the Mysterium and the Free Council. The Adamantine Arrow is always looking for more Mastigos due to their extraordinary reconnaissance abilities.

**Appearance:** More often than not, Mastigos are flawlessly groomed and fashionably dressed. They often make excellent first impressions, as they pay much attention to small rituals of self-discipline — proper etiquette, good grooming — which they feel help them master themselves in ways that will later help them master others.

**Sanctums:** Like rats, roaches or termites, Mastigos can live nearly anywhere and never be detected. They tend to blend into their surroundings and prefer urban settings to isolated sanctums. A comfortable apartment in a large building where they can be anonymous from their neighbors is ideal for a Mastigos.

**Background:** The Warlock Awakening falls most commonly on those who are devout individualists. They make their own way regardless of what others may say about them. They are often rebels, innovators, egotists and some seem to be inherently prone to deception, seduction or manipulation to get what they want. Many on the Path of Scourging began as lawyers, seducers, inventors, porn stars, liars, iconoclasts, sociopaths, mental-health professionals, writers, televangelists and con men.

**Character Creation:** Mastigos are subtle and fond of reaching their goals through indirect means. Given their focus on Mental and Social Attributes, Physical Attributes are almost always tertiary. Those on the Path of Scourging need a great amount of Willpower.

Mastigos often live or die by their Social Skills, so those are frequently emphasized, although Mental Skills come in a close second. Larceny and Stealth are common Physical Skills.

Mastigos view Fortitude as an ideal Virtue, even if not all of them practice it. They warn one another of Lust, but that Vice still seems to be endemic to the Path.

**Favored Resistance Attribute:** Resolve

**Ruling Arcana:** Space/Mind

**Inferior Arcanum:** Matter

**Nimbus:** "Nightmarish." Depth perception takes on new clarity, and it might seem that objects are seen from all sides in a single glance, or that things seem impossibly far away, beyond reach. Objects seem limned by an unseen flame, and exotic fragrances hover at the edge of awareness. With powerful magic, distant screams or howls of rage might sometimes be heard.

**Associations:** Mages on the Path of Scourging are extraordinarily circumspect about with whom they associate. They tend to be somewhat paranoid, particularly when dealing with others on their own Path (they know their kind too well to trust them fully). Their relatively mobile lifestyles — enabled by the Space Arcanum — also tend to undermine any sort of stable

organization or affiliation. Consequently, alliances between Mastigos are frequently as brief as possible. What interactions they have during that time tend to be cold and rigorously formal even as they strive behind the scenes to get the other at a disadvantage.

The most enduring associations many Mastigos form are those with Acolytes (or other mages) whose minds they have conditioned into thralldom.

On occasion, Mastigos serving the same master (or sharing an Acolyte) are obligated to work together for extended periods of time. Under such circumstances their interactions depend entirely on the mages involved and don't draw on any pre-existing organizational framework.

**Legacies:** Subtle One, Clavicularius, Sphinx

**Concepts:** Creepy infernalist, itinerant demon slayer, struggling antihero, unseen assassin, haunter-of-nightmares, *realpolitik* diplomat, carnival dream interpreter

## Stereotypes

**Acanthus:** Inveterate liars, cheats and sneaks, every last one of them — and blessed with good fortune to boot. Enviable.

**Moros:** It's easy to laugh at their overdeveloped sense of drama, but never, ever underestimate a mage who can command both the dead and the stones beneath your feet.

**Obrimos:** Insufferable moralists. Unfortunately, they have enough raw firepower that we can't just ignore them.

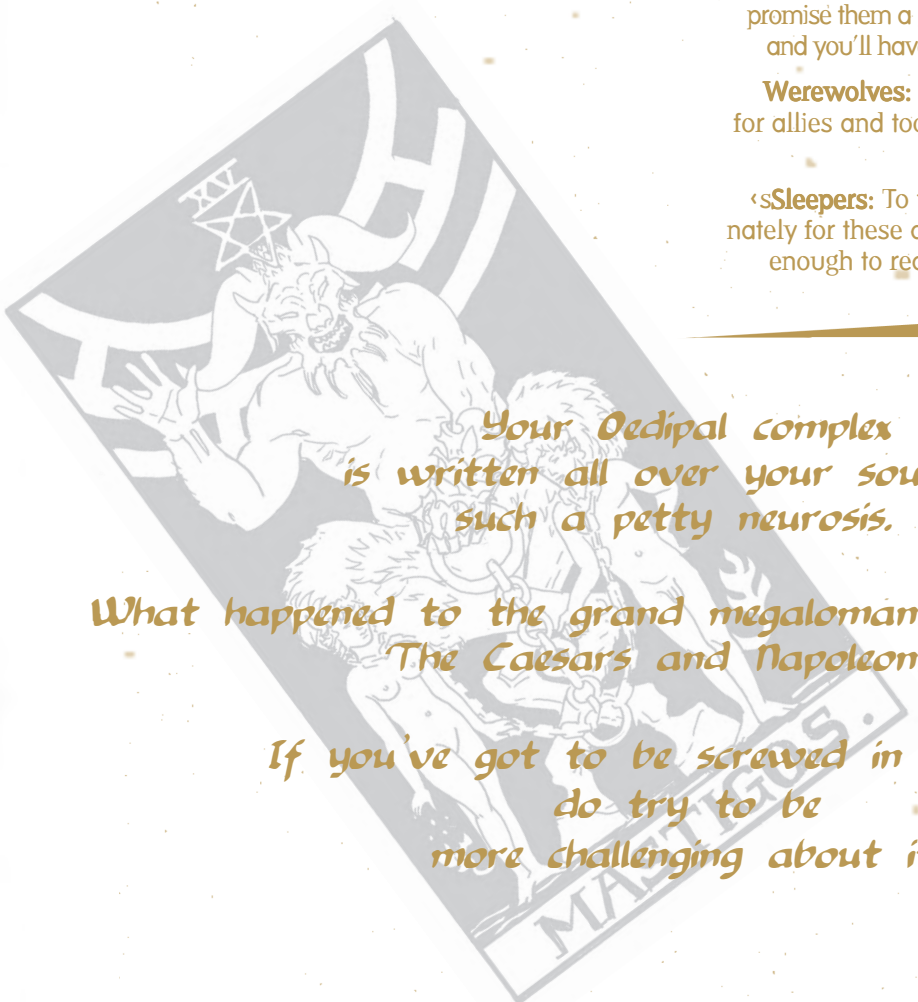
**Thyrsus:** Noble savages? I think not.

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**Vampires:** Excellent tools if you can distract them from their nightly drama pageant. Stroke their egos, promise them a glorious triumph over their peers, and you'll have them competing to serve you.

**Werewolves:** Too blatant for tools, too angry for allies and too powerful for enemies. They're best avoided.

**Sleepers:** To the victor go the spoils. Unfortunately for these dullards, they're not even aware enough to realize that they *are* the spoils.




*Your Oedipal complex*
*is written all over your soul —*
*such a petty neurosis.*

*What happened to the grand megalomanias of yesteryear?*
*The Caesars and Napoleons?*

*If you've got to be screwed in the head,*
*do try to be*
*more challenging about it.*

# MOROS

Necromancers on the Path of Doom,
Scions of the Watchtower of the Lead Coin in the Realm of Stygia,
Kingdom of Crypts and Abode of Shades

Many on the Path of Doom Awaken after a near-death experience, with the violence of their close call and their brief trip to the lands of the dead opening their eyes to the existence of magic. These mages often describe their Awakening as hearing the noise of the world die away and being wrapped in a shroud of tranquility. It is this shroud that allows them to maintain their composure once they gain the capacity to hear the shrieks and pleas of the restless dead.

More than anything else, the Moros Path is concerned with transition and transformation. Its magics focus on the transformative edge where life becomes death, lead becomes gold and ignorance blossoms into understanding. Necromancers are fascinated by the edges of objects, places and states of being, where shore becomes sea, where coal becomes diamond and where the land of the living segues into the land of the dead. It is little wonder that they remind others of the tarot card of "Death," a card of transitions.

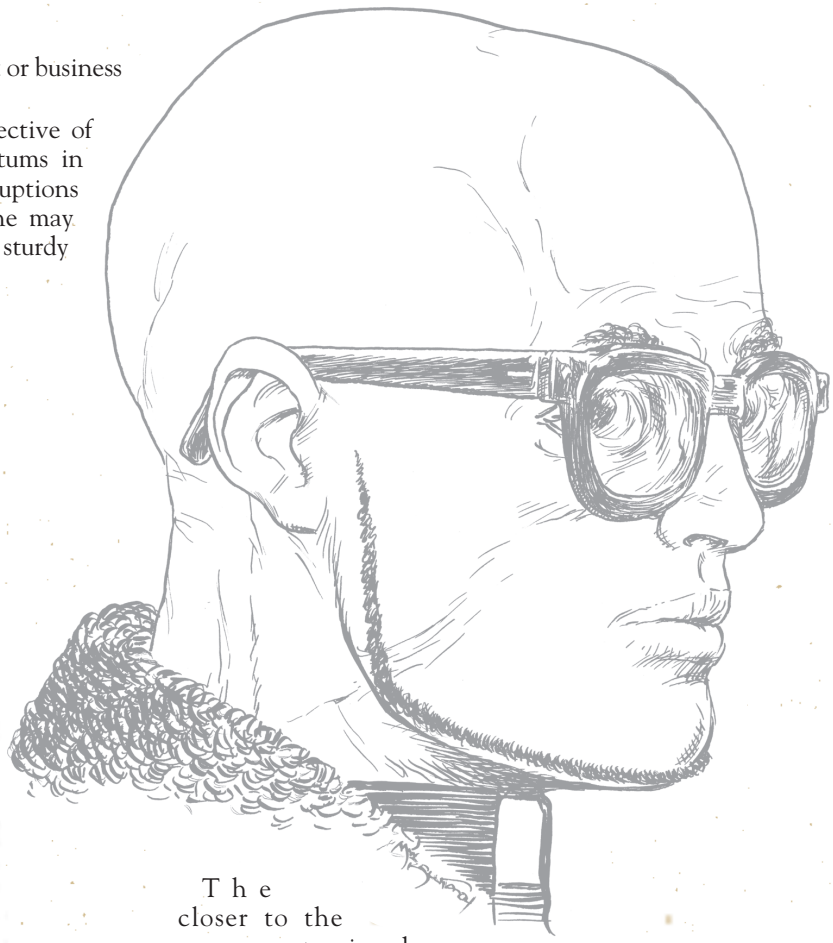
Necromancers are often hypersensitive to the brevity of life and understand just how little time they have to gain the transformative secrets they crave. They often become obsessive about their studies, sleeping only a few hours each night to leave enough time for their research. Moros mages who have mastered the basic arts of alchemy are free from the quotidian financial worries that plague some other mages, as they can create fortunes in gold and gems with only a modicum of effort.

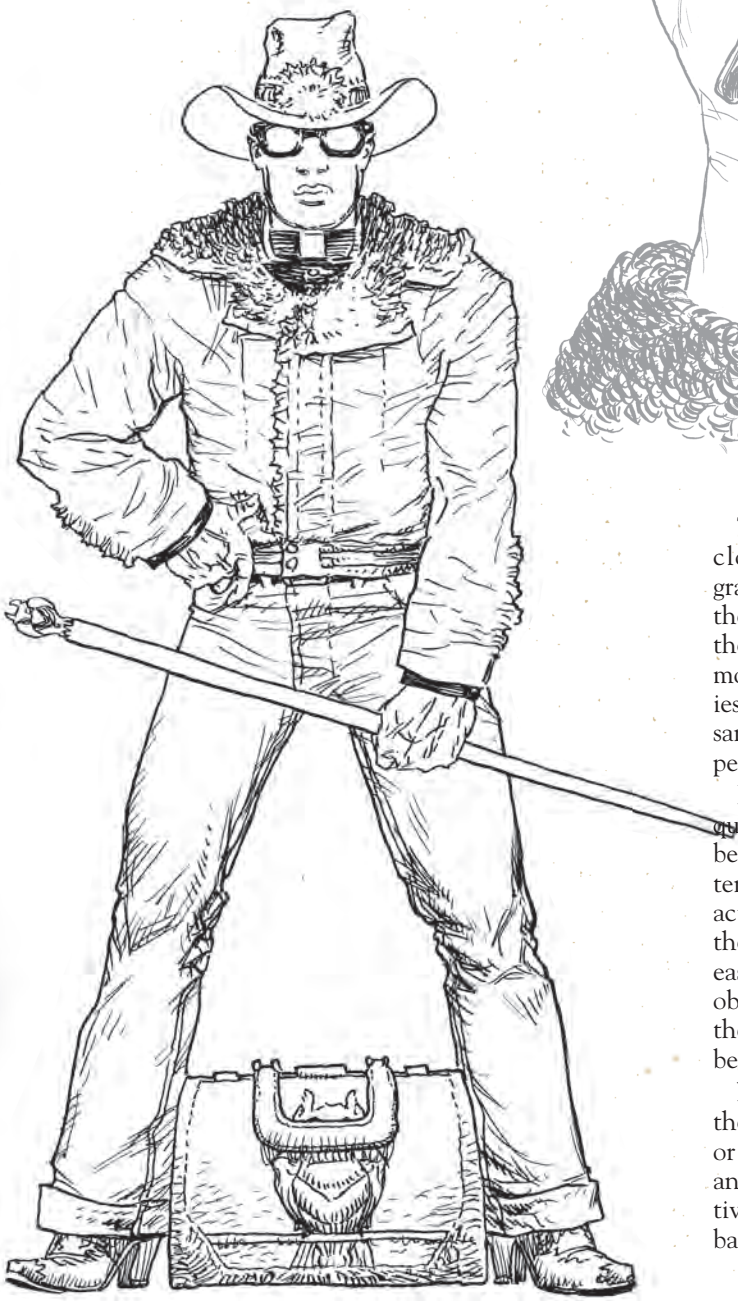
**Orders:** Moros join orders primarily to facilitate their own understanding. The orders that offer them the most, in terms of Arcane Skills and like-minded companionship, are the Guardians of the Veil and the Mysterium. Their work with the latter in particular has led to the discovery of some remarkable items of power, thanks to knowledge they've garnered from the dead. Otherwise, they join the Adamantine Arrow or Silver Ladder for similar reasons as any mage — to hone fighting prowess or to rise to power.

**Appearance:** Moros don't actually age faster than their peers, but they sometimes *seem* older than they really are, a side effect of their entropic magic. Enhancing this image is the fact that they take most matters *very* seriously (although some are known for their gallows humor). As a general rule, Moros dress themselves in whatever colors their culture deems appropriate for mourning. In Asia, for example, they dress entirely in white, while in most Western countries they prefer vestments of somber black. That said, some on the Path of Doom take great delight in going against

expectation and wearing perfectly normal street or business clothes as a form of going incognito.

**Sanctums:** Moros often grow insanely protective of their privacy. They may establish their sanctums in remote locations to prevent intrusions or interruptions to their studies. If a mage has the money, she may surround herself with a buffer of empty land and a sturdy fence.





The closer to the grave a sanctum is and the more saturated it is with the energies of death and entropy, the more comfortable its Moros owner is. Proximity to cemeteries or sites of mass death is almost obligatory for a Moros sanctum. Others prefer more material palaces, such as lavish penthouses or manors.

Moros prefer dim lighting, cool temperatures and absolute quiet in their sanctums, thereby minimizing the difference between their homes and the tomb. Moros sanctums also tend to be beautiful and richly decorated as a way of counteracting the sense of isolation some Necromancers feel. With their talent for alchemy, those on the Path of Doom can easily use precious metals and gems as common household objects. Just as Pluto's kingdom was the realm of the dead *and* the realm of riches, so do many Moros make their abodes into beautiful, if macabre, treasure troves.

**Background:** In one way or another, mages Awakening to the Path of Doom have an uncommon connection to death or the dead. It is not unusual for soldiers, doctors, morticians and serial killers to Awaken on the Path of Doom. Alternatively, this Path also calls out to the greedy, including bankers, industrialists and well-connected plutocrats.

**Character Creation:** Mental Attributes are almost always primary for Moros. As scholars of death and the dead, the mind is more crucial to their work than anything else. Like anyone fascinated with mortality, Moros often find themselves socially ostracized, so it's not uncommon for Social Attributes to be tertiary. With regard to Physical Attributes, Stamina tends to be high.

Mental Skills are heavily favored by those on the Path of Doom, especially Academics, Medicine, Occult and Science. Other popular Skills are Stealth and Intimidation.

Good judgment is highly prized by Moros, so they often strive to master the Virtue of Prudence. The vice with which they are most concerned is Pride, which can lead a Necromancer to a terrible end.

**Favored Resistance Attribute:** Composure

**Ruling Arcana:** Matter/Death

**Inferior Arcanum:** Spirit

**Nimbus:** "Haunting." Onlookers think they see vague and blurry figures. Shadows grow deeper or seem to reach out to an onlooker, and objects look decayed or rotted. With powerful magic, they might even hear whispers. Corpses might twitch or seem to moan.

**Associations:** Necromancers aren't necessarily organized, but they are surprisingly social with one another (in part because they are often ostracized by other mages). Behind this social urge is a driving curiosity about what others on the Path of Doom discover in their research, though some of this intrigue stems from their knowledge that connection with others becomes much harder once one has passed across the shroud.

**Legacies:** Uncrowned King, Bokor, Tamer of Earth

**Concepts:** Thanatologist, speaker for the dead, modern alchemist, parapsychologist, elite assassin, leader of a ghostly spy ring, dangerous death cultist, euthanasia activist, inquisitive vivisectionist

## Stereotypes

**Acanthus:** If they could actually focus on a problem long enough to get something done they would be dangerous.

**Mastigos:** Undisciplined libertines and underhanded manipulators, they often seem to hold the entire world in contempt.

**Obrimos:** Fascists, zealots and martinets without peer. They also happen to have a regrettable talent for calling down the wrath of God.

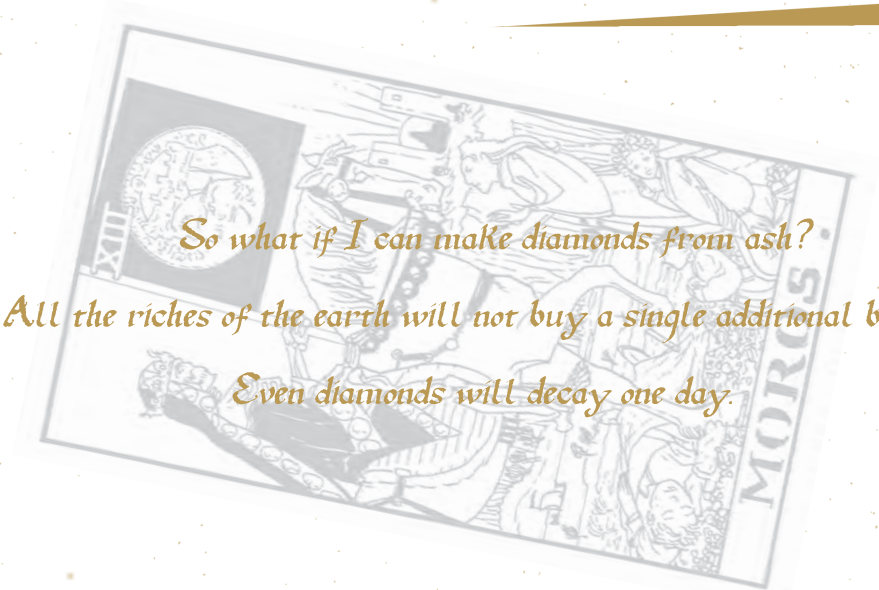
**Thyrsus:** They fidget too much and seem to have traded in their social graces for preternatural physicality.

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**Vampires:** Cursed with power that outstrips their wisdom, and with hunger that outstrips their self-control, the undead should be pitied and feared in equal measure. Above all, they should be studied.

**Werewolves:** Savages who do not truly understand the mysteries of Death as well as we do, but who inflict it with little thought and less effort.

**Sleepers:** If they could stop fearing Death just long enough to understand and welcome it, Awakening would be just a breath away.




*So what if I can make diamonds from ash?*

*All the riches of the earth will not buy a single additional breath.*

*Even diamonds will decay one day.*

# Obrimos

Theurgists on the Path of the Mighty,
Scions of the Watchtower of the Golden Key in the Realm of the Aether,
Kingdom of the Celestial Spheres and Abode of Angels

Mages who Awaken with a connection to the Kingdom of the Celestial Spheres often recall their Awakening as being struck by divine lightning and becoming the thunder. With no warning and no clear understanding of why, they are overcome with the absolute certainty that they are the champions of the Divine — though how they define "the Divine" seems to vary drastically. Some feel the Divine to be a patriarchal god of judgment. Others sense the Divine as a manifestation of immanent Nature, while still others feel it to be an ongoing sentient process of self-aware coincidence. Whatever they feel the Divine to be — and many take years trying to discern just what force it is they serve — the Mighty all agree that they were Awakened to serve as Its warriors.

Ultimately, no particular faith unites mages on the Path of the Mighty. It is their shared conviction in doing the right thing, fighting the good fight and making the will of the Divine manifest on Earth (and elsewhere). Obrimos are committed to doing what they see as just and right for the greater good. As they see it, the world has lost its way, and they have been charged with putting it back on track — by any means necessary. Others associate them with the tarot card of "Strength," wielding an indomitable will with unwavering purpose.

This sense of divine right gives the Obrimos a confidence that is hard to shake. They suffer from self-doubt less than most others and frequently suffer from a rather ironic case of hubris. An Obrimos mage is aware that the world is made of energy and magic, and he's been given the right to wield it. Lacking any direct communiqué from a divine being, many come to the conclusion that their own wills *are* the divine will. What they say goes, even if it conflicts with what another mage says — even another Obrimos.

**Orders:** The Adamantine Arrow is ideal for Obrimos. It is the most warlike of the orders and Theurges' talents (not to mention temperaments) are ideally suited to waging war. Many Obrimos (those who appreciate the security of a well-defined hierarchy) also find themselves drawn to the Silver Ladder.

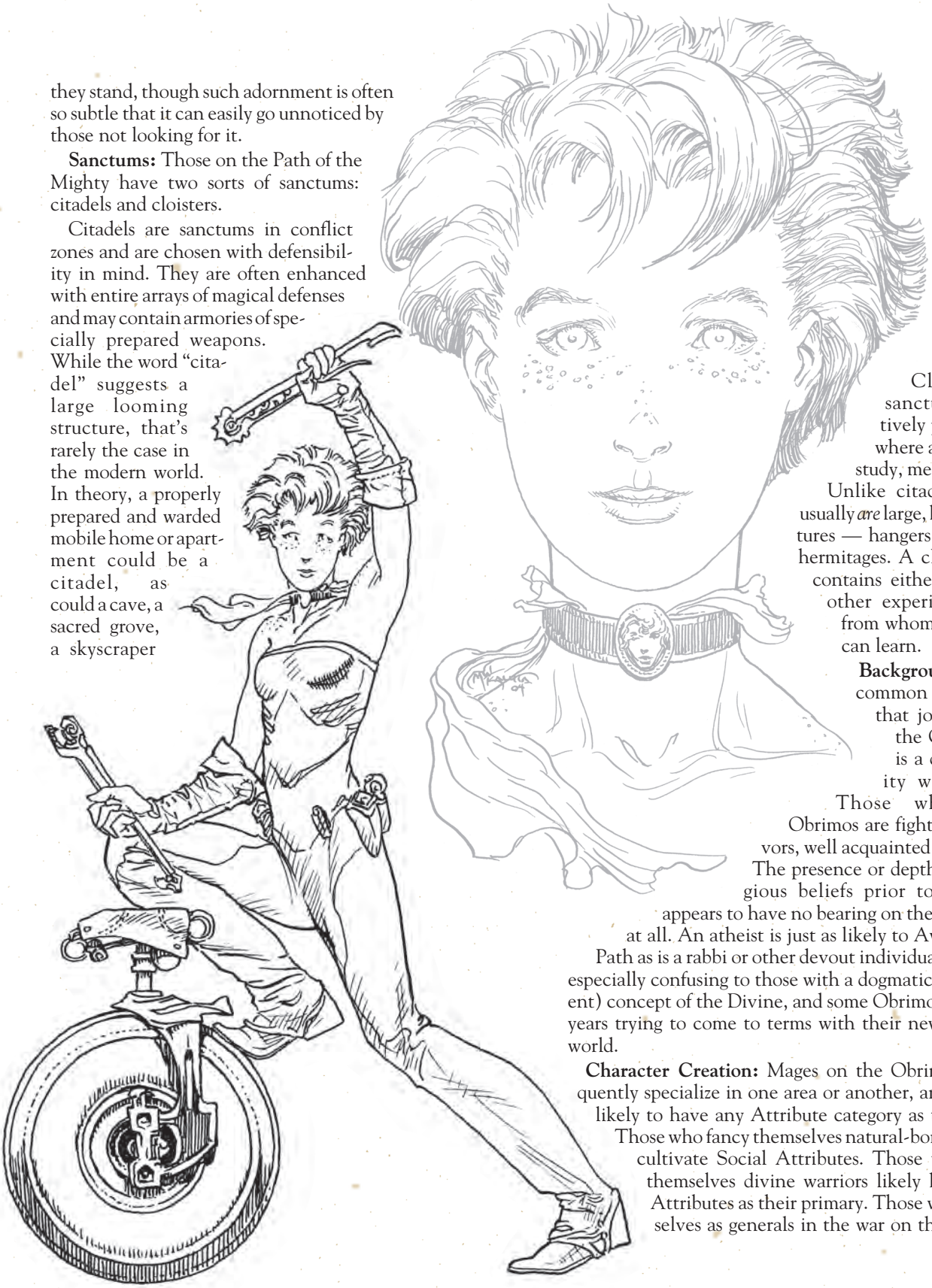
Some Obrimos join the Free Council because they seek to bring their Forces magic into the present with the power of science. Others join the Guardians of the Veil to act as the high-powered defenders of the Mysteries. Those who join the Mysterium usually do so in order to seek out lore that will make them better artificers or to find material components for some manner of imbued weapon they intend to build.

**Appearance:** Obrimos tend to maintain well-groomed appearances. Their preferred clothing is usually just loose enough to grant freedom of motion without getting in the way. Those working with other mages may wear some form of signifier of office or rank to show where

they stand, though such adornment is often so subtle that it can easily go unnoticed by those not looking for it.

**Sanctums:** Those on the Path of the Mighty have two sorts of sanctums: citadels and cloisters.

Citadels are sanctums in conflict zones and are chosen with defensibility in mind. They are often enhanced with entire arrays of magical defenses and may contain armories of specially prepared weapons. While the word "citadel" suggests a large looming structure, that's rarely the case in the modern world. In theory, a properly prepared and warded mobile home or apartment could be a citadel, as could a cave, a sacred grove, a skyscraper or a private jet.



Cloisters are sanctums in relatively peaceful areas where a mage goes to study, meditate or pray. Unlike citadels, cloisters usually *are* large, looming structures — hangers, monasteries, hermitages. A cloister usually contains either a library or other experienced mages from whom the Obrimos can learn.

**Background:** The only common denominator that joins mages on the Obrimos Path is a deep familiarity with conflict. Those who become Obrimos are fighters and survivors, well acquainted with struggle. The presence or depth of their religious beliefs prior to Awakening appears to have no bearing on their Awakening at all. An atheist is just as likely to Awaken on this Path as is a rabbi or other devout individual. This can be especially confusing to those with a dogmatic (or nonexistent) concept of the Divine, and some Obrimos spend many years trying to come to terms with their new roles in the world.

**Character Creation:** Mages on the Obrimos Path frequently specialize in one area or another, and are equally likely to have any Attribute category as their primary. Those who fancy themselves natural-born leaders may cultivate Social Attributes. Those who envision themselves divine warriors likely have Physical Attributes as their primary. Those who see themselves as generals in the war on the enemy may

focus on Mental Attributes and approach the struggle from a strategic or scholarly perspective.

Obrimos often begin with or accrue very high Willpower scores, a reflection of the robust self-confidence possessed by these agents of the Divine.

The mages of the Golden Key hold up Justice as their ideal Virtue. The most disavowed (yet insidiously common) Vice is Pride.

**Favored Resistance Attribute:** Resolve

**Ruling Arcana:** Forces/Prime

**Inferior Arcanum:** Death

**Nimbus:** "Enlightening." Things become self-luminous, seeming to glow from within, and the air becomes charged with energy, accompanied by the smell of burning ozone or unseen smoke. Everything seems to be preordained, divinely chosen. With powerful magic, a distant choir might be heard.

**Associations:** Obrimos have a thing for hierarchy. If there are two in a room, they need to determine who outranks whom. If several Obrimos work together, they all want an organizational chart to show who falls where in the chain of command and who is responsible for what. A single Obrimos may wear many hats, depending on how many groups with which he works.

**Legacies:** Perfected Adept, Thrice-Great, Tamer of Fire

**Concepts:** Soldier of God, terrorist, martial artist, hyper-disciplined scholar of philology, Awakened cop, defender of the weak, contemporary inquisitor, enforcer, neighborhood hero, uncompromising zealot, monster hunter

## Stereotypes

**Acanthus:** Their astonishing magical talents are undermined and wasted by their absolute refusal to commit to a single cause.

**Mastigos:** Selfish and amoral, they embody the very worst of the Awakened, valuing their own power and pleasure over doing the right thing.

**Moros:** At their very best they are desecrators of the dead. At their worst they are unholy predators on society.

**Thyrsus:** Closer to barbarians than any Awakened individual has a right to be, many are still noble individuals and reliable comrades in arms.

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**Vampires:** These loathsome creatures are reviled by every culture that has ever suffered their depredations. They have no legitimate place in the world. They must be destroyed at every opportunity.

**Werewolves:** It's hard enough for humans to act on their better nature. How much harder must it be for these savage creatures?

**Sleepers:** When you let the light shine through you, Sleepers can tell, and it makes them shift restlessly in their Sleep. Shine brighter and who knows what could happen?




*You resist me?*

*I, who have walked through fire without being burned?*

*I see through your wards and unravel them with a word.*

*Do not dare defy me.*

# THYRSUS

**Shamans on the Path of Ecstasy,**
**Scions of the Watchtower of the Stone Book in the Realm of the Primal Wild,**
**Kingdom of Totems and Abode of Beasts**

Mages who Awaken with a link to the Realm of the Primal Wild tap directly into the primordial forces of vitality that drive creation. Their hearts beat with the pulse of the world, and they are moved by a passion and vigor that sets them apart from their Awakened peers.

Many Thyrsus are already in unusually good health when they Awaken, while others are sick or injured and Awaken in the course of their fevered dreams. Once they gain sufficient mastery of the Life Arcanum, many reach a level of physical fitness and sheer hardiness that few besides Olympic-level athletes could ever hope to attain. Many of the most physically powerful of the Awakened travel the Thyrsus Path.

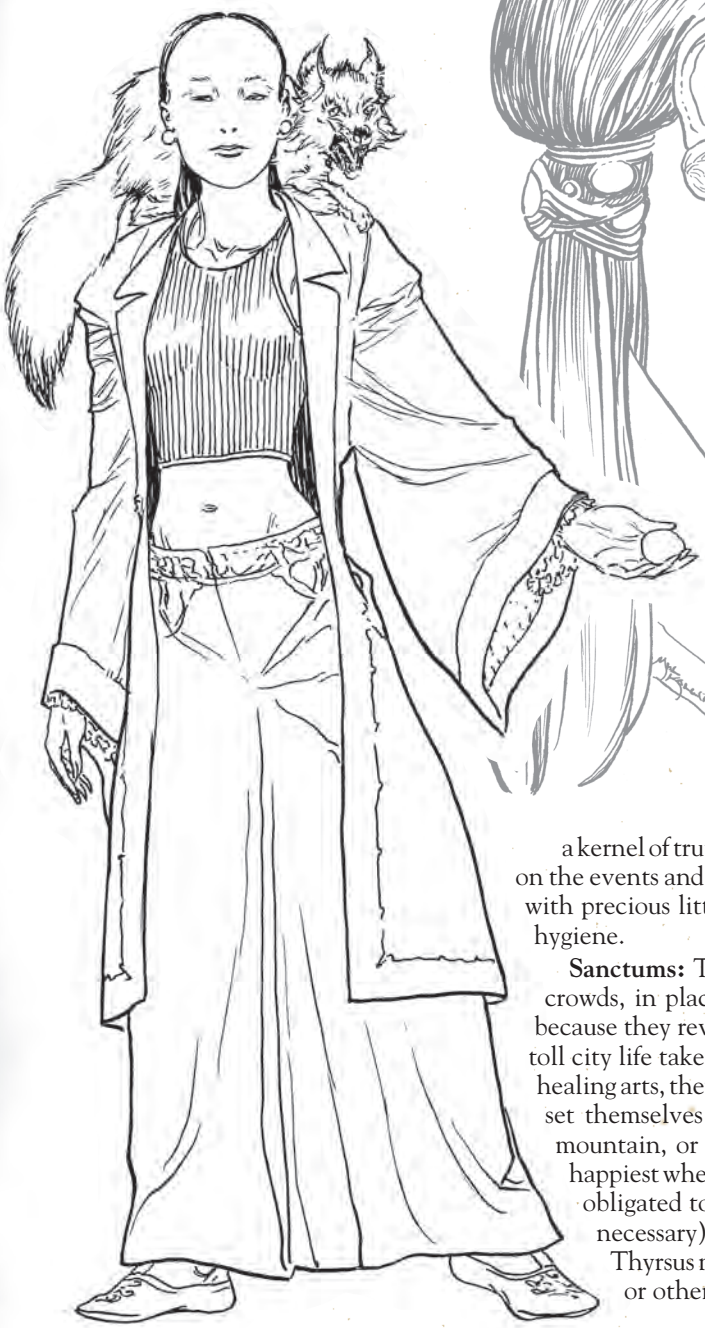
Shamans' connection to the Realm of the Primal Wild is not entirely beneficial. It often gives them an intensity that others find disturbing. Upon Awakening, Thyrsus gain insights into the mysteries of life and the spirit world that almost invariably shift the focus of their lives to a drastic degree. They may come across as somewhat distracted or impatient with those who possess less vitality and drive than they. Some may seem antisocial or vaguely feral. Emphasizing this is the fact that mages on the Thyrsus Path commonly have more energy than their peers, and they invest vast wellsprings of passion into everything they do. Those they love, they love with an incandescent passion. Those they hate, they despise with a terrifying intensity. They pursue their goals with a fervor that would lay low lesser mortals (or mages, for that matter), and others sometimes see them as obsessed because of it. In the grip of their passions, Thyrsus may seem positively amoral, like forces of nature in their own right, more akin to animals or spirits in human guise than mortal men and women. They may seem callous or crude at times, discussing matters of life and death almost flippantly, but then that's hard to avoid given their perspective. Life and death follow each other in an eternal cycle. Calling one "good" and the other "bad" is ludicrous to these amoral mages.

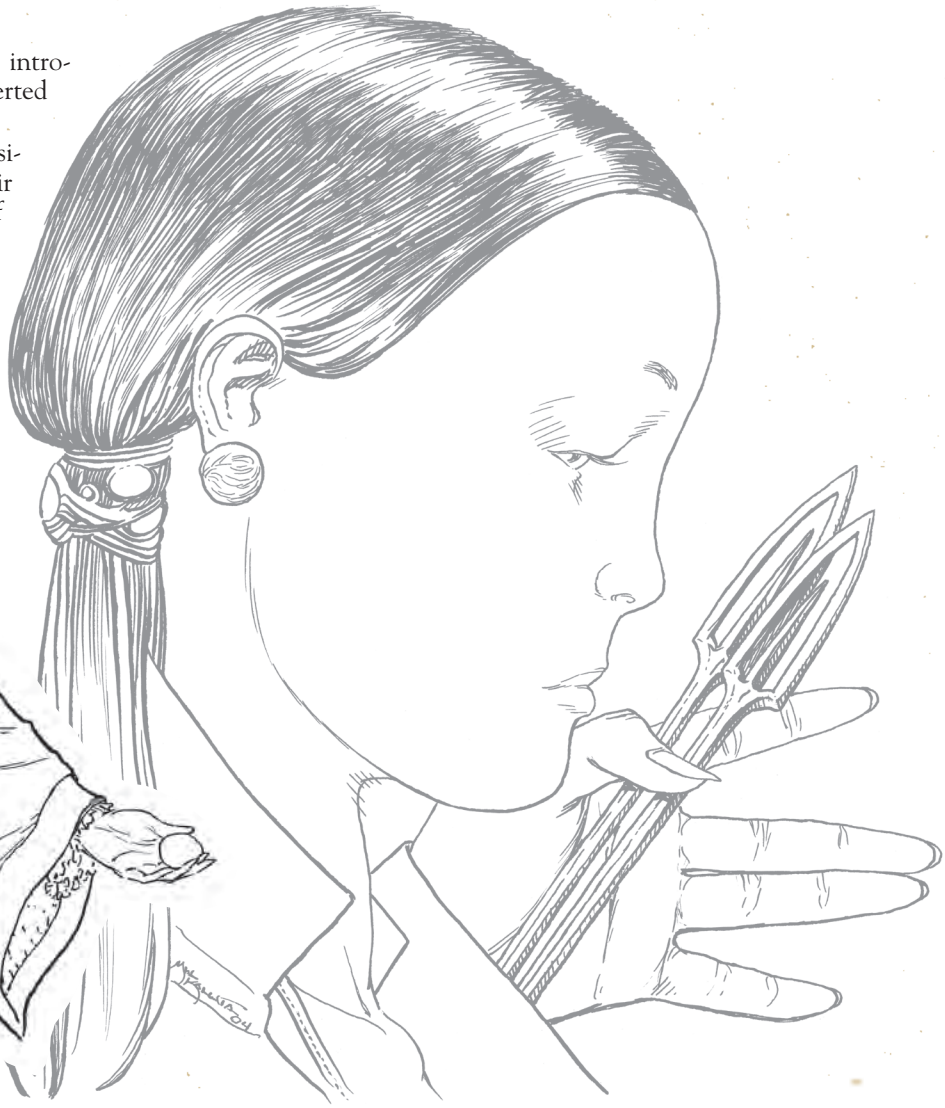
To others, they seem like the embodiment of the tarot card "The Moon," with their animal passions and keen instincts.

**Orders:** Despite Thyrsus' pronounced eccentricities, all orders covet them as members. The world of the Awakened is dangerous, and the presence of mages who can heal the body as well as the soul can mean the difference between success and annihilation for a cabal. That said, mages on the Thyrsus Path tend to join the Adamantine Arrow and the Mysterium with notable frequency—the former because they are most needed by the Arrow's combative mages (and because they're relatively combat-hardy themselves) and the latter due to its emphasis on survival and lore. Of course, Thyrsus are found among the Guardians of the Veil and the Silver Ladder as well. The

former order tends to attract the more introverted while the latter lures the extroverted among primordial mages.

**Appearance:** Thyrsus are frequently physically attractive due to applications of their own magic, but there is a stereotype of Shamans as unkempt if not downright dirty. As with many stereotypes, there is a kernel of truth to this. Living in the wild and focusing on the events and denizens of the Shadow as they often do leaves these sorcerers with precious little time or energy to spend on vanity, fashion or, frequently, hygiene.





**Sanctums:** Thyrsus prefer to establish their sanctums far from maddening crowds, in places where they can live close to nature. They do so not just because they revel in the natural world, but because they see quite clearly the toll city life takes on the human body and soul. With a natural affinity for the healing arts, they are less dependent on civilization than most others. They may set themselves up in a cabin beside an oak grove, a cave in the side of a mountain, or in an adobe hut on the edge of a desert. Thyrsus mages are happiest when they're far from civilization. On those occasions when they're obligated to live in a city, they usually seek out a house (or apartment if necessary) near a park, forest preserve or similar green space. Some Thyrsus may be most concerned with being near the ocean or a large lake or other natural waterway.

**Background:** Few mages Awaken to the Thyrsus Path who do not already possess a strong connection to life and/or the spiritual world. They are often those who are intimately familiar with the pulse of nature's cycles. Doctors, hunters, midwives, farmers and sailors may Awaken when their professions grant them insights into the world of spirits or the flow of life force.

Children who Awaken become Thyrsus in disproportionate numbers, but even adults on this Path often possess a degree of childlike enthusiasm and innocence that seems out of place in those capable of bending reality to their wishes.

**Character Creation:** Those traveling the Thyrsus Path are unusually physical for mages. They frequently possess a remarkable hardiness, strength or quickness that lets them survive away from civilization for long periods of time. Physical Attributes are often primary, although the Path possesses its fair share of scholars. Social Attributes are often tertiary, although those mages who deal often with spirits may carefully cultivate the Social traits and protocols necessary to interact with otherworldly beings.

While Thyrsus vary a great deal in Skills, there are three that they favor most: Crafts, Survival and Animal Ken, all of which make it easier to deal with their lives of self-imposed exile.

Many (but by no means all) Thyrsus mages uphold Charity as their ideal Virtue, because life itself is generous, always giving. Their Vice is most commonly Gluttony, for they find it hard to let go of what they so passionately embrace.

Where Merits are concerned, Thyrsus are far more likely to have the Familiar Merit than mages of any other Path.

**Favored Resistance Attribute:** Composure

**Ruling Arcana:** Life/Spirit

**Inferior Arcanum:** Mind

**Nimbus:** "Vibrant." Adjacent onlookers feel a "runner's high" as their blood beats faster, their hearts feeling strong. The hairs on the napes of their necks rise, sending a thrill down the spine. Onlookers see movement out of the corner of their eyes, or think they see shapes in random patterns, such as faces peering at them from the abstract patterns on wallpaper. With powerful magic, they might even hear growls, whines or insect buzzing coming from inanimate objects such as lamps, staplers or cars.

**Associations:** Thyrsus can be the most solitary of mages, establishing themselves far from the civilized world. Consequently, they are the least organized of the Paths. When Thyrsus do work together, they are strong believers in a strict meritocracy. Those who can and do perform strong magic receive more responsibility and respect. Beyond that, the less hierarchical the relationships between people, the better.

**Legacies:** Shapeshifter, Dreamspeaker, Tamer of Rivers

**Concepts:** Native American healer, visionary lunatic, berserker, enlightened veterinarian, herbalist, witch, eco-saboteur

## Stereotypes

**Acanthus:** While we are very much a part *of* this world, the Arcadians seem to be very much apart *from* it, and I have trouble trusting them because of it.

**Mastigos:** Most of them seem to be half a step away from being psychopaths. The rest have already crossed that threshold.

**Moros:** We're exactly the same, but with nothing in common. They are us turned inside out. Where we make light, they cast shadows, and where we make noise, they produce echoes.

**Obrimos:** They're never content to let things unfold organically. Indeed, they insist on ordering and reordering *everything* until it suits their narrow view of the world. Frankly, they get on my nerves.

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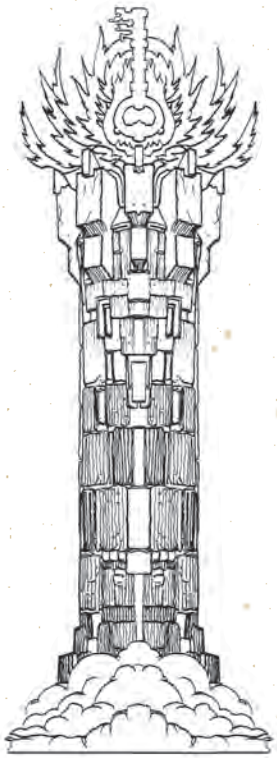
**Vampires:** Twisted husks and travesties of humanity left behind when true life and potential have fled.

**Werewolves:** These beasts are like us, only far more violent and far less enlightened.

**Sleepers:** They've picked a fight with Nature and refuse to back down, regardless of the cost to both sides.

*Remember those old jungle movies where*
*the explorers would hear ominous drums in the distance?*
*Someone was hunting them.*
*Listen now. Hear the drums? What hunts you?*

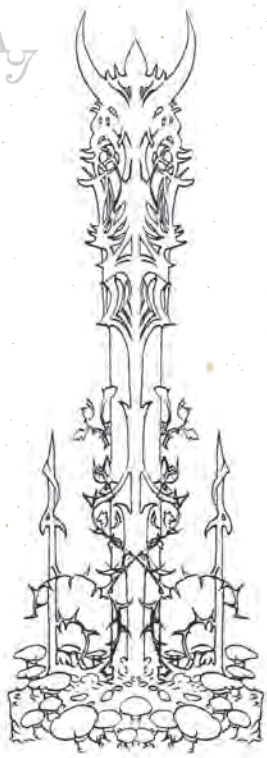


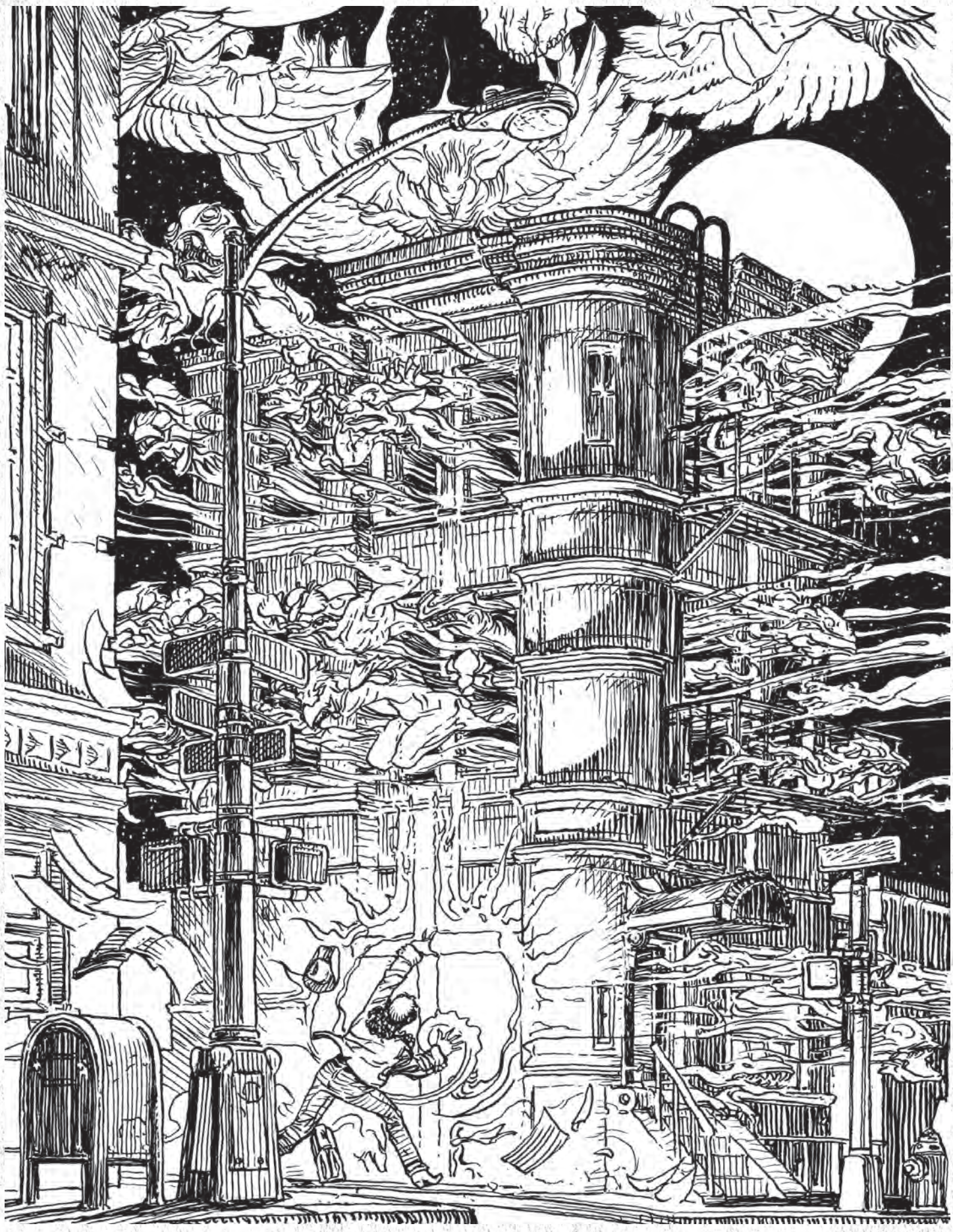












# CHAPTER THREE: MAGIC

CHAPTER THREE

*Rafael stared at the old brownstone. It looked normal, at least to mundane eyes. To his Second Sight, however, it roiled with activity. Eyes blinked from the dark windows and spine-grating chattering sounds echoed from every door. His contacts had guessed correctly: the place was haunted, but not by ghosts. These were spirits of terror and malediction, drawn to the place by… what? What fetid force pulsed within, calling the spirits like moths to a flame?*

*He paced around the building, getting its measure, not just geographically but spiritually. He would have to cast his spell's net wide, and that would require energy and time. Luckily, the neighborhood was deserted at that hour. The few reconstructed lofts across the street were empty, their residents probably uptown at gallery openings or expensive restaurants. Without further delay, Brother Owl, as he was known in the Awakened world, began work.*

*He stood on the corner before the building and pulled out three sticks of incense, a rare scent gathered by a friend from South America. He lit the sticks and placed them upright in the cracks of the sidewalk. He whispered to himself in a language that, if anybody had been around to hear it, would have sounded like utter nonsense. To him, it was the only tongue that could accurately describe the invisible threads all around him, threads which he now tugged and worried.*

*After an hour of this slow work, he was ready. The Imago of the spell was crystal-clear in his mind. He released his will and it impacted the building like an earthquake. With a subsonic rumble and thudding explosion within the depths, the building's windows and doors flew open. Spirits flooded out, screeching and wailing, ejected like shreds of paper before an electric fan.*

*Brother Owl, concentrating with the exertion, was faintly aware of the nimbus of his power. It cast a white glow around the building, giving the impression of a host of angels hovering above it all, sanctifying his work.*

*He took a deep breath, relieved that it had worked, and scanned the building for signs of any wayward spirits. A bulldog sauntered out of the main door, staring at Brother Owl with utter hatred. It growled as they locked eyes.*

*Ah, Brother Owl thought, a familiar. So I have trespassed upon a sanctum. Well, then, let's see who owns it.*

If a Bhikkhu should desire, Brethren, to exercise one by one each of the different Siddhis: being one to become multiform, being multiform to become one; to become visible, or to become invisible; to go without being stopped to the further side of a wall, or a fence, or a mountain, as if through air; to penetrate up and down through solid ground, as if through water; to walk on the water without dividing it, as if on solid ground; to travel through the sky like the birds on wing; to touch and feel with the hand even the sun and the moon, mighty and powerful though they be; and to reach in the body even up to the heaven of Brahma; let him then fulfill all righteousness, let him be devoted to that quietude of heart which springs from within, let him not drive back the ecstasy of contemplation, let him look through things, let him be much alone!
— "Akankheyya Sutta," Vol. XI of The Sacred Books of the East

Mages are mortals in every way but one. They can do magic, and that makes all the difference. They can reach out to a higher world and draw down a bit of its power. Mages call this instance of borrowed might a "spell," and all of them yearn to master even the most complex of such power grabs. The Atlantean orders codified the metaphysics of how Supernal power interacts with the Fallen World, classifying the various phenomena as the actions of 10 elemental processes. They called these processes the "Arcana," for their workings are not evident even to the newly Awakened. They are *secrets*, clues to solving the great Mysteries of the universe. It is through these secrets that spells are cast and magic is made real.

## Unseen Senses

Mages have an innate "sixth sense" concerning all things supernatural. Their hair stands on end, goose bumps race along their arms, or a shiver runs up the spine. Regardless of the manner, their bodies react to the *active* presence of unseen forces (i.e., the use of a supernatural power, not simply the presence of a vampire or werewolf — unless it is using its powers). They can't actually see or hear anything (except a mage's nimbus when he casts spells), and they might not know at first what causes the strange reaction. To understand the feeling and its source, they can cast the Mage Sight upon themselves (or be the recipient of such a spell), and then scrutinize the scene (see below).

Mortals can purchase a similar ability, the Unseen Sense Merit (p. 110 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), but it applies to only a single type of supernatural phenomenon, such as the presence of a ghost or a vampire. For mages, this sense applies to *all* supernatural phenomena, alerting the willworker that the Invisible World is at hand, allowing him to cast magic to better investigate.

## Mage Sight

Mages have a number of means by which they can open their eyes to the supernatural, seeing (or even hearing, smelling, touching and tasting) the subtle currents of supernatural powers at work in the world. While all mages have an innate sixth sense to detect the presence of active powers (see above), it does not allow them to identify or analyze such powers. For that, they need to enchant their senses with one of the Unveiling Practices of the many Arcana. Although these spells come in many forms, they are collectively called Mage Sight.

Besides revealing magic and other supernatural powers, these spells make resonance obvious to the senses. Mages can read this resonance to identify its qualities. See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with these spells.

Finally, some Arcana can be used to sense or analyze certain powers better than others, although all Arcana can be used to sense supernatural power. If the power is mystically concealed, however, successes rolled for the mage must equal or exceed the Potency of the magic used to conceal the source. Note that Mage Sight does not allow a sorcerer to see or interact with Twilight beings or entities. That requires other spells (usually Death and Spirit).

The various Mage Sight spells, each with its own unique, additional effects are:

**Death:** "Grim Sight," p. 134.
**Fate:** "The Sybil's Sight," p. 149.
**Forces:** "Read Matrices," p. 163.
**Life:** "Pulse of the Living World," p. 181.
**Matter:** "Dark Matter," p. 194.
**Mind:** "Third Eye," p. 206.
**Prime:** "Supernal Vision," p. 221.
**Space:** "Spatial Awareness," p. 233.
**Spirit:** "Second Sight," p. 246.
**Time:** "Temporal Eddies," p. 258.

## Spellcasting

Mages channel higher realities to change common reality in accordance with their wishes, or to perceive the secret realities hidden from normal sight. An individual act of magic is called a *spell* and the process of doing it is called *casting* a spell or *spellcasting*.

Use the following steps when casting a spell.

## The Spell

The first step in casting a spell is to decide what the spell is supposed to do. Does the mage want to strike an enemy down with a bolt of lightning, read the deepest secrets of someone's mind, heal an injured friend, see visions of a distant place, or something else entirely? While magic is capable of accomplishing almost anything, individual mages are limited in what they can reasonably accomplish by their knowledge of the Arcana (that is, their Arcana dots).

The descriptions of the 10 Arcana on pp. 133-267 list the various spells possible with each dot in a given Arcanum.

When a mage wants to cast a spell, the player chooses a spell from these lists.

Magic, however, is not confined to a list — anything a mage can imagine is potentially possible given the proper Arcanum lore. A mage can even make up a spell on the spot in an instant if he needs to. See "Creative Thaumaturgy," pp. 289-291, for guidelines on creating new spells.

### Conjunctional Spell

A spell that *requires* the use of two or more Arcana to achieve its effect is called a *conjunctional spell*. If the effect can be achieved without the use of one or more additional Arcana, it is not a conjunctional spell. The spell descriptions for the various Arcana contain a number of examples of conjunctional spells.

### Imago: The Spell in the Mind's Eye

Once you, the player, have determined the spell to be cast, the mage does the same. He visualizes and imagines the *Imago* of the desired result. It includes all of the spell's effects and factors. Without this Imago, the mage's enlightened will cannot bring the spell to life — his imagination must be engaged to manifest change in the world, and that change matches the image he forms in his mind.

In the case of a rote, the Imago has been clarified and defined so precisely that it can be conjured easily in the mind and even taught to others.

## Casting Method: Rote and Improvised

The next step is to determine whether the mage has learned the spell as a rote or must perform an improvised casting.

### Rote Spells

*Rote spells*, also known simply as "rotes," are tried-and-tested magical formulae, handed down from master to apprentice, and developed over the course of a mage's training and practice in the Art.

Every rote started out as an improvised spell. A mage comes up with a spell for a particular purpose and finds it useful enough to use the same spell over and over again. The mage teaches others to envision the spell's Imago and perform its casting gestures, and they in turn pass it on. Over time, the spell becomes a standard, known to many or all mages in an order, learned and cast by rote.

A mage can learn a rote from someone who already knows it. He must spend time studying with that person, and then experience points must be spent at a cost of two points per the highest Arcanum dot used in the rote. Few mages teach their rotes for free; most levy a cost in one or more favors owed. Mages are forbidden to teach an order's rotes to anyone not of the same order.

***Example:*** *Arctos wants to learn the "Telekinetic Strike" rote (p. 170) from his order. Since it is a Forces 3 rote, it will cost him six experience points (two points per dot).*

Despite their additional cost, rotes have a number of significant advantages over improvised spells: greater reliability, lower Mana cost, less chance of causing a Paradox — a lurch in reality — and a lighter resonance "signature," making it difficult for others to identify the caster by examining the spell.

### Improvised Spells

*Improvised spells* are based on the mage's enlightened will and knowledge of the Mysteries. A mage can cast improvised spells by dint of her Path; she needs no training from other mages (although training certainly helps!). Any spell listed in the Arcanum descriptions can be cast as an improvised spell, provided a mage has the proper Arcanum dots. No additional experience point expenditure is required.

## Casting Action: Instant or Extended

The next step in casting a spell is to decide whether the casting is an *instant action* or an *extended action*. The spell's description lists which casting action the spell requires.

### Instant Spellcasting

Instant casting, also called "fast casting," takes only a moment, allowing the mage to cast a spell in a single turn. Mages use instant casting when they need a spell *right now*, particularly when using magic in combat.

An instant spell is resolved with a single spellcasting roll. While spellcasting, a mage can take no other action (even if a Merit or other spell normally allows for other actions) and can move no more than his Speed rating in that turn.

Instant-action spells can be cast as extended actions if a mage so desires (such as when he has the luxury of time), but not vice versa.

### Casting When Grappled

Mages, like just about anybody else, can be the victims of grappling attacks. See "Unarmed Combat," pp. 157-159 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The grappling rules assume that both opponents perform physical actions (hence the need to overpower one's opponent before performing a maneuver). Spellcasting, however, is not necessarily a physical action. A mage can call a spell into manifestation with will alone. A sorcerer who has been grappled or even immobilized in a grapple can still perform an instant spellcasting action, with the following limitations:

- If he is casting a vulgar rote requiring him to perform a hand formation (see "Rote Mudras," p. 125), he suffers a –1 dice penalty. If he is immobilized, he suffers a –2 dice penalty. This penalty does not apply to covert rotes or improvised spellcasting.
- He cannot exert his Strength to resist his opponent's overpower attempts in the same turn in which he casts a spell. He goes physically limp and gives up resisting. In other words, his Strength is not subtracted from his opponent's overpower roll.

• The mage cannot employ a magical tool to help him avoid a Paradox.

• Note that he must first break the grapple before he can gain the benefit of any spell that applies to actions requiring free physical movement. For example, he can cast a Force 4 "Burst of Speed" spell (p. 171) upon himself while he is grappled, but he cannot use the spell's Speed-boosting effect to run away at incredible speed until he breaks free of his opponent's hold.

## Extended Spellcasting

Extended or *ritual* spellcasting takes time and a succession of rolls, but builds up power over time. Extended spellcasting allows for elaborate spells with many factors. Rituals can also create wide-ranging and long-lasting, even permanent, spells.

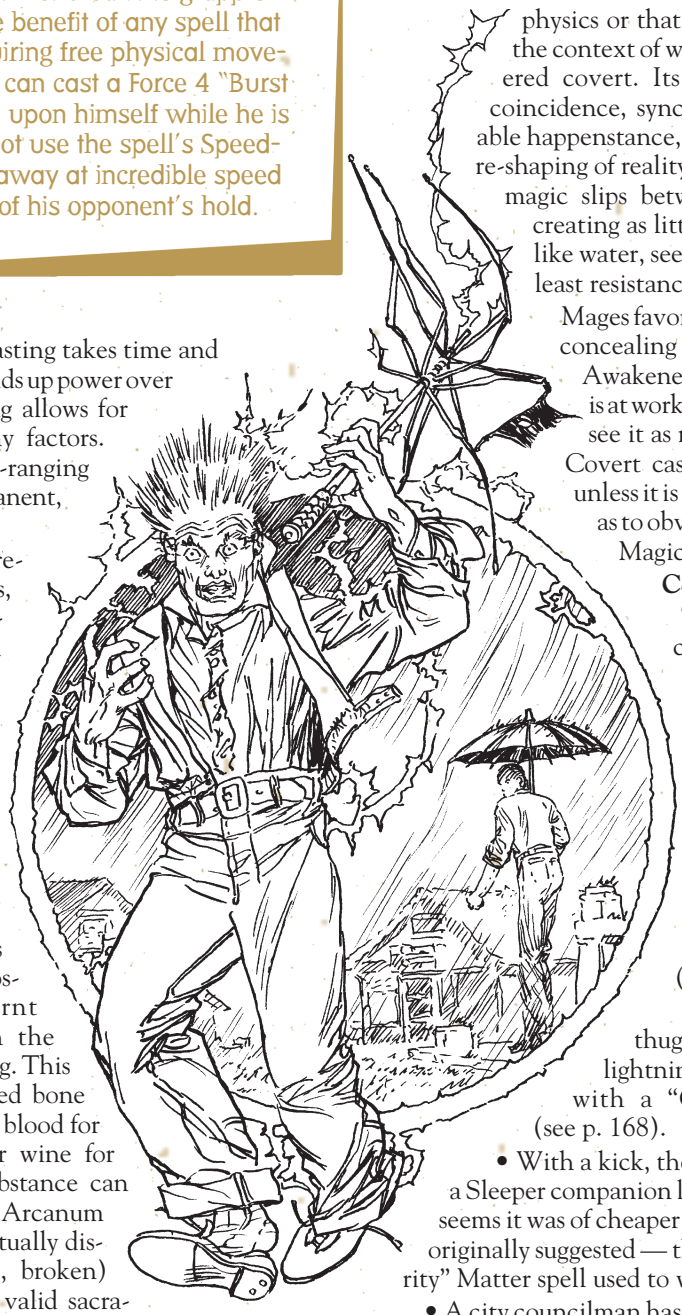
An extended spell is resolved with a series of rolls, like any other extended action. While performing an extended spellcasting, a mage cannot take any other action (even if a Merit or other spell normally allows for other actions) and can move no more than his Speed in the same turns.

**Sacraments**

Extended-action castings require a *sacrament*, a disposable component (a burnt offering) associated with the Arcanum used in the casting. This sacrifice might be powdered bone for Death, a fire for Forces, blood for Life, incense for Spirit or wine for Prime. As long as the substance can symbolically represent the Arcanum for the mage, and can be ritually disposed of (burnt, ingested, broken) during the casting, it is a valid sacrament. If no such sacrament is at hand, the caster suffers –1 dice on extended casting rolls.

## Spell Aspect: Covert or Vulgar

*How* a spell alters reality determines whether or not reality will accept that spell without complaint. Spells are described as either *covert* or *vulgar*. Covert magic works secretly or fools onlookers into believing that the effect is mere coincidence rather than intentional magic. Vulgar magic works outside of those limits, potentially invoking a Paradox.



### Covert Magic

Covert magic works within the bounds of reality. Any spell that could occur through the normal laws of physics or that is not wildly improbable within the context of when and where it is cast is considered covert. Its casting and effect seems like coincidence, synchronicity or some other believable happenstance, anything other than the forcible re-shaping of reality through individual will. Covert magic slips between the boundaries of reality, creating as little disruption as possible. It flows like water, seeking the lowest level, the path of least resistance.

Mages favor covert magic because it is subtle, concealing the work of the mage. While the Awakened almost always know when magic is at work, Sleepers witnessing covert magic see it as natural rather than supernatural. Covert casting does not cause a Paradox, unless it is cast before a Sleeper in such a way as to obviously be magic. See "Improbable Magic," below.

**Covert Magic Examples**

The following are all examples of covert spells:

• After the mage examines an injury, it's clear to all that it isn't nearly as bad as it first appeared. In fact, the mage used a "Healing Heart" Life spell to help undo the damage (see p. 186).

• "How did you know I'd be here?" The mage replies, "Lucky guess," when it was actually a "Divination" Time spell (see p. 263).

• Outside on a stormy night, a thug menacing the mage is hit by lightning. What are the odds? Pretty good with a "Call Lightning" Forces spell (see p. 168).

• With a kick, the dead-bolted door flies open. As a Sleeper companion looks at the remains of the lock, it seems it was of cheaper manufacture than its appearance originally suggested — thanks to the mage's "Alter Integrity" Matter spell used to weaken it (see p. 198).

• A city councilman has a heart attack in a restaurant and dies on the way to the hospital. There's no evidence of heart disease, but the death is chalked up to "natural causes" rather than a "Suppress Other's Life" Death spell (see p. 144).

• An otherwise lethal bullet hits the mage's belt buckle, hip flask, pocket Bible or some such protection courtesy of a "Fortune's Protection" Fate spell (see p. 152).

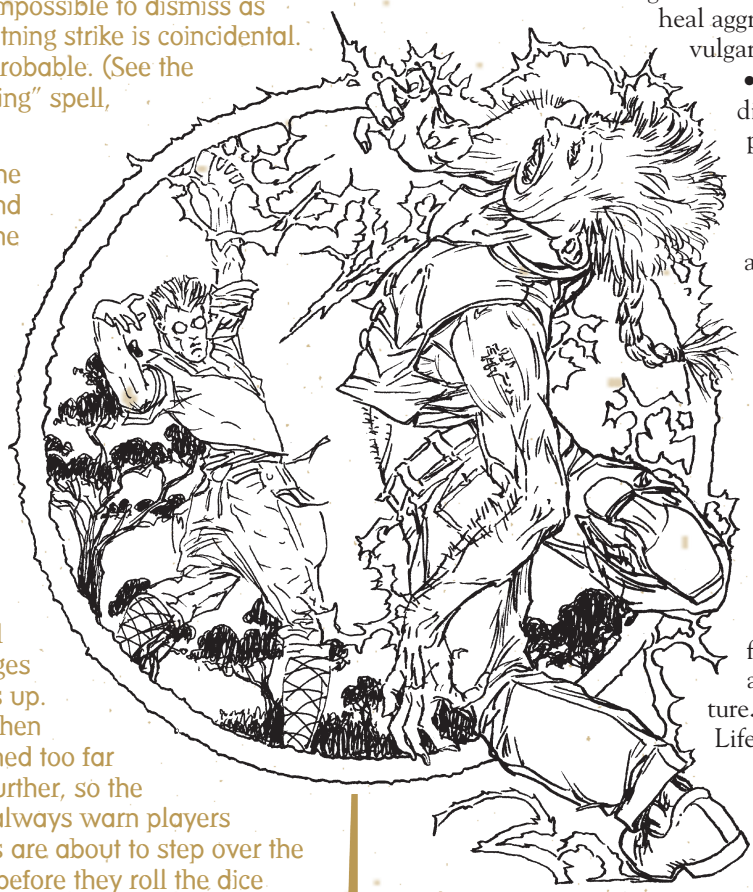
### Improbable Magic

While covert magic uses secrecy or the cloak of happenstance to hide its true nature, ordinary suspension of disbelief only stretches so far

before it snaps and turns into incredulity and disbelief. Basically, the more often mages perform covert magic in a particular place and time, especially the *same* covert magic, the more likely their magic crosses the line and risks a Paradox. Covert spells can become *improbable*. Some mages call this the "domino effect," since it's like tipping over a line of dominoes.

For example, it's not hard to believe lightning might strike someone from a cloudy sky, particularly if there's a storm brewing and the target is standing out in the open. Lightning striking the same target twice, however, is much harder to believe, and lightning striking multiple targets multiple times in the same area over a short period is almost impossible to dismiss as coincidence. One lightning strike is coincidental. A dozen is highly improbable. (See the Forces "Call Lightning" spell, p. 168.)

There's a fine line between the two, and ultimately it's up to the Storyteller to decide when a mage is about to cross it. Generally, if the reaction of Sleeper witnesses is likely to be "Wow, what are the odds?" then there's no chance of a Paradox. If it's more likely to be "No way, that's impossible!" then the spell risks a Paradox. Mages know when the jig is up. They can sense when coincidence is stretched too far to be pushed any further, so the Storyteller should always warn players when their characters are about to step over the line, telling them before they roll the dice something like, "That spell will exceed the threshold of credibility and risks a Paradox."



### Vulgar Magic

By contrast, vulgar magic works outside the bounds of reality. Vulgar magic produces an effect that could not possibly occur through the normal laws of physics, or whose probability of occurrence is so high as to be unthinkable.

Vulgar magic is by definition showy, accomplishing the impossible right before one's eyes. Using vulgar spells, mages can fly through the air, transform into creatures out of legend, throw fire and lightning, and literally turn the world upside down. But reality rebels against such magic, so mages pay a price for vulgar spells. That price is a Paradox.

Vulgar magic does not *necessarily* reveal the spellcaster as the source of the magic, unless the effect obviously comes from him (such as an electrical charge shot forth from his fingertips). The Storyteller decides whether onlookers can trace a spell back to its caster based on the circumstances.

**Vulgar Magic Examples**

The following are all examples of vulgar spells:

- The mage opens a shimmering gateway in the air, stepping through it and disappearing, or simply vanishes in a puff of smoke. He has cast a "Teleportation" Space spell (see p. 241).
- With a laying of hands and a golden light, the mage heals a dying man and restores him to perfect health. He has cast the covert "Healing Heart" Life spell, but when used to heal aggravated wounds, the spell is vulgar.
- In a dark mirror, the mage displays images of events happening halfway around the world. He casts a "Scrying" Space spell (see p. 235).
- Pointing an oaken staff and speaking a word of power, the mage causes lighting to leap from the staff to strike an opponent. He casts a "Thunderbolt" Forces spell (see p. 173).
- The mage hovers in mid-air in the lotus position, without any visible means of support. He has cast a "Flight" Forces spell (see p. 177).
- The mage transforms from a human being into an animal or a fantastic creature. He casts a "Shapechanging" Life spell (see p. 190).
- A spirit materializes out of thin air to do the mage's bidding. The mage casts a "Materialize Spirit" spell (see p. 254).

### Hiding Magic in Plain Sight

A Sleeper who witnesses a vulgar spell causes the chance of a Paradox to increase (by +2 dice; see "Invoking a Paradox," p. 123). Likewise, a Sleeper witnessing an Improbable spell causes that spell to have a chance of causing a Paradox — a chance it otherwise wouldn't have.

The method the caster uses to cast his magic can change this possibility. If the Sleeper can be convinced that the spell is not magic, but something

ordinary (if unusual) or probable, then the onlooker does not increase the chance of Paradox for vulgar magic (although the magic is still vulgar, and thus has *some* chance of Paradox). Neither does he cause an Improbable covert spell to risk a Paradox.

Fooling Sleeper witnesses this way often requires some clever spellcasting, devising methods that seem plausible or even possible to the watching Sleeper. Traditional stage magicians use smoke and mirrors to distract an audience from seeing what really goes on. Real mages often need to use similar, if less prop-driven tricks, by making their spells seem to be perfectly ordinary or probable.

For example, a mage wants to lure a rival onto a wooden platform, and then cast a Death 3 "Destroy Object" spell (p. 139) upon it, rotting the wood away so that his opponent will plummet into a pit. Even though it is a covert spell, there are Sleeper witnesses, some of whom have walked along the same platform. They might find it Improbable that the floor would suddenly collapse. To better convince them of the possibility, the mage places construction signs in the area, implying that the platform has been worked on recently. That way, when the floor gives way, onlookers are likely to assume that the problem is related to the construction rather than to a freak circumstance. In this instance, the Storyteller decides that the spell is not Improbable, and so does not risk a Paradox.

## Casting Range: Sensory or Sympathetic

The reach of a mage's powers is limited to the extent of his awareness. Of course, with magic, a mage's awareness can extend very far indeed.

Spells have two basic ranges: sensory and sympathetic. *Sensory* spells are within range of the mage's mundane senses (particularly sight, hearing or touch). *Sympathetic* spells use the Space Arcanum to extend the mage's reach virtually anywhere, provided the mage has a strong enough connection to the spell's target.

### Sensory Spells

Most spells rely on a mage's mundane senses. He can cast a spell on any target distinguishable by sight, hearing or touch and who's in the mage's presence. If there's some question as to whether or not the mage can distinguish the target, the Storyteller may apply a penalty to the mage's spellcasting pool. If a mage cannot see his target, the rules for listening in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (pp. 166-167) can be used to target someone through sound, which usually involves penalties for concealment. Likewise, if he's got advanced olfactory senses, the rules for smelling (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 167) can be used. Neither of these methods is as ideal as sight, since even the best attempt to pinpoint a target gives him partial concealment (a –2 dice penalty if the mage gets an exceptional success on his listening or smelling attempt).

Targets that are still within sight but that are extremely far away, such as a sniper on a distant building, are not considered to be within the mage's presence. Generally, mages cannot affect targets more than 200 yards away, at best.

Targets that cannot be sensed, or that can be sensed but are farther than 200 yards away, or that are visible or audible to the mage but not in his presence — seen on live television or heard over the telephone, for example — require sympathetic spellcasting. In the case of someone seen or heard live over the television or telephone, the sensory impression of the target provides a strong connection (see below).

Sensory range is the default of spellcasting and requires no additional effort from the mage.

### Sympathetic Spells

Students of the Space Arcanum learn that distance is an illusion, a limit magic can overcome. By including the Space Arcanum in a spell, mages can extend the reach of their magic virtually anywhere in Creation.

Spells including a Space element to increase range are called *sympathetic spells*, since they take advantage of what some mages call the Law of Sympathy: "Like produces like." Sprinkling rain onto a map, scrying into a bowl of ink mixed with a drop of the subject's blood, sticking pins into a puppet containing a lock of the subject's hair — all of these are examples of sympathetic spells.

To cast a sympathetic spell, the mage must have at least 2 dots in Space and a Mana point must be spent. The stronger the connection between the mage and the target, the easier it is to include the target in the spell's Imago. If the mage knows little or nothing about the target, it is hard to perceive it in his mind's eye, making it difficult to build a sympathetic connection. This difficulty is represented with dice penalties.

Instead of penalizing a spell for the *distance* involved (distance is an illusion), it is penalized for the *vagueness* of the connection to the target. The less a mage knows about the subject, the higher the penalty — the greater his sympathetic "distance" from the target.

| Dice Penalty | Sympathetic Connection Between Caster and Target* |
|---|---|
| — | *Sensory:* You can see, hear or otherwise sense your target directly. This is the default factor, a sensory spell. (When trying to locate a target with hearing or smell, use the rules on pp. 166-167 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) |
| –2 | *Intimate:* You have a piece of the target's physical substance, such as hair, nail clippings or blood from a creature, a leaf or flower from a plant, or a sliver of material from an object. Or you know the target very well, such as a longtime friend or close family member, a beloved pet or a prized possession. |
| –4 | *Known:* You know the target, which might be a friend, co-worker or personal pos- |

| | |
|---|---|
| | session. You have a photo or other accurate representation of the target, or you can see the target on live video or hear the target over live audio. |
| –6 | *Acquainted:* You're acquainted with the target. It might be a casual acquaintance, a co-worker you hardly know, or an item you held or used once. |
| –8 | *Encountered:* You have encountered the target briefly, such as a person you passed on the street or an item you touched once. |
| –10 | *Described:* You have never encountered the target, but can describe it. You might know a person's name or physical description, or what an object or place looks like. |
| – | *Unknown:* If you know nothing about the target, you cannot cast a sympathetic spell on it. Knowing that there is a rival mage in town is not enough to affect the mysterious figure from afar. You must at least know his name, description or location. |

* If the caster does not know the real name of a target, the difficulty of achieving a sympathetic connection is increased by two degrees on the chart. So, an Intimate connection would become an Acquainted connection.

Note that these penalties (and those for spell factors, p. 117) can exceed the usual maximum dice penalty of five dice. Awakened magic is a special circumstance that bends the laws of reality well past their normal limits, warranting especially high degrees of difficulty that sometimes reduce beginning mages to dice pools consisting of only a chance die.

***Example:*** *Arctos wants to communicate mentally with his old mentor Morvran. He has no idea where Morvran is, so he must cast a sympathetic spell to reach him. Fortunately, he has a ring Morvran gave him for just such an occasion, containing a lock of the mentor's hair — an Intimate connection. Arctos needs Space 2, Mind 3 to cast the spell, and the effort suffers a –2 penalty for the Intimate connection.*

Names have power. Without a name, people are harder to pinpoint magically. When using sympathetic magic, it is best to know and speak (mentally, not necessarily out loud) the name of the target. If the target's name is not known, it is hard to reach out to him through sympathy — the difficulty of connection is increased by two degrees (increasing the dice penalty). For this reason, mages often hide their real names from other mages, using only their shadow names, which elude sympathetic connection. See "Shadow Names," p. 54. This factor applies to only people. Connections can be made to animals, plants, objects and places without need of a name.

***Example:*** *In the above example, Arctos' Intimate connection is an Acquainted connection if he doesn't know his mentor's real name. Thankfully, he knows that Morvran's real name is his Welsh family name of Owain Rhys Glamorgan, and so maintains his Intimate connection.*

*Later, Arctos wants to communicate with Zeno mentally. Having met him only a couple times, Arctos' connection would normally be Acquainted (–6 dice). But he does not know Zeno's real name, only his shadow name. That means the degree of connection is worsened by two degrees, to Described (–10 dice).*

## The Cult of Celebrity...

In addition to the penalties suffered for a weak sympathetic connection, the "metaphysical weight" of a target adversely affects a caster's ability to achieve a direct sympathetic connection. The more well known a person is by other people (especially strangers, who don't know him personally but might project their hopes and fears upon him), the harder he is to grasp sympathetically.

Subtract the target's Fame Merit dots from the spellcasting roll. For example, when trying to affect the Queen of England with a sympathetic spell, subtract three dice for her Fame 3.

Places and things can also benefit from such celebrity, making them hard to target sympathetically. The Storyteller decides the proper penalty, although it should be no higher than –3 dice. The notorious house where a famous serial killer buried his 23 victims might be –1, while the Hope Diamond would be –3.

This penalty applies to only spells that directly affect a target, not to indirect spells such as scrying or sending out a telepathic message (one that doesn't compel the target in any way). Nor does this penalty apply to spells cast at sensory range.

## ...and the Occulted

Mages who possess the Occultation Merit gain a degree of protection against sympathetic magic directed at them. The rules are as for celebrities above, except that their Occultation dots are used instead of Fame. See "Occultation," p. 86, for more details.

The manner in which a spell interacts with a target also affects a mage's ability to cast sympathetically. Spells that do not directly affect a target can be cast as described above. These include scrying spells, where a scrying window allows a caster to observe a target or an area, but the spell itself does not affect the target's Pattern. Spells that actively work magic on a target, however, such as the classic "sticking a pin in a voodoo doll to cause pain," require advanced Arcanum knowledge. The mage's dots in the highest Arcanum used for the spell must be one higher than is normally required to cast the spell. This requirement does not affect the Space 2 component of the spell, which is the conjunctional Arcanum used to establish the sympathetic conduit. The requirement applies to the Arcanum used for the effect itself (or all Arcana used in an elaborate conjunctional effect).

***Example:*** *Arethusa wants to use her Mind 3 "Psychic Assault" spell (p. 212) against her foe Bahazid. The vile mage is not present, so Arethusa must cast sympathetically. Since Psychic*

*Assault would directly affect Bahazid's Pattern, Arethusa needs four dots in Mind — one dot higher than the Mind 3 normally required. The young mage lacks that degree of Arcanum knowledge, so cannot cast the spell. She has to wait until Bahazid is within her sensory presence.*

Note that, because of this requirement, a master of an Arcanum (5 dots) cannot cast sympathetic Making or Unmaking spells directly against a target's Pattern, since those would require the sixth dot to cast.

Finally, casting sympathetic magic opens a sympathetic conduit between caster and target, allowing a subject to cast spells back at the sympathetic caster without needing Space 2 (although he still suffers the relevant penalties for his degree of connection to the caster). Opening a scrying window also creates a sympathetic conduit; if a mage on the other end knows the window is there (using Mage Sight, or especially the Space 1 "Spatial Awareness" spell, although the scrying spell does not necessarily alert the mage to the window's existence), he can direct spells through it at its creator on the other end (but not at any other target who did not participate in the sympathetic casting). The conduit lasts for as long as the sympathetic spell that created it.

***Example:*** *Angrboda opens a scrying window to spy on Morvran. Luckily, Morvran has an active Mage Sight spell and notices the window. Taking this opportunity to strike at his foe, Morvran casts a Mind 3 "Psychic Assault" spell at Angrboda. He doesn't need to add a Space 2 component (for a direct sympathetic Pattern assault), since Angroda's spell already provides the sympathetic conduit, but he does need Mind 4 (one dot higher than normally required to cast the spell, since it directly affects Angroda). He has that many dots, so he can cast the spell.*

*Morvran's degree of sympathetic connection modifies the dice pool. Angroda was once an old friend but is now a sworn enemy; Morvran's connection is Known (–4 dice).*

**Sympathetic Casting Drawbacks**

- It requires one Mana to cast a sympathetic spell.
- The mage loses his Defense while casting. He is focused upon his target and is therefore less aware of his surroundings.
- A sympathetic spell is always vulgar, even if the spell is normally covert. (Hence, the target can use countermagic against it; see p. 122.)
- If the spell directly affects a target's Pattern, the mage's dots in the spell's highest Arcanum must be one higher than normally required to cast the spell.
- The casting creates a sympathetic conduit between caster and target, allowing the target to direct spells against the caster — even if he does not have Space 2 — for as long as the sympathetic spell lasts.

## Aimed Spells

The Tapestry is made up of Patterns. A mage directs his spells against one or more Patterns, and his magic rends, bolsters, rearranges or transforms that Pattern. Physical obstacles between the mage and his target don't matter. As long as the mage can perceive the Pattern at all, he can target it. The only thing his magic might normally contend with, besides possible perception modifiers, is the target's resistance (as described in "Resistance Against Magic," p. 121).

Some spells, however, create a magical effect the caster directs physically at a target, such as a dart or bolt of magical power for an attack. These spells are called *aimed spells*. Only instant-action spells can be aimed spells. Conditions change too rapidly to target extended-action spells this way. The spell descriptions list spells that are aimed.

Since an aimed spell is a physical phenomenon directed against a target's physical body rather than his Pattern, the target does not get to contest or resist the magic, although countermagic can still be effective. For the same reason, the target's armor and other ranged attack modifiers *are* applied to the mage's spellcasting pool, since the target benefits from armor, cover and going prone, just like avoiding a gunshot or similar ranged attack.

Targets do not normally get their Defense against aimed spells (unless the spell's description states otherwise), except at point-blank range. Armor is useful only against spells it could conceivably protect against. A bulletproof vest might help stop a stone projectile, but it doesn't stop electrical or fire damage.

### Aimed Spell Drawbacks

- Targets defend as against any ranged attack: cover and/or armor apply, and being prone levies a –2 penalty on the caster's roll. (If the caster is within close-combat range, the target receives his Defense, but the caster gets a +2 dice bonus against prone targets.)
- The mage suffers range penalties when attacking distant targets. The short-range distance for his aimed spells is equal to his Gnosis x 10. Medium range is twice that, and long range is twice medium range. For example, Arctos' Gnosis is 3, giving his aimed spells a short range of 30 yards, a medium range of 60 yards and a long range of 120 yards (the equivalent accuracy of a heavy pistol).
- Depending on a spell's effect, the caster might be able to alter the Target factors of an aimed spell to affect multiple targets. Doing so involves creating a large effect, like a giant ball of fire or an array of projectiles. The Storyteller decides if such an effect is possible for the spell in question. If so, the mage can add extra targets (at a dice penalty of –2 each), but targets must be standing near each other (within three yards of at least one of the others).

• Aimed spells cannot be cast sympathetically, nor can they be cast through a sympathetic conduit created by another caster (such as a scrying window created to spy upon a mage).

• A failure on an aimed spell's casting roll still manifests the effect. At the Storyteller's discretion, the spell might hit a nearby object (the car next to the missed target) or background element (the window behind the missed target).

## The Spellcasting Dice Pool

Once the spell is chosen and its method, action, aspect and range are determined, a casting dice pool is determined.

### Rote Spell

When a mage casts a rote spell, the player rolls a pool based on Attribute + Skill + Arcanum, using the traits listed in the rote's description.

**Rote Spellcasting Dice Pool = Attribute + Skill + Arcanum**

Attribute represents the mage's will or raw ability, while Skill represents his facility with the principles involved in the spell.

Arcanum measures the mage's understanding of the phenomena the spell manipulates. When casting a conjunctional spell, the mage's highest applicable Arcanum is used for the spellcasting pool.

Note that Skill Specialties do not apply to rote casting. A mage with an Occult Skill Specialty in Curses does not get a one-die bonus to his dice pool when casting curse spells, even if the rote uses the Occult Skill. Instead, mages can use their orders' Rote Specialties. See "Rote Specialties," p. 75.

### Improvised Spell

When a mage casts an improvised spell, the player rolls a pool based on the mage's Gnosis + Arcanum.

**Improvised Spellcasting Dice Pool = Gnosis + Arcanum**

Gnosis represents the mage's knowledge of the Supernal, the ability to create changes in reality. It's the mage's raw magical power.

Arcanum dots measure the mage's understanding of the phenomena that the spell manipulates. When casting a conjunctional spell, the mage's highest applicable Arcanum is used for the spellcasting pool.

### Words of Power

Every spell can be spoken or "spelled out" with an Atlantean word or phrase. The Atlantean tongue is no longer known with enough fluency to be used for common speech, but enough words and phrases remain to empower magic. Mages believe that since this language was the native tongue of the Oracles and Exarchs, its words hold power over the Fallen World, forming a sort of "true tongue" that can make things real. If a spell's true words are uttered during spellcasting, the magic is ushered in by a surge of power.

The mage must know the language (see the "High Speech" Merit, p. 84). If so, he can perform an instant action speaking words of power before casting. A +2 bonus is then added to his spellcasting dice pool in the following turn, during which he punctuates his casting with more chanting. (The dice bonus applies to only spells cast immediately after chanting.) For extended casting, the mage must spend 30 minutes chanting to gain the +2 dice bonus.

The mage must speak in at least a loud whisper, with enough volume that others nearby might hear him with a successful Wits + Composure roll. Loud noises might levy dice penalties to this listening roll, while absolute silence might offer a bonus for others to hear the throaty whispers.

During the chanting action, the mage loses his Defense and can move no more than his Speed (he cannot run). Note that a covert spell accompanied by a strange chant and witnessed by a Sleeper might be perceived as improbable, raising the risk of a Paradox.

## Spell Factors

All the preceding rules assume only the most basic spellcasting aspects: that a spell affects a single target for a very short amount of time. A mage can create an Imago, however, that calls for a burst of flame to affect an entire area or for an enchantment to last for a whole day. These elements of a spell — the number of targets or area affected, the amount of time the spell lasts, and even its raw power — are called *spell factors*, and the mage can increase them as he desires. Spells are limited only by a mage's power and knowledge.

**Potency** is a measure of a spell's power. For damaging spells, it is the spell's damage. For other spells, Potency has different effects. Potency also denotes a spell's resilience against other mages' attempts to counter or dispel it.

**Target** is the creature or object or the number of creatures or objects that a spell affects. The default is one target: a single living being or inanimate object of up to Size 20, or a small area. To affect larger beings or things, you must add additional Target factors.

**Duration** is how long a spell lasts. The default for most spells is one turn (for transitory spells) or one scene (for prolonged spells). Once Duration elapses, the spell ends.

Any mage can increase his spell's various factors, although he does so at the cost of dice penalties (for instant castings) or additional required successes (for extended castings). A mage with advanced understanding of a spell's Arcanum (one dot higher than is normally required to cast the spell)

can increase her factors by more dramatic amounts, as explained below.

Note that spell factors might seem complicated at first, but they are optional. A mage does not *have* to alter the default factors of his spellcasting, as explained in the individual spell descriptions for each Arcana, but he has that choice. Beginning players might want to wait until they've mastered the basics of the spellcasting system before they try altering spell factors.

## Instant Spellcasting

The spell's description lists which factor is *primary*. Successes rolled in the spellcasting are applied to this factor. A single success gives a spell the following factors:

**Potency:** 1 point

**Target:** One (of Size 20 or smaller), or a circular radius of one yard or a defined area of five square yards.

**Duration:** One turn (three seconds) for transitory spells, and one hour or scene for prolonged spells.

Extra successes enhance the primary factor only. To enhance the other factors, you must assign dice penalties before the roll is made. Note that only successes can increase the primary factor.

### Potency

Potency describes a spell's raw power. It is also the measure of a spell's resiliency, how hard it is to counter or dispel. Even if a spell requires only one point of Potency, the caster might still wish to increase its Potency if he suspects a target will try to counter or dispel it. A spell with Target or Duration as its primary factor (i.e., successes are applied to one of those factors), has a default Potency of one point, making it easy to counter or dispel even if the casting resulted in an exceptional success. (The spell affects many targets or lasts a long time, but has little resilience against countering or dispelling attempts).

Potency is the primary factor for the majority of spells listed later in this chapter. If a spell description does not call for successes to be devoted to number of targets (or area affected) or Duration, assume that its successes apply to Potency.

| Potency | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| 1 | None (basic success) |
| 2 | –2 |
| 3 | –4 |
| 4 | –6 |
| 5 | –8* |

* Impose an additional –2 die penalty per extra point of Potency. For example, Potency 6 would levy a –10 dice penalty.

### Target

Spells are targeted against one or more creatures or objects. The magic is woven directly into that target's Pattern, bypassing any intervening obstacles. Two questions to consider are: How many targets are to be affected, and how big is each target?

| Number of Targets | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| One | None (basic success) |
| Two | –2 |
| Four | –4 |
| Eight | –6 |
| 16 | –8* |

* Impose an additional –2 die penalty per x2 targets. For example, 32 targets would levy a –10 dice penalty.

*Size*

Once a mage knows who he targets, he must account for the largest target in the group. Targets of exceptional size (larger than a dump truck) require extra spell control.

| Size of Largest Target | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| 20 or less | None (basic success) |
| 21-30 | –2 |
| 31-40 | –4 |
| 41-50 | –6 |
| 51-60 | –8* |

* Impose an additional –2 die penalty per +10 extra Size. For example, a target of Size 61-70 would levy a –10 dice penalty.

*Area-Affecting*

Instead of one or more specified targets, a spell might affect a circular radius around a specified spot (radiating equaling in all directions), or a defined volume (measured in three dimensions — width, length and height — defined by the spellcaster). The spell then applies to anyone or anything in that radius or volume, friend or foe. The mage cannot single out specific targets within the declared space.

| Radius or | Defined Volume | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|---|
| 1-yard radius | 5 cubic yards | None (basic success) |
| 2-yard radius | 10 cu. yards | –2 |
| 4-yard radius | 20 cu. yards | –4 |
| 8-yard radius | 40 cu. yards | –6 |
| 16-yard radius | 80 cu. yards | –8* |

* Impose an additional –2 die penalty per extra x2 radius or x2 area. For example, a 32-yard radius or a 160-cubic-yard volume would levy a –10 dice penalty.

Note: The central spot for the radius must be within sensory range. This usually means the mage must be able to see it, unless the center is making a noise he can pinpoint or feel. Otherwise, he must use sympathetic magic (Space 2) to affect a spot outside of the range of his senses.

*Advanced Area-Affecting:* If the mage has dots in the spell's primary Arcanum that are one or more higher than normally required to cast the spell, he can increase the radius or defined volume by more dramatic steps.

| Radius or | Defined Volume | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|---|
| 1-yard radius | 5 cubic yards | None (basic success) |
| 4-yard radius | 20 cu. yards | –2 |
| 16-yard radius | 80 cu. yards | –4 |
| 64-yard radius | 320 cu. yards | –6 |
| 256-yard radius | 1280 cu. yards | –8* |

* Impose an additional –2 die penalty per extra x4 radius or x4 area. For example, a 1024-yard radius or a 5,120-cubic-yard volume would levy a –10 dice penalty.

A mage can alter a spell that normally affects one or more targets to affect a radius or defined volume, instead. His Arcanum dots must be one or more higher than what is normally required to cast the spell (although he uses the basic, not advanced, chart to determine the actual area affected), and doing so costs one Mana spent during casting.

### Duration

There are four types of spell Duration: lasting, concentration, transitory and prolonged. The spell descriptions provided later in this chapter list each spell's Duration.

*Lasting*

A lasting spell's effect is a natural part of reality; it has no defined Duration, since it persists as long as it is natural for it to. For example, a spell that sets a target on fire is lasting. The fire is real and continues to burn normally until it is put out or there's nothing left to burn. The target's injuries are also real and must heal normally. Likewise, a spell that heals injuries is lasting. The healing restores the target to its natural state, so wounds do not re-appear when the spell ends.

Concentration-based, transitory and prolonged spells all create an unnatural effect, such as transforming someone's shape. Their effects end once the spell's Duration expires. That is, reality restores things to normal. Spells with a lasting Duration do not count against the maximum number of spells a mage can maintain (based on his Gnosis).

*Concentration*

A concentration-based spell's Duration is as long as the mage applies mental effort to keep it going. The mage cannot take any other action, except for simple movement (up to his Speed; he cannot run). The mage also receives no Defense against attacks, although he can seek cover from ranged attacks. If the mage is attacked, a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll must be made for him to maintain concentration.

If the mage stops concentrating for any reason, voluntarily or not, the spell ends. The exception is if he decides to add Duration factors as if it were a transitory spell (see below) *before* the spell is cast, in which case the spell lasts for an additional time equal to its assigned Duration, and then lapses. The mage cannot start concentrating on a spell again once he has stopped, even if the spell hasn't lapsed yet.

Note: A mage cannot use a concentration-based Duration when casting aimed spells (see "Aimed Spells," p. 116).

*Transitory Spells*

A transitory spell's default Duration is one turn.

| 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. For example, a 20-turn transitory Duration would levy a –10 dice penalty.

*Prolonged Spells*

A prolonged spell's default Duration is one scene or one hour.

| Duration | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| One scene/hour | None (basic success) |
| Two hours | –2 |
| 12 hours | –4 |
| 24 hours | –6 |
| Two days | –8* |

* Impose an additional –2 dice penalty per extra +2 days. For example, a four-day prolonged Duration would levy a –10 dice penalty.

*Advanced Prolongation:* If a mage has dots in the spell's primary Arcanum that are one or more higher than normally required to cast the spell, he can increase the Duration by even more dramatic steps.

| Duration | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| One scene/hour | None (basic success) |
| 24 hours | –2 |
| Two days | –4 |
| One week | –6 |
| One month | –8 |
| Indefinite* | –10 |

* The spell is permanent until cancelled or dispelled. Living targets, however, grow, change and heal. Spells with an indefinite Duration cannot be cast upon a living creature.

A vulgar spell with Duration longer than one hour or scene might suffer from the corrosive effects of Disbelief whenever a Sleeper witnesses the magic. See "Disbelief," p. 274.

## Atlantean Runes

The alphabet of Atlantis, like the words of that language, reverberates with power. (See "Words of Power," p. 117.) Atlantean runes can be inscribed onto the target of a *transitory* or *prolonged* spell to automatically extend the spell's Duration by +1. (The mage does not have to extend the Duration himself by assigning dice penalties or extra successes; the rune does all the work.) Runes do not affect spells with Durations of *lasting* or *concentration*. If the spell is area-affecting, the periphery of each cardinal direction must be marked with a rune.

The spellcaster must personally inscribe the rune himself by drawing, painting or carving it no more than a day before spellcasting. This effort requires at least an instant action and maybe a successful Dexterity + Crafts roll, depending on the method used. Mages cannot use pre-made runes, printing them out in bulk and slapping them onto targets as needed. Each rune must be handmade in the moment.

Runes are most appropriate for use with ritual (extended) castings, such as the creation of a magical circle of protection (a Space Ward spell; see p. 236), and are not very practical for use with combat magic, unless the mage can mark the rune on the target before casting. Mages who know High Speech can recognize runes and avoid being marked with them.

The drawback to using runes is that a spell becomes inert if the rune (or one of the directional runes marking an area or radius) is removed or erased, even if the spell's Duration is still active. The caster can redraw the rune upon the target (or replace a removed area marker) to reactivate the spell; no casting roll is required. Any time that has passed still counts against the spell's Duration, even though the spell's effect wasn't active.

Mages usually carve runes onto an item they intend to enchant (see "Ephemeral Enchantment," p. 225) or imbue (see "Imbue Item," p. 225).

## Extended Spellcasting

Legends and tales of yore abound with images of witches spending hours over boiling cauldrons, sorcerers incanting ancient names of power for days, or mystics meditating for weeks to achieve miraculous effects. Each of these willworkers performs an extended-action casting, also called a ritual casting, allowing successes to be accumulated over a series of rolls.

The target number of successes depends on all the factors described in the Imago. The first success on an extended casting provides all the basic factors listed above for an instant casting: 1 point of Potency, one target, and a one-turn Duration (for transitory spells) or one hour/scene Duration (for prolonged spells). Extra factors are gained by adding more successes to the target number. To determine the target number required, use the charts below, adding the successes listed for each factor.

An extended casting spell is not activated until the required successes for all the stated factors are attained. Unlike an instant casting, no factor needs to be declared primary; successes are allocated as needed among all factors to achieve the target number for the spell.

**Potency**

| Potency | Target Number |
|---|---|
| 1 | Basic success |
| 2 | +1 success |
| 3 | +2 successes |
| 4 | +3 successes |
| 5 | +4 successes* |

* Add an additional success to the target number per extra point of Potency.

**Target**

| Number of Targets | Target Number |
|---|---|
| One | None (basic success) |
| Two | +1 success |
| Four | +2 successes |
| Eight | +3 successes |
| 16 | +4 successes* |

* Add an additional success to the target number per x2 targets. For example, 32 targets would add five successes to the target number.

*Size*

| Size of Largest Target | Target Number |
|---|---|
| 20 or less | Basic success |
| 21-30 | +1 success |
| 31-40 | +2 successes |
| 41-50 | +3 successes |
| 51-60 | +4 successes* |

* Add an additional success to the target number per +10 Size. For example, a target of Size 61-70 would add five successes to the target number.

*Area-Affecting*

| Radius or | Defined Volume | Target Number |
|---|---|---|
| 1-yard radius | 5 cubic yards | Basic success |
| 2-yard radius | 10 cu. yards | +1 success |
| 4-yard radius | 20 cu. yards | +2 successes |
| 8-yard radius | 40 cu. yards | +3 successes |
| 16-yard radius | 80 cu. yards | +4 successes* |

* Add an additional success to the target number per extra x2 radius or x2 area. For example, a 32-yard radius or a 160-cubic-foot defined volume would add five successes to the target number.

*Advanced Area-Affecting:* If the mage has a rating in the spell's primary Arcanum that is one dot higher than normally required to cast the spell, he can increase the radius or defined volume by more dramatic steps.

| Radius or | Defined Volume | Target Number |
|---|---|---|
| 1-yard radius | 5 cubic yards | Basic success |
| 4-yard radius | 20 cu. yards | +1 success |
| 16-yard radius | 80 cu. yards | +2 successes |
| 64-yard radius | 320 cu. yards | +3 successes |
| 256-yard radius | 1280 cu. yards | +4 successes* |

* Add an additional success to the target number per extra x4 radius or x4 area. For example, a 1024-yard radius or a 5120-cubic-foot defined volume would add five successes to the target number.

**Duration**

*Transitory Spells*

| Duration | Target Number |
|---|---|
| 1 turn | Basic success |
| 2 turns | +1 success |
| 3 turns | +2 success |
| 5 turns | +3 successes |
| 10 turns | +4 successes* |

* Add an additional success to the target number per extra +10 turns. For example, a 20-turn transitory Duration would add five successes to the target number.

*Prolonged Spells*

| Duration | Target Number |
|---|---|
| One scene/hour | Basic success |
| Two hours | +1 success |
| 12 hours | +2 successes |
| 24 hours | +3 successes |
| Two days | +4 successes* |

* Add an additional success to the target number per extra +2 days. For example, a four-day prolonged Duration would add five successes to the target number.

*Advanced Prolongation:* If a mage has dots in the spell's primary Arcanum that are one or more higher than normally required to cast the spell, he can increase the Duration by even more dramatic steps.

| Duration | Target Number |
|---|---|
| One scene/hour | Basic success |
| 24 hours | +1 success |
| Two days | +2 successes |
| One week | +3 successes |
| One month | +4 successes |
| Indefinite* | +5 successes |

* The spell is permanent until cancelled or dispelled. Living targets, however, grow, change and heal. Spells with an indefinite Duration cannot be cast upon a living creature.

### Relinquishing Control of Spells

Spells count against the total limit of spells a mage can actively maintain, determined by his Gnosis (see p. 75). A mage can choose to *relinquish* a spell from his control, allowing it to

continue on its own (until dispelled). To do so, one Willpower dot is sacrificed (it can be restored at the cost of eight experience points). Once he relinquishes such a spell, he can no longer dismiss it at will, restrict or limit its spell factors, or alter it in anyway using the normal rules for spell control (see "Spell Control," p. 128). It acts as if it were a spell cast by another mage.

Mages usually reserve relinquishment for indefinite Duration spells; the cost is judged to be too high for spells that will eventually dissipate after their Duration expires.

### Fast Casting to Ritual Casting

A mage's talent — his dice pool — might not be enough to produce all his desired factors, reducing him to a risky chance die. This is not enough to deter or defeat the Awakened, however. A mage can perform an instant-action spell as a ceremonial or ritual casting, performed as an extended action, allowing him to collect the factors over a series of rolls. He cannot perform extended-action spells as instant castings, though.

***Example:*** *Arctos wants to cast an improvised Forces 2 "Control Light" spell to brighten the beam of his flashlight, and he wants it to last a full day (24 hours). His Gnosis 3 + Forces 3 gives an unmodified dice pool of six. The 24-hour Duration levies a –6 dice penalty on the pool. Arctos' player is reduced to a chance die.*

*Arctos decides to cast the spell as an extended casting, which takes him longer (one hour per roll with his Gnosis of 3), but it gives his player a better dice pool. For the 24-hour prolonged Duration, three successes are added to the target number required. Since Arctos needs only a Potency of 1, the base target number is one success, for a total of four. With the player's six dice, he might get this amount in one roll, but it will more likely take two or three rolls (two or three hours of casting).*

A mage might wish to quit early and accept a weaker spell, or keep going and make a stronger spell once he has attained enough successes. In either case, a Willpower point must be spent to alter the Imago or else lose all accumulated successes.

The amount of time required per roll depends on the mage's Gnosis.

| Gnosis | Time per Roll |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | 3 hours |
| 3-4 | 1 hour |
| 5-6 | 30 minutes |
| 7-8 | 10 minutes |
| 9-10 | 1 minute |

Rolls must be made continuously. The caster may rest for only a short time between rolls — 10 minutes per dot of Gnosis. For this reason, mages who spend too much time spellcasting can suffer the effects of fatigue. See pp. 179-180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. A mage who cannot resume spellcasting between breaks loses all his accumulated successes. Mages sometimes use Life or Mind magic to help them resist the effects of fatigue before beginning a long ritual.

### Resistance Against Magic

Before dice are rolled for spellcasting, any resistance the target might have against magic must be considered, as it could affect the dice pool and outcome of the casting.

Living creatures have a degree of innate resistance to magic; their Patterns can sometimes resist change imposed from without. Consult the spell's description to see whether it allows the target some form of defense.

There are two types of innate protection against magic: "contested" resistance and "automated" resistance. Mages can also use countermagic to gain additional protection against spells. See "Countermagic," p. 122.

The target can choose *not* to resist a spell, but he must consciously choose to do so. Mind magic cannot be used to make a target let down his defenses. (Of course, the target might believe a mage casts a beneficial spell and so let down his defenses, but there's nothing to guarantee that the mage won't then betray that trust with a malicious spell.)

### Contested Resistance

Some spells allow a contested roll to be made for a target to avoid the magical effects. This is a reflexive roll, made right after the roll for the spellcaster. If successes equal or exceed those for the caster, the spell does not affect the target.

The spell description lists which Resistance Attribute is rolled for the target. Composure might be used to contest emotion-affecting spells and any spell intended to confuse his perception. Resolve might be used to contest mental effects, such as mind control or anything that diminishes his volition. For spells that affect him physically, such as a Death enervation spell, Stamina might be used to contest.

A mage's Gnosis is added to such a contested dice pool, giving her more potent defense against magic than a Sleeper gets.

**Contested Roll: Resistance Attribute + Gnosis**

If a target is aware that he is being magically attacked, a point of Willpower can be spent for a +3 dice bonus to his contesting dice pool.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The target succumbs completely to the spell. Its factors are the same, but their effects are more intense — pain is more painful, hypnosis more complete. At the Storyteller's discretion, the target might lose his action in this turn or the next as he is completely distracted by the spell.

**Failure:** The spell's effects are applied against the target.

**Success:** If the successes equal or exceed the caster's successes, the spell does not affect the target (or if the spell is an extended casting, the caster does not accumulate successes this roll).

**Extraordinary Success:** If the successes equal or exceed the caster's successes, the spell does not affect the target (or

if the spell is an extended casting, the caster does not accumulate successes this roll).

### Automated Resistance

The target's Resistance Attribute is subtracted from the spellcasting dice pool. The spell description lists the Attribute to use. If a spell affects multiple targets, the highest Resistance Attribute of all affected targets modifies the dice pool. Therefore, a mind-affecting spell that applies to three targets with Resolve scores of 2, 3 and 5 suffers a –5 penalty (the highest Resistance trait of the group). For extended-action castings, subtract the Resistance Attribute from each dice roll.

If a target is aware that he is being magically attacked, a point of Willpower can be spent for a +2 bonus to his Resistance trait.

## Supernatural Conflict

It's inevitable that mages come in contact with the other terrifying and bizarre denizens of the World of Darkness. Mages may clash with werewolves, vampires or stranger *things*. When such contact can't be resolved peacefully, supernatural powers and capabilities may be brought to bear to decide which creature prevails.

In this book, spells are applied against mortal human beings and against other mages. In those cases, the rules operate as written. There's little question as to what protection a target might have. A mortal probably has little protection against contestable spells other than his relevant Resistance Attribute, while a mage's Gnosis is added to his Resistance Attribute. For example, a mortal target of Mind magic has only his Resolve to apply in a contested roll against a mage's dice pool. Meanwhile, another mage who is the target of a Mind spell has a contested dice pool composed of Resolve + Gnosis.

So what happens when a mage encounters a supernatural being and is subjected to the powers that creature wields? How does the mage's inherent nature or capabilities protect him? In cases where a contested roll is made to determine the power's effects, the mage's relevant Resistance Attribute + Gnosis is rolled. The Resistance Attribute is any one of the mage's Stamina, Resolve or Composure. Stamina is used against powers that have a physical effect, Resolve is used against powers that have a mental effect, and Composure is used against powers that have an emotional effect.

For example, if a vampire seeks to Mesmerize your mage, roll Resolve + Gnosis in a contested action to resist. If a werewolf uses the Scent Beneath the Surface Gift to detect your mage's lies, roll Composure + Gnosis to resist.

Otherwise, follow all the other rules that apply for the power used.

The Storyteller can invoke this general rule whenever he confronts your character with monsters of his own creation — weird beings that may have never been seen before. Or he can allow you this kind of contested roll when your **Mage** chronicle overlaps with **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, **Vampire: The Requiem** or any other Storytelling game. When the Gifts, Disciplines or other powers from those games are turned upon your character, you know that his inherent potency as a creature of the night may afford him some protection.

Note, however, that such protection doesn't apply when no contested roll is allowed against the power used. Say the Storyteller rolls a dice pool to determine the effects of a werewolf's Gift turned on your mage, and the rules say your character's Resolve is simply subtracted from that pool. In that case, your mage's Gnosis is not subtracted from the pool as well. Since no contested roll is involved to fight off the power, your character's Resistance Attribute alone applies as a dice-pool penalty.

And be prepared! Just as mages get special defenses against the powers of other supernatural entities, so too do those beings get extra benefits against Awakened magic. When spells are combated with contested rolls, creatures such as werewolves and vampires get special dice pools based on their own otherworldly nature. Their extra protection is addressed in **Werewolf: The Forsaken, Vampire: The Requiem** and other Storytelling games.

### Countermagic

Mages have the ability to counter many uses of magic, particularly magic directed at them. Countermagic is in addition to any form of resistance against magic that a character already receives, as described above. Countermagic is applied before any roll is made to contest an incoming spell.

A mage has three different options for countermagic: "Dispel Magic" (see p. 220), whereby the he cancels existing spells; "Magic Shield" (see p. 222), whereby he shields himself against other spells; and "Counterspell" (see below), whereby the mage blocks an attacking spell with a special countering spell. The first two methods require the Prime Arcanum. "Counterspell" requires one dot in one of the Arcana used by the attacking spell.

### Counterspell
### (Any one of the attacking spell's Arcana at ●)

The mage creates Pattern interference that can weaken or even cancel a spell.

**Practice:** Shielding

**Action:** Instant and contested; successes are compared to the target spell's Potency

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

When someone directs a vulgar spell at the mage or other targets whom the mage wishes to protect, he can cast a countering spell that creates a form of magical interference, weakening or even canceling the attacking spell, similar to how an obstacle can act as cover against a ranged attack. He must first have Mage Sight to be able to perceive the attacking spell. Like a dodge action, he can cast Counterspell against vulgar spells cast by another mage with a higher Initiative. (He cannot counter attacks with lower Initiatives if he has already performed an action in the turn. See "Dodge," p. 156 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, for rules on how this circumvents the normal Initiative order for the turn.) A mage can even counter sympathetic spells cast directly at him (but not those cast at other targets), by sensing the sympathetic conduit being forged by the spell (again, he must have Mage Sight for this).

Successes are subtracted from the target spell's Potency. If the target spell is left with no Potency, it is canceled entirely. If even a single point of Potency remains, the spell is applied against its target (at its reduced Potency).

A covert spell cannot normally be countered, since the defending mage must first identify its Arcanum components using the normal rules for doing so (see "Scrutinizing Spells," p. 278). Such investigation is not normally possible within the same turn in which the spell is cast, although some Time magic might give a mage the extra time needed or clue him in on what spell the caster will cast before he casts it. Vulgar spells do not need this kind of scrutiny; they are obvious enough to counter within the same turn of casting.

A spell aimed at more than one target does not need to be countered for each target; a successful countering diminishes or prevents its effects against all targets.

A countering mage must have at least one dot in *one* of the Arcana used by the attacking spell. For example, to counter a conjunctional Mind 3 + Life 2 spell, a mage needs either Mind 1 or Life 1, but not both. If he does not have a proper Arcanum lore, he cannot counter the spell. Counterspell can be learned as a rote (use Occult Skill), but it must be learned separately for each Arcanum to which it applies.

A mage with two dots of Prime can instead use the "Counterspell Prime" spell, p. 222, to counter any spell, regardless of Arcanum. In addition, Counterspell Prime allows him to counter covert spells (assuming he has active Mage Sight) without first needing to identify them.

## Invoking a Paradox

Once a mage begins casting an instant spell (i.e., after the player has figured out all of the above elements for his character's spell), but *before* the spellcasting roll is actually made, the Storyteller checks for the possibility of a Paradox occurring. If the casting is an extended spell, the Paradox roll is made *after* the casting, and only if the casting was successful.

A Paradox might occur in the following situations:

- The mage casts a vulgar spell
- The mage casts a covert spell that a Sleeper witness believes is improbable

In any of these cases, the Storyteller makes a Paradox roll to see if the casting character has invoked a Paradox. The Paradox roll's base dice pool is determined by the caster's Gnosis.

| Gnosis | Base Paradox Dice Pool |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 die |
| 2 | 1 die |
| 3 | 2 dice |
| 4 | 2 dice |
| 5 | 3 dice |
| 6 | 3 dice |
| 7 | 4 dice |
| 8 | 4 dice |
| 9 | 5 dice |
| 10 | 5 dice |

The base dice pool is also modified by various conditions, including successive Paradox rolls. The more rolls made for Paradoxes, the higher your next dice pool becomes.

**General Modifiers**

| Dice Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| +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. In the case of an extended casting, this modifier applies to successive Paradox rolls made within the same *day*. |
| –1 | The mage is casting a rote |
| –1 | The mage uses a magical tool during casting |
| +2 | One or more Sleepers witnesses the magic (vulgar magic only) |

### Paradox Mitigation

Before Paradox dice are rolled, the caster's player can announce that his character tries to *mitigate* the chance of a Paradox by spending Mana to ease the passage of the spell into the world. One Mana is spent per die the player wants to subtract from the Paradox dice pool. This is a reflexive action. Points cannot exceed the amount of Mana the mage is normally allowed to spend per turn, based on his Gnosis (see p. 76), including the amount of Mana that must be spent for the spellcasting itself (see below).

## Magical Tools

A magical tool helps a mage decrease the chance of Paradox when imposing impossible or improbable phenomena onto mundane reality. If the mage uses a magical tool during casting, one die is subtracted from the Paradox dice pool rolled because of his spell. The types of magical tools from which a mage can choose are determined by his Path and order. He can choose them from either category. See "Magical Tools," p. 89.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The mage does not invoke a Paradox and the next Paradox roll made for him in the same scene (for an instant casting) or within the same day (for an extended casting) does not suffer the usual, cumulative +1 dice modifier.

**Failure:** The mage does not invoke a Paradox.

**Success:** A Paradox occurs, regardless of the casting's success or failure (see "Casting the Spell" below). The number of successes on the Paradox roll determines its severity. For more details on each type, see "Paradoxes," p. 268-273.

| Successes | Severity |
|---|---|
| 1 | Havoc |
| 2 | Bedlam |
| 3 | Anomaly |
| 4 | Branding |
| 5+ | Manifestation |

In addition, the caster's player subtracts one die per Paradox success from his casting roll. The worse the Paradox, the greater the chance that the spell doesn't succeed, or at least doesn't succeed as well as it otherwise would have. Either way, the Paradox still takes effect.

**Exceptional Success:** The mage suffers a Manifestation Paradox.

### Backlash

After the Paradox roll is made and the number of successes are revealed by the Storyteller, a caster can attempt to contain the Paradox in part or in full with his own flesh. He can choose to convert Paradox successes to bashing damage on a one-for-one basis. This is called a *backlash*.

A backlash is voluntary. If the mage is willing to suffer, he can eliminate any portion of the successes he wants to, or eliminate them all, as long as he has enough Health to withstand the damage. A self-sacrificing mage could even choose to use his last Health, thereby probably rendering himself unconscious.

Backlash damage is Resistant; it cannot be healed with Awakened magic, such as with the Life 2 "Self Healing" (p. 183) or Life 3 "Healing Heart" spells (p. 186), or with Pattern Restoration (see p. 77). Armor and magic do not protect against backlash damage.

## Resistant Damage

Pattern scouring (see p. 77) and Paradox backlash can cause Resistant Damage. This type of damage cannot be regenerated using supernatural means, although it heals at the normal rate. Bashing, lethal and aggravated damage can all be classified as Resistant.

When marking Resistant Damage on the character sheet, place a dot beneath the marked box. For instance, if a mage with seven dots of Health suffers two points of Resistant bashing damage from a Paradox backlash, his player would mark it like this:




If he later suffers a normal (i.e., non-Resistant) lethal point of damage, he'd move the two Resistant bashing damage wounds to the right, like so:




Using Life magic (or Pattern Restoration, p. 77), he can heal the single lethal point, but magic cannot heal the two Resistant bashing wounds.

### Example of Paradox

*Arctos casts an improvised vulgar spell. Before the roll is made to determine the success or failure of the spell, the Storyteller makes a Paradox roll, Arctos' first for this scene. Arctos' Gnosis is 3, so the base dice pool consists of two dice. There are no Sleeper witnesses, so there are no dice penalties, but Arctos is using a magical tool (an iron wand), reducing the Paradox dice pool by one die.*

*The Storyteller rolls a single die and gets one success, signifying a Havoc Paradox. The player subtracts one die from Arctos' spellcasting roll for the single Paradox success. Should the spell succeed, Arctos loses control of it according to the rules for a Havoc (see p. 268).*

*Later that scene, Arctos casts another improvised vulgar spell. The Paradox dice pool is two dice (two base dice for his Gnosis, +1 for the second Paradox roll within the same scene, –1 for a magical tool). Arctos' player announces that his character wants to mitigate the roll, spending one Mana to reduce the dice pool to a single die.*

*The Storyteller rolls the die and miraculously gets one success again. Arctos does not want another out-of-control spell. His player announces that Arctos suffers a backlash of one Resistant bashing Health wound to contain the Havoc and maintain control of his spell.*

## Casting the Spell

Once all the steps are complete, the mage casts the spell.

• *Rote Casting:* The mage must perform the rote's coded gestures, based on the secret signs of his order. For a covert spell, these are usually quite subtle, such as raising a single finger or eyebrow, while a vulgar spell usually requires hand gestures that might look like sign language to others. If he cannot perform the gesture at all, he cannot perform a rote casting. For more information, see "Rote Mudras," below.

• *Improvised Casting:* The mage does not necessarily need to perform a gesture or movement of any kind. To an onlooker, his involvement in the magic might seem completely inconsequential, depending on the effect. Some effects are obviously the work of the caster, however, such as many aimed spells (like Forces 4 "Thunderbolt," p. 173). Otherwise, the caster could even feign sleep while casting an improvised spell (as long as the target can still be sensed).

### Instant Spellcasting

As with any instant action, only one success is required for the spell to succeed.

*Remember:* If the spell invoked a Paradox, the Paradox roll's successes are subtracted from the casting roll as a penalty. At this point, the player *must* make the casting roll, even if he's been reduced to a chance die — he can't back out now.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The magic does not work. If the spell invoked a Paradox, its effects might be more severe at the Storyteller's discretion.

**Failure:** The magic does not work; the mage's imagination is not made real.

**Success:** The spell's effect takes place as imagined. Excess successes can be applied to the spell's primary factor. Note: If the target can *contest* the roll (see p.126) and his successes equal or exceed the spellcasting successes, the spell does not affect him.

**Exceptional Success:** The spell's effect takes place better than imagined.

### Extended Spellcasting

Each roll allows the mage to accumulate successes toward the total target number needed.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The magic fails and all accumulated successes are lost; the mage must start over again from scratch.

**Failure:** No progress is made (no successes are accumulated), although the mage can continue the spell.

**Success:** Successes are accumulated toward the total needed. Note: If the target can *contest* the roll (see p. 126) and his successes equal or exceed the spellcasting successes, the caster does not accumulate any successes this roll.

**Exceptional Success:** Successes are accumulated toward the total needed. Once the target number is met, the spell is cast. If, however, five or more successes are gained than are required, the spell's effect takes place in its most ideal form. The Storyteller decides what this means based on the spell and the situation. A Death spell is creepier, a Fate spell rings of destiny or a Mind-reading spell elicits just the right memory.

### Rote Mudras (Hand Formations)

A rote is a unique application of the art of memory. The mysteries of the mind have yet to be solved by even masters of the Mind Arcanum, and magic is more than just an operation of the intellect; it is intimately tied to the soul itself. Mages theorize that a spell's Imago is formed not so much in a mage's consciousness as in the recesses of his soul.

When an improvised spell is formalized into a rote, the spell's Imago is coded with the use of many mnemonics, or memory tools, designed to draw it forth from the soul (not merely the mind) into manifestation. In addition to the picture of the spell in the caster's mind, these mnemonics include associated words, and more importantly bodily gestures. As experts on memorization can tell you, giving an image three dimensions through associated movement or ritual actions can make it more vivid. In the case of a rote, each order has its own gestural mnemonics that casters must perform to unlock the rote from the recesses of the imagination. If they can't perform the gestures, they can't gain the rote's unique benefits of specialized dice pool and lowered Mana cost (although they can still cast an improvised version of the spell).

These gestures consist of secret signs used by each order. Many of these were first coded in Atlantis, although some are of more recent development. Covert spells generally use very subtle, almost unnoticeable gestures, such as lifting a finger, blinking an eye, or even twitching a nose. Vulgar spells are more obvious, usually consisting of hand gestures that might resemble a form of sign language to the uninformed. These movements are known in Eastern religions as *mudras* (Sanskrit for "seals" or "signs").

A mage who witnesses another mage casting a vulgar rote can identify a rote of his own order

by recognizing the mudras used. He cannot identify the mudras of other orders, since the orders keep these seals of power secret, forbidding members from teaching them to outsiders. Even if he were to learn a rote from a member of another order, a mage witness would know only the mudra used in that rote, not the various other mudras used in the order's other rotes. The complexity of a rote's mudras depends entirely on the rote's effect. Generally, the higher the Arcanum rating use, the more complex the mudra. There are allegedly different seals for the different magical practices, the Arcana, the spell's unique effect, and even for specific types of target and spell duration.

Most mudras use both hands, but that isn't necessary; only a single hand is needed. A mage who cannot form a hand mudra (perhaps because he has lost his hands) can instead learn rotes that are coded with facial gestures, although these rotes must be created specifically for use with facial mudras. (See "Designing Rotes," p. 291.) Mages from some cultures, such as New Zealander Maori, might prefer the use of facial mudras over hand mudras, as they scowl at their targets with a terrifying intensity.

### Mana Cost

Players spend points of Mana to allow mages to perform various feats of magic, including the following:

- **Improvised Magic:** Casting an improvised spell requires the expenditure of a point of Mana, unless the primary Arcanum used is one of the mage's Ruling Arcana.
- **Sympathetic Magic:** Casting a spell upon a target beyond sensory range requires the expenditure of a point of Mana. See "Sympathetic Spells," p. 114.
- **Aggravated Damage:** Mages must spend a point of Mana for a spell to inflict aggravated damage. The mage must first have the prerequisite Arcana dots to cast an aggravated effect, as described in the spell descriptions.
- **Power:** Certain effects that significantly alter the laws of nature or physics might require the expenditure of Mana, as described in the spell descriptions.

In the case of instant-action castings, the spell's entire Mana cost must be spent for the mage in a single turn, or he cannot cast the spell. See "Gnosis," p. 76, to determine the mage's maximum allowable Mana expenditure per turn. For extended-action castings, points can be spent over the course of the casting, as long as the total required points are spent by the final roll.

## Spellcasting Quick Reference

The steps for spellcasting are summarized here for quick and easy reference.

### Step One: Declare the Spell

Choose a spell from the descriptions listed with each Arcanum dot, pp. 133-267. The choice of spell determines the following:

**Action:** Instant (resolved in one turn with a single die roll) or extended (resolved over time with a series of rolls)

**Duration:** Lasting (the effect is permanent), concentration (the effect lasts as long as the mage spends instant actions concentrating upon it), transitory (one turn), or prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert (the spell's effect isn't obvious or can be explained away as coincidence) or vulgar (the spell's effect is obviously impossible; Paradox must be checked in Step Five)

#### Option: Create a New Spell

Instead of choosing from the listed spells, create your own spell. See "Creative Thaumaturgy," pp. 289-291. This is recommended only for players who are familiar with the magic rules.

### Step Two: Spellcasting Dice Pool

Determine whether the mage can perform a rote casting (he has spent experience points to learn the spell) or must perform an improvised casting.

- *Rote casting:* Add the specified Attribute + Skill + Arcanum to determine the caster's base spellcasting pool.
- *Improvised casting:* Add Gnosis + Arcanum to determine the caster's base spellcasting pool.

**Determine the Range**

The spell's range is sensory (the spell's target is in range of the mage's mundane senses) unless Space 2 is added to make it sympathetic (see p. 114).

**Magic Resistance**

Check to see if the spell allows the target protection against magic, either a reflexive contested roll or a Resistance Attribute that is subtracted from the spellcasting dice pool.

- *Countermagic:* If the target is a mage who wants to counter the spell, see "Countermagic," p. 122.

**Spell Factors (Optional)**

Choose whether to increase non-primary spell factors: Potency, Target or Duration. The dice pool is modified by additional factors. See p. 117.

## Step Three: Paradox

If the spell is vulgar or Improbable, the Storyteller checks for a Paradox, rolling a base dice pool based on the caster's Gnosis and modified by various conditions.

| Gnosis | Base Paradox Dice Pool |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 die |
| 2 | 1 die |
| 3 | 2 die |
| 4 | 2 die |
| 5 | 3 dice |
| 6 | 3 dice |
| 7 | 4 dice |
| 8 | 4 dice |
| 9 | 5 dice |
| 10 | 5 dice |

| Dice Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| +1 | Each successive Paradox roll made for the caster within the same scene (or day in the case of extended castings). This bonus accumulates with each roll. |
| –1 | The mage is casting a rote |
| –1 | The mage uses a magical tool during casting |
| +2 | One or more Sleepers witness the magic (vulgar magic only) |

**Mitigation (Optional)**

Declare if the caster wants to mitigate the Paradox dice pool by spending Mana (1 point per die subtracted)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The mage does not invoke a Paradox and the next Paradox roll made for him within the same scene (for an instant casting) or within the same day (for an extended casting) does not suffer the usual +1 dice modifier.

**Failure:** The mage does not invoke a Paradox.

**Success:** A Paradox occurs. The number of successes determines its severity. For more details on each type, see "Paradoxes," pp. 268-273.

| Successes | Severity |
|---|---|
| 1 | Havoc |
| 2 | Bedlam |
| 3 | Anomaly |
| 4 | Branding |
| 5+ | Manifestation |

In addition, the caster's player subtracts one die per Paradox success from his casting roll.

**Exceptional Success:** The mage suffers a Manifestation Paradox.

**Backlash (Optional)**

Declare if the caster wants to contain the Paradox with a backlash by suffering Resistant bashing wounds (one Health point per success on the Paradox roll).

## Step Four: Casting the Spell

Roll the modified dice pool (remember to impose any Paradox successes as a dice penalty). For rote casting, the mage must perform the required gestures. Improvised casting requires no special movement.

**Roll Results**

• *Instant Spell:* Only one success is required for the spell to succeed.

**Dramatic Failure:** The magic does not work. If the spell invoked a Paradox, its effects might be more severe, at the Storyteller's discretion.

**Failure:** The magic does not work; the mage's imagination is not made real.

**Success:** The spell's effect takes place as imagined. Excess successes can be applied to the spell's primary factor (see below). Note: If the target can *contest* the roll (see "Magic Resistance," in Step Two) and his successes equal or exceed the spellcasting successes, the spell does not affect him.

**Exceptional Success:** The spell's effect takes place better than imagined.

• *Extended Spell:* Each roll allows the mage to accumulate successes toward the total target number needed. The time per roll depends on his Gnosis (see p. 121).

**Dramatic Failure:** The magic fails and all accumulated successes are lost; the mage must start over again from scratch.

**Failure:** No progress is made (no successes are accumulated), although the mage can continue the spell.

**Success:** Successes are accumulated toward the total needed. Note: If the target can *contest* the roll (see "Magic Resistance," in Step Two) and his successes equal or exceed the spellcasting successes, the caster accumulates no successes this roll.

**Exceptional Success:** Successes are accumulated toward the total needed. Once the target number is met, the spell is cast. If, however, five or more successes are gained than are required, the spell's effect takes place in its most ideal form. The Storyteller decides what this means based on the spell and the situation. A Death spell is creepier, a Fate spell rings of destiny or a Mind-reading spell elicits just the right memory.

**Mana Cost**

Spend any Mana required for the spell. (Make sure the mage's Gnosis allows him to spend this amount in a single turn.)

*Improvised casting only:* If the highest Arcanum used is not one of the mage's Path's Ruling Arcana, spend 1 Mana.

*Sympathetic spells:* If the spell affects a target sympathetically, spend 1 Mana.

## Step Five: Apply the Spell's Effect

• If the spell succeeds, the spell alters reality as explained in the spell's description. (A Havoc Paradox might alter the desired effect; see p. 268.)

## General Spell Considerations

Some rules apply to all types of spells.

### Spell Control

A mage defines a spell before it is cast by creating an Imago. After a spell is cast, the mage has only a limited ability to redefine the spell's parameters.

Casters cannot expand the factors of an existing spell to include more targets, for example, or greater Potency or Duration. Such revision requires the mage to undo the existing spell and cast a new one with the expanded factors.

Mages can, however, *restrict* the factors of an existing spell to exclude targets, reduce the spell's Potency, or even eliminate it altogether. You can exclude a particular target from an existing spell's effect, such as excluding an ally from a warding spell to allow the ally to pass through the warded area. You can reduce a spell's Potency, so it has a lesser effect. You can even combine the two, reducing Potency against a particular target so the spell is still effective against that target, but at a reduced level. Finally, you can dismiss your own spells at will, essentially reducing their effect to nothing and ending the spell. Dismissing a spell is a reflexive action, while modifying a spell's factors is an instant action (regardless of the number of modifications).

All the above modifications are permanent, since you can't expand an existing spell's parameters. So if you exclude a target from a spell and later want to affect that target, you need to re-cast the spell. The same is true if you reduce a spell's Potency and later want a greater effect. And, obviously, if you dismiss a spell, you must re-cast it to re-establish the spell.

Exemptions for targets are made on an individual basis, per person, place or object. If you want to exempt a significant group of targets from a spell, such as all members of your order, all virgins or all redheads, you must incorporate Fate 2 into the spellcasting. See "Target Exemption," p. 154. You cannot add such broad exemptions to an existing spell (you must dismiss the spell and re-cast it). The Storyteller decides what exemptions are suitable for a given spell. Some exemptions — such as "everyone except my enemies" — may be considered too broad or vague.

### Spell Accumulation

A mage can tolerate only a certain number of spells cast on him before the resonance's signal-to-noise ratio interferes with his ability to cast magic. This effect is called "contagion," and a mage's ability to withstand it is called his Spell Tolerance, determined by his natural Stamina. Each spell cast upon him (by himself or others) in excess of his Stamina levies a –1 dice penalty to any spellcasting roll made for him. He suffers this penalty for as long as the total number of spells exceeds his Spell Tolerance. The exception to this rule is a spell that lasts for only an instant (one turn); its effect is too fleeting to interfere, so it doesn't count toward the mage's Spell Tolerance total.

Mages are very careful in allowing others to cast magic upon them, even beneficial magic. Likewise, the spells of enemies such as curses and degradations can combine to interfere with the subject's spellcasting, making those afflictions even more troublesome than they might otherwise be.

Enchanted or imbued items that a mage wears or carries count toward his Spell Tolerance, but not as strongly. An item counts as only one spell toward Spell Tolerance for every two spells (or fraction thereof) that are enchanted or imbued into it. For example, an item imbued with one or two spells counts as one spell toward Spell Tolerance, while an item imbued with three or four spells counts as two spells. See "Enchanted and Imbued Items," p. 280, for more details about such items.

In addition, multiple spells with the same effect on the same target do not "stack" or accumulate. Only the spell with the highest Potency takes precedence. The other spells of the same kind remain, and may take effect if the Duration of the most potent spell expires, but they have no effect on Spell Tolerance until then.

For example, if a mage casts a "Magic Shield" spell (see p. 222) on a subject, granting two points of armor against spells, and then casts another Magic Shield spell granting four points of armor, the subject has four points of armor, not two or six. If the four-point spell wears off before the other, the subject still has two points of armor remaining (from the first spell). In terms of Spell Tolerance, only the four-point spell applies to the subject's total.

Note that such precedence applies to only spells with the same effect, not just the same Arcanum. If a subject has a Strength-boosting Life spell, then a Stamina-boosting Life spell, or any other Life spell cast on him, they all affect the subject normally. Another Strength-boosting spell, however, does not stack with the first. Only the most potent spell takes effect, and both count as one toward Spell Tolerance.

#### Supernatural Creatures and Spell Tolerance

Spell Tolerance also applies to vampires and werewolves who have spells cast upon them. Their dice pools for their active supernatural powers — Disciplines, Devotions, Gifts and rites — are affected if the number of spells exceeds their Spell Tolerance. A werewolf's dice pools to prevent Death Rage are also affected.

### Combined Spells

The Arcanum descriptions explain discrete spells and their effects. Sometimes, however, a mage wants more than one of these spells to take place with a single casting. The result is called a *combined spell*. The chief advantages of a combined spell are that it counts as only one spell toward the total the mage may have active at the same time (see above), and all its effects activate simultaneously.

The drawback is that the mage must have a certain degree of expertise in the Arcana used (+1 dot above the rating normally required for the spell), along with increasing de-

grees of Supernal understanding (Gnosis) for the combining of more than two spells.

| Number of Spells Combined | Required Gnosis |
|---|---|
| Two | 3 |
| Three | 6 |
| Four | 9 |

***Example:*** *Arctos has Gnosis 3, Forces 3 and Mind 2. He wishes to combine a Forces 3 and a Mind 2 spell, but realizes — to his frustration — that he can't do it, even though his Gnosis allows it. He needs Forces 4 and Mind 3, because his Arcana competence in both spells must be one dot higher than normally required for their casting.*

Mages cannot combine the same spell or spells with the same effects. For example, a mage cannot combine a spell that boosts his Intelligence with a different spell that boosts both Intelligence and Wits. Combined spells are still limited by the normal rules for spell accumulation (see above).

If the caster knows one of the combined spells as a rote, but the other is improvised, the combined spell cannot be cast as a rote. It must be improvised.

### Casting Combined Spells

Once it's determined that it is possible for a character to cast the desired combined spell, two dice are subtracted from the spellcasting dice pool per additional spell after the first.

*Combined Spell:* –2 dice per additional spell

The *lowest* dice pool of the two spells is rolled. For example, if the mage combines a Forces 3 spell with a Mind 2 spell, not only must he have Forces 4 and Mind 3 to be able to cast the combined effect, but the lowest of the two spell's dice pools is used.

For extended castings, the target number of successes is equal to the total needed for all the combined spells. For instant spells, the successes rolled are allocated between each spell's effect, in any combination the player wishes. (Extended and instant spells cannot be combined into the same casting.)

***Example:*** *Zeno casts a spell to slow down and turn aside a speeding bullet. He combines the Forces 4 "Control Velocity" (p. 172) and "Turn Projectile" (p. 171) spells. He has Forces 5 and Gnosis 5, so he's capable of achieving the combined casting. Two dice are subtracted from his pool for the additional spell. Three successes are rolled.*

*Referencing the spell descriptions, Zeno's player applies two successes to the Turn Projectile effect, allowing Zeno to turn the bullet 60 degrees from its course, while the remaining success is applied to the Slow Projectile effect to slow the bullet enough to subtract one point of damage from its impact. Both effects take place at once.*

If only one success is gained on the casting, it applies to only one of the spells. The other spell does not take effect. The mage fails to juggle the complexities involved and properly account for both spell possibilities.

### Group Rituals

Mages can cooperate to cast extended-action spells, combining their efforts. This is handled like any other action where characters combine their efforts (see "Teamwork" in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134). The mages involved in the ritual must all be capable of casting the spell, having the necessary Arcanum ratings and so forth. If the spell is a rote, only the leader must know the rote.

One caster is designated the leader, with the other mages as helpers. At the end of each turn of casting, a spellcasting roll is made for each of the helpers as if each is casting the spell herself. Successes are added as bonus dice to the leader's spellcasting roll. A dramatic failure on the part of *any* participant in the ritual causes the entire ritual to fail.

#### Teamwork and Symbolic Cabals

Cabals often form themselves around a magical theme (see p. 35). The benefit of a symbolic cabal is a slight boost to its members' willworking when done in tandem. If all members of the cabal participate in a spellcasting, each gains a +1 bonus to teamwork rolls. This bonus only applies, however, if the cabal's symbolic theme can be integrated into the spell.

## The Secrets of the Universe: Arcana

The mages of Atlantis codified the workings of the universe into a metaphysical system involving 10 elementary forces. They called these elements the "Arcana," for each revealed secrets about aspects of reality beyond the mundane. As a means of conceiving the inconceivable, the Atlanteans devised a metaphor for the universe: the Tapestry. The threads of this great weave were composed of the 10 Arcana, and their warp and weft made up the Patterns within the Tapestry.

Then the Celestial Ladder was shattered, creating the Abyss and dividing the worlds. While the Arcana still represent reality, their true power only faintly manifests in the Fallen World in the most fundamental and static ways, recognized as the common, unyielding laws of physics. They are now truly manifest only in the Supernal World in varying degrees within the five realms. To weave the Arcana's strands, a mage must draw them down into the Fallen World by way of the Watchtower of his Path's realm.

#### The Atlantean Pentagram

The mages of Atlantis developed an image to illustrate the interrelations of the Arcana: the pentagram. This well-known symbol of magic has been used by various cultures throughout history to represent different aspects of magic, from the five classical elements (earth, air, fire, water and spirit) of the West to the five elements (earth, metal, fire, water and wood) of the East.

In the Atlantean configuration, the subtle Arcana form the points while the gross Arcana form the lines between them. Imagine the pentagram as a clock face with the points marking 12 o'clock, three o'clock, five o'clock, seven o'clock and nine o'clock. Drawing the pentagram, you begin at the top, at 12 o'clock and make a line from 12 o'clock to five o'clock. This is the "creation" or "invocation" cycle, associated with magic that brings things into existence or that nurtures existing things. It goes like this:

Prime marks 12 o'clock, and Forces marks the line from 12 to 5.

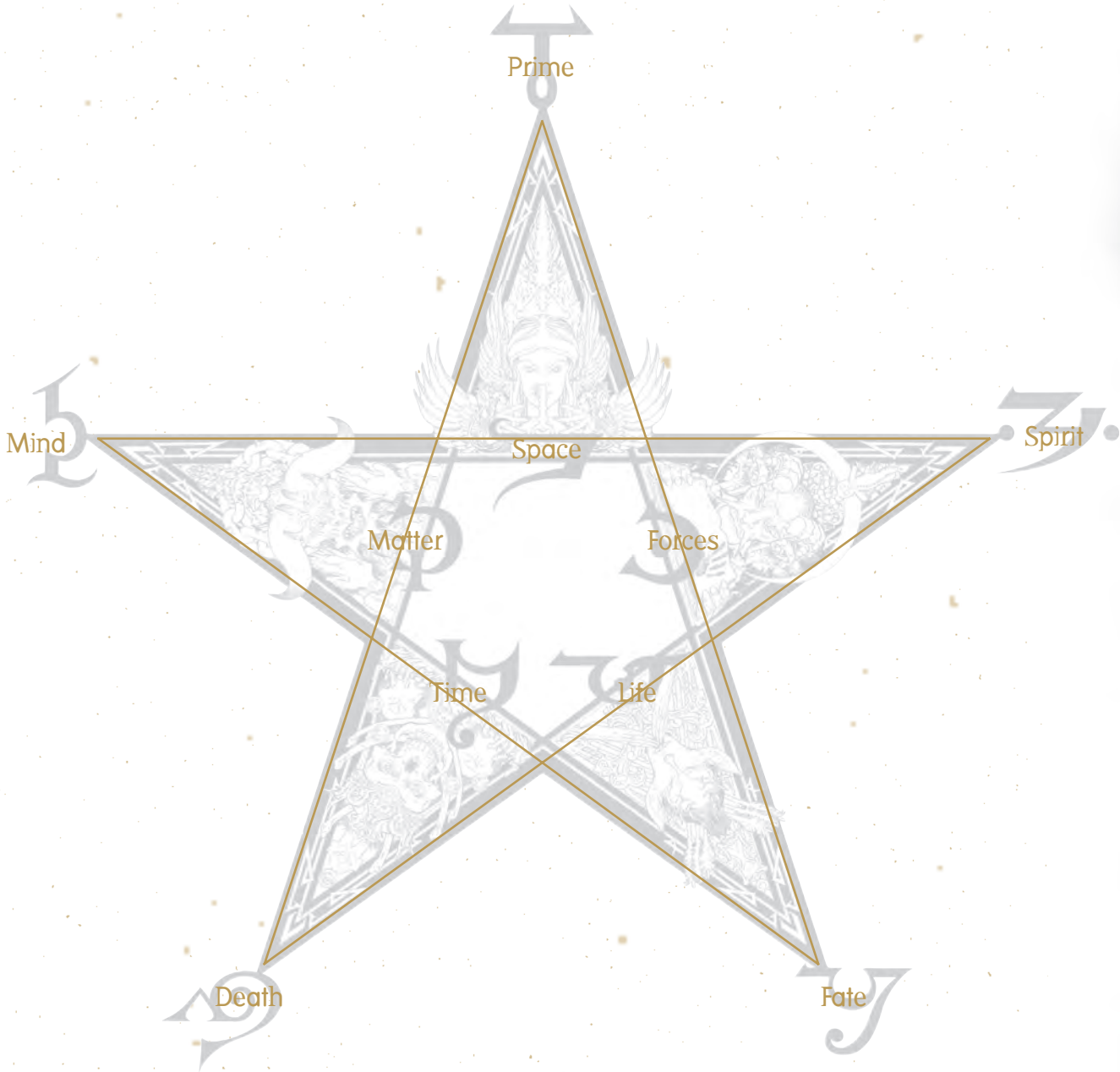
Fate marks five o'clock, and Time marks the line from 5 to 9.

Mind marks nine o'clock, and Space marks the line from 9 to 3.

Spirit marks three o'clock, and Life marks the line from 3 to 7.

Death marks seven o'clock, and Matter marks the line from 7 to 12.

If you were to start at Death (seven o'clock) and draw backward to three o'clock and so forth, you would draw the "banishing" cycle, which is associated with magic that removes things from existence or that harms existing things.



## Spell Format

Each Arcanum description includes a list of spells available at each dot. These descriptions contain the following information about spells. (The rules for spellcasting begin on p. 110.)

### Spell Title

Brief description of the spell's effect.

**Practice:** One of the 13 magical practices identified by the Atlanteans, defining just what a mage can accomplish with increasing degrees of Arcana mastery. See "Magical Proficiency," below.

**Action:** Instant or extended. See "Casting Action," p. 111.

**Aspect:** Covert or vulgar. See "Spell Aspect," p. 112.

**Cost:** Any Mana requirement for casting the spell, above the normal point needed to cast an improvised spell. See "Mana Cost," p. 126.

Then there's a detailed rules description of the spell's effect, including its primary factor (for instant spells).

**Sample Rote**

Each effect is listed with a sample rote from one of the five major orders. Rotes are not exclusive to any single order; most orders have their own versions of known spells. The Skill listed for a rote's dice pool, however, does not change from order to order. It's a trait inherent to the spell, and not dependent upon one particular order's own unique means of casting. Different orders might use different Attributes, though. Generally, the order most known for using that rote is listed. Sometimes another order's alternate means of casting a rote is described. For those orders not mentioned, assume they use the same dice pool as the primary order described for that rote.

## Magical Proficiency

When the higher world is imposed upon the lower world, anything can be accomplished — assuming a caster knows the right combination of Arcana. The Arcana descriptions provide an extensive list of spells possible with each dot. Not every possible spell can be listed, however. Players' ingenuity and imagination will surely expand beyond these descriptions. Whenever a character attempts an effect not described in the following pages, refer to the "Creative Thaumaturgy" section, pp. 289-291.

As a mage progresses in his understanding of the Arcana, new powers become available to him.

### 1 Dot — Initiate

With one dot in an Arcanum, an initiate can:

- Gain mystical knowledge about and understanding of phenomena within the Arcanum's purview. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Knowing.
- Elementary manipulation of phenomena within the Arcanum's purview, enough to activate them and/or impart directions. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Compelling.
- Gain sensory perception of phenomena within the Arcanum's purview. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Unveiling.

A mage performs these practices with elementary understanding. As he rises in Arcanum lore (i.e., dots), he gains more advanced facility with these practices. For example, with Prime 1, a mage can cast the Unveiling spell "Supernal Vision" (p. 221) upon himself. With Prime 2, he can cast it upon others (see "Primal Flow," p. 222).

### 2 Dots — Apprentice

With two dots in an Arcanum, an apprentice can:

- Exert elementary command and control over phenomena within the purview of the Arcanum. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Ruling.
- Conceal, camouflage or hide phenomena within the Arcanum's purview from scrutiny. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Veiling.
- Protect a target against attacks, usually by providing points of armor. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Shielding.

In addition, he can perform advanced-level applications of the 1st-dot practices.

### 3 Dots — Disciple

With three dots in an Arcanum, a disciple can:

- Alter the capabilities or functions of phenomena within the Arcanum's purview. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Weaving.
- Injure a target. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Fraying.
- Fortify, bolster or improve phenomena within the Arcanum's purview. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Perfecting.

In addition, he can perform advanced-level applications of the 1st and 2nd-dot practices.

### 4 Dots — Adept

With four dots in an Arcanum, an adept can:

- Transform phenomena within the Arcanum's purview into related phenomena or shapes, or replace their capabilities or functions with different ones. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Patterning.
- Significantly injure a target, degrade its capabilities or negatively transform it. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Unraveling.

In addition, he can perform more advanced-level applications of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd-dot practices.

### 5 Dots — Master

With five dots in an Arcanum, a master can:

- Create phenomena within the Arcanum's purview from nothing. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Making.
- Destroy or mutilate a target. Atlanteans called this the Practice of Unmaking.

In addition, he can perform advanced-level applications of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th-dot practices. Further understanding is only disclosed to archmages. See "Archmastery," p. 290.

## The Laws of Higher Realities

The laws of the five Supernal Realms are represented by Arcana, classified as *ruling*, *common* and *inferior*.

*Ruling* Arcana are the most potent, those that describe the primary reality of a realm. Mages who walk that realm's Path may learn up to 5 dots in these Arcana with no need for instruction from mages of other Paths. It costs *new dots x6* experience points to learn either of the Ruling Arcana for one's Path.

*Common* Arcana are just that: common principles of that reality. Mages can learn up to 4 dots in a Path's common Arcana. To learn the 5th dot, they must seek instruction from a mage who follows the Path where those Arcana rule. See "Drawing Down New Realms," below. It costs *new dots x7* experience points to learn a Common Arcanum for one's Path.

*Inferior* Arcana are gross principles that are barely present within that realm. Mages can learn up to 2 dots in a Path's Inferior Arcanum at a cost in experience points of *new dots x8*. After that, they must seek out a teacher from another Path if they wish to increase proficiency; see "Drawing Down New Realms," below.

### The Aether (Path Obrimos)

**Ruling** (• to •••••): Forces/Prime

**Common** (• to ••••): Fate, Life, Matter, Mind, Space, Spirit, Time

**Inferior** (• to ••): Death

### Arcadia (Path Acanthus)

**Ruling** (• to •••••): Time/Fate

**Common** (• to ••••): Death, Life, Matter, Mind, Prime, Space, Spirit

**Inferior** (• to ••): Forces

### Pandemonium (Path Mastigos)

**Ruling** (• to •••••): Space/Mind

**Common** (• to ••••): Death, Fate, Forces, Mind, Space, Spirit, Time

**Inferior** (• to ••): Matter

### Primal Wilds (Path Thyrsus)

**Ruling** (• to •••••): Life/Spirit

**Common** (• to ••••): Death, Fate, Forces, Matter, Prime, Space, Time

**Inferior** (• to ••): Mind

### Stygia (Path Moros)

**Ruling** (• to •••••): Matter/Death

**Common** (• to ••••): Fate, Life, Matter, Mind, Prime, Space, Time

**Inferior** (• to ••): Spirit

## Drawing Down New Realms

While a mage cannot draw down magic from his Path realm that is rated higher than his realm allows, he can learn how to draw it from other realms where such magic is possible. He does this by seeking instruction in the Arcana from mages of other Paths. Through their tutelage, he can learn to draw energy from their Path realms by directing it through his own Path's Watchtower. All his own magic is always cast by way of his Path's Watchtower, but he can now use that tower to draw down laws from other Supernal Realms.

The maximum dots a mage can learn in an Arcana on his own is limited by his realm's ruling, common and inferior Arcana, as listed above. He can rise above these limitations only by learning from a mage whose Path allows the dot-rank he seeks. His instructor need not even know the sought after dot-rank himself; all he needs to impart to the student are the rules of his realm. For example, a Thyrsus mage could teach Death 4 to another mage, because that is a Common Arcanum in the Primal Wild, but he couldn't teach the 5th dot in that Arcanum; only Stygians can do that.

In gameplay terms, this means the mage who seeks to exceed his Path's limits in an Arcanum must make a deal with another mage for tutelage. The period of instruction varies, but it should require no less than one month in which at least one full day of tutelage per week is practiced. Once this study period is complete, experience points can be spent to raise the mage's Arcanum, but he cannot raise it higher than the rating allowed by the realm he has just studied. For example, if an Acathus mage learns Forces from a Mastigos mage, he is limited to learning four dots, because Forces is a Common Arcanum for Pandemonium, the Mastigos mage's Path Realm.

Of course, few mages give such instruction for free. They usually exact a price, whether in service, cash or magic.

# Death

**Purview:** Darkness, decay, ectoplasm, enervation, ghosts, soul stealing

Death is a gruesome and terrible Arcanum. With it, a mage can exert control over that most primal and frightful of mysteries. Ghosts and the dead fall under the purview of this Arcanum, as does the health of the soul.

Those who delve deeply into the Mysteries of Death are often (though not necessarily) morbid people, given to considerable introspection regarding mortality, decay and endings. Many such individuals had too close a brush with their own mortality at some point. Out of fear (or disdain), they attempt to master the very metaphysical constant responsible for claiming those whose time has passed, seeking to define the limits of their own existence rather than being subject to the whims of a cold and impersonal universe. Like the Arcanum they pursue, such mages tend to be subtle, owing much less (despite what others might think) to bad horror movies and heavy metal than to a pervasive, cold and clinical outlook on Creation, one in which they have already perceived the destiny of everything and flensed away their fear in the crucible that is the knowledge that all things must die in time.

## Ruling Realm: Stygia

The gross/subtle pair of Matter/Death provides the Ruling Arcana of Stygia, that bleak land where disincarnated souls gain rest until called upon to incarnate again into the cycle of life. Death is the ephemeral expression of that pair.

In Atlantean metaphysics, the function of Death is to root the soul in the material world, to give it an anchor for its sojourn in the world. Death draws the soul down into matter and density with an inexorable gravity. But it also releases the soul in time by decaying the body to which it is tied, freeing the soul to return to the Supernal World with the memories of all its bodily experiences. These memories, entered into the Book of Stars, lend weight and fresh meaning to the ethereal heavens.

In the current age of the Fallen World, most have forgotten this core truth, and use the power of Death for debased reasons. Necromancers manipulate the shades of the departed for selfish gain. The Atlanteans did not believe that ghosts were conscious beings. They were not even "beings," but *things*. They were shells left behind by the soul, still bearing the imprint or form of the soul. They mimicked consciousness, still "wearing" the personality and behavior of the departed soul. Atlanteans also believed that the soul could never ascend back to its source as long as its shell was still intact and bound to a worldly anchor. In essence, to manipulate the shell was to also affect the soul that once owned it. Much of the instinctive terror that this Arcanum evokes is attributed to its power over the soul.



## Initiate of Death

The mage can cast any of the following spells as an improvised spell, or he can create his own spells using the guidelines given at the end of this chapter in "Creative Thaumaturgy," pp. 289-291. He can also learn to cast these spells as rotes by learning them from another mage of his order. (You must spend experience points for your character to learn rotes; see "Rotes," p. 69.)

> Like the fly that nourishes itself on death, I discern the specter of the grave in all its manifestations, from the grossest to the most rarified. I see unquiet ghosts and speak their whispered tongue. I know the ailing spirit for what it is. I scent the Reaper upon the wind and follow him to his hiding place, no matter how he seeks to conceal himself from me. I shape the very stuff of darkness, making it cast shadows of my own design.

### Ectoplasmic Shaping (Death ●)

The mage can alter the form of an ectoplasmic manifestation (see "Ectoplasm," p. 136), shaping it with his will into whatever form he desires. He must contend with the will of the mage who conjured the ectoplasm or the ghost who manifests through it.

**Practice:** Compelling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target reflexively rolls Resolve + Gnosis (mage) or Resistance (ghost)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

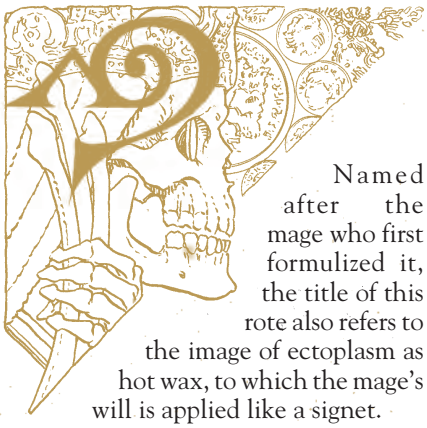
**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Successes are used as Potency to wrest control of the ectoplasm from the mage or ghost who currently controls it.

**Mysterium Rote: The Seal of Harafax**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult + Death vs. Resolve + Gnosis (mage) or Resistance (ghost)



Named after the mage who first formulized it, the title of this rote also refers to the image of ectoplasm as hot wax, to which the mage's will is applied like a signet.

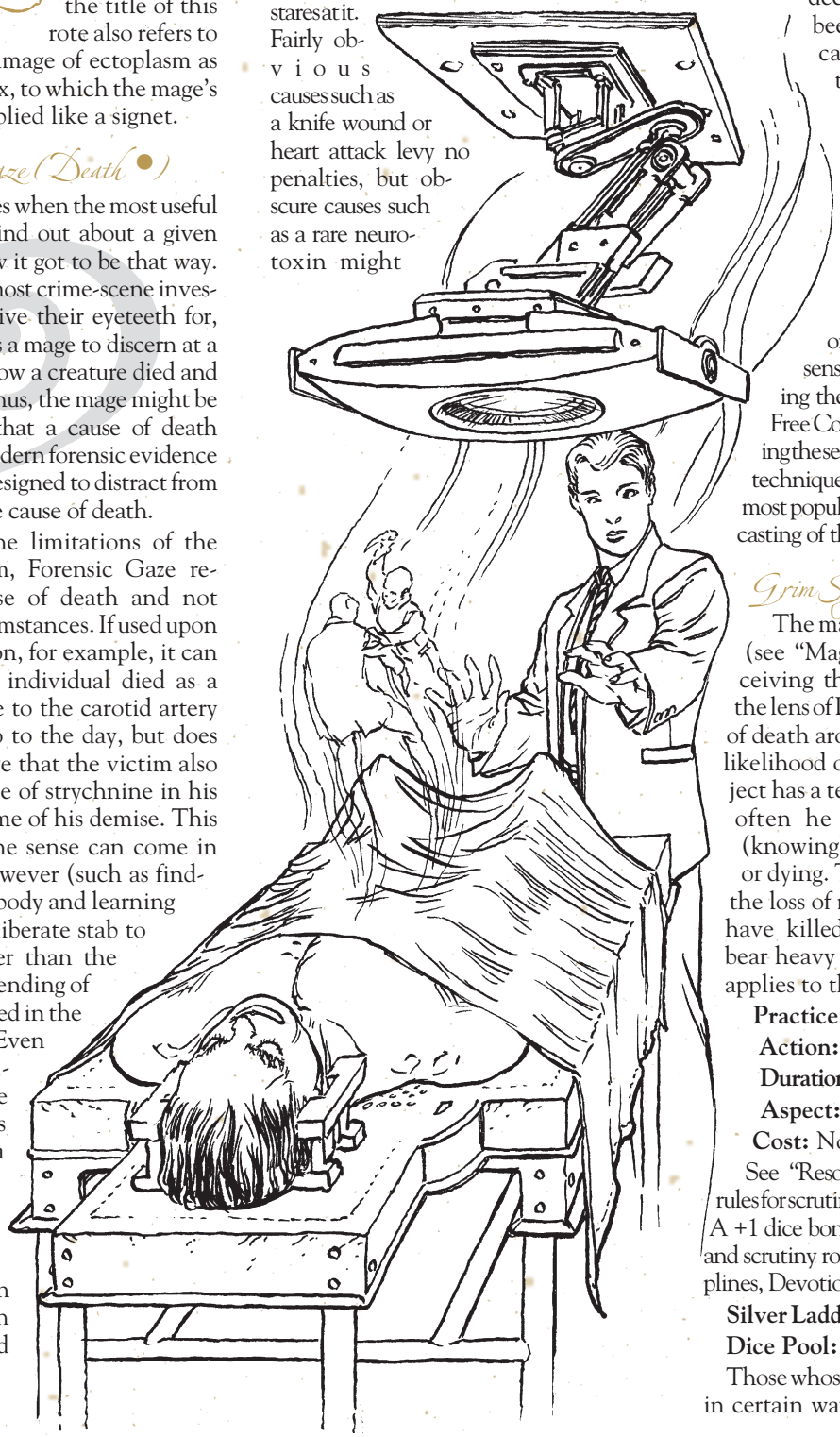
### Forensic Gaze (Death ●)

There are times when the most useful thing one can find out about a given dead body is how it got to be that way. An ability that most crime-scene investigators would give their eyeteeth for, this spell enables a mage to discern at a glance exactly how a creature died and how long ago. Thus, the mage might be able to realize that a cause of death obvious to all modern forensic evidence is in fact a ruse designed to distract from the subject's true cause of death.

Because of the limitations of the Death Arcanum, Forensic Gaze reveals only cause of death and not mitigating circumstances. If used upon a human skeleton, for example, it can reveal that the individual died as a result of damage to the carotid artery two months ago to the day, but does not tell the mage that the victim also had a lethal dose of strychnine in his system at the time of his demise. This limitation on the sense can come in quite handy, however (such as finding a mutilated body and learning that it was a deliberate stab to the heart, rather than the obvious manic rending of flesh, that resulted in the person's death). Even if physical evidence of the cause of death is absent (as with a body reduced to ash), this spell reveals what killed the being in question and how much time has passed since it died.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage peers at a corpse to ascertain the cause of death. He does not need to touch, prod or cut into the corpse; he merely stares at it. Fairly obvious causes such as a knife wound or heart attack levy no penalties, but obscure causes such as a rare neurotoxin might cause a –2 or greater penalty. Likewise, deaths that took place more than a year ago suffer –1 dice. Deaths older than a decade suffer an additional –1 dice per decade.



It is possible to detect a vampire with this spell, although the cause of death (the Embrace) is extremely obscure (–3 penalty). The caster also suffers the usual penalty of –1 die per decade that the vampire has been dead. Zombies, too, can be detected, although their state is usually obvious even to those without this spell.

**Free Council Rote: Reaper's Scent**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Death

This rote relies not only on sight, but on the olfactory senses to aid the mage in reading the secrets of a corpse. Some Free Council mages enjoy employing the seemingly miraculous forensic techniques seen in many of today's most popular prime-time shows in the casting of this rote.

### Grim Sight (Death ●)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110), perceiving the supernatural through the lens of Death. He sees the weight of death around a person — not his likelihood of death (unless the subject has a terminal illness), but how often he has rubbed shoulders (knowingly or not) with the dead or dying. Those who have suffered the loss of many loved ones or who have killed many people tend to bear heavy burdens. This sight also applies to things or places.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules for scrutinizing magic with this sight. A +1 dice bonus is gained on perception and scrutiny rolls to sense vampiric Disciplines, Devotions and rituals.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Aura of Gloom**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

Those whose lives have been touched in certain ways by Death can be ma-

nipulated through that contact. Using this rote, a mage can perceive another's grief through a recent loss, and use this knowledge to manipulate that person's emotional vulnerability. It can be used to identify murderers who have otherwise concealed their crimes from all knowledge (although this rote reveals no details about the murder, only that the target has blood on his hands). Some members of the Adamantine Arrow use a similar rote to size up a person as a potential threat.

### Shadow Sculpting (Death •)

While the Forces Arcanum teaches a mage how to ignite or snuff out a light, it gives no power over the quality of darkness. In Atlantean cosmology, darkness was not merely the absence of light, but an active force. An initiate of Death learns how to manipulate that force, giving form to existing shadows or thickening them. Mages use this spell to hide themselves from easy scrutiny, literally hiding in shadows, and even sculpting shadows to best cover themselves or an awkwardly shaped object that otherwise might jut out into the light under natural conditions.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

A simple success allows a mage to shape a one-yard radius area of shadows or darkness into shapes of his choosing, or he can thicken its gloom, making shadows deeper even under bright light. The Storyteller assesses the quality of existing shadows, categorizing them into three degrees: from light to dark to complete darkness. Each success deepens the darkness by one degree. Once complete darkness is achieved, additional successes impose dice penalties to perception rolls on a one-for-one basis for anyone peering into the area.

With Death 2, the mage can give shadows animation, while Death 3 allows him to conjure them.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Fall of Night**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

Sleepers rarely believe in anything more than what they can see. When a phenomenon is masked by shadows, most simply walk away, unwilling to delve any deeper into Mysteries best left to the Awakened.

### Soul Marks (Death •)

This sense enables a mage to perceive a soul's health. He can discern the presence of derangements, but not necessarily their kind (that might require a period of study with an extended Intelligence + Empathy roll). Other kinds of soul marks can also be detected, such as the telltale signs of a mage who has created a soul stone (see "Soul Stones," p. 277). Some soul marks (such as serving as a vampiric vessel) are sufficiently rare and insidious as to penalize rolls made to perceive them.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Wounds of the Soul**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Death

Arrow mages seek to exploit any weakness their enemies might display. Conversely, this rote can also be used to detect vulnerabilities amongst one's allies.

### Speak with the Dead (Death •)

The mage can see, hear and speak with ghosts within Twilight. He can also detect their unseen presence, if they are hiding or have chosen not to reveal themselves. He can see spirits within Twilight, too, but they appear hazy and indistinct and he cannot hear them, unless he also uses Spirit 1 while casting this spell. He cannot perceive mental projections unless he adds Mind 1 to the casting.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

This spell's successes must equal or exceed the Potency of any power (if any) used to conceal the ghost.

**Mysterium Rote: Clamor of the Departed**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

Long have the Awakened known that the dead keep secrets. Mages of the Mysterium use this magic to learn such lost lore. More pragmatically, willworkers of the Adamantine Arrow have sometimes been known to use this rote to ask questions of allies or enemies recently slain.



## •• Apprentice of Death

*The secrets I have learned enable me to transmute the face of death. I can command audience with those spirits of the dead that haunt our world, and my hands reach into the realm they inhabit, there to use either the comforting touch of friendship or the closed fist of retribution. I can conjure ectoplasm, the substance by which the dead manifest themselves. Those things that are possessed by the restless shades are mine to grasp and draw into our world for a time. I can cause steel to rust or wood to rot, and I can silence the singing in the spirit that marks one as Awakened, going unnoticed among even the most perceptive of our kind.*



### Animate Shadows (Death ●●)

As with Shadow Sculpting, above, but the mage can now cause the darkness to move, even causing it to travel from its naturally occurring place to somewhere darkness could not possibly exist, such as beneath the direct glare of a lamp.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

The Speed at which the darkness can flow (directed by the caster as a reflexive action) is equal to the caster's Gnosis + Death + the spell's Potency.

**Mysterium Rote: Light's Nemesis**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

Occasionally, the business of discovering the knowledge of the ancients is better pursued under cover of darkness than with a lantern proudly outstretched to dispel the shadows of ignorance.

### Corpse Mask (Death ●●)

The mage alters the appearance of death by adding or subtracting features from a corpse. The mage could, for example, make the small pile of ashes left behind by a person killed by fire look as though she died from a stab wound to the neck. In this fashion, mages have turned murder most foul into seeming accidents or the product of natural causes, or taken a perfectly innocent circumstance (quiet heart failure in the night or a tumble down a flight of stairs) and used it to frame someone for a killing she never committed.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage can add or subtract one feature per success. A feature represents a single wound or disease condition, such as a laceration caused by a knife, burns caused by exposure to a conflagration, or a cancerous tumor in the target's liver.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Mortician's Touch**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Death

Even the most savvy coroner can be put off the trail of a blatantly paranormal death by means of this rote. Guardians thus preserve the integrity of the Mysteries. Adamantine Arrow mages, in the course of their work, must also sometimes occlude the truth behind a killing, so they too make use of this magic (Wits + Subterfuge + Death).

### Decay (Death ●●)

The mage can cause a material object to corrode, rust or become rotten.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

This spell lowers the object's Durability by one point per success, but it does not affect the object's Structure (for that effect, see "Destroy Object," p. 139). The degraded Durability cannot be repaired by normal (non-magical) means.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Return to Dust**
**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Intimidation + Death

Mundane weapons are of little use against Arrow mages, for they can be rendered brittle and easily destroyed. Guardians of the Veil sometimes use a similar rote (Resolve + Intimidation + Death) in preparation for destroying surveillance equipment used to capture evidence of the unseen world.

### Ectoplasm (Death ●●)

The mage can create ectoplasm from one of his orifices (usually his mouth or nostrils) or the orifice of a corpse. This opaque, white, slick material can be molded to form whatever shape the mage desires, although it cannot be disguised to look like some other substance (unless the mage adds Matter 2 to the casting). The mage could use it as a mirror to allow anyone (even Sleepers) to see ghosts or objects that are present in Twilight.

Most often, it is used to allow a Twilight ghost to manifest without suffering any dice modifiers for location or the presence of mortals. The ectoplasm takes the shape of the ghost's own image.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Successes are allocated between the ectoplasm's Size (base 5 or less, plus one per allocated success) and its solidity. Its base solidity is like a spider web's, but allocated successes can make this denser and thicker, giving the ectoplasm some weight and increasing detail. A ghost that manifests through ectoplasm with one success of solidity has only vague features. With two successes, its face can be recognized by those who knew it in life. Five successes make it look almost real (except for its uniform white color). Even with five successes (the maximum solidity), a material being or object can pass through the ectoplasm with little resistance. A manifesting ghost is not affected by damage to its ectoplasmic "body"; it merely becomes harder to make out its features.

The ectoplasm remains for one hour or for the rest of the scene.

**Free Council Rote: A Mirror Darkly**
**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult + Death

Spectral manifestations are intrinsic to the "new" definition of the occult. This rote enables Council mages to facilitate the appearance of such apparitions, especially before the eyes of those turning to scientific (or other non-traditional) aspects of "ghost hunting." Silver Ladder willworkers sometimes highlight objects or beings in Twilight so that their allies can study or perhaps use other magics upon such subjects.

### Entropic Guard (Death ●●)

By stealing vigor from incoming attacks, a mage guards himself against harm. Effectively, the mage's shield attacks the vitality of an incoming assault, eroding its forcefulness with a primal decay.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Death Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the ward.

Note that this magical armor does not apply against an opponent's attempts to achieve a grappling hold on the mage (Fate, Mind, Space and Time Arcana provide shielding spells to accomplish that). This spell will, however, work to steal vigor from a grappler's Strength + Brawl rolls to overpower the mage.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Shield of Bones**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

While some of the rewards yielded up by a long familiarity with Death are dubious at best, no Arrow mage argues with the benefits of this rote.

### Ghost Summons (Death ●●)

The mage calls a specific ghost or sends out a general call to the nearest ghost within sensory range. He may either call one or more ghosts personally known to him, or he may specify any type of ghost of his choosing (male ghosts or child ghosts, for example), or even send out a general summons to *all* restless shades within his sensory range (in which case, the closest one to him responds). The ghost comes to the caster with as much speed as it can muster, although it cannot be made to go farther than the maximum distance it is allowed to travel from its anchor.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

In the case of a general summons among multiple ghosts, the spell targets the closest one. A curious ghost will usually answer a general call or personal summons, but a reflexive, contested Resistance roll is made if it does not wish to come. It must remain near the summoning mage for the Duration of the spell, unless the caster allows it to leave.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Muster the Dead**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Death vs. Resistance

Even the shades of the dead can be gathered by the call of a Silver Ladder willworker. While the mage cannot compel a ghost to do anything without more advanced magics, nothing prevents her from convincing the dead to serve her by more mundane means.

### Grant the Grim Sight (Death ●●)

The mage can give another supernatural being Mage Sight. This is as the Death 1 "Grim Sight" spell, p. 134, except that the mage casts it upon another mage or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, a reflexive, contested Resolve + Gnosis roll is made.

**Free Council Rote: Opening the Sealed Eye**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Death

The mage whispers to the target, coaxing him to open his third eye. Those who have never before glimpsed the heavy shadow of Death are often changed by the experience. It is for this reason that Adamantine Arrow mages also make use of this magic (Presence + Persuasion + Death), so that none can forget the heavy burden that their order has accepted.

### Soul Jar (Death ●●)

Certain ancient cultures such as the Egyptians recognized that a soul could be placed within a container to prevent its release back into the cycle of birth and death. This spell creates such a receptacle.

**Practice:** Ruling

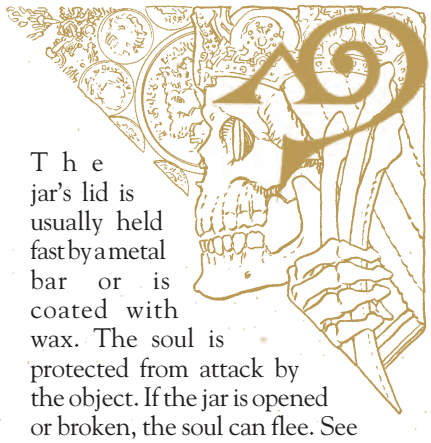
**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Any receptacle that can be used to seal liquid can serve as a soul jar, whether it's a wine bottle, a preserve jar or even Tupperware. Success on the spellcasting enchants the receptacle so that a soul placed within the jar cannot escape.



The jar's lid is usually held fast by a metal bar or is coated with wax. The soul is protected from attack by the object. If the jar is opened or broken, the soul can flee. See "Soul Handling," p. 276.

With Death 3, the mage can attempt to cast this spell with indefinite Duration.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Urn of Motes**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Crafts + Death (or Spirit)

In ancient times, Silver Ladder mages would carry out a terrible punishment levied against mage criminals: the severing of their souls. This was sometimes a temporary sentence; the caster would store the soul in a jar and release it once the convict's sentence had been served.

### Suppress Aura (Death ●●)

The mage suppresses his own or another's personal aura. Effectively, he causes the aura to lapse into slumber, smoothing the telltale ripples it creates in the Tapestry and rendering it more difficult (or virtually impossible) to detect, save by the most puissant of sensory abilities.

**Practice:** Veiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

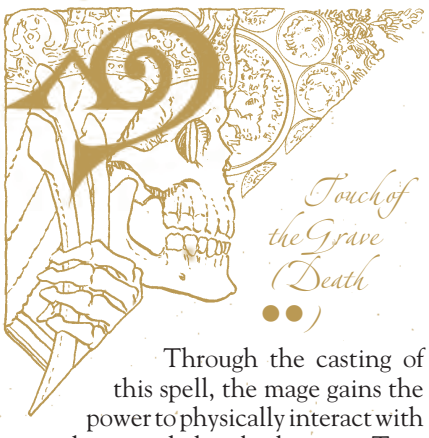
**Cost:** None

Each success levies a –1 penalty on any attempts to scrutinize the target's aura.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Cloaking the Anointed**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Death

Concealing the truth of the Mysteries sometimes entails occluding the mark of power within oneself, especially when enemies of the Awakened are about. When entering hostile territory in the pursuit of hidden wisdom, Mysterium mages have also been known to use this rote.



### Touch of the Grave (Death ●●)

Through the casting of this spell, the mage gains the power to physically interact with ghosts and ghostly things in Twilight state. ("Ghostly things" are usually parts of a spectre's anchors, which often exhibit ephemeral existence even after their material counterparts have crumbled to dust). She could, for example, pull a ghostly hammer out of a Twilight room in order to pound a nail into a wall. She could take the spectral reflection of a key out of the lock in which it was broken, pull it through into materiality, and use it to open the material lock barring her from entering a room she wishes to access.

She can also touch ghosts and be touched (or attacked) in return by any nearby shade. Such beings tend to be, at best, cold and clammy and many have other disturbing and not entirely tactile sensations associated with physical contact. Some spectres have been known to long for physical contact with the living in ways most unhealthy or inappropriate.

The caster cannot damage ghosts, or affect non-dead spirits such as fetches (see p. 82) or mental projections, including vampires using the Twilight Projection Discipline (she needs the Spirit and Mind Arcana, respectively, for those effects).

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Objects drawn from Twilight possess Durability 1 and crumble into a fine ash if broken, regardless of their original consistency. Nothing really makes these items superior to (or even the equal of) those a mage could acquire normally in the material world, but being able to snatch the revolver from the nearby ghost of a police officer when the mage is attacked can be a lifesaver.

Note that objects found in Twilight are only infrequently the same as those found in the material world, as only lost or broken objects tend to manifest in that state. Objects that serve as anchors (or even those that once served as anchors but are now missing from the material world, either through decay or destruction) also often appear in Twilight. Some Twilight objects are made by magic; see "Ghostly Object," p. 140.

**Mysterium Rote: Ashen Grasp**
**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Survival + Death

Often, the things that willworkers of the Mysterium seek have been lost to the ravages of time. On occasion, these relics leave shadows of themselves, shadows that can be used to open ancient vaults, studied for the imagery that they depict, or even read to learn the secrets they contain.

### Control Ghost (Death ●●●)

The mage can force a ghost to perform an action. A single, simple command ("Attack!" "Flee!" "Stand there!") can be issued per success.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Complex commands require multiple successes. For example, "Go to the Contessa's mansion and steal the Borgia Diamond!" might require three successes.

If the ghost has not completed the action by the time the Duration expires, it does not have to finish the job. It must, however, work to complete the command as soon as possible.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Word of Woe**
**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Death vs. Resistance

The unquiet dead can be potent allies, and Silver Ladder mages waste no resource. Some use the shades of the departed as simple shock troops, while the more cunning compel them to reveal desired knowledge or to use the subtle abilities of the dead in pursuits other than battle. Mysterium willworkers often find uses for a closely related rote (Manipulation + Intimidation + Death) in their endless endeavor to gather up the hoary secrets of the world.

### Destroy Ephemera (Death ●●●)

The mage mystically attacks an ephemeral object.

**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Successes in excess of the object's Durability (most ephemeral items have Durability 1) inflict aggravated damage on its Structure. This spell does not affect animate ephemeral beings such as ghosts (or anything with a Corpus trait rather than a Structure trait).

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Shattering the Fetters**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Death

Even ephemeral objects have sometimes been known to exert an invisible

## ●●● Disciple of Death

*When I speak, the dead heed my commandments. I walk among those who haunt the world when I desire it and can will my body to die, only to rise and live once more. When I have need of servants or soldiers, the graves give up their charges and I muster their lifeless frames to my cause. Steel and stone crumble to dust beneath my fingertips and I can feast on the spirits of the dead and dying to refresh my own strength of purpose and mystic will. If I wish it, I can pull the souls of the living out of their prisons of flesh, leaving only husks, devoid of passion and desire, in the wake of my passing.*

pull on the material world, motivating Sleepers to strange and inexplicable acts. In these cases, Guardians have been known to destroy such items, ending the invisible pull they exert and preserving the secrecy of the occult.

### Destroy Object (Death ●●●)

The mage mystically attacks a material object, causing it to decay instantly.

**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Successes in excess of the object's Durability inflict aggravated damage on its Structure.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Breaking the Chains**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Crafts or Science + Death

A crumbling truncheon or dissolving handgun poses no threat to a mage of the Adamantine Arrow, or to the charges of such a willworker. The Guardians of the Veil sometimes use a similar rote (Composure + Crafts or Science + death) in the pursuit of their work.

### Devouring the Slain (Death ●●●)

While any mage can commit a living sacrifice to gain Mana (see p. 78), this spell is an act of sorcerous cannibalism that allows a willworker to regain strength from the souls of the dying without necessarily killing them (although it certainly harms them).

A mage can restore her resolve or "burn out" a living human Pattern for its Mana, drawing this energy directly into her own stores to use as she will. The spell does not work if cast upon an animal; if it is, nothing happens. If used on a vampire or other form of walking dead, the spell provides no benefit to the mage. In general, the spell is meant for use upon a normal human being, and any attempt to diverge from that procedure is not apt to go well for the caster.

**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must first grab hold of the target, with a Strength + Brawl roll, subtracting the target's Defense. If successful, he can cast this spell as an instant action in the following turn. (With Death 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range as an instant action. He needs Death 5 before he can add Space 2 for a sympathetic casting.)

Each success allows the mage to replenish one of his spent Willpower points by harvesting it from a person who has suffered at least one aggravated wound during the current scene (including one who has lost all of his Health to lethal damage and now suffers aggravated damage as his body dies), up to a maximum of the victim's remaining Willpower points.

Alternatively, the mage may burn out a person's Pattern for points of Mana, converting the ephemeral energies that make up his idealized form into raw power. Each success inflicts one lethal Health wound onto the victim and gives the caster one Mana point. If the victim is a mage, his own Mana points are unaffected; this spell steals energy directly from his Pattern. The caster must use the Prime 5 "Siphon Mana" spell (see p. 231) to directly tap an Awakened person's Mana. Direct siphoning requires a separate casting from the Willpower-harvesting version of this spell, although both effects can be combined using the normal rules for combining spells (see "Combined Spells," p. 128).

Devouring the Slain can be used only on a given individual once, after which a new level of aggravated damage must be inflicted upon him before he can again be a target.

**Free Council Rote: Energetic Transfer**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Death

Some scientifically minded Free Council mages see this spell as a means of conserving energy, taking it from the dying before it can dissipate beyond anyone's use. More traditional, mystically minded Awakened see the grim truths of this rote for what they are. Despite such knowledge, no few make use of it.



### Entropic Shroud (Death ●●●)

The mage can cast the "Entropic Guard" spell (p. 136) on others, protecting them with a field of entropic decay.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The target gains one point of armor per dot the caster possesses in the Death Arcanum. The caster can increase the Duration to one day with the expenditure of one point of Mana.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Shroud of Gloom**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

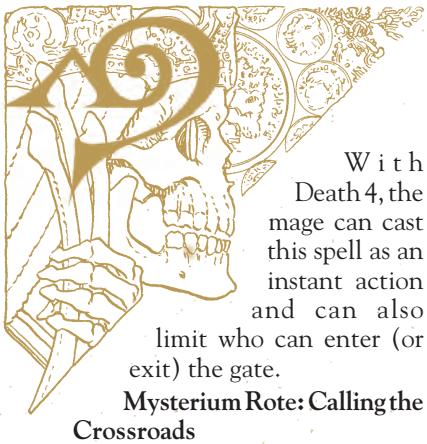
The Guardians protect their charges with this spell, although some of them find its aura disturbing.

### Ghost Gate (Death ●●●)

The mage creates a gateway that transforms anyone who steps through it into a Twilight state of existence. They become Twilight beings until they exit the gateway. While Twilight, they can touch ghosts, pick up ghostly objects or read tomes hidden there. They can also engage in physical or magical combat with ghosts, damaging their Corpus. Conversely, wrathful shades might physically lash out at visitors, causing them harm.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Extended (target number = local Gauntlet strength)
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

One person of Size 5 or less can pass through the gate per turn (larger people can spend two turns squeezing through). Each success on the casting allows the mage to widen the gate so that one additional person can pass through per turn.



With Death 4, the mage can cast this spell as an instant action and can also limit who can enter (or exit) the gate.

**Mysterium Rote: Calling the Crossroads**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Death

While it is one thing to speak to the dead and learn their lore, it is another entirely to physically become like a ghost and employ one's senses while in a ghostly state. Certain locations inaccessible from the material realm can also be explored by means of this rote, enabling a Mysterium willworker to discover relics and knowledge perhaps lost for ages.

### *Ghostly Object (Death ●●●)*

The mage creates a ghostly item by turning a real material object into a Twilight object. To do so, he must destroy the real object, eliminating all its Structure points, and then cast this spell upon its remains. The subject then becomes a ghost of itself within Twilight, allowing the mage to manipulate it with Death 2 (see the "Touch of the Grave" spell, p. 138).

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

**Mysterium Rote: Night Hallowing**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult or Science + Death

Mysterium mages often populate their sanctums with Twilight objects, ready to be drawn forth using "Touch of the Grave" as needed. Free Council mages learn a version of this rote that uses the Science Skill in place of Occult.

### *Quicken Corpse (Death ●●●)*

Sometimes, it isn't enough to have loyal and steadfast living servants. A normal human being, no matter how trustworthy, has the capacity for betrayal. Whether his lips are loosened by seemingly sincere companionship, mystic compulsion or even torture, he can be induced to fail his master's trust. Where, then, does an enterprising necromancer turn for assistance? Quicken Corpse animates one or more corpses to serve as unfailing, devoted slaves. What such servants lack in wits and motivation, they more than make up for in dogged determination and sheer, tireless pursuit of the tasks they are set.

Generally speaking, such ambulatory corpses possess a level of reasoning just above that of a rather intelligent dog. They understand certain visual cues (such as the opening of the door they are meant to guard) and auditory commands ("Defend me!"), but cannot perform feats requiring abstract intellect. They have a limited memory, but cannot make even basic correlations or inferences. (While they can, for example, dimly recall that their master has changed their clothes once a day, they cannot determine that he is likely to do so again tomorrow.) They have no individual initiative.

These corpse-slaves are not really any stronger than they were in life, but they are tireless and completely without the ability to sense or respond to pain. They need not eat or sleep and do whatever chore they are set to until told otherwise, even if it requires them to tear their own bodies apart in the attempt. They experience neither fear nor the desire for self-preservation and have no minds, per se, for others to control. They can, however, be wrested away from their master through the casting of this spell by another necromancer.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

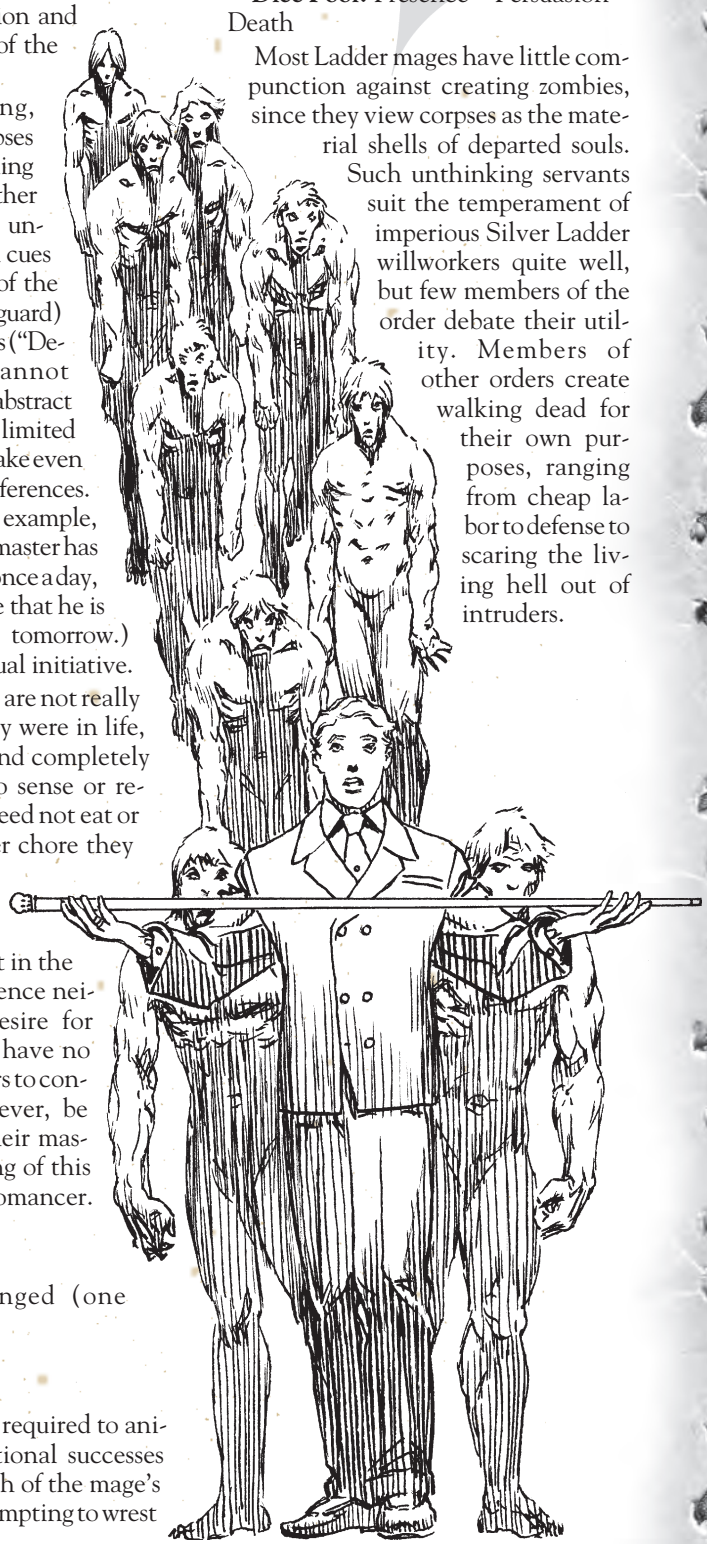
**Cost:** None

Only one success is required to animate a corpse. Additional successes determine the strength of the mage's control. Someone attempting to wrest control of the walking dead with another casting of this spell must exceed the original caster's successes. Additional success can instead be used to boost the corpse's Physical (but not Mental or Social) traits, at a rate of one success per additional dot in any trait.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Rise and Obey**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Death

Most Ladder mages have little compunction against creating zombies, since they view corpses as the material shells of departed souls. Such unthinking servants suit the temperament of imperious Silver Ladder willworkers quite well, but few members of the order debate their utility. Members of other orders create walking dead for their own purposes, ranging from cheap labor to defense to scaring the living hell out of intruders.



## Zombies

Each zombie created by the "Quicken Corpse" spell (one per Target factor) has the following base traits:

**Attributes:** Power 1, Finesse 1, Resistance 2
**Size:** 5 (or less if the corpse is small)
**Speed:** 1*
**Initiative:** 1*
**Defense:** 1*

* These traits begin at 1, regardless of Attribute scores; the caster must spend successes on a one-success-per-dot basis to raise them.

Zombies do not suffer wound penalties and cannot heal damage naturally. Bashing, lethal and aggravated wounds are marked normally, but zombies never suffer incapacitation — they just keep going until their last Health point is lost to aggravated damage. When a zombie's final (rightmost) Health box is marked with bashing damage, no roll is required to remain conscious. When its final Health box is marked with lethal damage, it does not collapse and begin bleeding to death — it keeps going. Any damage suffered after that is upgraded to aggravated. Once this happens, the corpse loses body parts with each new upgraded wound until it is completely pulverized or disintegrated (the Storyteller decides which parts fall off with each wound).

A zombie continues to rot. It suffers one lethal point of damage with each passage of a number of days equal to its Resistance. A zombie with a Resistance of 3 therefore suffers one lethal point of rotting damage every three days.

In addition, zombies created by this spell have a vulnerability to one specific type of attack, such as fire, damage to the brain or carving a mystic sigil on one's body. If a zombie suffers at least one lethal or aggravated point of damage from an attack to which it is vulnerable, it is destroyed instantly. The caster chooses the zombie's vulnerability during spellcasting, unless he devotes a success (over and above the simple success needed to animate the corpse) to make it Indestructible. Indestructible zombies can be destroyed only when their final Health box is marked with aggravated damage.

### *Restore Corpus (Death ●●●)*

The mage can heal a ghost's Corpus.

**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

One Corpus point of damage is restored per success.

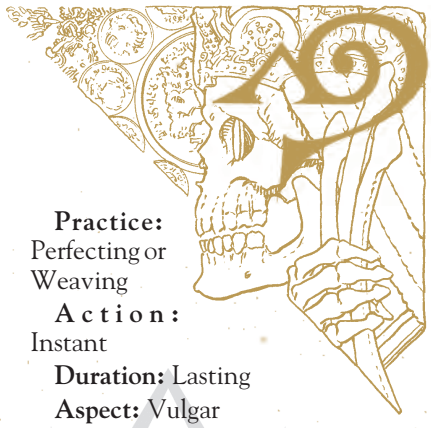
**Free Council Rote: Spectral Poultice**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Death

Some mages prefer to bend the dead to their will. Many in the Free Council are eager to point out that one catches more flies with honey than with vinegar. Aiding restless ghosts can often help in winning their trust and perhaps friendship. Adamantine Arrow mages often use a version of this rote (Resolve + Occult + Death) to heal shades that they have sent into battle, enabling them to keep fighting for a little longer.

### *Sculpt Ephemera (Death ●●●)*

Inanimate objects and places within Twilight or the Shadow Realm are made from a substance called *ephemera*. The mage can shore up or degrade the Durability of such ephemera, and the item can be reshaped, changing a heap of metal into a bicycle frame or a stick into a spear. The mage cannot affect animate ephemera, such as a nature spirit or a fetch. Doing that requires Spirit.



**Practice:** Perfecting or Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Only one success is needed to reshape an object (if the new shape is very complex, the Storyteller might levy dice penalties to the casting). Or, one point of Durability is added per success. In the case of weapons or armor, successes can also be assigned to a weapon's equipment bonus or to armor's protection.

**Mysterium Rote: Spirit-smithing**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Crafts + Death

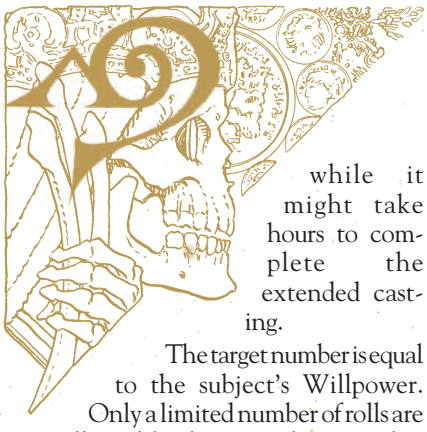
Mysterium willworkers often use this rote to craft useful objects before drawing them out of the Shadow Realm and into the material world. Sometimes, however, they create such items as gifts for spirits or ghosts.

### *Sever the Sleeping Soul (Death ●●●)*

The mage severs a soul from a Sleeper. While the soul is separated from the body, the subject suffers all the normal afflictions of soullessness. See "Soul Loss," p. 276.

**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Extended and contested; target rolls Resolve reflexively
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must touch the target for the entirety of the spellcasting. If he loses contact, he loses all accumulated successes. (With Death 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range. The spell cannot be cast sympathetically.) Needless to say, the victim must be rendered incapable of moving or escaping for the full length of the spellcasting. Relying on a grappling hold for a conscious victim is unwise, since the victim gets a chance to throw off the hold each turn,



while it might take hours to complete the extended casting.

The target number is equal to the subject's Willpower. Only a limited number of rolls are allowed for the caster, however, before his attempt is deemed a success or failure. A number of rolls may be made equal to his Resolve + Composure. If the spell fails, it cannot be recast on the same target until at least one day (24 hours) has passed.

A reflexive and contested Resolve roll is made for the target against each of the spellcaster's rolls. If the target's rolls succeed at any point during the extended casting, the casting fails.

While the soul is free of its body, it exists in Twilight. The mage who severed the soul can see and touch the Twilight soul. Mages who use this dread magic usually store their soul bounty in a Soul Jar (see p. 137) to prevent its escape. See "Soul Handling," p. 276, for more details about unmoored souls.

A soul can be restored using Spirit 3 ("Restore Lost Soul," p. 250), and it can be protected with Prime 4 ("Armor of the Soul," p. 223) and reclaimed with Fate 4 ("Destroy Bindings," see p. 156). With Death 5, the mage can sever an Awakened soul.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Stripping the Wicked**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Death

Arrow mages claim their order used this rote in Atlantis to punish criminals. Since this magic is difficult to cast with any degree of subtlety, Guardians of the Veil rarely if ever use it unless they believe they can do so in secrecy. Even then, Guardians almost never do so unless to quiet a particularly persistent Sleeper.

### Summon Shadows (Death ●●●)

As with "Shadow Sculpting," p. 135, and "Animate Shadows," p. 136, but the mage now creates darkness from nothing. In addition, he gives it a semi-substantial form so that it can touch things and even provide a weak barrier.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

The mage creates a one-yard radius patch of darkness or five-cubic yard volume of darkness. Each success gives the shadow Strength 1 (used to lift objects) or Durability 1. It is not a material object, so it has no Structure. Attacks directed through it (if it is being used for cover) must deal with its Durability, but they don't damage the shadow barrier.

**Free Council Rote: Child of Midnight**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

By conjuring up such impenetrable and even animate shadows from light, a Free Council mage can create a barrier that serves as cover against ranged-weapon attacks, he can conjure a specter to frighten off an intruder, or he can wield a battering ram to fell a door.

### Suppress Own Life (Death ●●●)

The mage can temporarily suppress his own life. While in this state, the mage is well and truly dead. The physical symptoms of death, other than decomposition, set in (the onset and passing of rigor mortis, the receding of the gums and the skin of the scalp and fingertips, the pooling of blood at the bottom of the body). The mind and spirit are absent.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant (or reflexive with 1 Willpower)
**Duration:** Prolonged (one hour)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage determines a trigger that will wake him from this state (such as being struck or having a dog bark within earshot). Otherwise, he is dead until such time as the spell's Duration runs out. Once awake, his Social rolls are penalized by –1 for every four hours he was under the spell's effects (up to a maximum of –5). A character who looks like a walking corpse likely causes terror and repugnance. Penalties are reduced by one per hour after waking, as the mage regains his natural complexion.

This spell is most often cast as covert magic, made to appear as if the mage dies of natural causes or an accident. By spending a Willpower point, the mage can reflexively cast the spell as soon as something happens that he can use as an excuse for his demise, such as if a foe strikes him.

The Death 1 "Grim Sight" spell (p. 134) allows a mage to detect that a seemingly dead body is not actually dead, although that spell's Potency must equal or exceed the Suppress Own Life spell's Potency.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Descending to the Grave**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Subterfuge + Death

Not many people think to ask anything of a corpse, and Guardians whose activities have been compromised sometimes use this rote in order to avoid difficult questions. While the issues that crop up in the wake of a body disappearing from the local morgue can prove problematic, they are often less of a headache than being arrested or genuinely killed. On occasion, willworkers of the Silver Ladder have faked their own deaths by way of this rote, in order to cut the losses of one life and start anew.

## ●●●● Adept of Death

*I chain the dead to this Earth, making them to haunt the living or forcing them to inhabit their own rotting shells. I walk among ghosts when I wish and shatter lives with a word. I place the shadow of death upon those who yet live and breathe, making them to seem dead before even the most perceptive eye. Should I wish it and my need be dire, I can steal souls and bind them within me.*

### Enervation (Death ●●●●)

The mage can draw the vigor of life from a person's body, leaving him weak and helpless, so that a weight-lifting champion is rendered barely able to lift a child's toy.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage must first grab hold of the target, with a roll of Strength or Dexterity + Brawl – the target's Defense. If successful, he can cast this spell as an instant action in the following turn. (With Death 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range as an instant action. He needs Death 6 before he can add Space 2 for a sympathetic casting.)

Each success subtracts one dot from the target's Strength Attribute, down to a minimum of 1. The maximum amount by which Strength can be lowered is equal to the mage's dots in the Death Arcanum. (Lowering Strength also lowers the target's Speed trait.)

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Weight of the Grave**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult + Death

If she lacks the strength to lift a weapon, an enemy without recourse to other means is rendered virtually harmless. Thus do Arrow mages strike at their foes' power and secure victory. Of course, willworkers of all orders can find one use or another for this rote. Mysterium mages, for example, have been known to use one like it (Manipulation + Occult + Death) in order to slow pursuers while they flee.

### Haunting (Death ●●●●)

The mage causes a recently dead (within the past hour) or dying Sleeper to cling to a physical anchor rather than move on to whatever afterlife awaits. (The dying Sleeper begins haunting immediately upon physical death, so long as he dies within the Duration of the spell)

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve (Sleeper) or Resistance (ghost) reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

A point of Mana must be spent for the mage (above and beyond any other expenditures) to create an anchor for the ghost, which in this case need not be something precious to the subject.

Excess successes can increase Duration:

| Successes | Duration |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | Two hours (or 24 hours with Death 5) |
| 3 successes | 12 hours (or two days with Death 5) |
| 4 successes | 24 hours (or one week with Death 5) |
| 5 successes | Two days (or one month with Death 5) |
| 6 successes | Four days (or indefinite with Death 5; only against ghosts, not the dying) |

With Death 5, a mage can create a haunting with a recently dead or dying mage or with a ghost who has been long dead.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Eternal Unrest**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Death vs. Resolve (Sleeper) or Resistance (ghost)

On occasion, even death is not punishment enough for the enemies of the Silver Ladder. This rote allows a mage to bind the spirit of a recently dead person, or one who is dying, to a given locale. The shade may be commanded through other magics, or simply left to its own devices, as the willworker desires. Sometimes members of the Mysterium perform similar bindings (Intelligence + Persuasion + Death), using the dead to drive off those who might seek to steal the lore they have worked so hard to acquire.

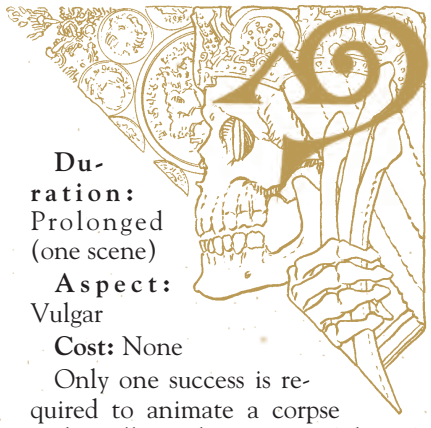
### Revenant (Death ●●●●)

The mage prevents a recently dead Sleeper's spiritual release. The casting of this spell must begin within an hour of the target's death. This spell creates what some mages call a revenant, forcing the soul to inhabit a body that does not decompose for the duration of the spell.

The caster inculcates the revenant with one or more driving Passions related to achieving a certain goal — revenge, salvation — that strengthen it for its trials.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended and contested; target rolls Resolve reflexively



**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Only one success is required to animate a corpse and instill it with a Passion. Additional successes are added to the target number to boost the revenant's traits, at a rate of one success per additional dot of any trait.

Although the target is dead, the Resolve Attribute it had in life is used to contest the magic.

With Death 5, the caster can make a recently dead mage into a revenant, although the revenant can no longer cast magic. (It contests with Resolve + Gnosis.)

**Silver Ladder Rote: Duty Before Rest**

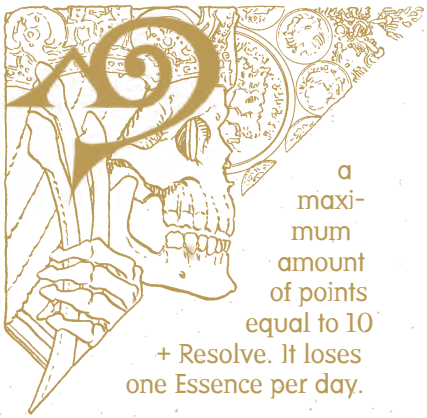
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Death

Ladder mages often use this rote to raise to service those who have not yet fulfilled their debts, though some cast it for no reason other than that they need a loyal servant with exceptional capabilities and who is largely incapable of betrayal. Still, such castings are dangerous and potentially quite cruel, and can easily lead a mage away from the path of Wisdom.

#### Revenants

This undead being possesses all the same Attributes and Skills as in life, but subtract one dot each from the revenant's Composure (due to its obsessive nature) and Wits (because of its disconnection between body and spirit). The revenant cannot regain Willpower points by any means.

The revenant has a pool of Essence points equal to its Resolve +5, and it can hold



a maximum amount of points equal to 10 + Resolve. It loses one Essence per day.

Instead of his former Virtue and Vice, the revenant has a Passion (the caster can add one additional Passion per success added to the spell's target number). This could be "avenge a murder" (including its own), "protect Sarah," or "steal the Ebon Grimoire." Whenever the revenant performs an action that promotes the achievement of its Passion, roll a number of dice: one die is rolled for actions that only weakly benefit the Passion, while five dice (the maximum) are rolled for actions that are directly relevant to the Passion. Each success gives the revenant one Essence.

Finally, the revenant has one spirit Numen, a power it can use to help achieve its Passion. The caster can imbue the being with additional Numina, one per every two successes added to the spell's target number.

### Rotting Flesh (Death ●●●●)

One of the most vicious direct mystic assaults known to the Awakened world, Rotting Flesh rends and destroys the physical form of a living being, riddling it with corruption and putrefaction. This assault is brutally effective, but is the metaphysical equivalent of using a club rather than a scalpel. Flesh corrodes and rots, bones twist, crack and turn to ash, and blood thickens with globs of corrupted tissue and rivulets of pus. While each component of this assault, taken on its own, looks to be perhaps some effect of natural decay, taken together, they cannot be mistaken for anything but unnatural. Certainly, any that witness such a spell know the magic for what it is, as the victim is afflicted with the rot of the grave.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must first grab hold of the target, with a roll of Strength or Dexterity + Brawl – the target's Defense. If successful, he can cast this spell as an instant action in the following turn. (With Death 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range as an instant action. He needs Death 6 before he can add Space 2 for a sympathetic casting.)

Each success inflicts one Health point of lethal damage to the target. With Death 5, the mage can inflict aggravated damage instead with the expenditure of one Mana.

In addition, each success levies a –1 die penalty on all the victim's Social rolls, due to the horrible appearance (and stench) of his wounds. (This penalty is not cumulative with successive wounds from successive castings of this spell; use the highest penalty from either the newest wound or the previous wound.)

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Teeth of Kali Ma**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Intimidation + Death – Stamina

When a willworker of the Adamantine Arrow just needs to *kill* someone and kill him quickly, this rote is a favored one. Every order practices similar magics, however.

### Slay Own Aura (Death ●●●●●)

The mage destroys all sign of his own aura. This destruction permanently removes all signature of the mage's current aura, such that it cannot be read by any magic.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage develops a new aura by the end of the week as his soul takes on new resonance based on his actions and character. (See "Resonance," pp.277-280.) This new aura cannot be recognized by anyone who has not examined it before, giving the mage a new mystical "fingerprint." In the meantime, mages who use aura-perception spells to view the mage are unnerved by the target's complete lack of an aura — an unnatural occurrence.

**Free Council Rote: Starting Anew**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Death

The Free Council is in many ways all about a fresh start, and this rote proves that Death is merely the gateway to a new beginning. Powerful mages of all orders turn to this rote when their auras become overpowering.

### Soul Binding (Death ●●●●)

The mage can attach a stolen soul to himself or another, but only if he or the target currently has no soul.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended (target number = one for a Sleeper's soul, Gnosis for a mage's soul)

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The target number is equal to the recipient's Gnosis, or simply one success if the target is a Sleeper. The soul then belongs to the recipient. See "Soul Handling," p. 276, for more details on handling unmoored souls.

**Free Council Rote: Restoration**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Empathy + Death

Used far more often to attach a soul to another who has been left soulless than for the Council mage's own benefit, this rote has preserved the sanity of many an unwitting pawn dragged into the struggles of the Awakened.

### Suppress Other's Life (Death ●●●●)

The mage can suppress life in others temporarily. The effects are the same as the "Suppress Own Life" spell, p. 142.

**Practice:** Veiling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage must first grab hold of the target, with a Strength or Dexterity + Brawl – the target's Defense. If successful, he can cast this spell reflexively. (With Death 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range. He needs Death 6 before he can add Space 2 for a sympathetic casting.)

If the target is attacked or harmed in any way during the time in which he appears to be dead, the spell is immediately broken and the target awakens. While "dead," the target experiences nothing, as if he were merely in a deep sleep.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Consign to the Mausoleum**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Death vs. Composure + Gnosis

When all else fails and a Guardian of the Veil has no wish to actually end the life of a problematic Sleeper, she can use this rote to make him seem to be dead temporarily. She then acquires the "corpse" and helps to ease the individual into a new life elsewhere. Arrow mages in war-torn areas sometimes cast this rote to help allies infiltrate an enemy's lair.

### Twilight Shift (Death ●●●●)

The mage can personally transform himself into the Twilight state of existence without needing to pass through a gateway.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

All the mage's clothing and equipment is likewise transferred into an ephemeral state, as long he touches it during casting. The mage can restore himself to a material state at anytime by dismissing the spell.

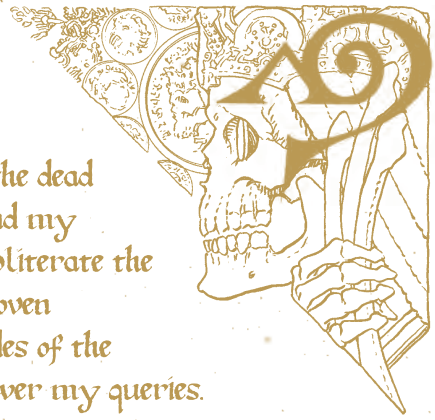
**Mysterium Rote: Stepping Over**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult + Death

A bit more precise than any gateway into the state of unlife, this rote enables a member of the Mysterium to affect a quick escape for which there can be no mundane pursuit. Granted, such sojourns often come with their own difficulties, but most willworkers would argue that it is better to go among the dead in this fashion than in the traditional manner.

## ●●●●● Master of Death

*I walk with death now as a close confidante and ally. I sup upon the souls of the living and the dead alike, restoring my conviction and my energies with their strength. I obliterate the stuff of magic and sunder its woven Patterns, and command the shades of the long-departed to appear and answer my queries.*



### Devouring the Living (Death ●●●●●)

The mage consumes a healthy life-force or ghost. Just as he is able to do with an ailing person under the shadow of death, the mage can now consume a fully healthy soul, one not touched with the taint of the grave, revitalizing his stores of Mana or stealing the victim's will. Likewise, he may devour any nearby ghost for its spiritual energies, augmenting himself in a similar manner.

**Practice:** Unraveling
**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina (living being) or Resistance (ghost)
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

This spell is handled in exactly the same way as "Devouring the Slain," p. 139, save that the mage may now perform the spell upon a healthy subject (one not currently suffering from aggravated damage) or a nearby ghost (damaging the spirit's Corpus). The mage must still grab hold of the target first, however (unless he has Death 6, allowing him to cast the spell within sensory range as an instant action).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Spoils to the Victor**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Death – Stamina (living being) or Resistance (ghost)

Let those who would lead the charge in battle be the first to sample victory's fruits. So goes the logic of the Adamantine Arrow, whose willworkers use this rote to destroy enemies, even as they restore reserves of both will and mystic power. Mages of the Silver Ladder also favor such magic, obliterating those who would express defiance through force of arms.

### Destroy Mana (Death ●●●●●)

The mage can destroy Mana.

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resolve
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

One point of Mana, no matter how it is stored (as tass, within an artifact, or a mage's own personal Mana points), may be destroyed per success.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Plucking Teeth**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Intimidation + Death – Resolve

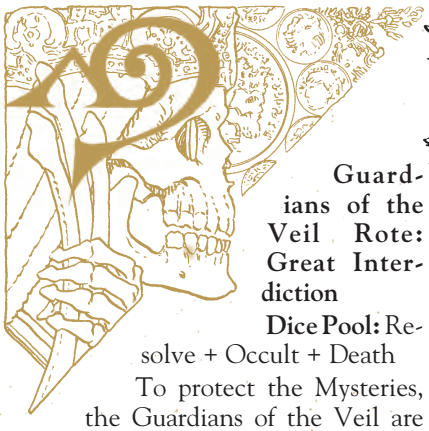
A gun without ammunition is largely useless. While the same cannot be said of a mage without Mana, such a willworker is nevertheless cut off from many of her most powerful magics. Arrow mages enjoy using this rote against enemies that have become reliant on advanced magic.

### Quell the Spark (Death ●●●●●)

The mage can dispel any spell, regardless of what Arcana were used to create it — he does not need Prime 1 or any other Arcana lore. The mage must first have Mage Sight so that he can perceive the spell to be affected.

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Successes are compared to the target spell's Potency. If they equal or exceed it, the spell is dispelled.



**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Great Interdiction**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Death

To protect the Mysteries, the Guardians of the Veil are willing to employ even the most drastic measures. This rote destroys a spell utterly, and Sleepers who did not perceive it previously will never know it existed at all. Members of the Free Council are also known to use a variant of this rote (Manipulation + Occult + Death) to prove that the "tried and true" ways of magic are not quite as infallible as some would like to believe.

### Quicken Ghost (Death ●●●●●)

The mage quickens a ghost, restoring mindless shades to a semblance of the personality they had in life, and turning ancient ghosts into more potent specters.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Each success raises one of a ghost's three Attributes by one or provides it with one Essence (this bonus cannot cause a ghost to possess more Essence than it can normally hold).

**Mysterium Rote: Remembrance of the Flesh**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Death

Ghosts make powerful allies. Supplemented by this rote, they can accomplish feats far beyond their already impressive capabilities. Mysterium mages sometimes bribe the dead by means of this rote. A Guardian (Resolve + Occult + Death) may bring a given ghost's anchor along with him to another ghost's haunt, and then fortify his interloping shade to drive out the resident spirit.



### Steal Lifespan (Death ●●●●●)

The mage steals years of life from a Sleeper to extend his own life. Each person is allotted a set span of years, a single thread of existence that is snipped with each passing year, the thread growing shorter and shorter. A person's actions in life can fray the thread or stretch it. This spell allows a mage to snip a portion of a Sleeper's thread and sew it to his own. This spell cannot be cast upon supernatural beings, including the Awakened.

**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Extended and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target number of successes equals the number of years sought from the target, although the mage may not steal more years with a single casting than his total dots in Death. The mage can cast this spell on the same target only once a year.

This effect is largely in the hands of the Storyteller. It is a means mages can use to live beyond a normal mortal life span, although it does not prevent the effects of aging nor death by calamity.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Drawing the Thread of Years**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Death vs. Stamina

Building something of lasting importance can be difficult at best to accomplish within a single lifetime. Ladder willworkers turn to this rote to seize a few more precious years in which to finish their grand works. Mysterium scholars (Intelligence + Subterfuge + Death) likewise fail to see any reward in departing the mortal coil while half-completed projects and unfinished research remain.

### Summon the Dead (Death ●●●●●)

The mage can summon a ghost from the Underworld, making it appear next to him within Twilight. The Underworld is a dread place where, according to most mages, ghosts without anchors are banished. The caster can use other spells to compel the ghost to manifest, or can provide ectoplasm for its manifestation. This spell is most often cast to learn the secrets of the long-departed, such as the locations of lost treasures or the existence of lost heirs.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Special

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The mage can ask one question of the ghost per success. After it has answered it departs, returning to the Underworld. (The mage cannot delay for more than five turns between questions, or else the ghost departs.) The entity's answers are truthful and straightforward, although if a question is not clear and concise, the ghost might misinterpret it and give a misleading answer.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Demanding an Audience of the Departed**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Death vs. Resistance

Even the denizens of the Underworld are not forbidden to one who attains mastery of the Arcanum of Death. Mages of the Silver Ladder are known to gather all kinds of information with this rote, often of the sort conducive to the accrual of temporal power. Mages of the Mysterium (Manipulation + Persuasion + Death) most commonly cast one much like it with the intention of learning more esoteric lore.

## Fate

**Purview:** Blessings, curses, destiny, fortune, oaths, probability

Understanding the Arcanum of Fate grants its practitioner the ability to manipulate the threads of destiny, creating good or ill fortune, binding oaths, blessings and curses.

Those who study Fate come to understand the intricacies of fortune, seeing with clear sight the interconnection of the threads that bind all cause and effect within Creation. Those with powerful destinies (or none at all) stand out to even the most elementary Fate Arcanum perceptions, while more complicated fortunes sometimes require more of a discerning eye.

Mages who devote themselves to the understanding of the Fate Arcanum are usually the sorts of people who would rather know "why" rather than "how." Many of them enjoy a good mystery and consider feelings about things to be just as important, if not more so, than so-called "hard facts." Sometimes mages who wish to discern the vagaries of Fate do so out of an implicit faith in destiny, while others do so out of a blatant distrust in that nebulous constant. Those who submit themselves to fortune are often easy-going and carefree, with the confidence born of knowing, and more importantly accepting that what is meant to be, will be. Those who rail against fortune are usually driven and unhappy people, too concerned with shaping their own role in the future to admire the beautiful complexities of Fate.

### Ruling Realm: Arcadia

The gross/subtle pair of Time/Fate provides the ruling Arcana for Arcadia, the enchanted realm inhabited by fickle spirits of immense beauty and cruelty. Fate is the ephemeral expression of that pair.

Fate does not predict what will happen in the future or perceive what has happened in the past. Those effects are the purview of Time. Fate deals with the *themes* that govern Patterns within the Tapestry. These exert influence upon the chaotic flux of probability around people and things, inclining the course of events toward certain outcomes. The boy destined to be king has a higher probability of being king than another person, for example.

It's no coincidence that human myths about Fate offer a glimpse into the same metaphors used by mages to describe reality: a vast Tapestry woven by unseen powers, often personified as a goddess weaving a loom. The Fate Arcanum is the magic of weaving the threads of destiny. Some Free Council mages prefer the more modern example of quantum physics, seeing Fate as the Arcanum that allows a mage to observe quantum reality and to change that reality through the act of witnessing it — the controversial "observer-created reality" principle. The mage alters raw probability in accordance with his wishes, working the loom to alter the weave of the Tapestry.



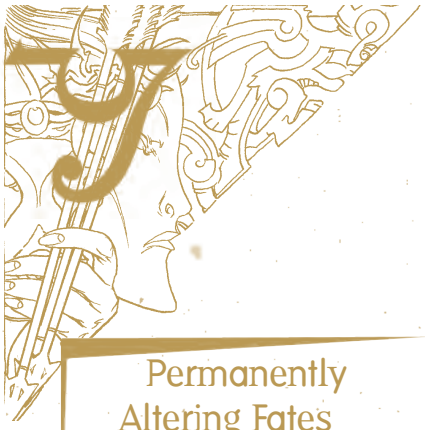
### Initiate of Fate

I see the hidden hand of destiny as it moves behind the lives of all people and all things.

I know when a destiny is about to be fulfilled and when it has been thwarted by some outside force.

I see the weight of fortune carried by every soul.

When prophecy is uttered, I hear it for what it is and perceive the mark of providence upon the very fabric of magic itself.



## Permanently Altering Fates

Although spells with an indefinite Duration cannot normally be cast upon living creatures, Fate spells offer an exception. A Fate spell can be made indefinite against a living target if it is cast as a conditional spell (see p. 150) with a trigger event that ends its effect. ("Once you have again won the love of your wife, only then will this curse lift.")

### *Interconnections (Fate ●)*

This spell reveals themes and interconnections between people, places and things. In other words, the caster can read the degree of sympathetic connection between subjects. The mage can also sense manipulations of destiny and their causes. This ability extends to any supernatural effect that will or might result in a person's destiny unfolding in a manner different from that in which it is "meant" to.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Extended (one turn per roll)
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Success allows the mage to examine anyone in sensory range to determine the interconnections they might have with each other (or even with things and institutions, such as corporate brands or fashions). On each turn following the casting of this spell (so long as the mage continues to concentrate), an extended Wits + Empathy + Fate roll can be made for the mage to scrutinize people. Each success yields some information, with more successes yielding more powerful or secret connections. The mage cannot tell exactly what the connections mean, just their intensity. See "Sympathetic Range," p. 114, for details on what each degree of connection means.

| Successes | Interconnection |
|---|---|
| 1 success | The caster can identify Unknown and Described connections between people and/or things. The caster can also detect an oathbreaker, one who has violated an oath or *geas*. |
| 2 successes | The caster can identify Encountered connections between people and/or things. The caster can read an individual's dots (if any) in the Destiny Merit (up to two dots, with one additional dot per additional success). |
| 3 successes | The caster can identify Acquainted connections between people and/or things. The caster can also detect direct supernatural mind control, spiritual possession or alterations of destiny. |
| 4 successes | The caster can identify Known connections between people and/or things. The caster can also detect indirect supernatural mind control, spiritual possession or alterations of destiny. |
| 5 successes | The caster can identify Intimate connections between people and/or things. The caster can also detect interconnections of destiny, such as if one person viewed (or depicted nearby) is destined to be the mentor or apprentice of another person viewed or depicted — or is destined to be his murderer. |

If the target has any form of supernatural occlusion (such as the Occultation Merit) that would hinder the mage's perception, the caster's dice pool is modified by the dots or Potency of that protection.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Indra's Net**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Fate

The power to read Fate's mark on another can often prove vital to a Guardian's work. Sometimes, a paranormal influence impresses itself upon a given individual's destiny, for example, and drastic steps must be taken to defend the secrecy of the Mysteries. Mages of the Silver Ladder often use a variant of this rote (Wits + Investigation + Fate) to discern those who might be suitable for inclusion among their own ranks (or conversely to discern those who may prove to be rivals to their order in time).

### *Quantum Flux (Fate ●)*

The mage reads probability and compensates for deleterious factors. At this level of expertise, she can only mitigate or negate those small factors that add up against her (the crooked house dealer suddenly realizes that he didn't stack the deck quite as well as he had originally imagined, for example), rather than actively setting events in her favor. Most mages who read possibilities in this way have a preference for either determinism or chaos, but there are quite a few who do not care to put their own spin on the matter and take such things at face value.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

At any time within the spell's Duration, the mage can spend time "aiming" any action, reducing dice-pool penalties turn by turn (as an instant action per turn) on a one-for-one basis, to a maximum of three dice worth of penalties. This effect can negate only penalties, however, and may not result in any kind of bonus to dice pools.

***Example:*** *Zeno wants to drive his motorcycle up a ramp and jump over a fence. The Storyteller deems that because of the torrential downpour, there is a –3 dice penalty. Zeno had earlier cast Quantum*

*Flux, allowing him to mitigate deleterious factors such as the heavy rain. He sets his bike in motion, and spends the next three turns "aiming" his jump, mystically accounting for all the problems the rain might cause him and so reducing the –3 penalty by one die per turn. When he's ready to jump, he suffers no penalties for the rain.*

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Eye of the Storm**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Fate

In the course of defending allied Awakened against their enemies, willworkers of the Adamantine Arrow must occasionally deal with strange circumstances and maddening distractions such as high winds, driving rain or the pain of a grievous injury. This rote enables such a warrior-mage to focus fully on the task at hand. Mages of the Mysterium also use this magic (Resolve + Occult + Fate) to concentrate when their explorations into the secrets of the occult lead them into hazardous situations in which lack of focus can prove deadly.

### Reading the Outmost Eddies (Fate ●)

Some twists of fate and fortune are too small and insignificant to warrant much in the way of prophetic powers. Destiny rarely hinges upon a coin toss, though a hundred bucks could ride on one. Some believe that this spell creates a small manipulation of chance, while others maintain that it just gives a mage an idea of what's coming next. In either case, the results are the same. The caster knows the outcome of some small random (or mostly random) action in her immediately vicinity. Thus, she may know from which roll of scratch-tickets to get her Lottery ticket in order to win something (not necessarily the grand prize, but definitely $20). The spell cannot bring about a life-altering change. Nor can it be used to change the probability of an event already set in motion. (A mage couldn't use the spell on a scratch-ticket she'd already bought, but must use it before buying one ticket out of many.) Nor may the spell create any chance that an impossibility will come to pass.

Those who attempt to use the spell repeatedly to build up to a life-altering change (buying ten thousand $20 winning tickets over the course of one week) often find themselves punished by fortune, subject to all manner of ill luck.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

A simple success results in small turns of immediate or nearly immediate good fortune pertinent to the willworker's current circumstances (such as which vending machine will drop that dangling candy bar the last guy paid for and gave up on after it got stuck on the rotating coil). An exceptional success yields the high end of small good fortune. (Say, turning down the left-hand alley rather than the right one and finding the runaway cat for which the owner has posted fliers advertising a $100 reward).

Successive attempts to use this spell for the same goal are considered vulgar.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Lakshmi's Touch**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Fate

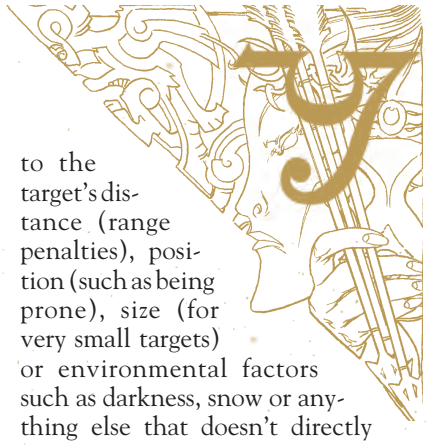
There are times for grand shifts in the fabric of destiny, and there are times when a small nudge is sufficient. Part of being a member of the Silver Ladder is knowing when a small change is enough. Members of all orders find use for such small turns of good fortune.

### Sharpshooter's Eye (Fate ● + Space ● and Life or Matter ●)

In driving rain, at night, aiming at the smallest of moving targets, the willworker armed with this spell might just make a shot if her skill is sufficient for the task. This magic eliminates all of the minor random factors that conspire against ranged attacks, while giving the mage a flawless lock on an object or living creature within her normal line of sight. It cannot be used to shoot around corners, but it *can* be used to shoot a hummingbird out of the air or to put a hole directly through the middle of a playing card flicked up into the air.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Special
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage uses Life 1 to get a lock on a living creature or Matter 1 for an object. Each success reduces one die of ranged combat penalties normally due to the target's distance (range penalties), position (such as being prone), size (for very small targets) or environmental factors such as darkness, snow or anything else that doesn't directly work upon the mage herself or serve to physically shield the target (the spell does not eliminate cover penalties). It can even apply to penalties for aiming at specific targets, such as an enemy's hand or the object he holds.



The spell is applied to the next roll the caster makes against the target onto which he has locked. If the target leaves his direct sight before he makes his shot, he loses the lock and must cast this spell again to achieve the same effect.

This spell cannot be cast in combination with the Space 1 "Spatial Map" spell (p. 233); only one spell (the one with the highest Potency) takes precedence.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: The Wings Off A Fly**

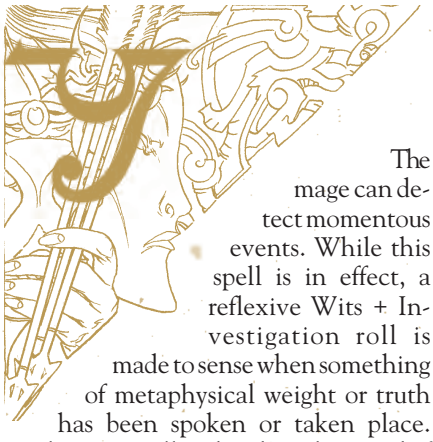
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Firearms + Fate

More than once, the secrecy of the Mysteries has hinged on a Guardian being able to eliminate some small scampering thing before it can escape to bedevil Sleepers, or perhaps to destroy some tiny relic dangling from around an enemy's wrist. This rote enables a willworker under such circumstances to shoot from the hip with precision that would be envied by the world's finest snipers.

### The Sybil's Sight (Fate ●)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). He detects the particular qualities a given mystic force has in its interactions with fate. Many describe the result as a "thickness" or "gravity," a tangling of threads.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None



The mage can detect momentous events. While this spell is in effect, a reflexive Wits + Investigation roll is made to sense when something of metaphysical weight or truth has been spoken or taken place. The Storyteller decides when and if such an event occurs. The mage cannot have others "fish" for prophecies by having them keep saying things until something registers as resonating with destiny. Such abuses of the gifts of Fate have been known to backfire upon mages with grim consequences. Instead, this ability gives a willworker an idea of when somebody just happens to utter words that are somehow true or important in a metaphysical sense. In other words, while "the sky is clear today" could very well be a correct assessment, it is not usually a significant enough truism to register to this application of Fate. Instead, a child's assertion that a beautiful woman "looks like an angel" may well resound in the mage's ears if there is something truly exceptional or even supernatural about her, or if she is particularly holy or touched by the divine in some meaningful way. Naturally, this sense is quite vague, leaving the mage to puzzle out exactly what is meant by the prophetic or otherwise weighty statement.

**Mysterium Rote: Flight of Birds**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Fate

Perceiving the presence of the Mysteries can sometimes involve nothing more than the ability to discern a particular gravity to a seemingly random statement. Mages of the Mysterium use this rote in their endless hunt for hidden lore.

### Winds of Chance (Fate ●)

The mage can evade or attract good or ill fortune. Generally speaking, this effect is more a roleplaying consideration than anything else. If the willworker wants to find someone interesting to share a beer with on a Saturday night, such a person happens to ask, "Is this seat taken?" in a crowded bar. Likewise, she could make someone's morning commute a waking nightmare, causing him to get splashed by a passing car, harassed by an utter nutcase on the bus, and defecated on by a low-flying pigeon as he walks in the door 45 minutes late.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

**Free Council Rote: Nudging Probability**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Subterfuge + Fate

Quantum probabilities affect people's lives in all sorts of ways at all times. Mages of the Free Council manipulate these probabilities through this rote, creating runs of what most would consider good or bad luck. Nothing life altering, but certainly sufficient to make someone smile or to ruin his day.

## ●● Apprentice of Fate

When I will it, the virtuous are rewarded and the wicked punished by destiny itself. The oaths I swear are sanctified by the Universe, and I am thereby given the strength to see them come to pass, even when dark forces are arrayed against me. My lesser needs are seen to by fate, liberating me to consider the greater questions of the Universe.

### Conditional Duration (Fate ••)

Normally, a spell's Duration is unconditional; it lasts until its time is up and then the spell ends. Optionally, mages can set conditions on a spell's Duration, essentially setting up a particular circumstance whereby the spell ends early. The advantage of a conditional Duration is it conserves magical energy, giving a slight boost to a spell's Duration factor at the cost of potentially ending it prematurely.

A mage specifies the condition to end the spell when casting it, and must state this condition clearly to the spell's target(s) as part of the casting. For example, a witch casting a curse on someone might say, "You shall be so cursed for a turn of the moon, or until you receive forgiveness from those you have wronged." For otherwise indefinite spells, the caster need only state the condition (since the spell lasts until the condition is fulfilled).

A conditional-Duration spell lasts longer than normal. Just how long depends on the probability of the condition. If it's a common occurrence or an easy task, the Duration bonus is higher than if it is an extremely improbable condition.

| Condition | Duration Bonus |
|---|---|
| Improbable | +1 factor |
| Infrequent | +2 factors |
| Common or easy | +3 factors |

A spell that normally lasts for one hour can be extended to two hours without

casting penalties if it is made conditional with an improbable condition. It can be made to last 12 hours with an infrequent condition, or a whole day with a common or easy condition. See "Duration," p. 117.

The Storyteller also decides what constitutes a reasonable condition for breaking the spell. Virtually impossible conditions — "until the Moon falls out of the sky" or "until Atlantis rises again" — should be disallowed. Conditional spells are intended to add an element of storytelling and drama to spellcasting. Players should be enjoined from using them as just a way to squeeze a little extra Duration out of their characters' spells.

Conditional Trigger (Fate •• + Time ••)

The mage can set a trigger that automatically activates a prepared spell (see Time 2 "Prepared Spells," p. 260). Normally, the mage must activate the trigger himself, but by adding a conditional trigger, the spell automatically activates when the conditions stated in the trigger come about. Examples of conditional triggers might be: "When [the target of the spell] next sees the moon," or "When the clock chimes midnight."

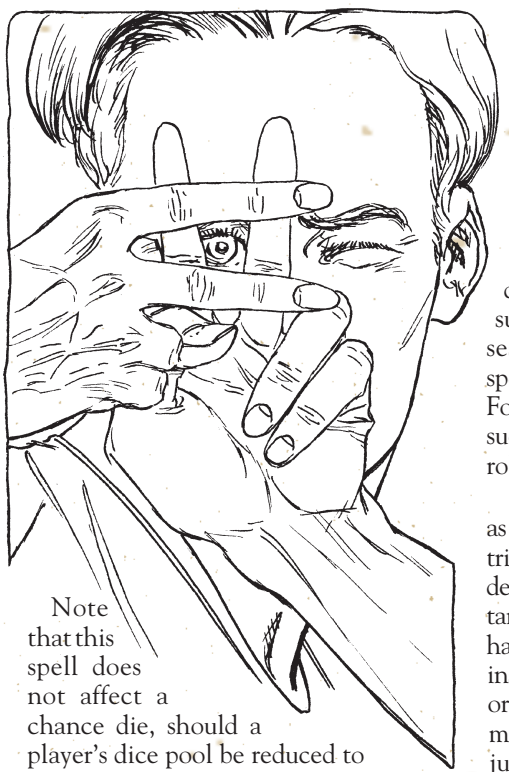
The Mana needed to activate the prepared spell's trigger must be invested into the spell during casting or the spell will not have enough energy to activate on its own. The normal rules for casting prepared spells apply.

### Exceptional Luck (Fate ●●)

The mage's endeavors are blessed with exceptional luck that defies the odds.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage gains the 9-again quality (re-roll results of 9 and 10) on one future dice roll per success. The player can choose which of his rolls are affected by this exceptional luck (declared before dice are rolled), and they can include any action or task. This effect lasts for one scene (unless additional Duration factors are added during casting), after which time any unused luck rolls are lost.

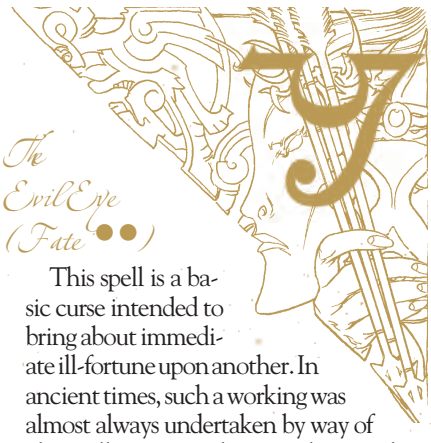


Note that this spell does not affect a chance die, should a player's dice pool be reduced to one. Only a result of 10 is a success.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Blessings of the Gods**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Fate

Prowess of arms can take a mage only so far. On occasion, a bit of luck is also required. This rote imparts such good fortune upon an Arrow willworker in the heat of battle. Naturally, such a helpful rote finds use by mages of all orders.



### The Evil Eye (Fate ●●)

This spell is a basic curse intended to bring about immediate ill-fortune upon another. In ancient times, such a working was almost always undertaken by way of physically staring at the one to be cursed, directing a baleful glare at him and thereby hexing his actions. Now, it may be directed through less obvious means, but many mages still prefer the old-fashioned aspect.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Resisted; subtract target's Composure
**Duration:** Special
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Success causes a number of dice to be removed from the subject's dice pool for the next action he takes (i.e., the next action for which dice need to be rolled). One die is subtracted per Fate dot the caster possesses. Each extra success on the spellcasting affects one additional roll. For example, if the caster rolls three successes, he affects the next three rolls made for the target.

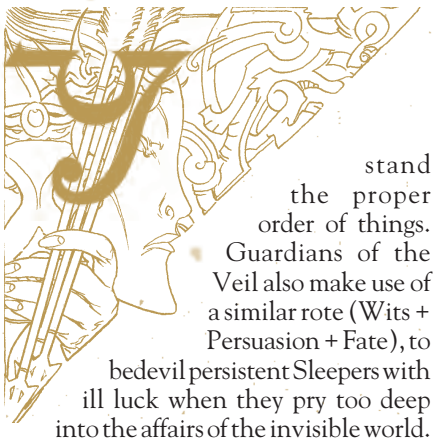
Some mages prefer to cast the Evil Eye as a prepared spell with a conditional trigger. This approach allows them to delay the onset of the curse until the target performs a specified action (perhaps repeating the same insult that inspired the caster to impose this spell) or certain conditions are in place. The mage needs Time 2 or higher as a conjunctional Arcanum. See "Prepared Spell," p. 260, and "Conditional Trigger," above, for complete rules.

(Note: The Fate 5 "Break the Chains" spell, p. 159, can dispel the Evil Eye.)

**Silver Ladder Rote: Imprecation**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Fate – Composure

A leader can lay low a dissident with political machinations, armed thugs or any number of other relatively indelicate tactics. Some willworkers of the Silver Ladder prefer to allow Fate itself to unmake those that fail to under-



stand the proper order of things. Guardians of the Veil also make use of a similar rote (Wits + Persuasion + Fate), to bedevil persistent Sleepers with ill luck when they pry too deep into the affairs of the invisible world.

### Fortune's Protection (Fate ●●)

The caster weaves a web of probability about herself, ensuring that attacks are unlikely to affect her. She "just happens" to stumble at the right moment, causing a bullet to miss her, or she unthinkingly turns just the right way so that a knife slides off her jacket rather than piercing it.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot she possesses in the Fate Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of a morning ritual. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

Note that this magical armor applies against attempts to grapple the caster (both his Defense and Fortune's Protection armor are subtracted from the grappler's dice pool when he attempts to achieve a hold on the mage), but it does not protect against attempts by an opponent to overpower and/or inflict damage once he has managed to grapple the mage.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Untouchable**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Athletics + Fate

Not all threats to the hidden society of the Awakened stem from supernatural sources. A well-aimed tire iron (perhaps swung by a frightened Sleeper who has seen too much) can prove just as deadly to a Guardian as any ancient curse, so protective countermeasures are sometimes in order. Mages of the Adamantine Arrow also favor a variant of this rote (Resolve + Athletics + Fate) for self-defense while about their order's assigned tasks.

### Granting the Sybil's Sight (Fate ●●)

As the Fate 1 "Sybil's Sight" spell, except that the mage casts this upon another mage, or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may contest with a reflexive Resolve + Gnosis roll.

**Mysterium Rote: Flock of Augurs**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Fate

It is not always sufficient to perceive Fate's nuances for oneself. On occasion, others must be made aware of destiny's pattern. Willworkers of the Mysterium developed this rote to impart such understanding upon those who would otherwise go blind to such intricacies.

### The Perfect Moment (Fate ●●)

This spell enables the caster to act in a social situation with perfect grace and timing, saying just the right thing at just the right moment. The mage does not really think out what he will do; he goes with the flow, letting Fate and his instincts guide him. He must not have foreknowledge of what he will encounter (a good hunch is one thing, but extensive scrying or a detailed description from someone on the scene via cell phone is not acceptable; such intimate understanding of the circumstances ruins the necessary randomness). For example, if the mage casts this spell in a bar upon meeting someone whom he considers ideal, he might easily wind up getting her phone number, thanks to his Fate-guided panache.

Casting this spell over and over again in regard to the same subject (such as the girl at the bar) muddles the threads of destiny and may even hopelessly entangle them (the girl turns out to actually be a creepy stalker type or suffers from some less-than-ideal complication). In the most extreme cases, repeated castings may sever threads entirely (ending the relationship and perhaps even a life if the mage has been exceptionally presumptuous).

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

More a roleplaying issue than anything else, this spell moves out of the realm of dice rolls and into that of manipulating the story. The mage effectively chooses some small thing that he wishes to see come to pass and makes it so through his magic. A Storyteller may levy dice penalties for highly improbable results (such as a pierced, tattooed and leather-garbed punk making a great impression at a black-tie affair). Generally speaking, favorable results of this spell do not last longer than the spell's Duration (unless the mage has subsequently taken non-magical steps to that effect).

Unfavorable side effects can haunt a mage for quite some time. These are usually reversals of the exact same fortune the spell provided. Using this spell repeatedly against the woman in the bar might lead to an unfortunate encounter with her jealous ex-Mafia boyfriend, for example.

**Mysterium Rote: Everything's Zen**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Fate

It's not always the ideal way to do so, but a socially inept bookworm of the Mysterium is occasionally put into a position in his search for knowledge that renders this rote the only way to attain that which he seeks.

### Platonic Mechanism (Fate ●●)

This spell imbues a mechanical item with a perfect precision. Fate, after all, is the perfect *kind* of order, that which is ordained by the stars and the progression of the ages. A machine, no matter how simple or complex, enchanted by means of this spell functions flawlessly for as long as it is meant to function while under the effects of this spell. For a pocket watch, this mean until it winds down, while an intact, plugged-in clock normally only shuts off if unplugged or subjected to a power outage.

A blender always creates a smooth, even blend, while a clock runs with absolutely perfect accuracy. In essence,

such devices do exactly what they were intended to, effectively becoming physical representations of the Platonic Ideals of such machines. Even a shoddy looking device or one in poor repair (as long as it is mostly functional) can be enhanced by means of this spell to perform at 100% physical efficiency.

The device is not any more resilient to damage than normal, so a stout blow to a perfected rock tumbler still damages or breaks it, but the spell does render the machine beyond the ken of normal environmental hazard (what constitutes a "normal" hazard depends entirely upon the device in question). A thermometer intended to measure the temperature of cooling lava has considerably different parameters for "normal use" than a refrigerator or a lawnmower.

**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

In game terms, dramatic failures associated with the "perfected" device are ignored. In addition, the device always works as it was designed. This does not mean a "perfected" car can be driven any easier in difficult conditions — that's up to the driver's skill and the car's design (a sports car provides a better equipment bonus for maneuvering than a compact car). It does mean, however, that the engine won't overheat and the tires won't blow out (unless attacked).

"Normal" use of the item in question is literally flawless. Most people don't know enough to know a "perfect" microwave oven from an ordinary one, so the risk of Disbelief is minimal. "Perfected" guns never jam, "perfected" light bulbs never burn out before the maximum possible amount of time, and "perfected" computers never experience those occasional little inexplicable quirks that plague most machines.

**Free Council Rote: Atomic Clock**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Fate

In the pursuit of alternate aspects of magic, the mages of the Free Council have established this rote, a series of procedures intended to enhance any mechanical or electronic device to the point of perfection. In doing so, the order aims to illustrate that new ways need not be anathema to the Awakened.

### Shifting the Odds (Fate ●●)

The mage creates a shift of destiny, effectively generating turns of good or bad luck. These small manipulations of fortune almost always take the form of totally plausible situations, such as a parched mage finding that last quarter she needs on the sidewalk so she can buy a drink, or a sudden, stiff crosswind that turns a crack sniper's fatal shot into a serious wound. Big shifts, such as finding $1000 at the convenience store's front door or a piano falling on the sniper are simply too implausible to easily happen at this level of mastery. The mage simply requests some small jolt in the desired direction and allows destiny to make the decision as to how it comes about, meaning the mage should be on her toes, ready for anything in the event that her requested outcome happens in an extremely unexpected manner.

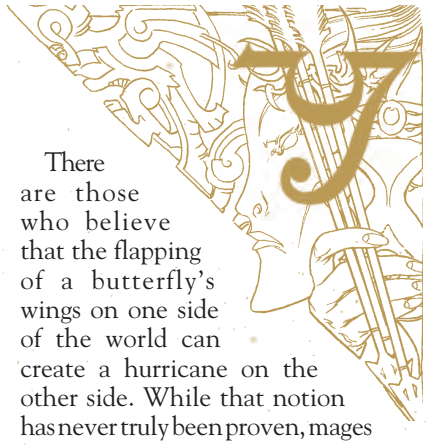
A wish for "a new car," for example, yields one up, but the mage gets it under circumstances that cause long-term possession to be undesirable (the car is stolen or haunted) or under which long-term possession is unhelpful (the car is faulty and quickly ends up collecting dust in a garage).

These manipulations of destiny are small, but they may be undertaken for a wide variety of ends. Indeed, these tweaks can grow into something bigger and more meaningful if carefully tended. Mr. Right Now *could*, in fact, actually be Mr. Right provided the mage actually puts in the time and effort to bring such a relationship to fruition. Alternately, the $200 a mage hits on a scratch ticket might yield up many times its own value if invested wisely. This level of the Fate Arcanum helps destiny along rather than creating it, but it does give the mage the opportunity to seize her own fortune or to help make one for another.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Special
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Successive attempts to use this spell for the same goal are considered vulgar.

**Free Council Rote: The Butterfly Effect**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Fate



There are those who believe that the flapping of a butterfly's wings on one side of the world can create a hurricane on the other side. While that notion has never truly been proven, mages of the Free Council nevertheless understand the beautiful complexity of the chain of causality that creates any event, no matter how great or minor, and capitalize upon that understanding by means of this rote. Guardians of the Veil are also known to favor this magic, hounding the inquisitive away from the Mysteries with a sudden turn of bad (or sometimes good) luck.

### Swearing an Oath (Fate ●●)

The mage learns the basics of binding oaths, acquiring the ability to swear such an oath (effectively declaring her intentions officially to Creation). The metaphysical weight of her vow is small and has little momentum, but such an oath can turn the tide in a mage's darkest moments, being the deciding factor that transforms disaster into victory.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The oath gives the mage no bonuses to dice rolls or anything grandiose like that, but instead gives his player the opportunity to reflexively roll Resolve + Composure for the character to act in circumstances that would normally forbid action. For example, the mage is being controlled mentally and compelled to stand by and watch as the person she swore to protect suffers. A reflexive Resolve + Composure roll can be made for her to ignore the mental compulsion and to act to protect her charge. Also, at the Storyteller's discretion, when the mage undertakes some action that directly upholds the oath, she may regain a spent Willpower point, just as though she indulged her Vice.

Note that a mage cannot cancel her own oath spell unless she knows Fate 4. She must dispel it if she no longer wants its effect. If the mage knowingly and willingly breaks the oath (in other words, is not compelled to do so), she suffers from the effects of the "Evil Eye" spell (see p. 151), an effect which cannot be undone by a mage with less than Fate 4. (This means that *all* the mage's dice pools are penalized by her own Fate dots until the oath spell is dispelled.)

The mage cannot swear more than one oath at a time. (He can have more than one *geas* cast upon him, however; see below.)

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Testifying to the Gods**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Fate

There are few things in this world more fearsome than a warrior sworn sincerely to a cause. Willworkers of the Adamantine Arrow consecrate their oaths before Fate itself and so dedicate themselves entirely to their missions. Mages of the Silver Ladder, wishing to make a good impression upon those over whom they would hold sway, sometimes take similar vows, as a show of good faith.

### Target Exemption (Fate ••)

Mages are limited in their ability to control what people or things can interact with their spells, as described under "Spell Control," p. 128. This level of Fate allows a mage to cast his net wider and exempt whole groups from his spells' effects — "everyone except my enemies" is now an acceptable condition.

He can now also exempt individual targets from his area-effecting spells. He suffers a –2 dice penalty per exempted target.

***Example:*** *Arctos, Glorianna and Morvran are surrounded by a gang of hostile cultists. Arctos casts a "Thunderbolt". Forces spell (p. 173) to give the cultists a shock, but he wants to protect his friends from electrocution. Doing so levies a –4 dice penalty on his spellcasting dice pool.*

## ●●● Disciple of Fate

I bring the powers of fate to bear upon the garments that clothe me, the vehicles that convey me and the weapons I wield. I curse the armaments of my enemies and they are bedeviled by ill fortune. That which others call "luck" is a skill to me, and one in which I am well-versed. I shield the fates I have made against the hands of those who would undo them, lie to destiny itself, make others believe my deceptions, and twist the threads of sanctified oaths.

### Alter Oath (Fate ●●●)

The mage can alter the terms and conditions of a Fate-based oath. Note that a mage trying to get another to alter the tenets of an oath can easily constitute intent to violate said vow (and therefore subject the mage to the deleterious effects of breaking an oath).

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resolve

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The targeted oath's Potency acts as dice penalties to the casting roll. (If this spell is cast as an extended action instead of an instant action, the target oath's Potency provides the target number needed.)

Once an oath is so altered, it remains altered for the remainder of its Duration. A mage cannot alter an oath she has made for herself (as under Fate 2) until she has Fate 4.

***Example:*** *Freya once swore to protect her friend Einar Strombeck from harm. But her friend betrayed her and became Angrobda, a Scelestus — one the "Wicked" (see p. 361). One of her friends, Morvran, who has remained loyal, is aware of this oath and knows that it can only cause her trouble now. Without Freya's knowledge, Morvran casts Alter Oaths to change the conditions of her oath so that she resists Einar's attempts to sway her rather than protect him. Even though she wants to be rid of her oath, her Resolve is subtracted from Morvran's dice pool as a form of natural resistance to his magical alteration. In addition, her oath's Potency is subtracted from Morvran's dice pool.*

**Silver Ladder Rote: Nullify the Contract**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Politics +Fate

There are times when it simply isn't expedient to be bound by the letter of the law. When the law is a Fate-enforced oath, mages of the Silver Ladder can either endure the consequences of their promises or make use of this rote. Of course, willworkers of the Free Council also enjoy the freedom offered by this magic (Wits + Politics + Fate), and are known to alter the "small details" of binding vows their cabal-mates make.

### Bestow Exceptional Luck (Fate ●●●)

As with the Fate 2 "Exceptional Luck" spell, p. 151, except that the mage can give others the 9-again quality for one or more rolls.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana
**Free Council Rote: Rabbit's Foot**
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Fate

Sometimes, the best gift one can give another is a chance. Council mages use this rote to grant just that to allies, bestowing a bit of luck that can prove to be a lifesaver. No order overlooks the utility of this rote, though; all recognize the value of looking out for their friends.

### Fabricate Fortune (Fate ●●●)

This spell creates a false destiny upon a person or thing. The mage can make a given thing *seem* destined to come to pass, even if none of the momentum of destiny is behind it, deceiving others with the power to perceive fortune. A dagger *seems* destined to slay a king or a child looks to cursory Fate sensing to be the Antichrist.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Those who are attuned to prophecy must overcome the Potency of this spell in order to see through the lie.

If this spell is cast upon an unwilling mage, a reflexive, contested Composure + Gnosis roll may be made to resist.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: False Messiah**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Fate

A false trail that seems paranormal to inexperienced Awakened (or even to Sleepers somehow sensitive to fortune and prophecy), but that ultimately leads nowhere, can do more to conceal the truth of the occult than any smear campaign or threatening encounter.

### Grant Fortune's Protection (Fate ●●●)

As with the Fate 2 "Fortune Protection" spell, above, but the mage can now cast this upon others.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional to extend Duration to 24 hours)
**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Bolster the Company**
**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Fate

While it is well and good to be fortified against one's enemies, few can stand alone when those enemies press from all sides. Thus, the Adamantine Arrow developed this rote for the purposes of protecting allies, keeping them safe from foes both subtle and obvious.

### Lucky Coin (Fate ●●●)

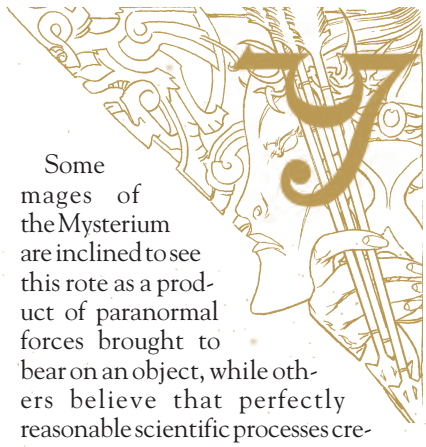
The mage learns how to interact with a lifeless object, bringing fortune to bear upon it. By touching the destiny of an object, the mage fortifies its ability to perform the tasks for which it was designed.

**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

On the turn after casting, the targeted object receives an equipment dice bonus equal to the spell's successes, up to a maximum of the caster's Fate dots. (This is in addition to the item's normal equipment modifier.) In addition, a suit of armor's protection can be increased by one point per success (to a maximum of the caster's Fate dots).

As a roleplaying consideration, lucky objects tend to benefit those who own them (a lucky jacket is snagged by some tree roots as a mage slides on some loose rocks down a steep hill). Sometimes a lucky object does not even need to be used by its owner to bring fortune to bear upon him.

**Mysterium Rote: Four-Leaf Clover**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Fate



Some mages of the Mysterium are inclined to see this rote as a product of paranormal forces brought to bear on an object, while others believe that perfectly reasonable scientific processes create the seemingly supernatural effect. Regardless, the result is the same. Adamantine Arrow willworkers are known to use a similar rote (Presence + Occult + Fate), blessing their own armaments with good fortune.

### Monkey's Paw (Fate ●●●)

The mage learns how to bring bad fortune onto lifeless objects, similar to how he can cause luck with "Lucky Coin," above, bringing fortune to bear upon them. For example, a car just won't work right (when it works at all), or an enraged wife murders her spouse with an unlucky paperweight.

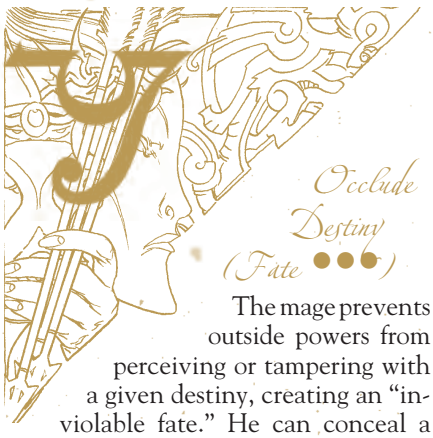
**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

On the turn after casting, the targeted object is subject to an equipment dice penalty equal to the spell's successes, up to a maximum of the caster's Fate dots. In addition, a suit of armor's protection can be decreased by one point per success (even down to zero points).

As a roleplaying consideration, unlucky objects tend to cause their owners harm (an unlucky carving knife cuts a chef's hand, putting him out of action for weeks). Sometimes (as in the case of the cursed paperweight, above) an unlucky object need not even be used by its owner to bring ill fortune upon him.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Sword of Damocles**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Fate

Adamantine Arrow willworkers use this rote to curse their enemies' armaments with ill luck.



### Occlude Destiny (Fate ●●●)

The mage prevents outside powers from perceiving or tampering with a given destiny, creating an "inviolable fate." He can conceal a true "child of prophecy" or another so favored (or ill-favored) by fate against perception by those with an eye for such things. This effect can protect the mage's Destiny Merit against being detected or altered by another willworker, for example, or shield an oath against having its conditions altered by outside magic.

**Practice:** Veiling and Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The spell's Potency contends against all other mages' attempts to perceive or alter the target's destiny.

If this spell is cast upon an unwilling mage, a reflexive, contested Composure + Gnosis roll is made to resist.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Hidden Treasure**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Fate

Guardians must sometimes create destinies in order to protect the Mysteries, and those destinies must be protected. Likewise, they are on occasion forced to conceal the fortune of people, places or things so that Sleepers will remain blissfully ignorant. Silver Ladder willworkers have also used this magic (Composure + Subterfuge + Fate) to occlude their own (often powerful) destinies, so as to go unnoticed when stealth and secrecy are required.

### Superlative Luck (Fate ●●●)

The mage's endeavors are blessed with amazing luck that defies the odds and credibility.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage gains the 8-again quality (reroll results of 8, 9 and 10) on one future dice roll per success achieved in the spellcasting roll. The player can choose which of his rolls are affected by this superlative luck, and they can involve any action or task. This effect lasts for one scene (unless additional Duration factors are added during casting), after which time any unused luck rolls are lost.

Note that this spell does not affect a chance die, should a mage's dice pool be reduced to one. Only a result of 10 is a success.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Walking the Supernal Path**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Fate

Like any other thing, Fate can be bent to the needs of a superior will. A Ladder willworker uses this rote to defy any twist of fortune that leads him away from the destiny he knows to be rightfully his, enhancing his prowess in virtually all endeavors well beyond human norms. Mages of all orders eventually find one use or another for this powerful rote.

### Destroy Bindings (Fate ●●●●)

This spell enables a mage to free a soul that has been forcibly bound outside of its proper place (such as one stolen and reattached using the Death Arcanum, or one kept in a soul jar). The caster can sever the connection between a mage and her familiar, release a spirit that has been placed into a fetish, and even free a ghost from an anchor.

**Practice:** Unraveling
**Action:** Instant and contested; successes are compared to the bond's Potency
**Duration:** Lasting (or prolonged vs. familiars)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

The caster's successes must exceed the Potency of the bond being severed. In the case of a ghost, successes must exceed its Resistance dots. For a fetish, use the Potency of the spell that created the item (see the Spirit 4 "Create Fetish" spell, p. 252). In the case of a familiar, successes must exceed its owner's Gnosis dots.

Both the release of a trapped soul and the release of a bound spirit or ghost are lasting, though the mage-familiar bond returns to normal at the end of the scene (the caster can increase this Duration as per a prolonged spell). In the case of freed souls, the soul does not automatically return from whence it came. It must be restored to its rightful owner using the Spirit 3 "Restore Lost Soul" spell, p. 250.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Cutting the Chaff**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Fate vs. bond's Potency

With relentless conviction, the willworker of the Adamantine Arrow shatters all fetters binding a spirit against its will. In this manner, powerful fetishes can be destroyed and bound servants are given the ability to turn upon their would-be masters. Even those ephemeral beings that choose to remain at an enemy's side can be dismissed. Guardians of the Veil use a variant on this rote (Intelligence + Occult + Fate) to break the bonds between troublesome spiritual entities and the material world, so the beings

## ●●●● Adept of Fate

*Every vow uttered is as clay beneath my fingertips. I send the soulless and lifeless as I will along the web of destiny, sending rich treasures to those who please me and tainted gifts to those who have earned my ire. I break the chains of those who are bound in spirit and I reject the control of others in all things, truly emancipated by my power. Both order and chaos are mine to command and I bring mad fortune to bear as I will it, shattering others' illusions of control.*

can either leave of their own volition or be banished, no longer threatening the secrecy of the Mysteries.

### Gift of Fortune (Fate ●●●● + Space ●●)

Objects do not have volition of their own, but they are given momentum by the wills of the sentient creatures that act upon them. They are imbued with purpose by human belief in their designated purposes. Human choices *become* the destinies of such items. Thus, a mage with a stronger will than a Sleeper could, for example, decide that a rare heirloom will come into her possession. Through the quirks of fate, it eventually finds it way into her keeping. It may not do so in any way she might envision (and her ownership of it need not necessarily be legitimate or even legal), but she does not have to exert any special effort to acquire it. Indeed, she need not even know where the object is when she casts the spell. The item reaches her when it does, if it does (this spell could be dispelled before the item arrives; see below), and she has no control over the circumstances of how or when it arrives. Destiny makes no guarantees, for example, that a ritual knife a mage hopes to get won't end up protruding from a wound in her abdomen by the hand of some crazed wino.

A mage can send a given object any which way she desires, specifying that a woman's gold necklace ends up owned by the son she gave away at birth, or that a treasure chest eventually spends its days at the bottom of the sea. Using this spell with naked and indiscriminate greed often results in dire consequences for the caster (such as the aforementioned knife in the gut). Wise workers of Fate magic advocate using this spell for personal gain only when need is great, otherwise doing legwork personally and without the aid of magic. Some items have so much belief and will behind them, conscious or otherwise, that it is essentially impossible to move them from their current circumstances. While the Hope Diamond *might* be able to be moved (at a –3 penalty for its celebrity; see "Cult of Celebrity," p. 115), the Leaning Tower of Pisa isn't going anywhere, despite the fact that the technology certainly exists to disassemble, transport and reassemble it. The threads of fortune can only be stretched so far.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (sympathetic casting cost)

The Storyteller assigns a required target number (the metaphysical weight of the object's current destiny) that must be overcome in order to move the item in the desired direction. Thus, an object from a mage's own childhood about which no one else really cares might require only one success, while the mummy of Tutankhamen could require that 10 or more successes be accrued, if it can be moved at all.

The targeted item can take some time to make it to its destination. Excess successes added to the target number can speed up the journey by one degree per success.

| Physical Distance from Caster | Maximum Time Until Item Arrives |
|---|---|
| Same city | One day |
| Same state | One week |
| Same region or province | Two weeks |
| Nearby country (from Canada to Mexico) | One month |
| Distant country (from America to Nepal) | Three months |

This spell can target items within the Shadow Realm, although without a Spirit 3 component the item cannot cross the Gauntlet. It arrives just on the other side of the Gauntlet, probably brought by means of a hapless spirit.

Using this kind of magic for selfish or greedy ends, especially when a mage does so repeatedly, almost always leads to bad twists of fortune, often involving one or more of the objects the mage tries to acquire.

As with any spell targeting an unseen subject, the mage needs a Space Arcanum sympathetic connection to reach out and grasp the object's strands of fate to draw them to him. The strength of this connection determines if there are penalties on the spellcasting roll (see p. 114).

**Mysterium Rote: True Ownership**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Fate

Members of the Mysterium skilled in the Arcanum of Fate need not go traipsing through dark jungles or crawling around dusty tombs to find the relics or knowledge they seek, but can call such things to them by means of this rote.

### Probable Cause (Fate ●●●●)

The mage can ensure the probability of succeeding in nearly anything to which he puts his hand.

**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage gains the rote quality (re-roll failed dice once) on one future dice roll per success achieved on the casting roll. The player can choose which of his rolls are affected by this altered probability, and they can include any action or task, although he must decide before the dice are rolled. This effect lasts for one scene (unless additional Duration factors are added during casting), after which time any unused Probable Cause re-rolls are lost.

Note that this spell does allow the player to re-roll a failure on a chance die.

This spell cannot be "stacked" with "Exceptional Luck" (p. 151) or "Superlative Luck" (p. 156); only the most potent spell takes effect.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Assured Acquisition**
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Fate

This is a rote for those times when a Guardian simply *must not* fail in protecting the hidden world from the eyes of the uninitiated. Named for circumstances in which a given person or object must be acquired and spirited away, this rote sees use in all manner of situations and by members of all orders.

### Sanctify Oaths (Fate ●●●●)

The mage can witness the swearing of oaths on the part of others as he did for himself with Fate 2 ("Swearing an

Oath," p. 153), bringing the weight of destiny to bear upon them. Note that the participant(s) need not be aware that the mage has the means to place metaphysical momentum behind such vows. An individual considered to own or bear responsibility for the life of another (such as a child's parent) can swear oaths in that person's name.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

If the target is unaware that the words he's about to utter will bind him into a mystical oath, he gets to unconsciously contest the spell with a reflexive Resolve + Gnosis roll.

Note that this spell is tallied against the total amount of spells the mage can maintain (and it counts toward the spell tolerance of those who are affected by the oath). The caster can, however, choose to relinquish the spell (see "Relinquishing Control of Spells," p. 120) so that it no longer counts against the total of his maximum spells allowed.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Let Their Words Condemn Them**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression + Fate

Those who would offer solemn oaths to a mage of the Silver Ladder should be wary of this rote, lest their words be rendered *truly* binding. Willworkers of the Mysterium also make use of this powerful magic in the course of their work, whether to hold another to a promise of aid or to a vow to deliver a certain artifact by a given date.

### *Sever Oaths (Fate ●●●●)*

The mage severs an oath completely. He may also use this spell to freely manipulate an oath he has sworn (with Fate 2).

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; successes are compared to the oath's Potency

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Successes must exceed the Potency of the oath to be severed, unless the caster targets one of his own oaths, in which case one success is enough.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Magistrate's Rule**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Fate vs. oath's Potency

One who would rule must not hesitate to break a promise that stands in the way of good governance. In the case of an oath sanctified through the Fate Arcanum, this rote is the only way to break from it safely, and Ladder mages make use of it when they must. Free Council willworkers bound to unpleasant oaths likewise feel little or no shame in use of such a rote. If the one to whom such a vow was made were worthy, there would be no need for mystic fetters ensuring complicity.

## Unfettered (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 magics that will or could harm his fate. He can resist falling under the sway of a *geas*, for example, or shrug off psychic control.

The mage can reflexively cast an instant countermagic protection under the following circumstances:

— His soul is being tampered with or attacked

— He is being forcibly bound into a *geas*

— Ill fate (a doomful item, as described under Fate 5) is directed at him

— A supernatural compulsion to do something he does not wish to do is directed at him

The mage needs only the Fate Arcanum to counter the attack. He doesn't need to know all the Arcana involved in the attacking spell. Unfettered countermagic can be made against even covert spells. For more information on counter spells, see "Countermagic," p. 122.

## ●●●●● *Master of Fate*

*I rule the destinies of others and forge their fates as I wish. I can raise the lowliest pauper to become a queen and can lay low even the mightiest of men. My maledictions are the doom of my enemies and my favor spares those who please me from dire misfortune. I wear the face of Fate itself, my fingers forever enmeshed in its innumerable threads.*

### Break the Chains (Fate ●●●●●)

The mage can dispel or rearrange the conditions of another mage's *geas*. See "Geas," below.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; successes are compared to the *geas*' Potency

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Successes must exceed the *geas*'s Potency.

**Free Council Rote: The Hidden Clause**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Fate vs. *geas* Potency

This rote enables a Council willworker to shift the specifics of a *geas*, or to destroy the compulsion utterly. After all, Council members reason, what good can come of respecting the wishes of one who obviously has so little regard for the desires of others as to forcibly bind another to her will? Sorcerers of the Silver Ladder are also drawn to this magic (Resolve + Occult + Fate) in their determination never to be fettered against their will.

### Forge Destiny (Fate ●●●●●)

The mage determines the destiny of a living being. A living saint can be set almost irrevocably upon a murderous path, while an animal that might otherwise go to a cruel and abusive home can be given the good fortune of ending up with a kind and loving family. These sorts of manipulations, having to overcome a certain degree of the subject's self-determination, can be quite difficult for even the most experienced of willworkers, so most undertake it only rarely.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Each success on the spellcasting roll can be used to add one die to the target's dice pool for any action that might foster the fruition of the fate declared by the caster. Conversely, one dice penalty per success can be levied against rolls that might help prevent a subject's new destiny. The Storyteller determines when modifiers penalize an action, but they're often employed whenever the target tries to deny the fate that the spellcaster has imposed.

The effect lasts for one scene. If sufficient Duration is not assigned to the spell, the being may not have long enough to see the action through. For example, rendering a person destined to buy a given used car in her hometown makes that fate likely (but not necessarily) to come to pass rather quickly, while giving a dog a destiny to kill a prominent recluse 2000 miles away may result in a fate that takes years to come to fruition.

If a mage attempts to influence another artificially created destiny, she must overcome the Potency of the spell used by the mage who originally imposed the artificial fortune.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Anointing the Chosen One**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Fate vs. Resolve + Gnosis

Setting Fate's mark upon an individual can protect the hidden society of the Awakened. Guardians are known to use this magic to great effect, creating false trails leading away from genuine mystic phenomena. Mages of the Mysterium sometimes use this magic (Intelligence + Persuasion + Fate) to draw another *into* the occult world.

### Forge Doom (Fate ●●●●●)

A living being, place, thing, condition, flaw or behavior can be declared someone's *doom*. For example, a sword could be forged as a person's doom, as could the sanctum of his direst enemy or even his estranged son. Likewise, the leg he injured in a long-ago car crash could be made his doom, as could his philandering, or being beneath the full moon's light.

**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

While in direct confrontation with a doom or while acting within or being targeted by the parameters of a doom (being struck in the wounded leg or getting in trouble with a woman's large boyfriend while hitting on her in a club), any damage dice suffered by the subject are increased by the spell's successes. The damage type does not change (sources of bashing damage still cause bashing damage, they just cause more than they normally would).

Meeting a doom does not guarantee that the mage will suffer damage; it only worsens any damage that might happen to be inflicted. For example, a mage who enters a sanctum that is his doom has no more chance than usual of coming to harm, but should he accidentally fall down the stairs (or be pushed), his odds of suffering a lot of damage increase.

In the case of a place made into a doom, the default area affected is of one-yard radius or five-cubic yards of volume.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Achilles' Heel**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Intimidation + Fate vs. Resolve + Gnosis

Even a mediocre swordsman wielding a weapon forged as a given foe's doom is a force to be reckoned with. So goes the reasoning of Adamantine Arrow willworkers who make use of this rote. Even a skilled warrior can benefit by use of an item (or place, person or circumstance) named as the downfall of an enemy. Guardians of the Veil sometimes use this magic as a last resort, ending a threat to the secrecy of the Mysteries.

### Forge Godsend (Fate ●●●●●)

A living being, place, thing, condition, behavior or a physical strength (swift reflexes, unyielding fortitude or a good right hook) can be declared a godsend.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The successes achieved in the spellcasting roll designate the level of protection. When possessed of, acting under the parameters of, or within the

presence of a godsend, the spell's successes are subtracted from any damage he suffers (starting with aggravated damage first, then lethal, then bashing). In the case of a place made into a godsend, the default area affected is of one-yard radius or five cubic yards of volume.

***Example:*** *Arethusa retreats to a sacred grove. The area around an old oak tree acts as her godsend (created with a three-success spell in a three-yard radius around the tree). Later, still within the Duration of the Forge Godsend spell, an enemy enters the grove and attacks Arethusa with a spell while she sits under the tree. Her godsend's three successes are subtracted from any damage the spell might inflict, so long as she is within the godsend tree's radius.*

**Mysterium Rote: The Secret Strength**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Survival + Fate vs. Resolve + Gnosis

Some believe that members of the Mysterium are eclectic scholars unsuited for the rigors of combat. In some cases, that sentiment may ring true. By means of this rote, however, even the most retiring researcher can hold her own in dangerous situations, defended by Fate itself. Of course, willworkers of the Adamantine Arrow are also quick to make use of this potent aegis in the course of their perilous work.

### *Geas (Fate ●●●●●)*

This spell creates a *geas*, enabling a willworker to forcibly compel another to heed her will as though having sworn an oath to that effect. If the subject cannot resist this magic, then he must do as he is bidden or suffer the enmity of destiny. The mage is under no obligation to be reasonable when levying a Geas upon another, although the objective must still be possible. "Count every grain of sand on this beach," while extraordinarily improbable for most people, is at least possible, but "Using only your own physical abilities, swim to the bottom of the ocean and back," is not.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Note that, unlike the powers of the Mind Arcanum, this spell does not *compel* a target to perform a task. It instead sets up terrible repercussions if he doesn't perform it.

Those who violate the terms of a Geas (failing to actively work toward fulfilling the Geas counts as violating it) during the spell's Duration suffer the effects of the "Great Curse," below, until such time as the Geas would normally expire.

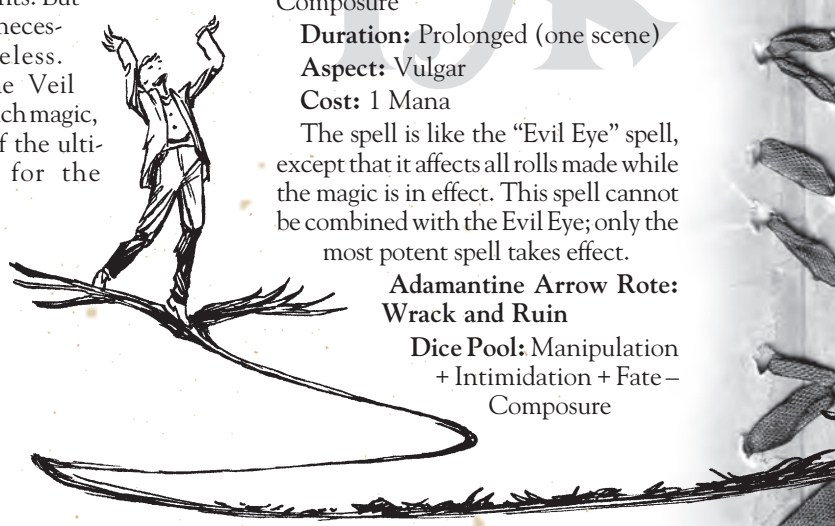
Geas has the potential for greater longevity than most prolonged five-dot spells. When increasing Duration factors during casting, the mage uses the advanced prolongation factors chart, even if he does not have six dots in Fate:

| Duration | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| One scene/hour | None (basic success) |
| 24 hours | –2 |
| Two days | –4 |
| One week | –6 |
| One month | –8 |
| Indefinite | –10 |

**Silver Ladder Rote: Chain of the Fates**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression + Fate vs. Resolve + Gnosis

There are times when respecting the rights and freedoms of others simply does not produce necessary results. Mages of the Silver Ladder use this rote sparingly, lest they be perceived (and rightly so) as tyrants. But it is occasionally necessary, nevertheless. Guardians of the Veil also make use of such magic, perhaps as one of the ultimate defenses for the Mysteries.



### Unto the Seventh Generation

With indefinite Duration and the sacrifice of one Willpower *dot*, a Geas created by a mage or an oath sanctified by her can be made generational, affecting lineal descendants of the one(s) initially subjected to the magic (along with the consequences for breaking the commandment). Descendants inherit the Geas or oath only once the spell's original target(s) dies. (The lost Willpower dot can be regained with the expenditure of eight experience points.)

With Fate 5, if the mage wishes it, any oath she sanctifies for herself or another can afflict one who violates it with the "Great Curse," below, for the remainder of the oath's Duration. If an ancestral Geas is broken and the caster has Fate 4 or less, the violator is affected instead by the "Evil Eye" spell, p. 151.

### *Great Curse (Fate ●●●●●)*

This is a more powerful version of the "Evil Eye" spell, p. 151. Every task the victim undertakes surely fails.

**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Composure

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The spell is like the "Evil Eye" spell, except that it affects all rolls made while the magic is in effect. This spell cannot be combined with the Evil Eye; only the most potent spell takes effect.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Wrack and Ruin**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Fate – Composure

A tiger is a fierce and powerful beast, but how much less so would it be without fangs or claws, or when robbed of its great strength and agility? Mages of the Adamantine Arrow use this rote to cripple their foes, robbing the tiger of its claws. Mages of all orders make use of this rote, however, whether to achieve victory in battle, to outmaneuver a rival suitor or to just win a debate.

### *Swarm of Locusts (Fate ●●●●●)*

The mage can create chaotic conditions: rains of frogs, every animal within a city block going berserk simultaneously, and other similarly "Fortean" occurrences. He totally surrenders control of the effects of the spell when he casts it; he puts the matter in Fate's hands. While Sleepers who witness this chaos might be befuddled, confused and scared, they are temporarily open to the possibilities of magic and are not instrumental in causing Paradoxes for any spell they witness in the affected area.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Those Sleepers who witness the effects of the Swarm of Locusts do not act as witnesses when determining the chances of a Paradox for any successive spell cast in the area (although the Swarm of Locusts spell must still contend with a possible Paradox, the chances of which are made worse by Sleeper witnesses). The space covered by Swarm of Locusts depends on the successes rolled:

| Successes | Defined Volume |
|---|---|
| 1 success | 5 cubic yards |
| 2 successes | 10 cu. yards |
| 3 successes | 20 cu. yards |
| 4 successes | 40 cu. yards |
| 5 successes | 80 cu. yard |

The chaos seething in the area is beyond the caster's control and might adversely affect him or his allies. Depending on the description of the effect, the Storyteller might levy a –1 to –2 dice penalty on any rolls made that are not directly involved in dealing with the chaos.

This spell cannot be cast a second time within the same area (or in adjacent areas) for the next 24 hours.

**Free Council Rote: Fortean Storm**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Fate

This rote drives to the heart of the new philosophies on magic espoused by the Free Council. It unleashes chaotic happenings upon a world that most people would rather be ordered and safe, but opens people to the possibility that the universe isn't always as it seems, causing even the dimmest of Sleepers to wonder what other mysteries are still out there. Also, as some members of the order are quick to point out, it makes one hell of a smokescreen when attempting a hasty getaway.





## Forces

**Purview:** Electricity, gravity, kinetic energy, light, physics, radiation, sound, weather

This is the Arcanum associated with light, heat, energy and the animation of the universe, the patterns of power that make the worlds to move in their orbits, stars to burn, and the cohesion that binds the cosmos together. It is a primal, powerful Arcanum, well suited to those with assertive overlooks on the world and who are confident of their own preeminent place within it. Those who master the Arcanum of Forces command storms, droughts, tides and even the power of the atom.

Forces is perhaps the most "classical wizardly" of the Arcana. With Forces, a mage can summon fire from his fingertips, overcome the power of gravity to take flight, levitate objects and even people with the power of his will alone, conjure up both darkness and light or cause the very earth to tremble. Those who seek to control this Arcanum are often unsubtle people, energetic and boisterous. They laugh heartily, weep openly and otherwise express themselves with honesty and passion in all things.

### • Initiate of Forces

The first part of harnessing a thing is to understand that thing. I see the elusive energies of the world, moving in a dance too complex and elaborate for sleeper eyes to perceive. I hear words spoken on the wind and see that which is invisible to normal sight, the glow cast by light too rarified for human eyes.

### Ruling Realm: The Aether

The gross/subtle pair of Forces/Prime provides the ruling Arcana for the realm of the Aether, the celestial space where heavenly fires burn. Forces is the material expression of the pair.

### Forces at a Glance

Not all types of energy can be manipulated with equal facility. Mages can influence, control and master different types of energy with different degrees of learning in the Forces Arcanum.

**Heat, Light, Sound:** The mage can begin to influence these forces with the first dot in the Arcanum, and she gains more control as she advances in her understanding. With the third dot, she can create these forces from thin air.

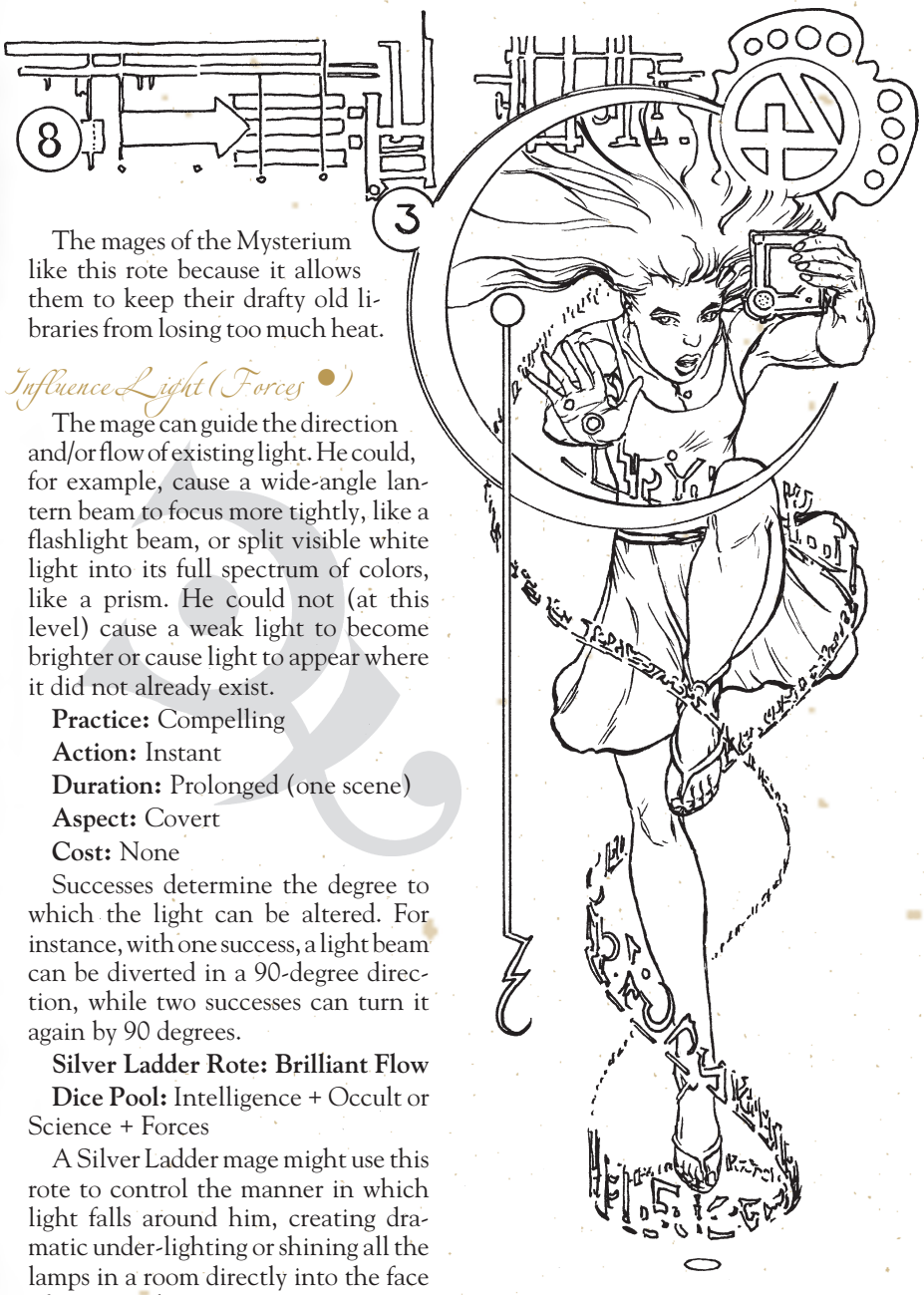
**Electricity, Fire:** The mage can begin to influence these mercurial forces with the second dot in the Arcanum, with increasing control as she progresses. With the fourth dot, she can generate these forces from nothing.

**Kinetic Energy:** The mage can begin to influence different aspects of kinetic force at different degrees of mastery. With the second dot, she can repel kinetic force applied against her, or focus a broad kinetic force into a pinpoint. With the third dot, she can telekinetically move things, with expanded control as she progresses to higher levels. With the fourth dot, she can alter the vectors and velocity of moving things, with greater control at the fifth dot.

### Influence Heat (Forces •)

The mage can guide the direction and/or flow of existing heat. He could, for example, keep warm in cold weather by pulling the ambient warmth shed by other human bodies to himself, or make sure that the dim heat from a radiator on the other side of a bathroom reached the shower stall. He could not increase the temperature of the heat at this level, nor create heat where there is none.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None
**Mysterium Rote: Radiant Blessing**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces



The mages of the Mysterium like this rote because it allows them to keep their drafty old libraries from losing too much heat.

### Influence Light (Forces ●)

The mage can guide the direction and/or flow of existing light. He could, for example, cause a wide-angle lantern beam to focus more tightly, like a flashlight beam, or split visible white light into its full spectrum of colors, like a prism. He could not (at this level) cause a weak light to become brighter or cause light to appear where it did not already exist.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Successes determine the degree to which the light can be altered. For instance, with one success, a light beam can be diverted in a 90-degree direction, while two successes can turn it again by 90 degrees.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Brilliant Flow**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

A Silver Ladder mage might use this rote to control the manner in which light falls around him, creating dramatic under-lighting or shining all the lamps in a room directly into the face of someone he interrogates.

### Influence Sound (Forces ●)

The mage can guide the direction and/or flow of existing sound. He could, for example, focus sound waves from across a vast chamber so he can listen in on a whispered conversation, or ensure that the sound of his own voice does not carry beyond the person to whom he is speaking. He could not amplify the volume, however, or create a noise from thin air.

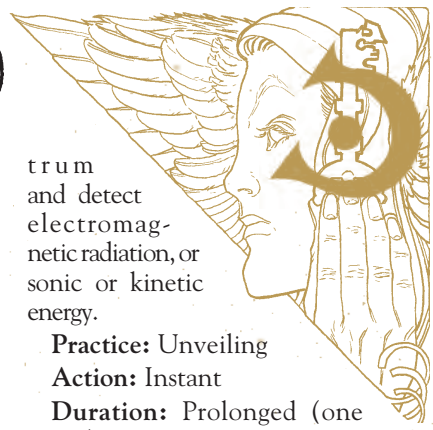
**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

**Silver Ladder Rote: Fording the River**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

A whispered word can mean the downfall of an empire, a fact well known to the willworkers of the Silver Ladder. With this rote, such words can be overheard.

### Nightsight (Forces ●)

By attuning her perceptions to pick up trace amounts of ambient light, supplementing this with an intuitive feel for vibration, heat and the like, a mage can see in the dark with the same clarity as most nocturnal predators. She can essentially perceive the infrared or ultraviolet spectrum and detect electromagnetic radiation, or sonic or kinetic energy.



**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

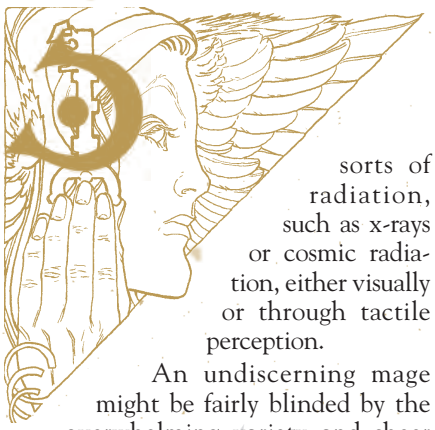
Each success lessens by one any penalties for operating under cover of darkness. Note, however, that sudden bursts of light can prove disorienting or even painful for the mage and that she will find the light of an ordinary desk lamp to be excessive, while full noonday sunlight is excruciating. (Invert lighting penalties for the character; it is easy to see in dim or no light, difficult to see in normal light and impossible to see in very bright light.) Also, because this vision is augmented by a somewhat heightened sense for sound and vibration, sudden, violent motions (like an earthquake or an explosion) may temporarily impose penalties on the mage as she readjusts her perceptions to compensate.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Night As Day**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Composure + Forces

Few things are more frightening to the enemies of the heirs of Atlantis than a squad of Adamantine Arrow willworkers moving in under cover of night and supplemented by this rote. Whether used on the defensive (when a sanctum suddenly loses power, for example, and something unspeakable begins seething up from the basement) or on the attack, this rote is to its caster as a light in the darkness.

### Read Matrices (Forces ●)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). He can perceive energy and magical resonance, detecting the presence of all of the universe's various forms of energy: heat, gravity, electromagnetism and the like, including the presence or absence of different



sorts of radiation, such as x-rays or cosmic radiation, either visually or through tactile perception.

An undiscerning mage might be fairly blinded by the overwhelming variety and sheer quantity of energy that moves around her at all times, unable to process the ever-shifting tapestry of power that is all but invisible to the untrained eye.

The mage is also especially aware of resonance's energetic aspects and flow, its vibratory frequency and movement.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with this spell. When scrutinizing energetic phenomena (like the electromagnetic spectrum), the more invisible that energy is to the naked eye, the more dice penalties the mage suffers.

| Spectrum | Dice Penalties |
|---|---|
| Gamma rays | –3 |
| X-rays | –2 |
| Ultraviolet rays | –1 |
| Visible light | 0 |
| Infrared rays | –1 |
| Radar | –2 |
| Radio, TV | –3 |

**Mysterium Rote: The Electric Invisible**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Forces

The ancients sometimes buried secrets not in crude etchings on stone and clay, but in the unseen energies of the world. This rote enables a member of the Mysterium to sense such invisible forces for whatever purpose, and to witness their interplay. Members of all orders use this rote to discern the patterns of energy that move around them, and to detect the presence of forceful or energetic resonance.

### *Receiver (Forces ●)*

The mage can hear sounds on subsonic or supersonic frequencies that the human ear cannot normally distinguish, but this spell does not improve her hearing ability (it adds no dice, but does extend the range of sounds she can hear).

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

A Wits + Composure roll is made for the mage to discern high-frequency sounds (a dog whistle) or low-frequency sounds (the rumble of a distant herd of elephants). Sounds that are very high or low on the scale from the normal human range of hearing might impose dice penalties.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Thunderous Whispers**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Forces

Perception is a large part of being a Guardian of the Veil. A number of Guardians make use of this rote to pick up on things ordinary humans might miss. After all, the world is full of all sorts of wondrous and terrible phenomena, and one never knows if, say, all the dogs in the neighborhood are howling because of some unnatural presence, or due to nothing more than a sound painful to their ears, one far above the register audible to humans. Mages of the Mysterium also make use of such magics, for sometimes the secret to an enigma lies not in what one can see, but in what one can *hear*.

### *Tune In (Forces ●)*

This spell enables a mage to listen in on a free-floating data transmission (like that of a cellular modem) and translate the electromagnetic "noise" into intelligible information. The willworker cannot, however, understand information that was originally transmitted in another language.

With this sense, a mage could listen in on a radio broadcast without the need for any kind of receiver. Likewise, she could watch any television signal not transmitted directly through cables. This would enable the mage to spy on closed walkie-talkie channels, get free satellite pay-per-views, or even "listen in" on the datastream transmitted and received by a cellular modem if she really felt like it (not that she'd be able to make much sense of it without the use of Mind magic to interpret the noise). She could even access wireless communications (such as MP3s, Internet long-distance phones, or video conferencing) at a wi-fi "hot spot," although she can only listen to, not read, such transmissions. At this point, the mage is incapable of actually sending any information along these channels and is restricted to eavesdropping on extant signals.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

A Wits + Science roll is made for the mage to discern transmissions. Electromagnetism travels vast distances in a short period of time; signals are bounced all over the place by satellites (both natural and artificial), the Earth's atmosphere and various other things. Encrypted signals levy a penalty on perception rolls equal to the successes initially accrued in encrypting the signal.

**Free Council Rote: Mohammed's Radio**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science + Forces

Good for more than just free satellite radio, this rote allows a Free Council willworker to listen in on police-band radios, walkie-talkies and cellular phone transmissions. Guardians of the Veil also make regular use of this magic in the course of their work defending the Mysteries.

## ●● Apprentice of Forces

### Control Heat (Forces ●●)

The mage can increase or decrease the temperature of an area.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success either increases or decreases the temperature in a one-yard radius of the targeted spot by up to 10 degrees Fahrenheit. For example, four successes allow the caster to reduce average room temperature of 72 degrees down to freezing (32 degrees).

**Mysterium Rote: Subtle Ambience**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

The Mysterium uses this rote to control the temperature in the libraries and storerooms in which they keep their valuable finds, creating toasty reading rooms or freezing lockers.

### Control Light (Forces ●●)

The mage can brighten or weaken an existing light source, such that a 40-watt light bulb can be made to shine as brightly as a floodlight.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success doubles the light's candescence or diminishes it by half.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Dim the Lights**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

The Guardians of the Veil use this rote to darken the places they sneak into without affecting any existing systems, which could be centrally monitored.

### Control Sound (Forces ●●)

The mage can amplify or turn down the volume of sound in an area, such as making the music coming out of a pair of headphones loud enough for dozens of people to hear clearly.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success doubles the sound's volume or diminishes it by half. The effect covers any sound source emanating from within a targeted spot of one-yard radius. For example, if cast upon a podium, anyone standing within that one-yard spot speaks louder than he would when standing outside it.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Thunderous Whispers**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

It takes more than a voice that carries to make a great speaker, but this sort of thing almost never hurts, either.

### Eyes of the Matrix (Forces ●●)

As the Forces 1 "Read Matrices" spell (see p. 163), except that the mage casts this rote upon another mage, or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If the spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, a reflexive and contested Resolve + Gnosis roll is made to resist.

**Mysterium Rote: Full Spectrum**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Forces

Explorations into the Mysteries sometimes make for strange bedfellows. The mages of the Mysterium use this rote to bestow basic Forces Arcanum perceptions upon erstwhile allies, whether Awakened or of some other occult origin. Silver Ladder willworkers use a variant rote (Presence + Science + Forces) to extend such perceptions to those supernatural beings, mage or otherwise, with whom they associate.

### Influence Electricity (Forces ●●)

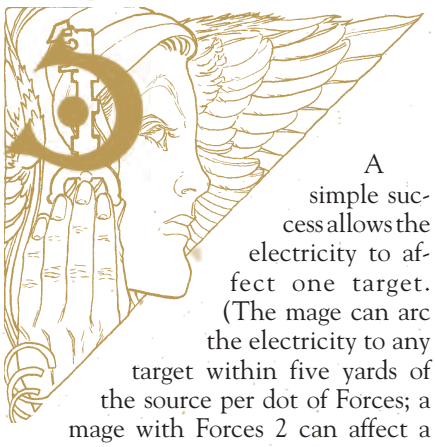
The mage can influence the direction or flow of electricity. He can, for example, cause an existing electrical current (such as that moving through appliances or in walls) to flash or arc out and strike a target. He could not amplify the current at this level.



I can weave the threads of power with an artisan's eye, moving such energies according to my will. I can hide objects from sight, or armor myself against the assaults of my enemies. Light, heat and sound all flourish or are diminished at my command.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant and aimed
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

The mage does not directly attack a person or object with this spell; he instead manipulates an existing electrical current, redirecting it toward the target of his choice. The damage inflicted depends entirely on the electrical current. See "Electrocution," pp. 177-178 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for guidelines. The raw power of the current is not altered in any way at this level. This spell usually causes the power source to shut down (a circuit breaker engages) or short out in following turn (although Duration factors can be increased to prevent this termination for additional turns).



A simple success allows the electricity to affect one target. (The mage can arc the electricity to any target within five yards of the source per dot of Forces; a mage with Forces 2 can affect a target 10 yards away.) Excess successes affect additional *adjacent* targets next to one another (this is an exception to the normal rule that disallows aimed spells to affect multiple targets). Targets must each be within three yards in either direction of each other.

| Successes | Targets |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | Two targets |
| 3 successes | Four targets |
| 4 successes | Eight targets |
| 5 successes | 16 targets |

The source itself, however, limits the total number that can be affected:

| Source | Total Targets |
|---|---|
| Wall socket | Two |
| Industrial socket | Four |
| Junction box | Eight targets |
| Main line feed | 16 targets |

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Shock Therapy**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Forces

Occasionally, a spark is all that's required. Of course, even an ordinary wall socket packs a potentially lethal punch, so Adamantine Arrow mages do not overlook the usefulness of this rote.

### *Influence Fire (Forces ●●)*

The mage can influence the direction or flow of an existing flame. He can, for example, cause a campfire to leap from its place and onto a person, or direct the flame from a Zippo lighter in an arc to the pool of liquor on the countertop. He could not fan the flames to make a larger or hotter fire at this level.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and aimed; subtract target's Defense

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The mage does not directly attack a person or object with this spell; he instead manipulates an existing fire, moving it or directing it toward the target of his choice. The damage inflicted depends entirely on the size and heat of the fire. See "Fire," p. 180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for guidelines. This spell usually causes the fire to exhaust its fuel in the following turn, although if targets are wearing highly flammable clothing, they might catch fire and continue to burn each turn until the fire is put out.

A single success allows the fire to affect one target. (The mage can send the fire at any target within three yards of its origin per dot of Forces; a mage with Forces 2 can affect a target six yards away.) Excess successes affect additional *adjacent* targets next to one another (this is an exception to the normal rule that disallows aimed spells to affect multiple targets). Targets must each be within three yards in either direction of each other.

| Successes | Targets |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | Two targets |
| 3 successes | Four targets |
| 4 successes | Eight targets |
| 5 successes | 16 targets |

The size of the source itself, however, limits the total number that can be affected:

| Size of Fire | Total Targets |
|---|---|
| Torch | Two |
| Bonfire | Four |
| Inferno | 16 targets |

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Deliberate Arson**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics + Forces – Defense

The Guardians like this rote because it gives them a plausible way to cover up evidence they don't want getting out. There is no sign of arson with this rote, and besides, even a small arc of flame can spell disaster for an enemy weighed down with guns and ammunition.

### *Invisible Object (Forces ●●)*

The mage can render an inanimate object invisible to all forms of sight, including cameras. Cast in combination with "Influence Sound," p. 163, the mage can redirect any sounds the object makes (such as the clicking of a camera shutter), making them seem to come from another location.

**Practice:** Veiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

If the object is moved, it is not invisible (it can be seen) while it is moving.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Look Away**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Forces

This rote allows a Guardian to render some object (whether a faintly glowing obelisk, exsanguinated corpse, or something else entirely) invisible to mundane sight. Silver Ladder mages sometimes use this rote to conceal some manner of leverage (perhaps a weapon) during delicate negotiations until the time is right.

### *Kinetic Blow (Forces ●●)*

The mage focuses the force of a physical attack, such as a punch or kick, down to a pinpoint, inflicting damage as though the person on the other end is stabbed with a knife.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Bashing damage is converted to lethal. Attacks that already inflict lethal damage are unaffected. The spell affects one future attack roll per success. The player can choose which of his attack rolls are affected, but he must choose before he rolls the dice for each attack. This effect lasts for one scene (unless additional Duration factors are added during casting), after which time any unused Kinetic Blows are lost.

With Forces 3, the mage can use this spell with ranged-weapon attacks such as thrown rocks.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Knife Fist**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Brawl or Weaponry + Forces

The greatest martial artists can kill with a single blow. Arrow willworkers with this rote don't require any special training to transform fists and feet into deadly weapons. As an incredibly useful combat tool, this magic sees considerable use among mages of all orders.

### Transmission (Forces ●●)

The mage can hijack an extant radio signal, transmitting her own words on it and replacing the original transmission.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

While this spell gives the caster the ability to replace one signal with another, it doesn't convey the skill or talent needed to fake a specific transmission. That requires Skills appropriate to the transmission, which could be Expression, Subterfuge and even Science. The Storyteller decides what roll needs to be made to devise a convincing transmission. For example, faking a radio transmission by a well-known radio shock-jock would require the ability to mimic that DJ's voice, which might be Intelligence + Expression, assuming the speaker's voice isn't too unlike the person's mimicked.

**Mysterium Rote: Voices in the Ether**
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Expression + Forces

Good for sending police on wild-goose chases and creating scares about Martian invasions, among many other uses, this Mysterium rote is also quite popular with Guardians of the Veil, who cherish its potential for misdirection.

### Unseen Shield (Forces ●●)

Through the use of this spell, the mage deflects incoming attacks with an energy shield, dispersing their force along its invisible contours and causing a punch to land harmlessly. Kinetic attacks (like fists and bullets) are as surely turned aside as energy-based ones (like a gout of flame or a laser), their momentum stolen or power leeched away.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Forces Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

Note that this magical armor does not apply against an opponent's attempts to achieve a grappling hold on the mage (the Fate, Mind, Space and Time Arcana provide shielding spells to do that). Nor does it apply against a grappling opponent's attempts to overpower the mage. The spell does, however, protect against attempts to inflict damage upon the caster (subtract the armor points from any overpower roll that intends to damage the mage or attack him with a drawn weapon).

In addition, the mage gains +1 die per Forces dot on rolls to resist being knocked down from applications of kinetic force, such as a hurtling wrestler or a stiff wind along a canyon edge (including attacks that cause the knockdown effect; see p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

**Free Council Rote: Force Field**
**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult or Science + Forces

This Free Council rote generates a weave of simple energies designed to blunt any incoming attack. Adamantine Arrow willworkers use a similar rote to guard against such assaults.

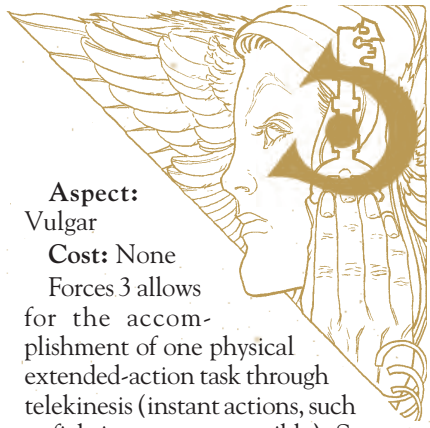
### ●●● Disciple of Forces

*I transmute the base energies of the universe, changing one into another as I will. I walk unseen by others so long as my will is firm. The length of my grasp goes well beyond the reach of my fingertips, and electricity and fire dance at my command.*

### Autonomous Servant (Forces ●●● + Mind ● or ●●●●●; optional Space ●●)

The mage can have a spell perform an extended-action task for him while he goes about his own business. He might have it cook him dinner while he watches TV, or lift buckets of water while he reads a book.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration

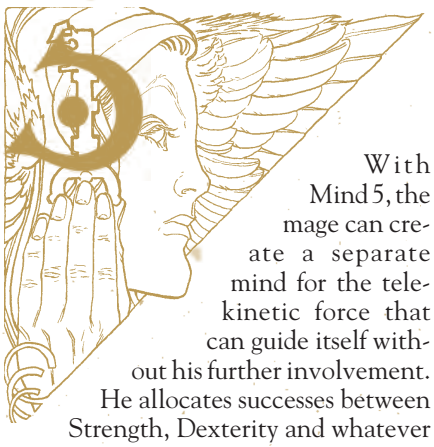


**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Forces 3 allows for the accomplishment of one physical extended-action task through telekinesis (instant actions, such as fighting, are not possible). Successes are allocated to the telekinetic force's Strength or Dexterity, as per the "Telekinesis" spell, p. 170. The caster must concentrate for the length of the task. If he is attacked or surprised, a Resolve + Composure roll must be made for him to maintain concentration. If concentration is lost before the extended action's target number is reached, the spell can be recast but all accumulated successes are lost; the spell must start from scratch.

Mind allows the mage to devote part of his own brainpower to guiding the task, while he is able to perform a separate mental (not physical) action himself. He multitasks, as with the "One Mind, Two Thoughts" spell (p. 206). Since he presides over the telekinetic operation, which does all the actual work, it is considered a mental task rather than physical one.

The spell's telekinetic force performs the extended-action task, guided by a portion of the mage's own mind that is invested into the chore being performed. The dice pool is equal to the telekinesis' spell's assigned Attribute plus the mage's own Skill. A heavy-lifting task might require Strength + Athletics, cooking dinner or writing one's memoirs might need Dexterity + Athletics or Crafts, and picking a lock might be Dexterity + Larceny.



With Mind 5, the mage can create a separate mind for the telekinetic force that can guide itself without his further involvement. He allocates successes between Strength, Dexterity and whatever Physical Skill is needed for the task (it doesn't use the mage's own Skills, it has only those Skill dots that are allocated to it with spellcasting successes).

If Space 2 is included, the Autonomous Servant can perform its task well away from the eyes and ears of the mage. For instance, he can get it to pick the lock to the wealthy financier's home while he chats up that financier at a gala ball across town.

**Mysterium Rote: Indispensable Aide**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Forces

Mysterium mages are stereotyped as being too buried in their books to attend to mundane matters, such as shaving, cleaning or even dressing properly. This rote's popularity among mages of that order does little to break the stereotype, although it does allow a bookworm mage to at least dust his library before visitors arrive without losing valuable study time.

### Bestow Unseen Shield (Forces ●●●)

The mage casts a protective ward upon others. As with the Forces 2 "Unseen Shield" spell, p. 167.

**Practice:** Shielding

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional; extends Duration to 24 hours)

**Free Council Rote: Force Shield**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

This rote is usually cast upon an area, creating a barrier with which attacks and objects must contend. Free Council mages often cast this rote with strange devices, while Mysterium willworkers usually invoke its power through more traditional means (Resolve + Occult + Forces).

### Call Lightning (Forces ●●●)

The mage calls down lightning from a stormy sky to strike a target of his choice. He cannot conjure lightning from nothing (at least, not at this level). He can bring down lightning only from a pre-existing storm or a storm he causes through the "Change Weather" spell, p. 172.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and aimed

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage does not directly attack a person or object with this spell; he instead calls and directs a bolt of lightning toward the target of his choice. The bolt inflicts three points of bashing damage plus one per success (two successes therefore inflict five points of bashing damage). The target must be somewhere that lightning could reasonably strike.

Successive uses of this spell within the same scene against the same target (or even other nearby targets) might be considered Improbable by Sleeper witnesses (see "Improbable Magic," p. 112). A third strike (and each successive strike thereafter) in the same turn is vulgar.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Lightning Rod**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Forces

Sometimes the best way to silence a witness to the Mysteries is to let nature take its course — with a little bit of guidance. The Guardians use this rote as a last resort, but it's still easier to explain away to the authorities than most direct forms of magical assault.

### Control Electricity (Forces ●●●)

The mage can diminish an electrical current and/or alter its direction of flow. He could cut the power to a certain outlet, redirect all the electricity in the building to a single outlet, or send the power coursing through one outlet to multiple outlets (assuming the physical wiring exists or there is some other way to control conductivity). He cannot increase the current at this level, since that involves generating new electricity. He can work with only existing electricity at this level.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Each success can send a single line of power in a new direction, or divert it elsewhere. If the mage attempts to diminish the power, each success brings it down by one degree. For example, one success reduces a main line to a junction box. Two successes takes a junction box down to an industrial socket. Three successes reduces an industrial socket to a regular wall socket.

**Mysterium Rote: Switchbox**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Science + Forces

Mysterium mages are accustomed to having to disable security systems when they need to acquire something that just can't be bought with money. This rote allows them to disable power to a system without shutting down the entire line (and possibly alerting someone to trouble when all goes dark).

### Control Fire (Forces ●●●)

The mage can fuel an existing fire, increasing its size and intensity. Likewise, he can deprive an existing fire of fuel, dampening or even extinguishing it.

**Practice:** Weaving or Fraying

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn for fueling a fire) or lasting (extinguishing a fire)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

When fueling a fire, successes are allocated between size and heat, with each success either doubling the fire's size or adding one point to its heat damage. See "Fire" on p. 180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

When dampening a fire, each success subtracts one from the damage it delivers. Once it has no more damage rating, it is extinguished. For example, a torch delivers two points of damage (one from size, the other from heat). One success diminishes that to one point of damage, while two successes extinguish it completely. Extinguishing a fire is lasting (the fire doesn't re-ignite when the spell expires).

**Free Council Rote: Dry Water**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult or Science + Forces

It is not unknown for Free Council mages to accidentally start fires in their laboratories. This rote helps put them out before they can destroy hours of work.

### Light Mastery (Forces ●●●)

The mage can create or extinguish light. He could cause a room to go pitch-black or light a dark cave from nothing but the tip of a glowing finger.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Successes determine the created light's intensity (in a directional 30-degree arc).

| Successes | Intensity |
|---|---|
| 1 success | Flashlight |
| 2 successes | 75-watt bulb |
| 3 successes | Car headlight |
| 4 successes | Floodlight |
| 5 successes | Stadium light |

Conversely, one success is usually enough to extinguish a light, unless it's a light created by this spell or other magic, in which case the magic's Potency must be exceeded by this spell.

**Mysterium Rote: Hand Torch**

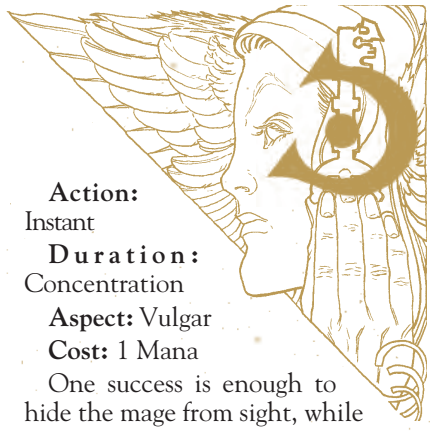
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult or Science + Forces

This rote is a major boon to a tomb-crawling Mysterium mage. Even if the batteries in his flashlight fail him, his magic can still light his way — or darken the way for his rivals.

### Personal Invisibility (Forces ●●●)

The mage can turn herself invisible. As with the Forces 2 "Invisibile Object" spell, p. 166, but cast upon herself. Cast in combination with "Sound Mastery," p. 170, the mage can be invisible and completely silent. She must maintain concentration as an instant action to remain unseen.

**Practice:** Veiling



**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Vulgar

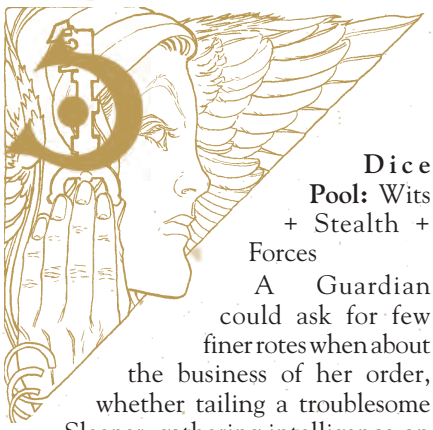
**Cost:** 1 Mana

One success is enough to hide the mage from sight, while excess successes act to occlude her from spells used to see or locate her (compare spell Potencies). Although the mage's physical form is invisible, her aura can still be seen by those with the ability to perceive auras (Mind 1 "Aura Perception," p. 205, or Prime 1 "Supernal Vision," p. 221). Also, while the mage is invisible to a vampire's heightened senses from the Auspex Discipline, the vampire might still sense the mage's presence through his heightened smell or hearing.

She must maintain concentration as an instant action (which means she cannot cast other spells while maintaining invisibility). She also cannot make quick movements (she can't move more than half her Speed), or gain her Defense while concentrating. If she does either, she can be seen as a prominent blur or refraction of light, allowing others to freely target her (as if she were barely concealed, with a –1 dice penalty) on the turn in which she moves and before she acts again on the following turn.

Others can try to pinpoint an invisible person through hearing or smell (assuming they have advanced olfactory senses). See the rules for "Fighting Blind," pp. 166-167 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Cloak of Rain**



**Dice Pool:** Wits + Stealth + Forces

A Guardian could ask for few finer rotes when about the business of her order, whether tailing a troublesome Sleeper, gathering intelligence on a potential problem site, or preparing to eliminate a threat to the secrecy of the Mysteries. The Guardian could be the proverbial "fly on the wall" watching an event unfold, unseen and unnoticed, save by ill luck (if someone blunders into her) or mystic senses. Mages of all orders make use of this magic given its broad utility.

### Sound Mastery (Forces ●●●)

The mage creates sounds or silences them. He could, for example, create the sound of a police siren or render absolutely silent the footfalls of a stealthy intruder. He can also record sounds, storing them magically for later playback.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Concentration (unique sounds) or prolonged (repetitive sounds)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Successes determine the sound's volume.

| Successes | Volume |
|---|---|
| 1 success | Casual talk |
| 2 successes | Scream |
| 3 successes | Electric guitar |
| 4 successes | Gunshot |
| 5 successes | Industrial factory noises |

The range of sounds the mage creates depends on his ingenuity and capability. A reflexive roll of Wits + Expression (for voices) or Animal Ken (for animal cries) or Science (for devices) might be required. An instant and contested Intelligence + Investigation roll can be made for any listener who doubts his ears to realize the sound is fake (it's a real sound, but not a real lion). The Duration for creating sounds is one scene, although if the sound is sufficiently repetitive it could last for up to a scene (or longer with extra prolonged Duration factors) without needing the mage's concentration.

Conversely, one success is usually enough to completely silence a one-yard radius around a targeted spot (successes can be allocated to Target factors to silence a larger area; see p. 117). A sound created by this spell or other magic within the zone of silence must contest with the silencing spell's Potency for its sound to be heard.

A separate casting of this spell allows a mage to record sounds that occur around her and store them as bits of magical energy. For the following hour, she can choose to turn on her magical recorder as an instant action, although she can turn it off reflexively. She then "locks off" one of her Mana points, using it to store the sounds. She cannot spend that point without losing its stored recording. She can play them back for herself at any time using the "Read Matrices" spell, p. 163, or she can play them for anyone to hear (and record with a mundane recording device, perhaps for posterity) by spending the locked Mana, after which the recording is lost. (Unless she has Prime 3, allowing her to distill the Mana into tass, and so store it physically.)

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Ventriloquist's Art**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult or Science + Forces

Guardians armed with this rote can distract Sleeper interlopers with all manner of sounds, or quiet their own noises should a Sleeper approach.

### Telekinesis (Forces ●●●)

The mage can telekinetically lift and/or use an object remotely.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The mage must declare before casting whether successes apply to the force's Strength (its lifting ability) or Dexterity (its fine manipulation ability). The lesser Attribute has a default score of 1 dot. The caster can also raise either Attribute by choosing to suffer a –1 dice penalty on the spellcasting roll per dot to be raised. She could, for example, choose to put a lot of Strength and very little Dexterity into a spell intended to lift an extremely heavy object straight up (see "Lifting/Moving Objects," pp. 47-48 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), or she could grant very little Strength and a lot of Dexterity to a spell cast to use a set of lock picks from a distance (roll the Telekinesis Dexterity + caster's Larceny Skill).

The object cannot be moved beyond the mage's sight (unless he uses Space 2 to scry it). The mage can move the item at a Speed per turn equal to his Gnosis + Forces.

The mage must concentrate for each turn. See "Concentration," p. 119. With Forces 4, he can cast the spell with a default Duration of one scene (in which case, when he is not actively manipulating the object, it stays where he left it, even levitating in the air).

**Silver Ladder Rote: Hand of the Mind**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Athletics or Larceny + Forces

A leader must resort to underhanded means on occasion. A document may need to be filched or a lock picked. Likewise, displays of brute force are sometimes useful, such as when battering down a door. Silver Ladder mages use this rote for those times. Adamantine Arrow willworkers use their version of the rote (Strength + Athletics + Forces) for almost purely martial purposes, such as to toss things at their enemies.

### Telekinetic Strike (Forces ●●●)

The mage creates a ball of telekinetic force that he hurls at his intended target.

**Practice:** Fraying

**Action:** Instant and aimed

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Each success inflicts one point of bashing damage.

With Forces 4, this damage can be lethal. With Forces 5, one Mana can be spent to make the damage aggravated, by tearing apart the target's cellular structure. This version of Telekinetic Strike actually causes air to ripple in an unnatural fashion, warning a target about the threat. The target is allowed his Defense against the caster's aiming roll.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Mind Arrows**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Athletics + Forces

Unarmed and at range, an Arrow mage can attack her foes. This rote launches a telekinetic assault that can strike at a distance. Of course, other mages also make use of this rote, as one never knows when it might become necessary to take someone down at 30 paces.

### Turn Projectile (Forces ●●●)

The mage can direct the course of a fast projectile.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Although the casting is an instant action, the mage can cast this spell at any point in the Initiative roster, even before he could normally act, although that is his action for the turn.

The mage can turn the projectile up, down, right, left, or even back the way it came. The degree to which the projectile's course is altered depends on the number of successes rolled:

| Successes | Course Alteration* |
|---|---|
| 1 success | Turn in one direction by up to 45 degrees |
| 2 successes | Turn in one direction by up to 60 degrees |
| 3 successes | Turn in one direction by up to 90 degrees |
| 4 successes | Turn in one direction by up to 120 degrees |
| 5 successes | Turn in one direction by up to 180 degrees |

* From the perspective of the projectile.

Mages can mix and match successes to direct a projectile's course in multiple directions. For example, with two successes, a mage can turn an arrow 45 degrees to its left and then make it go down 45 degrees from its new course. The effect is lasting; once the projectile's course is altered, it remains traveling along its new course until something else causes it to change vectors or it smashes into something. With a successful reflexive Dexterity + Firearms roll, the mage can aim the projectile at a target along its new trajectory.

The mage can affect multiple projectiles by adding extra Target factors. See "Target," p. 117. When turning autofire from the same gun, use the following special Target factors chart:

| Autofire Affected | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| Short burst | –2 |
| Medium burst | –4 |
| Long burst | –6 |

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Arrow Storm**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Forces

The Adamantine Arrow is perhaps not surprisingly renowned for this rote, by which members turn enemies' bullets back upon them.

## ●●●● Adept of Forces

### Bestow Invisibility (Forces ●●●●)

The mage can turn another person invisible, as he does with himself with the Forces 3 "Personal Invisibility" spell, p. 169. The target must maintain concentration to remain unseen.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target, not the mage, must concentrate to maintain the effect.

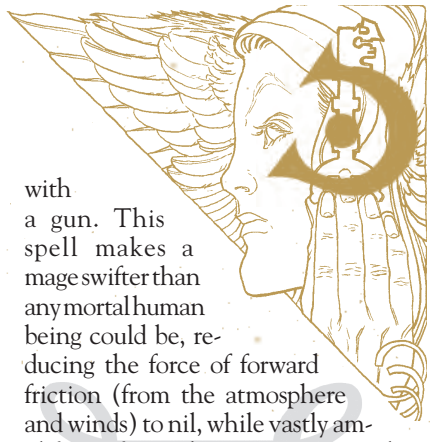
**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Unseen Army**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Stealth + Forces

Guardians understand that not everyone has the capabilities required to do the work the order requires of them, but they must, nonetheless, occasionally bring such unprepared souls along for the ride. This rote helps to even the odds somewhat, enabling even the most normally conspicuous souls to move with preternatural stealth. Silver Ladder mages also make use of this rote, often to conceal a bodyguard.

### Burst of Speed (Forces ●●●●)

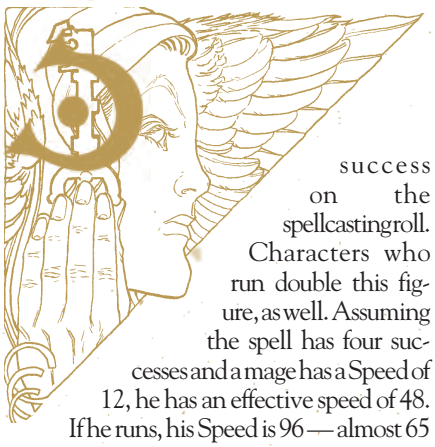
The circumstances requiring it may be rare, but every so often it happens that a mage needs to outpace a horse on foot. Sometimes it just helps to be a whole hell of a lot faster than the guy with a gun. This spell makes a mage swifter than any mortal human being could be, reducing the force of forward friction (from the atmosphere and winds) to nil, while vastly amplifying forward momentum. Each stride can carry the caster effortlessly for the equivalent of seven or eight normal paces. While the mage can't outpace a bullet, she does move faster than just about any living thing without mechanical assistance.



By the auspices of my enlightened science,
I create thunder and fire from nothing.
I strike down my foes and can bend even the weather to conform to my desires,
Summoning rains from out of a clear sky or bringing drought.
I move with the speed of the wind and turn bullets from their paths.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana per turn

A Mana point can be spent to boost Speed for a turn. The caster can do so as many times as he wishes while the spell's scene-long Duration is still active (assuming he has enough Mana). The mage's Speed increases by itself again for each



success on the spellcasting roll. Characters who run double this figure, as well. Assuming the spell has four successes and a mage has a Speed of 12, he has an effective speed of 48. If he runs, his Speed is 96 — almost 65 miles per hour!

If any Sleeper witnesses the mage running faster than a normal human, Disbelief is invoked.

**Mysterium Rote: Hermes' Sandals**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Athletics + Forces

There is a time for negotiations, a time to hold one's ground, and a time to get the hell out of Dodge. This Mysterium rote is magic for the last of those situations. Of course, members of the Mysterium are just as apt to use this spell to catch up with someone or something as to use it to take flight. Guardians of the Veil also occasionally use this magic when they need to intercept a threat to the secrecy of the Mysteries and don't have time to hail a cab.

### *Change Weather (Forces ●●●●)*

The mage alters weather patterns, bringing almost any sort of normal (non-disastrous) weather to bear on an area, given enough time and effort. (Note that a frost in late spring, while potentially very destructive to local food production, is not the same sort of thing as a tornado or typhoon, and can be created using this level of Forces.)

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The inertia of current weather patterns might levy dice penalties. Making threatening thunderclouds release a downpour might cause no penalty, while turning a bright summer's day into freezing rain might cause a –3 dice penalty. It takes about five minutes after casting for the storm effects to develop.

Major conditions, such as hurricanes or tornadoes, require the "Adverse Weather" spell, p. 174.

**Free Council Rote: Rainmaker**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

Long has humanity tried to harness weather to its own ends. A Free Council mage with this rote can call up rain to end a drought, a bit of warmth to break a cold snap, or whatever other non-extreme condition she desires. Mysterium mages use alternate means to control these forces (Resolve + Science + Forces), but accomplish the same ends.

### *Control Velocity (Forces ●●●●)*

The mage can increase or decrease the velocity of an object (but not a living creature). He could, for example, make a hurtling truck slow down, or speed up (or slow down) a bullet.

**Practice:** Patterning or Unraveling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Although the casting is an instant action, the mage can cast this spell at any point in the Initiative roster, even before he could normally act, although doing so is his action for the turn.

Each success doubles or halves the target object's speed. For example, a truck going 80 mph is reduced to 40 mph with one success, 20 mph with two successes, 10 mph with three successes, 5 mph with four successes, and two-and-a-half mph with five successes. Note that the mage must be able to affect the entire target and its Size (which might be up to 30 or more for an 18-wheeler rig and tow). He can't single out portions of it, such as slowing the velocity of a single tire and so slow the whole truck (while causing the passengers and objects inside to be thrown forward). See the rules for "Size," p. 118.

High-speed projectiles such as arrows and bullets cannot be halted at this level. Instead, add (for increased velocity) or subtract (for decreased velocity) one point of damage per every two successes, like so:

| Successes | Increased Velocity | Decreased Velocity |
|---|---|---|
| 1 success | +1 point of damage | –1 point of damage |
| 2 successes | +1 point of damage | –1 point of damage |
| 3 successes | +2 points of damage | –2 points of damage |
| 4 successes | +2 points of damage | –2 points of damage |
| 5 successes | +3 points of damage | –3 points of damage |

For turning autofire from the same gun, use the following special Target factors chart:

| Autofire Affected | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| Short burst | –2 |
| Medium burst | –4 |
| Long burst | –6 |

**Free Council Rote: Speed Trap**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science + Forces

Mages of the Free Council use this rote to slow down escaping enemies or to slow down those enemies' bullets.

### *Fiery Transformation (Forces ●●●● + Life ●●●●; optional Matter ●●●●)*

Stories of old tell of willworkers using the power of magic to metamorphose into all manner of strange forms. Many chose to become animals or to take on the shape of other people, while some assumed more fanciful skins. With this spell, a mage transforms into a creature of living flame.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The spell takes effect in the turn following casting.

Since the mage does not transform into another form of life, she is in no danger of losing herself to an alien mindset. Instead, she becomes a being of fire. Planes of force within her new shape allow her to maintain whatever Physical Attributes she possessed before the change.

The successes rolled for this spell are rolled as dice of lethal damage against anyone or anything not somehow fireproofed that makes physical contact with the mage (including her clothes and equipment). Likewise, the mage's hand-to-hand attacks cause lethal fire damage, to which the spell's successes are added as an equipment bonus.

By adding Matter 4 to the casting, the mage can cause all of her normal equipment (such as clothing or, say, a

knife) to change into fire with her, although they retain only simple mechanical properties. Firearms thus altered, however, do not function for the duration of the spell.

With Forces 5, the caster can spend one Mana to inflict aggravated damage with this magic.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Wrath of the Inferno**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Intimidation + Forces

Arrow mages who learn this rote use it to sow fear among their enemies and to inflict horrific harm in combat. While some see the rote as needlessly flashy, few things are quite as terrifying as a warrior of living fire, carving a charred and bloody swath through the ranks of her foes. Mysterium mages, though not often renowned for martial prowess, occasionally use a version of this rote to augment what combat ability they possess.

### Friction Knife (Forces ●●●●)

The mage increases the force of friction upon a given subject to the point that contact with the air itself causes lacerations and abrasions. A stiff wind can mean excruciating pain or death in the case of a very powerful caster.

**Practice:** Fraying

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The subject suffers one Health wound of lethal damage per every three yards (rounding down) that she moves in a turn. At the Storyteller's discretion, one additional wound might be caused by a strong wind. Note that a person sitting in a moving vehicle does not suffer this damage unless he's exposed to open air, such as in a convertible. (If he's next to an open window, he suffers half damage, rounded down.) Non-magical armor provides only half its normal protection, unless the subject's body is more than 95% covered by armor.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Sword of the Winds**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces vs. Stamina + Gnosis

The greatest warrior learns to use every resource in her environment, a lesson taken to heart by those Arrow mages who practice this rote. With such magic, an Arrow lays low her enemies without force of arms, allowing them to destroy themselves. Silver Ladder mages also make use of this magic to destroy foes without lifting a finger.

### Levitation (Forces ●●●●)

The mage can lift himself off the ground using telekinetic force. At this level of Forces, travel is slow and requires concentration.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Success allows the mage to levitate and travel in any direction with a maximum Speed equal to her Gnosis +1 per success (she cannot double this as she could by running on the ground). She must maintain concentration as an instant action (no further rolls are required). She is not very maneuverable, however. She cannot make quick movements to dodge obstacles and does not gain her Defense against any attacks that can reach her.

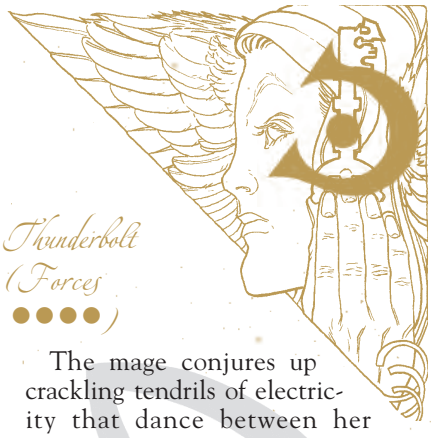
If she is attacked or startled, a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll must be made to maintain concentration. If it fails, she falls (see "Falling," p. 179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), although she can resume concentration as an instant action anytime within a number of turns equal to her Forces dots, halting her plummet instantly, assuming she doesn't hit ground before the. She'd have to fall from an extreme height — such as from skydiving — to allow her any time to regain concentration. (Note: This is an exception to the normal rules for losing concentration with a spell).

This spell instantly invokes Disbelief in Sleeper witnesses, which immediately works to unravel the magic.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Air Walk**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Athletics + Forces

Guardian mages find this a very useful spell when they need to perform home or office intrusions to fetch or destroy incriminating evidence — or to spy on someone from where he least expects it, above.



### Thunderbolt (Forces ●●●●)

The mage conjures up crackling tendrils of electricity that dance between her fingertips, and then sends them at a ranged target.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant and aimed

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional for aggravated damage)

Each success inflicts one Health wound of lethal damage. With Forces 5, one Mana can be spent to make the damage aggravated (although the target is allowed his Defense against the aiming roll made for the caster).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Lightning's Vessel**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + Forces

Perhaps one of the more awe-inspiring modes of attack common to the Adamantine Arrow (which is saying something), this rote is emblematic of that order's very name. Free Council willworkers use their own means of generating the energy needed for such magic (Intelligence + Athletics + Forces).

### Transform Energy (Forces ●●●●)

The mage can transform energy: sound into light or heat, or electricity into sound, or fire into electricity, or any combination of these forces. All kinds of energy have their origins in certain physical principles that manifested long ago and diverged from a single course. Using that sympathy, a mage can change one kind of energy into another.

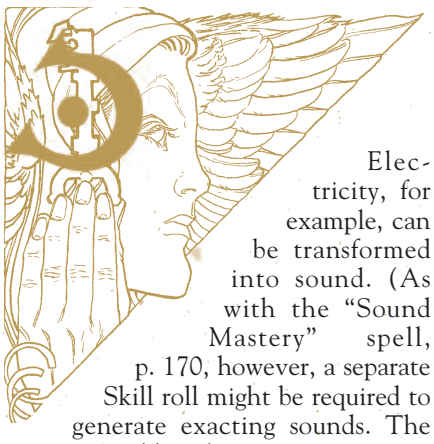
**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None



Electricity, for example, can be transformed into sound. (As with the "Sound Mastery" spell, p. 170, however, a separate Skill roll might be required to generate exacting sounds. The mage could easily get screams or gunfire, but it's harder to get a specific person screaming or the telltale sound of a certain model of gun.) Light could be changed into heat, meaning that a blindingly bright room could become pitch-black and searingly hot.

The existing energy is transformed, but it is not increased or diminished unless cast in combination with a spell that allows that effect. Use the chart below as a general guideline for transforming one form of energy into another:

**Free Council Rote: Electromagnetic Spectrum**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

By using advanced scientific techniques, a Council willworker can transmute simple forces, causing one form of energy to become another. Guardians of the Veil use similar magic (Wits + Occult or Science + Forces) when their duties require it.

### *Unseen Hand (Forces ●●●●)*

The mage can telekinetically lift a living creature remotely.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

A simple success lifts the target into the air. The spell's Strength is equal to its successes. The mage can move the living creature at a Speed per turn equal to his Gnosis plus any successes allocated for this purpose. The target cannot be moved beyond the mage's sight (unless he uses Space 2 to scry it).

Each turn, the victim can attempt to struggle free from the telekinetic grip. It takes an instant action and a Strength + Athletics or Brawl roll, penalized by the spell's assigned Strength.

With Forces 5, this spell can have a default Duration of prolonged (one scene), in which case when the caster is not actively manipulating the target, the target stays where the caster left him, even if he levitates in the air (although the target can try to break the hold as described above).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Unyielding Grasp**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Brawl + Forces vs. Composure + Gnosis

The Adamantine Arrow often uses this rote to freeze enemies in place, or to lift them high and then drop them (see "Falling," p. 179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). It lacks honor, but so do many Arrow enemies.

| Potency | Light | Sound | Heat* | Electricity | Fire |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Flashlight | Casual talk | Room temp. (72) | Car battery | Lighter |
| 2 | 75-watt lamp | Scream | Body temp. (98.6) | Wall socket | Torch |
| 3 | Car headlight | Electric guitar | Kills bacteria (160) | Security fence | Bonfire |
| 4 | Floodlight | Gunshot | Boiling point (212) | Junction box | Inferno |
| 5 | Stadium lights | Industrial | Books burn (451) | Main line | Conflagration |

* Fahrenheit

Note: Sunlight cannot be transformed (nor can another energy be transformed into sunlight) at this level.

I harness the fury of storm and earthquake, unleashing them according to my wishes. The iron grasp of gravity is mine to command, and I summon the sun and sear the life from the crude technologies of Sleepers. I take to the sky like a god and halt bullets in mid-air.

## ●●●●● Master of Forces

### *Adverse Weather (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage creates a major weather disturbance such as a tsunami or monsoon, following the guidelines of the "Change Weather" spell, p. 172.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (for storms, monsoons, tsunamis or similar long-term phenomena; one scene) or transitory (for tornadoes or similar short-term phenomena; one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Creating a tornado in the American Midwest in the summer might impose a

–1 dice penalty (depending upon current prevailing weather), while doing so in northern Alaska probably imposes a –5 dice penalty, regardless of the season.

Long-term weather effects (storms, monsoons) take about five minutes after casting to grow into force, and dissipate as soon as the spell's Duration expires. Short-term effects arise immediately and disappear immediately when the spell expires.

**Guardians of the Veil: Clearing the Streets**



**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Intimidation + Forces

Given the choice between creating a short-term panic with sudden hurricane-force winds and allowing Sleepers to bear witness to something that could utterly destroy the secrecy of the occult world, most Guardians opt for the former. This rote can also be used for purely destructive purposes, of course, and this "wrath of heaven" potential draws certain members of the Silver Ladder to learn the same magic.

### *Bestow Burst of Speed (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage allows others to vastly speed up their movement, as he does for himself with Forces 4 "Burst of Speed," p. 171.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana per turn

The target, not the mage, can spend a Mana point to boost his Speed for a turn, as per the rules for the "Burst of Speed" spell. If the target has no Mana, he cannot gain the benefit of this spell.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Flashpoint**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Athletics + Forces

Silver Ladder mages use this rote to give their cabal-mates the speed to catch or intercept enemies.

### *Bestow Levitation (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage can impart levitation to others. This is identical to that which a mage could bestow upon himself with "Levitation," p. 173, although the target must concentrate to levitate. This spell can be cast upon only willing targets. To lift an unwilling target, the caster must use "Unseen Hand," p. 174.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target, not the mage, must concentrate to maintain the spell.

**Mysterium Rote: Disc of Levitation**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

A quick casting of this rote has saved the life of more than one Mysterium willworker's cabal-mate. Adamantine Arrow mages use their own version of the rote (Wits + Occult + Forces) to give their allies the means to flee a hostile encounter or to attack a foe from an unexpected angle.



### *Complete Invisibility (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage can turn herself invisible, as with the Forces 3 "Personal Invisibility" spell, p. 169, but she no longer needs to maintain concentration to remain unseen.

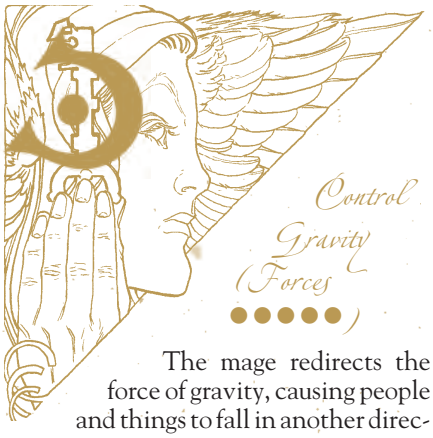
**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

One success is enough to hide the mage from sight, while excess successes act to occlude her from spells used to see or locate her (compare spell Potencies). Although the mage can now make quick movements (unlike with "Personal Invisibility"), and gains her Defense against attacks that can actually target her (the attacker must be able to see through the spell's Potency with a spell of his own), she cannot make Brawl or Weaponry attacks or run or dive for cover without revealing her location. Such movements can be seen as a prominent blur or refraction of light, allowing others to freely target the mage (with a –1 dice penalty) on the turn in which she moves and before she acts again on the following turn.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Cloak of Light**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Stealth + Forces

Guardians prize this rote as among the most valued for their "profession" of policing the Awakened world.



### Control Gravity (Forces ●●●●●)

The mage redirects the force of gravity, causing people and things to fall in another direction, such as sideways or upward.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

A simple success affects gravity in a one-yard radius. Excess successes spread the energy over a larger area.

| Successes | Radius Affected |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 2-yard radius |
| 3 successes | 4-yard radius |
| 4 successes | 8-yard radius |
| 5 successes | 16-yard radius |

Characters who fall into objects take damage normally. See "Falling," p. 179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.



A person in the radius who is sent "falling" upward travels at the same rate as someone falling downward, but once he exits the radius affected, he is subject to normal gravity again. Although his momentum might still send him upward for a turn or two, the natural downward pull of gravity brings him back down — unless he falls into the radius of the altered gravity, which sends him upward again. He might oscillate between the area of altered gravity and normal gravity until the spell expires.

**Mysterium Rote: Upending Expectations**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

With this rote, a Mysterium mage can reach places normally inaccessible to her, or suddenly cause an entire roomful of assailants to "fall" upward and hit the ceiling. Adamantine Arrow mages use their own version of this magic (Composure + Occult + Forces) to seize the advantage in combat.

### Create Sunlight (Forces ●●●●●)

The mage creates sunlight. He does not really turn night into day, but does create a miniature sun, a source of true sunlight.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The spell's successes determine the area of direct sunlight; anything outside the area might be illuminated indirectly by the glow, but isn't otherwise affected.

| Successes | Radius Affected |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 2-yard radius |
| 3 successes | 4-yard radius |
| 4 successes | 8-yard radius |
| 5 successes | 16-yard radius |

Needless to say, this spell is especially deadly to vampires. Within the radius affected, the sunlight is "direct" (three points of aggravated damage per turn). Outside the immediate radius (within double the radius' area), the sunlight is "faint" (one point of aggravated damage per turn).

**Silver Ladder Rote: Summoning the Dawn**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

Some creatures cannot be driven out by fire or the sword, but recoil from the cleansing light of the sun. Silver Ladder willworkers use this rote to summon true sunlight. Free Council mages are also known to make use of the same rote, whether for experimentation, defense or even just to provide some light for growing plants in a sanctum far from natural light.

### Earthquake (Forces ●●●●●)

With this spell, a mage can create a localized earthquake by manipulating the balance of force and pressure beneath the ground.

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

This spell inflicts damage upon structures such as buildings within its targeted area (a five-yard area with one success) equal to the spell's successes. Dexterity + Athletics, minus the spell's successes, is rolled for living beings to remain standing. In uncommon cases, those in the area (especially those who fall down) may suffer a Health wound or two of damage, almost always bashing (Storyteller's discretion). Being in a narrow stairwell filled with plummeting debris may involve more damage, as might being beneath a falling statue, but such occurrences are judged on a case-by-case basis.

| Successes | Area Affected |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 10 yards |
| 3 successes | 20 yards |
| 4 successes | 40 yards |
| 5 successes | 80 yards |

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Fist of Heaven**

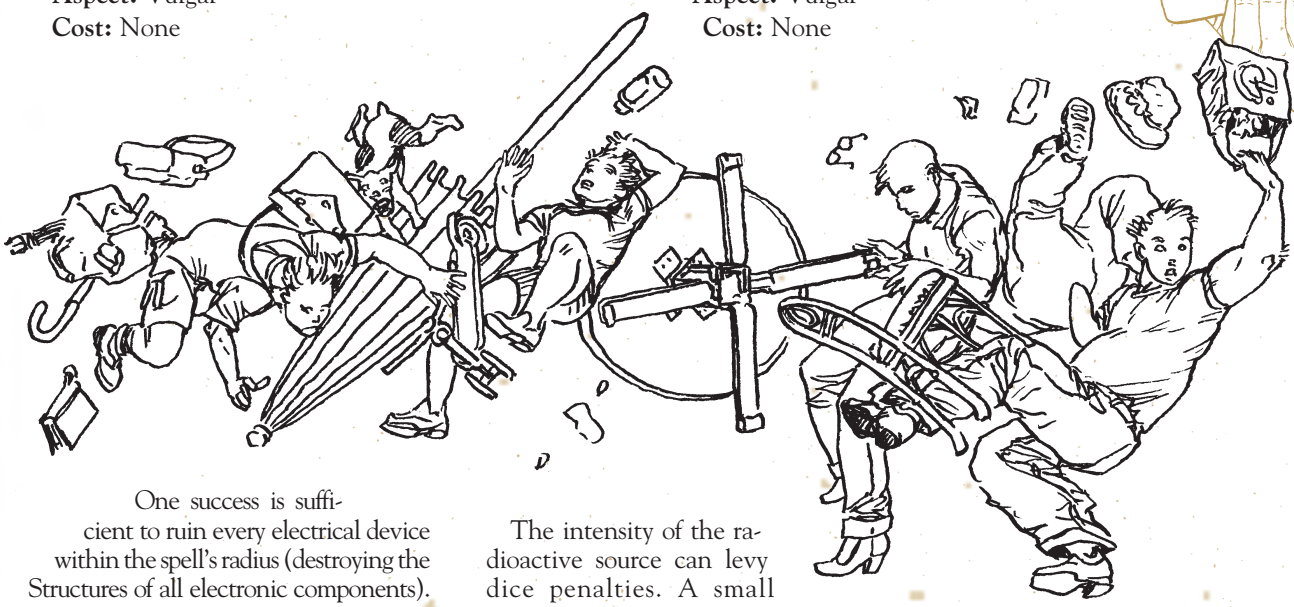
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Athletics + Forces

The earth itself can be used as a weapon by a mage of the Adamantine Arrow. With this rote, not even the ground that enemies stand on is safe. Guardians of the Veil occasionally make use of this magic (Manipulation + Athletics + Forces), using tremors to cover up stranger happenings, or to demolish a site before inquiring eyes spy things they were not meant to see.

### *Electromagnetic Pulse (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage creates an EMP that destroys power and electrical devices.

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None



One success is sufficient to ruin every electrical device within the spell's radius (destroying the Structures of all electronic components). (Certain military devices specifically made to resist EMP are immune).

A simple success affects a one-yard radius. Excess successes spread the pulse over a larger area.

| Successes | Radius Affected |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 2-yard radius |
| 3 successes | 4-yard radius |
| 4 successes | 8-yard radius |
| 5 successes | 16-yard radius |

The effect is lasting, although devices can be repaired.

**Free Council Rote: Short Circuit**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Science + Forces

Free Council mages understand that modern people are often overly dependent on technology. Take that away, and the odds in any situation shift radically. Many people panic when their conveniences are taken away, not to mention the chaos that can ensue based purely on the loss of those devices. Communications break down, computers are destroyed and electronic recording media are wiped clean. Mysterium mages also use this rote, stripping others of the edge afforded by technology and stacking the deck in favor of the Awakened.

### *Eradicate Radiation (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage extinguishes a source of nuclear radiation in an area.

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

The intensity of the radioactive source can levy dice penalties. A small amount of uranium might impose no penalty, while a cooling rod from an active nuclear plant might levy a –3 penalty.

A simple success affects radiation in a 1-yard radius. Excess successes extinguish radiation over a larger radius.

| Successes | Radius Affected |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 2-yard radius |
| 3 successes | 4-yard radius |
| 4 successes | 8-yard radius |
| 5 successes | 16-yard radius |

The effect is lasting.

**Free Council Rote: Cleansing**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Science + Forces

While the circumstances under which this rote is useful are (thankfully) few and far between, it is definitely the sort of magic Free Council mages are glad to have at their disposal when it is necessary.

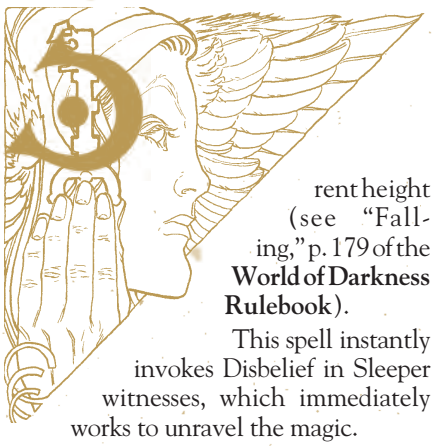
### *Flight (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage acquires the power of flight, using telekinetic force to repel herself from the surface of the Earth and upward into the air. This is a more advanced version of Forces 4 "Levitation" (p. 173). The mage now has more maneuverability and no longer needs to maintain concentration to lift away from gravity's pull.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Success allows the mage to fly and travel in any direction with a maximum Speed equal to her Gnosis +1 per success (she cannot double this as she could by running on the ground). Reflexive Dexterity + Athletics rolls are made to avoid obstacles, and she gains her normal Defense against attacks that can reach her.

If she is stunned or suffers a knockout (see "Other Complications," pp. 167-168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) or is rendered unconscious (perhaps by wounds), she begins to descend as her flight becomes uncontrolled. She does not fall, but slowly floats downward at a rate of Speed equal to her Size, touching ground without injury. If the spell's Duration expires before she touches down, she falls like anyone dropped from her cur-



rent height (see "Falling," p. 179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

This spell instantly invokes Disbelief in Sleeper witnesses, which immediately works to unravel the magic.

**Mysterium Rote: Witch's Broom**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Forces

This rote allows members of the Mysterium to avoid both the hassles and occasional perils of earthbound transportation. Granted, flight bears its own unique problems and risks, but no few mages are willing to accept them. Adamantine Arrow sorcerers use the same rote in conferring the powers of flight upon themselves.

### *Increase Gravity (Forces ●●●●●)*

This spell increases the pull of gravity, as if the Earth were a larger body.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

A simple success gives gravity a Strength of 1 and affects a five-square-yard area. Excess successes are allocated between the Strength of the gravity and the area affected.

Each point of Strength subtracts three points from the Speed of anyone or anything within the volume affected. Those affected also suffer a –1 dice penalty to jumping rolls per Strength. Additionally, if the gravity's Strength exceeds a person's Strength, all Physical dice pools are at –1 dice per excess Strength. Flying creatures (including those using Forces spells to fly or that are lifted telekinetically) are subject to a reflexive Strength + Athletics roll each turn. Failure in any roll forces them toward the ground at a rate of Speed per turn equal to the gravity's Strength.

| Successes | Defined Volume |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 10 cubic yards |
| 3 successes | 20 cu. yards |
| 4 successes | 40 cu. yards |
| 5 successes | 80 cu. yards |

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Slowing the Prey**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult or Science + Forces

Quarry under the effect of this rote find any physical task that much harder to perform, which is why it is so favored by Guardians of the Veil in their efforts to maintain the secrecy of the Mysteries. Those who have seen too much discover that retreat is difficult, and it can be almost impossible to surmount even the most elementary obstacles. Some Silver Ladder willworkers use their own rote (Presence + Science + Forces) to literally force stubborn foes and rivals to their knees.

### *Nullify Gravity (Forces ●●●●●)*

This spell decreases the pull of gravity as if the Earth were a smaller body.

**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

A simple success decreases gravity within a five-cubic yard volume. Successes are allocated between the Potency of the gravity and the volume affected.

Each point of Potency adds one to the Speed of anyone or anything within the area of effect. This sudden ease of motion might come as a surprise to a person affected. If more than five points are added to Speed, a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll is made for the subject to control her sudden vault. Also, every Potency point of the spell doubles a person's jumping distance per success. For example, under a spell with Potency 1, a character jumps two feet with a vertical leap and four feet with a standing broad jump. Flying creatures (including those using Forces spells to fly or to be lifted telekinetically) add one point to their flight Speeds when going straight upward.

| Successes | Volume Affected |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 10 cubic yards |
| 3 successes | 20 cubic yards |
| 4 successes | 40 cubic yards |
| 5 successes | 80 cubic yards |

**Mysterium Rote: Moonwalking**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Forces

Great for a quick escape for an entire cabal, this Mysterium rote occasionally comes in handy in various other strange circumstances. Adamantine Arrow mages use this rote as well, enabling a number of willworkers to close quickly on foes, moving easily over even difficult terrain.

### *Radiation (Forces ●●●●●)*

The mage irradiates an area, causing it to be suffused with deadly radiation.

**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The spell's successes determine the radius. Anything outside that area is not affected.

| Successes | Radius Affected |
|---|---|
| 1 success | 1-yard radius |
| 2 successes | 2-yard radius |
| 3 successes | 4-yard radius |
| 4 successes | 8-yard radius |
| 5 successes | 16-yard radius |

Living beings cannot spend time in the area without suffering the adverse effects of radiation poisoning. For every 30 minutes a person is exposed, increase the radiation's Potency by one. Once it exceeds the creature or person's Stamina, he suffers symptoms of poisoning.

1 point: Weakness. The victim suffers –1 to all Physical dice pools.

2 points: Nausea. If the victim moves more than half his Speed in a turn, a reflexive Stamina + Composure roll is required to avoid vomiting for that turn. While vomiting, the victim cannot take any other action, although he still gains his Defense.

3 points: Bleeding from an orifice. The victim suffers one point of bashing damage. This damage does not heal as long as the victim is still exposed. In addition, long-term health problems such as cancer might develop in later years.

4 points: Skin burns. The victim suffers one point of bashing damage this turn and per successive 10 minutes of exposure. This damage does not heal as long as the victim is still exposed.

5 points: Fainting. A reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll is made for the victim to avoid falling unconscious for a number of minutes equal to any radiation damage he has already suffered. Any new damage he suffers due to exposure while unconscious adds to this time. Once he awakens, the roll must be made again each turn if he is still exposed.

Ongoing exposure continues to inflict damage until a victim is dead of aggravated wounds.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Door to the Abyss**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult or Science + Forces

Even the most hardened Arrow willworker admits that use of this rote is cruel and unusual, but pragmatic members of the order recognize the need for such tactics every now and then. Free Council mages also make occasional use of this magic in experimentation.

### Velocity Mastery (Forces ●●●●●)

The mage can completely control an object or even a living creature's velocity, causing the subject to speed up or slow down beyond personal control. The mage can even halt bullets in midair.

**Practice:** Making or Unmaking

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Lasting (vs. projectiles) or transitory (vs. creatures and objects)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Although the casting is an instant action, the mage can use this spell at any point in the Initiative roster, even before he could normally act, although doing so is his action for the turn.

This spell acts just like "Control Velocity," p. 172, except that the mage can now cast it on living creatures or even on portions of objects (such as a truck tire, but not necessarily the rest of the truck, which surely causes the rig to jackknife unless the driver is very, very good). When the spell is cast on a living creature, its Speed trait is doubled or halved per success, but it is not in full control and reflexive Dexterity + Athletics rolls must be made each turn it moves or the subject suffers a knockdown effect (p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The creature's Speed is modified for the spell's Duration (default of one turn).

In the case of projectiles, one success is enough to completely halt a projectile halfway in its path (or as close between there and its target as the mage desires). Additional successes can halt it closer and closer to its origin point, and an exceptional success can halt a bullet in the barrel of a gun. For instance, with two successes, a bullet is stopped after it travels only one-quarter the way from the barrel to its intended target (one success stops it halfway, while the second success halves that distance again).

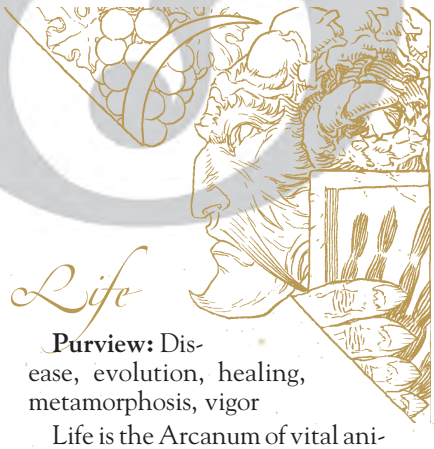
The mage can affect multiple projectiles by adding extra Target factors. See "Target," p. 118. Note that in the case of halting multiple bullets from the same gun (such as stopping machinegun fire), use the following special Target factors chart:

| Autofire Targeted | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| Short burst | −2 |
| Medium burst | −4 |
| Long burst | −6 |

**Silver Ladder Rote: Motion Control**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Athletics + Forces

A Silver Ladder mage can ensure that no one whom he calls before him can delay arrival. Although this rote does not make a Silver Ladder mage bulletproof, it can make it seem that way.



## Life

**Purview:** Disease, evolution, healing, metamorphosis, vigor

Life is the Arcanum of vital animation, that elusive spark that separates biological matter from base materials. It encompasses everything from viruses and bacteria to the most complex plants and animals. With the power of Life, a mage can cause or cure sickness, mend grievous injuries, and even create life forms from nothingness. She can bolster her own physical capabilities to levels far beyond those found in nature, or change her appearance (from superficial features to such inherent characteristics as height, weight, build, age and even gender) in whatever way she desires. The processes of life can be halted, accelerated, reversed or otherwise altered.

Mages who endeavor to master the Arcanum of Life are often one of two kinds of people. There are those who embrace the manifold splendors of the living world, who are so enamored with it that they are compelled to pursue its mysteries and thereby grow closer to it. These sorts of mages tend to leap headlong into both the best and the worst that life has to offer, with a fervor usually matched only among those who seek the secrets of Forces. The other kind if mage is driven to control, to impose order upon the great randomness of the living world. Unsatisfied with the existence of patterns she cannot see, this type of willworker wishes to become like a god, so that she need never again be subject to the unpredictable happenstance of sicknesses or pain.



## Initiate of Life

I see the trillion invisible lives that move in and out with your every breath, the tapestry of vitality concealed invisibly inside the air. No venom shall lay me low. I know illness and harm from wholeness at a glance, and the true face of every bird, beast and green growing thing. I see even the life of magic itself, witnessing the ebb and flow of its existence — its birth, ascendance, descent and demise.

### Ruling Realm: Primal Wild

The gross/subtle pair of Life/Spirit provides the ruling Arcana for the Primal Wild, the vast, primordial eden of forests, mountains, rivers and plains where Nature holds sway. Life is the material expression of that pair, the raw power of organic processes.

#### Types of Life

The mage can affect different types of life forms at different degrees of Arcanum mastery. The definitions are as follows:

**Base Life:** Insects, plants, fungi, bacteria and other microbes

**Median Life:** Non-sentient mammals, reptiles, birds, fish

**Advanced Life:** Sentient animals (humans, werewolves)

#### Pattern Alteration

A mage can alter a living being's Pattern with his spells, but he cannot do so with indefinite Duration (living creatures cannot be affected indefinitely).

Spells that cause natural changes — things that could occur without magic — have lasting effects even after the Duration expires. A healed wound does not reappear when the spell ends. Unnatural changes, however, do disappear once a spell expires. A human shapeshifted into a pig becomes a human again when the spell's Duration is over.

### Analyze Life (Life •)

The mage discerns the species, age and sex of a nearby living plant or animal, including humans.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Identifying a specific type of species requires a reflexive Intelligence + Animal Ken roll. If the target is a plant, Science, Survival or Medicine is rolled instead. The mage can even discern the breed (or breeds) of an animal, perhaps to detect whether its owner's claim of full-breed status is true. A non-human, supernatural creature can be identified, provided the mage has seen its like before. If not, its species remains unknown (this fact alone is sure to raise a mage's curiosity).

**Silver Ladder Rote: Classify Specimen**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Survival (plants) or Animal Ken (animals) or Medicine (humans) + Life

In all things, there is hierarchy, and the teeming life is no exception. Ladder mages use this rote to classify and categorize the living things around them.

#### Life Arcanum and the Undead

The Life Arcanum does not normally affect the undead (vampires, zombies, revenants, ghosts). The Death Arcanum is required to weave spells into their Patterns.

### Cleanse the Body (Life •)

The mage can cleanse herself of drugs, toxins or poisons.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Spellcasting successes are added as bonus dice to rolls for overcoming a drug, or allow a mage to ignore an equal amount of points of poison damage. See "Drugs," pp. 176-177, and "Poisons and Toxins," pp. 180-181 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Purge the Unbidden**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Medicine + Life

While it doesn't happen quite as often in modern times, it was once the case that guardsmen and warriors often needed to be mindful of poison. Adamantine Arrow mages use this rote to purge unwanted influences from their systems. Of course, the spell is as effective on, say, alcohol as it is on strychnine, so mages of all orders eventually manage to find one use or another for it.

### Healer's Trance (Life ●)

The mage can discern the state of health of a living being and detect and identify any illnesses.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Obscure or rare diseases or conditions might levy a dice penalty to the roll (the rare hemorrhagic Ebola virus might be –3). The time per roll is one turn, and the target number depends on the condition of the subject. Only one success is needed to examine a perfectly healthy specimen, but a small cancerous tumor might need five or more successes to detect. The Storyteller should make the roll, so that the player doesn't know when his character misses a telling sign of illness.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Root Out Illness**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life

Guardians occasionally come across strange illnesses in the course of their work, or are forced to quickly diagnose injuries caused by any number of malign entities. Adamantine Arrow mages use this rote for similar reasons, assessing injuries sustained in the defense of their charges.

### Pulse of the Living World (Life ●)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). He is able to detect the presence of mystic vital animation in the area, effectively reading resonance as a function of reality's living energies.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with this spell.

**Free Council Rote: Organic Perception**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Medicine or Science + Life

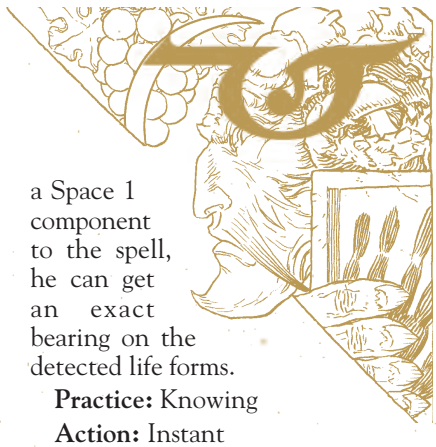
Free Council mages use this rote to study the living universe, discerning the elegant motions of the Tapestry as a single organism. Mages of the Mysterium often approach this magic with the same perspective, but with different methods (Intelligence + Medicine or Science + Life).

### Sense Life (Life ●)

It is often handy for a mage to know the proximity of living creatures. Sometimes he may need to find a potential food source. At other times, he may be curious as to whether potential allies or enemies are nearby. This spell allows a mage to reach out with an arcane sense, to touch the subtle eddies life impresses upon the Tapestry, and thereby discern the nearness of other living creatures, from the most miniscule microorganisms to the most expansive flora and fauna.

A mage typically specifies certain types of life to look for ("white-tailed deer, salmon and humans," for example, or "all insects"), which is often a much faster proposition than singling out certain kinds of life to *not* look for. Without putting some kind of filter on his search, the mage is apt to get a uselessly overwhelming response. The mage might even be overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of living creatures to be found virtually anywhere on, in, under or above the face of the earth, from the depths of the seas to the outermost reaches of the atmosphere.

The spell enables a mage to get a good sense of where these living patterns are in relation to him. By adding



a Space 1 component to the spell, he can get an exact bearing on the detected life forms.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage can detect life within his sensory range. In addition, while the spell is in effect, it creates a "safety zone" in a radius around the mage into which no living thing can enter without his knowledge. For example, if an assassin tried to creep up behind him, he'd know it as soon as the assassin entered the spell's radius.

| Successes | Safety Zone Radius |
|---|---|
| 1 success | 1 yard |
| 2 successes | 2 yards |
| 3 successes | 4 yards |
| 4 successes | 8 yards |
| 5 successes | 16 yards |

Successes are also used to pierce any supernatural occlusion a living creature may possess (such as a person under the effects of the Death 3 "Suppress Own Life" spell, p. 142).

**Mysterium Rote: Listening to the Soul's Echo**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Animal Ken + Life

Mysterium mages often have cause for vigilance. One never knows if a newly opened ruin contains some ancient mold spore or other dangerous form of life.

## ●● Apprentice of Life

I touch the threads of my own life, mending my hurts and dispelling my ailments. I exert such magics over lesser living things, honing my skills for use upon higher beings. I wear armor spun of my own flesh and bone. I dominate the least of all living creatures, seizing power over their instincts and shaping them according to my will.



## Body Control (Life ●●)

The mage has perfect conscious control of his bodily functions, from breathing and reflexes to metabolism and circulation.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Successes provide various benefits in each of the following four categories all at once. They are not allocated among categories, but are applied separately to each to collect a series of benefits. For example, one success allows the mage to slow down his breathing, gives him +1 Initiative, doubles the amount of time he can go before suffering deprivation or fatigue, slows his heart, and halves his healing time for bashing wounds.

*Breathing* — Each success allows the mage slow down his breathing so that he needs only half as much oxygen as normal, without hindering his physical activity.

*Reflexes* — Each success adds one to the mage's Initiative.

*Metabolism* — The mage efficiently regulates his metabolism and body's energy use, so that he requires less food than normal. Each success allows him to double the amount of time he can go before needing to check for deprivation or fatigue.

*Heartbeat* — One success allows the mage to slow down his heart and circulation so that poisons in his bloodstream affect him more slowly (double the increment of time between suffering poison or toxin damage). The mage could instead stop his own heart for one minute per success, although he can perform no physical actions (not even moving) during this time.

Also, for each success he can halve (round down) the healing time of any bashing wounds as he prevents bruising or controls internal bleeding. For example, one success allows him to heal one bashing wound in seven minutes; two successes cut that time to three minutes; three successes reduce it to one minute; four successes to 30 seconds; and five successes to 15 seconds (or one wound per five turns).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Body Mind**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Athletics + Life

Adamantine Arrow mages treat their bodies like temples, and this rote provides them with a purified shrine.

## Control Base Life (Life ●●)

The mage controls base life forms through the manipulation of instinctual responses. She can make a base life form engage in any behavior natural for it, even if outside of the circumstances under which such behavior would normally be performed. A honeybee could be made to signal to others in the hive that it has found pollen, even when it has not, or a spider could be made to secrete venom from its fangs in the absence of prey.

The mage can trigger whichever part of a base life form's fight or flight response she wishes, as well as compelling any base being with physiologically triggered instincts (such as a mother-wolf's instinct to protect her young) to engage in one or more of those instinctual behaviors through careful manipulation of brain and glandular chemistry.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage can affect either a single target or all targets within a defined area.

| Successes | Targets |
|---|---|
| 1 success | One (becomes a 1-yard radius swarm) |
| 2 successes | Two (becomes a 2-yard radius swarm) |
| 3 successes | Four (becomes a 4-yard radius swarm) |
| 4 successes | Eight (becomes an 8-yard radius swarm) |
| 5 successes | 16 (becomes a 16-yard radius swarm) |

The creatures can be various types of vermin. In the case of a swarm of stinging insects, it usually attacks any person or persons within its radius. The damage the swarm inflicts depends on its density. All sizes listed above deliver one die of bashing damage to anyone within the radius. A swarm can inflict more damage by condensing. Using the success chart above, add one die per step smaller on the chart. For example, a 16-yard-radius swarm (five successes) that condenses to a two-yard radius (two successes) inflicts four dice of bashing damage. Armor is effective only if it covers the full body, and then it provides only half its rating (rounded down).

In addition, targets are distracted by the buzzing swarm, suffering –2 dice on perception and concentration rolls while they are within the radius, even if they're not specifically attacked.

The insect swarm cannot be attacked with fists, clubs, swords or guns. Only area-affect attacks such as a torch affect it. Each point of damage inflicted by a flame or other applicable attack damages the swarm's size. Once it's reduced to zero size, all insects are either dead or the few remaining disperse.

**Silver Ladder Rote: King of the Beasts**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Animal Ken + Life vs. Stamina

While perhaps not as exacting as the kind of control that can be exerted through the use of the Mind Arcanum, mages of the Silver Ladder find this rote to be just as effective. With it, a swarm of hornets is made to descend upon an enemy.

## Heal Flora and Fauna (Life ●●)

The mage can heal the wounds of animals and plants.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

As with "Self-Healing," p. 183, but the mage can cast this spell upon non-human life. At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 3, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Free Council Rote: Cellular Regeneration**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life

With advanced medicines and experimental treatment techniques, Free Council mages are capable of mending the injuries of virtually any creature other than human. It is most commonly used on pets, but could conceivably by used on most any animal or plant. Guardians of the Veil also use this magic to erase all evidence of unnatural damage to flora or fauna.

### Organic Resilience (Life ●●)

The mage can shore up her living Pattern with magic, becoming far more resilient to most forms of attack. While this magic does not defend against any purely psychic forms of harm, or attacks to the mage's spirit, it does foil (at least partially) everything from edged weapons to blunt trauma to fire or other forms of energy.

This protection usually means increased tissue resilience when cast covertly, which might be noticed with a medical doctor's examination, assuming the doctor has examined the mage before without the spell's effect and can note the disparity.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Life Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

Note that this magical armor does not apply against an opponent's attempts to achieve a grappling hold on the mage (the Fate, Mind, Space and Time Arcana provide shielding spells to do that). Nor does the spell apply against a grappling opponent's attempts to overpower the mage. It does, however, protect against attempts to inflict damage upon him (subtract the armor points from any overpower roll that intends to damage the mage or attack him with a drawn weapon).

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Bones of Steel**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + Life

When going into a potentially perilous situation, Guardians with skill in Life magics often make use of this rote, armoring flesh and bone with a preternatural resilience. Some Mysterium mages use a variant rote (Resolve + Athletics + Life) that steels the body with a disciplined mind.

### Purify Bodies (Life ●●)

The mage cleanses others of drugs, toxins or poisons.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

As the Life 1 "Cleanse the Body" spell, p. 180, except that this version can be cast upon others. At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 3, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Mysterium Rote: Antivenin**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life

Even in the middle of nowhere, short on supplies and unable to call for help, a Mysterium mage with this rote is prepared to save a companion's life from envenomization by whatever sort of creature, terrestrial or otherworldly. Some Free Council willworkers use a more improvisational rote (Wits + Medicine + Life) to accomplish the same.

### Self-Healing (Life ●●)

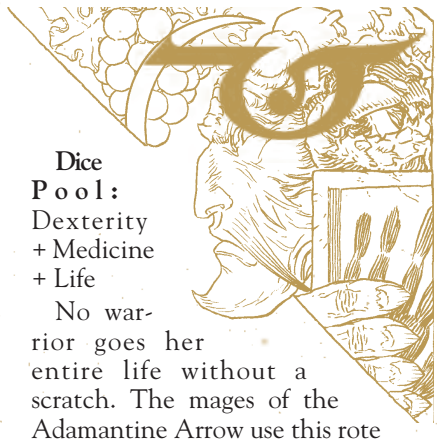
The mage can heal herself of injuries and wounds.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Each success heals one point of bashing or lethal Health damage (the rightmost wound on the Health chart is healed first). This spell can be cast covertly, although Sleepers who witness it need some method of explaining its miraculous effects so the spell won't seem Improbable; use of medical gear might be enough to convince them.

With Life 3, the mage can heal aggravated wounds, but the spell must be cast with a vulgar aspect.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Salve the Wounds of Battle**



**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Medicine + Life

No warrior goes her entire life without a scratch. The mages of the Adamantine Arrow use this rote to mend flesh and bone when skill fails or luck takes a turn for the worse. Such willworkers are careful to grit their teeth through the pain, so that a cursory inspection (and casting) can reveal even grievous hurts (to the eyes of the unenlightened, at any rate) to have been merely "flesh wounds." Guardians of the Veil who practice such arts often prefer slightly calmer surroundings for their healing magics (Intelligence + Medicine + Life) than the frantic circumstances in which Arrow mages often find themselves.

### Self-Purging (Life ●●)

The mage can cure sickness or disease in herself.

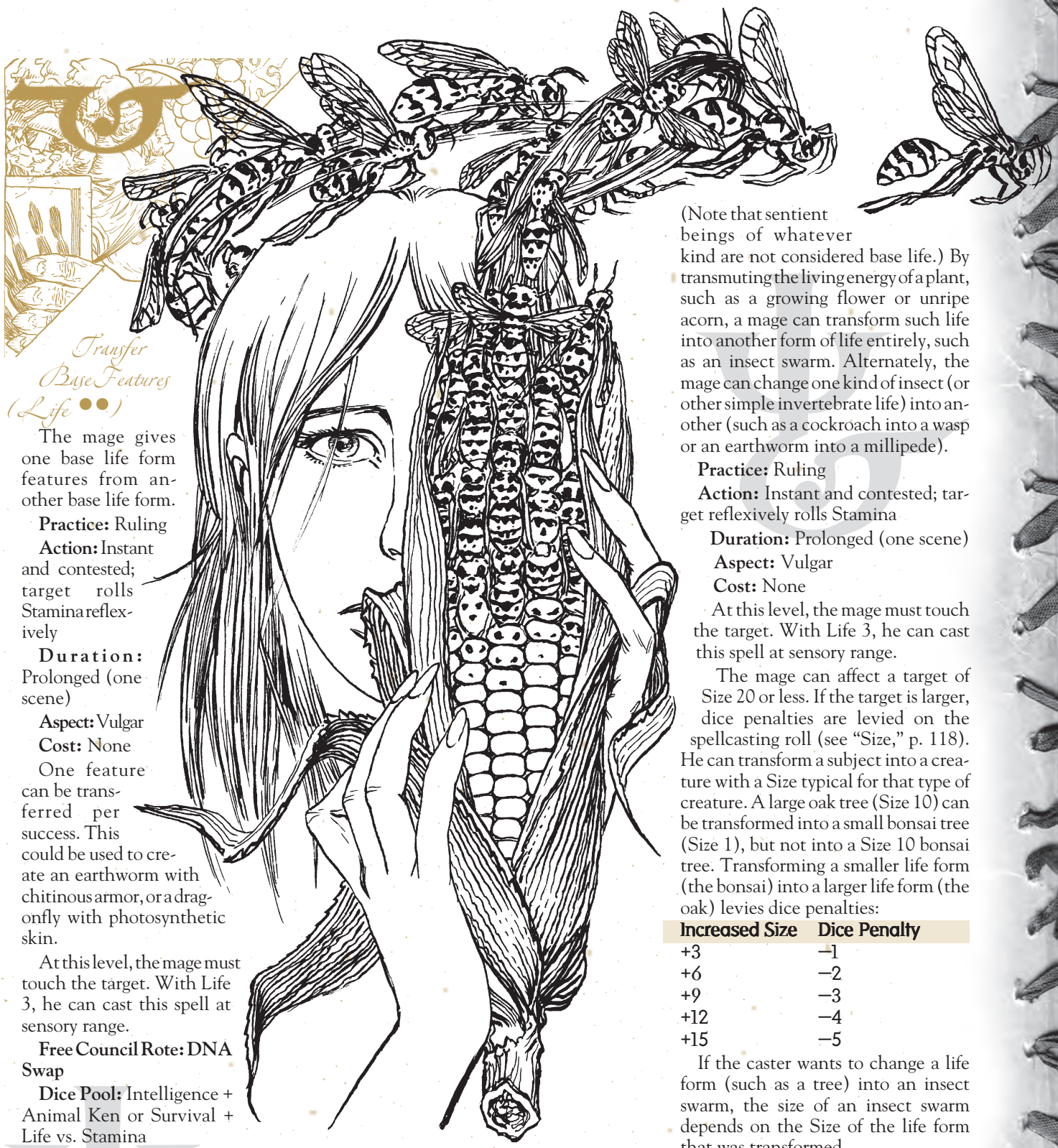
**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The rarity and virulence of the disease determines the target number required for overcoming it. A common cold might require three successes while Ebola might require 10 or more. Note that this spell provides no clues whatsoever toward providing a mundane antidote or cure for the disease.

**Mysterium Rote: Blood of the Lamb**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Medicine + Life

With poultices and strange elixirs, a mage of the Mysterium banishes illness and disease from her body, revitalizing and restoring herself from the ravages of even the most terrible sicknesses to the fullness of health.



### Transfer Base Features (Life ●●)

The mage gives one base life form features from another base life form.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

One feature can be transferred per success. This could be used to create an earthworm with chitinous armor, or a dragonfly with photosynthetic skin.

At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 3, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Free Council Rote: DNA Swap**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Animal Ken or Survival + Life vs. Stamina

Free Council mages use this rote to produce effects that even today's most skilled and well-schooled geneticists would be stunned to witness. Granted, many of these changes can unravel with Disbelief if witnessed by a Sleeper, but a cautious and discrete willworker can produce some truly miraculous transformations. Mages of the Mysterium use the same rote to perform similar alterations to basic life forms.

### Transform Base Life (Life ●●)

The mage can transform one base form of life (such as insects, fungi or plants) into another base life form. (Note that sentient beings of whatever kind are not considered base life.) By transmuting the living energy of a plant, such as a growing flower or unripe acorn, a mage can transform such life into another form of life entirely, such as an insect swarm. Alternately, the mage can change one kind of insect (or other simple invertebrate life) into another (such as a cockroach into a wasp or an earthworm into a millipede).

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target reflexively rolls Stamina

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 3, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

The mage can affect a target of Size 20 or less. If the target is larger, dice penalties are levied on the spellcasting roll (see "Size," p. 118). He can transform a subject into a creature with a Size typical for that type of creature. A large oak tree (Size 10) can be transformed into a small bonsai tree (Size 1), but not into a Size 10 bonsai tree. Transforming a smaller life form (the bonsai) into a larger life form (the oak) levies dice penalties:

| Increased Size | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| +3 | –1 |
| +6 | –2 |
| +9 | –3 |
| +12 | –4 |
| +15 | –5 |

If the caster wants to change a life form (such as a tree) into an insect swarm, the size of an insect swarm depends on the Size of the life form that was transformed.

| Target Life Form's Size | Insect Swarm Size |
|---|---|
| 1-3 | 1-yard radius |
| 4-6 | 2-yard radius |
| 7-10 | 4-yard radius |
| 11-15 | 8-yard radius |
| 16-20* | 16-yard radius |

* Add x2 radius per five additional points of Size.



To direct the swarm, the mage can cast the "Control Base Life" spell, p. 182.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Chrysalis**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Animal Ken or Survival + Life vs. Stamina

Ladder mages armed with this rote can bend simple life to their will, transmuting blades of grass into hornets or flies into scorpions to harry and perhaps even kill enemies. Adamantine Arrow mages use their own rote (Resolve + Animal Ken or Survival + Life) to craft such living weapons.

### Visions of the Living World (Life ●●)

As the Life 1 "Pulse of the Living World" spell, p. 181, except that the mage casts this magic upon another mage, or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may resist with a reflexive and contested Resolve + Gnosis roll.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Detect Intruders**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Animal Ken or Survival + Life

This magic allows an Arrow willworker to bestow simple Life Arcanum perceptions upon another. Some cast this rote to bolster the capabilities of allies, while others have been known to use it to disorient intruders with senses they have trouble controlling or understanding. Some Mysterium mages use a different rote (Manipulation + Animal Ken or Survival + Life) to gift others with such senses.

### Banish Plague (Life ●●●)

The mage can cure sickness or disease in others.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

As with the Life 2 "Self-Purging" spell, p. 183. At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Mysterium Rote: Reseal the Tomb**

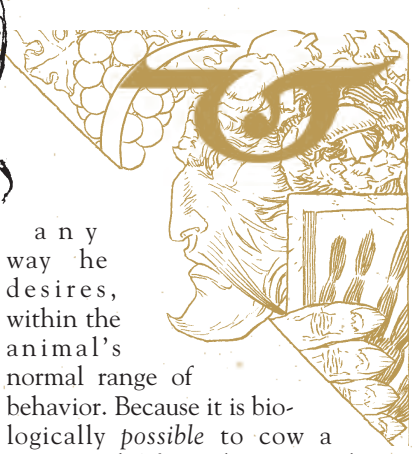
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Medicine + Life

Sickness and disease are just some of the threats encountered by Mysterium mages and their compatriots as they work to uncover the secrets of the ancients. With this rote, illness can be banished from the bodies of friends, or even just innocent strangers. Free Council mages also make some use of this magic (Intelligence + Medicine + Life) through the application of cutting-edge medical techniques and innovative treatments.

### Control Median Life (Life ●●●)

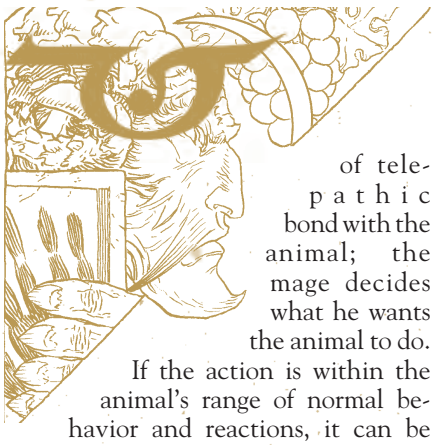
Animals are creatures of instinct. While some of the most intelligent sorts of beasts can apply reason to problem solving, most are restricted to responses determined by biologically pre-programmed protocols. When hungry, they seek food. When afraid, they flee. When cornered, many fight. In fact, these responses are so deeply ingrained and predictable that a mage knowledgeable in the Arcanum of Life can call upon these responses to induce a given animal to react in virtually any way he desires, within the animal's normal range of behavior. Because it is biologically *possible* to cow a 600-pound African lion into submission, the mage could, if he so wished, trigger the submission response in such an animal. Likewise, because a Yorkshire terrier has within it the *potential* to attack with relentless aggression, the mage can compel the dog to attack an adult human with all the fury (if likely none of the success) of a full-grown feral Doberman pinscher defending its territory against a smaller, weaker creature.

This is not a mental compulsion, but a delicate manipulation of an animal's instinctual responses to situations (regulated by brain chemistry and the animal's glandular system). All this means that a dog can't, for example, be made to pull a loose strip of tape off of the top of a sealed box in order to open it neatly, since that response requires training and is not a function of the dog's natural behavioral template. Further, the spell does not create any kind



### ●●● Disciple of Life

**The higher beasts are bent to my command. I throw barbs at those who offend me and mend the hurts of my allies. I change my own shape and the shapes of simple animals. I can conceal my true face from others or adapt to any environment, and grow stronger, swifter or more enduring.**



of telepathic bond with the animal; the mage decides what he wants the animal to do. If the action is within the animal's range of normal behavior and reactions, it can be induced to experience the desired response. A clever mage *can* use this spell to affect an animal's emotional state in a manner that practically borders on telepathy, such as triggering a dog's pack hierarchy instincts to make it regard the mage not only as a member of the pack, but as its alpha.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

One success is sufficient to induce a desired, normal instinctual response in an animal. If, however, the animal is dead-set on a given activity (such as fleeing a mage who has violated its territory or attacking a vastly superior foe), a +1 or greater dice bonus might be added to its contesting roll.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Daniel's Voice**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Animal Ken + Life vs. Resolve

While some might overlook the utility of command over lesser beasts, Silver Ladder mages put such a power to good use with this rote. Though animals can be compelled to act only within the parameters of their potential normal behaviors, a cunning willworker can get most creatures to do almost anything she requires. Guardians of the Veil use their own version of this magic (Manipulation + Animal Ken + Life) when compelling animals to do their bidding.

### Degrading the Form (Life ●●●)

The mage can lower one of his Physical Attributes or that of a base or median life form. The mage might wish to appear infirm or feeble.

**Practice:** Fraying

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana (if cast upon another)

The mage can lower one dot per success, up to a maximum amount equal to his Life dots. If cast upon a base or median life form, he must spend one Mana and the target's Stamina is subtracted from the spellcasting dice pool (resistance is reflexive).

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Infirmity**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + Life – Stamina

People who might feel perfectly justified harassing a hale and hardy man could suddenly experience a change of heart when confronted with a frail and limping one. Also, it is occasionally beneficial to be underestimated, or to be able to render a lesser beast too weak to cause harm. Adamantine Arrow mages use a different rote (Resolve + Athletics + Life) to cripple guard animals and the like.

### Healing Heart (Life ●●●)

The mage can heal the wounds of other humans.

**Practice:** Perfecting

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Each success heals one bashing or lethal Health wound (the rightmost wound on the Health chart is healed first). At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range. With Life 4, aggravated wounds can be healed, although the mage must still touch the target (he can heal aggravated wounds at sensory range with Life 5).

**Mysterium Rote: Balm of Flesh**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Medicine + Life

Whether through a potion, poultice or some other means, members of the Mysterium use this rote to mend injuries, restoring torn flesh and shattered bone. Guardians of the Veil use a version of this rote (Resolve + Medicine + Life) to remove evidence of injury by paranormal phenomena.

### Honing the Form (Life ●●●)

The mage can raise one of his Physical Attributes or that of a base or median life form.

**Practice:** Perfecting

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

A single Physical Attribute may be raised by one dot per success, up to a maximum of caster's Life Arcanum dots. For example, if the mage has Strength 3 and Life 3 and gets three successes on this spell to boost his Strength, his Strength becomes 6 dots for the spell's Duration. If four successes were rolled, he could still only boost Strength by three dots, since he has only Life 3. Naturally, this spell also modifies any derived traits (such as Speed, Health or Initiative).

Note that the same spell cast to boost a different Physical Attribute does not combine with the first spell—only the highest Potency spell takes effect. For example, if a mage boosts his Strength by two dots and then casts a spell boosting his Dexterity by one dot, only the first spell takes effect, since it has the higher Potency. (With Life 4, he can allocate successes among different Physical Attributes; see "Supreme Honing," p. 190.)

When cast upon base or median life forms (using the same rules as when casting upon himself), the mage must touch the target. With Life 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range. If the target resists the spell, subtract its Stamina from the spellcasting dice pool.

**Free Council Rote: Actualizing Potential**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Athletics + Life – Stamina

Free Council mages use this rote to tap into enhanced physical capabilities. Prodigious strength, quick reflexes, enhanced resilience; all can be manifested by a willworker sufficiently skilled in the Life Arcanum. This magic can also be used on lesser life forms, bestowing such amazing capabilities upon virtually any non-human creature. Given its broad appeal and amazing usefulness, this rote is practiced among all orders.

### Organic Shield (Life ●●●)

As with the Life 2 "Organic Resilience" spell, p. 183, but the mage can now cast this magic upon others.

**Practice:** Shielding

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

**Free Council Rote: Muscular Tension**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life

By performing subtle modifications to body chemistry and physiology, a Council willworker can fortify the body of a treasured companion, an ally of convenience, or even an innocent bystander. Silver Ladder mages are known to use similar magic (Presence + Medicine + Life) to fortify their champions in dangerous times.

### Transfer Median Features (Life ●●●)

The mage can give a median life form features from another median or base life form. A shark could be given crocodilian limbs and the ability to breathe air, for instance, or a spider monkey could be granted a scorpion's stinger tail and the venom to go with it.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

One feature can be transferred per success. At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Tampering with the Web**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life vs. Stamina

When nature does not provide a Ladder mage with the exact beast she needs for a given situation, she crafts one of her own design, cobbling parts together to form a useful whole. Free Council mages usually make use of advanced laboratories and the like when casting their own variant of this rote.

### Transform Median Life (Life ●●●)

The mage can transform one form of median life (most mammals, fish, birds and reptiles) into another median or base life form.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The mage can affect a target of Size 20 or less. If the target is larger, penalties are levied against the spellcasting roll (see "Size," p. 118). He transforms the target into a creature of Size typical for that type of being. A bear (Size 8) can be transformed into a cat (Size 2), but not into a Size 8 cat. Transforming a smaller creature (the cat) into a larger creature (the bear) imposes dice penalties:

| Increased Size | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| +3 | –1 |
| +6 | –2 |
| +9 | –3 |
| +12 | –4 |
| +15 | –5 |

At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

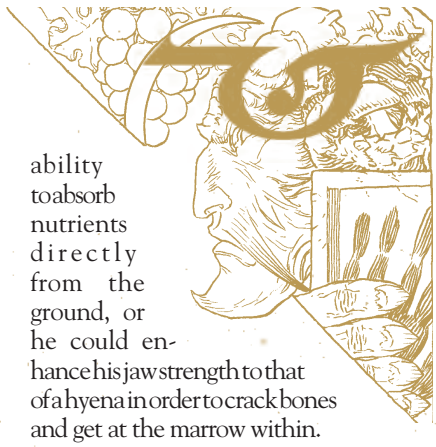
**Free Council Rote: Catalytic Change**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life vs. Stamina

Many Free Council mages are aware of how many earthly creatures share genetic similarly. Calling upon those connections, such a willworker is capable of transforming one basic or median life form into another, rearranging strands of DNA and thereby facilitating a total genetic shift. Mysterium mages usually prefer to define this magic as an act of transmutation, an organic alchemy.

### Transform Self (Life ●●●)

The mage can give himself the features of a base or median life form. He may affect certain changes in his own body, such as developing fungal, plant or animal features in order to thrive in a given environment or under a set of circumstances. He could, for example, supplement his intake of food in a harsh desert by granting himself the ability to absorb nutrients directly from the ground, or he could enhance his jaw strength to that of a hyena in order to crack bones and get at the marrow within.



**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage can take on one feature of a base or median life form per success. Among other things, the mage could manifest gills, sharp claws, fangs (turning his normal hand-to-hand damage from bashing to lethal and adding one to two dice modifiers to attack pools depending on the weapon gained), cat's eyes (lessening by two penalties from all but absolute darkness), or a rat's digestive system (allowing him to safely digest all but the foulest food sources). Note that this spell does not grant any changes beyond the purely biological. A mage who grows feline claws doesn't know how to fight any better than normal. Nor does a mage with a rat's iron stomach find the stench of carrion any more palatable than normal. As mentioned in "Transfer Median Features," above, a roll might be needed to get features right if specimens are not available during casting.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Harsh Duty**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + Life

The work of a mage of the Adamantine Arrow can be harsh and unforgiving. This rote enables an Arrow willworker to survive under all but the most brutal conditions, killing prey with his bare hands, thriving beneath the waves or in the deadliest cold, or going for weeks without a drop of water or morsel of food. Mysterium mages use similar magic to persevere in the sometimes-perilous environments in which they seek their lore.



### Two Faces (Life ●●●)

The mage can change his features.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

One feature may be altered per success. Each of the following is one feature: changing eye color (includes both eyes), skin color, hair color, hair length, hair texture. Other superficial characteristics can also be altered: fingers or toes may be slightly shortened or lengthened, body hair can be made sparse or more abundant, skin can be rendered dry or more oily, and height and weight can be very slightly altered (perhaps an inch or two, or up to 10 pounds, respectively). Perhaps most significantly, facial features and other distinguishing marks (like moles or scars) can be changed. Changes more extreme than these (such as changing fingerprints) require Life 4.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Incognito Exchange**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Subterfuge + Life

With this rote, a Guardian can be someone other than himself, a useful ability in his line of work. Indeed, such a mage can go from a "blond-haired, clean-shaven, green-eyed, early-30s" suspect being chased by police to a 40ish man with salt-and-pepper hair and beard saying, "He went *that* way." Silver Ladder willworkers sometimes use the same rote when trying to go unnoticed.

### Animal Degradation (Life ●●●●)

The mage can degrade more than one Physical Attribute of a base or median life form.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

As per "Enfeeblement," p. 189. The mage's successes can be allocated among the target's Physical Attributes in any combination. The total that each Attribute can be lowered is still limited by the mage's total Life dots.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Beast Lord**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Animal Ken + Life vs. Stamina

Just as with the lesser version of this rote, Arrow mages use this magic to strike at the martial prowess of lesser life forms, granting themselves the edge in combat.

### Animal Minion (Life ●●●●)

The mage exerts gross bodily control over base or median life. Effectively, the mage uses the affected creature like a marionette. Other Life Arcanum magics can move a beast to act within the limits of its instincts and understanding, but this spell enables the mage to push it beyond the parameters of its ingrained behavior (though not, without other alterations, beyond the limits of its physical capabilities).

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve reflexively

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Naturally, this spell works best on an unconscious target (which cannot normally resist). Make a reflexive and contested Resolve roll for creatures that resist consciously.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Loyal Hound**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Life vs. Resolve

At times, the Silver Ladder willworker needs an animal to do something it normally won't.

### Contagion (Life ●●●●)

The mage can cause sickness or disease.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

A common cold might require one success while Ebola might require eight or more. The mage must mimic an existing disease, and the more virulent or easily transmitted it is, the more successes it requires. The disease is contagious; anyone can potentially catch it after exposure (a reflexive Stamina + Athletics or Survival roll might stave it off).

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Interdiction**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Medicine + Life

Guardians occasionally use this rote to end a threat to the secrecy of the Mysteries in a way that raises few suspicions. After all, a noted journalist who suddenly disappears raises questions, while a fatal or even just crippling illness is dismissed by most as nothing more than bad luck. Free Council mages experimenting with microbial life and the like occasionally use a variant rote (Intelligence + Medicine + Life).

### Doppelganger (Life ●●●●)

Sometimes the right man for the job is someone else. A mage with this spell can *be* that someone else. "Doppelganger" enables a mage to alter her build and features to conform to those possessed by another human be-

## ●●●● Adept of Life

I wear the forms of bird and beast and appear however I choose, for my flesh is but a garment. I change lesser beasts into greater ones and assert control over the forms of my fellow human beings. I can change them, sculpt them and even control their urges as I will.

ing of either gender and any age and size. Conservation of mass does not apply, so a five-foot-tall, 97-pound woman could become a man of 6'7" and 340 pounds. Despite the spell's name, it need not always be used to mimic an actual person and can be employed to become an Everyman or to take on particular characteristics suited to a task (becoming a brawny linebacker sort when applying for a job as a bouncer). Without other Life Arcanum alterations, the mage's physical capabilities (i.e., Attributes) remain as they are in her normal form.

**Practice:** Patterning

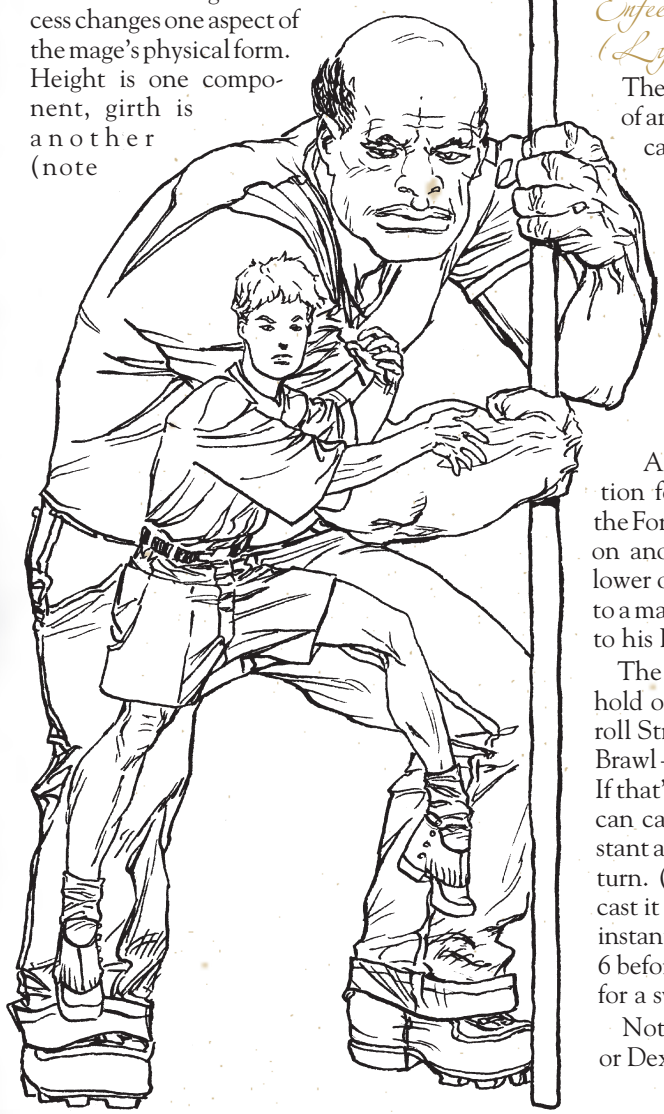
**Action:** Extended (one turn per roll)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The completeness of the change is dictated by the number of successes accrued in casting. Each success changes one aspect of the mage's physical form. Height is one component, girth is another (note that a mage wishing to actually change her Size can only move within normal human parameters and each change up or down from her current Size requires a success), and facial features are yet another. Each unique feature (like two different colored eyes, an intricate and conspicuous pattern of facial scarring or a birthmark in the shape of a wolf's head) requires a success.



**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Another Man's Shoes**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Life

A Guardian of the Veil with this rote can transform herself into any person she wishes to become. Cunning Arrow mages are sometimes known to use this rote to appear much less imposing or physically capable than normal.

### *Enfeeblement (Life ●●●●)*

The mage can degrade one of another person's Physical Attributes.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

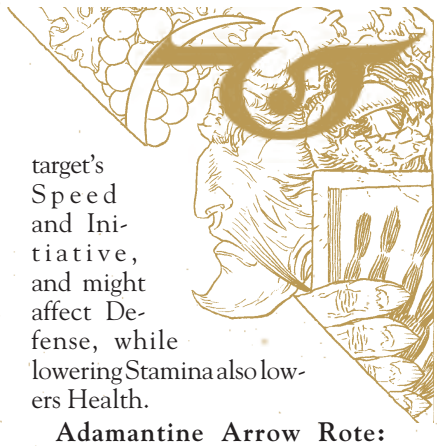
**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

As with self-degradation for Life 3 "Degrading the Form," p. 186, but turned on another. The mage can lower one dot per success up to a maximum amount equal to his Life dots.

The mage must first grab hold of or touch the target; roll Strength or Dexterity + Brawl – the target's Defense. If that's successful, the mage can cast this spell as an instant action in the following turn. (With Life 5, he can cast it at sensory range as an instant action. He needs Life 6 before he can add Space 2 for a sympathetic casting.)

Note: Lowering Strength or Dexterity also lowers the target's Speed and Initiative, and might affect Defense, while lowering Stamina also lowers Health.



**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Weaken the Foe**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Intimidation + Life – Stamina

The threat posed by an enemy incapable of holding a weapon is much less than that of one at full strength. Adamantine Arrow willworkers cast this rote to debilitate foes, whether in combat or for some other reason (perhaps rendering them less agile while she pursues over treacherous ground, or less hardy during frigid weather). Silver Ladder mages use their own version of this magic (Presence + Intimidation + Life) to whittle away the physical prowess of opponents.

### *Hone Another's Form (Life ●●●●)*

The mage can raise one of another human being's Physical Attributes, as per the Life 3 "Honing the Form" spell, p. 186.

**Practice:** Perfecting

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must touch the target. With Life 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

The target can choose to resist; subtract its Resolve dots from the spellcasting dice pool.

**Free Council Rote: Performance Enhancement**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life

Sometimes consisting of "energy supplements" and such, the casting of this Free Council rote augments another's physical capabilities.



### Life Force Assault (Life ●●●●)

The mage attacks a target's life force, the mystical field generated by all living things.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Each success inflicts one point of lethal damage to a single life form. With Life 5, the caster can inflict aggravated wounds by spending one Mana.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Organic Knife**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Life

Adamantine Arrow mages use this rote to strike down creatures or human enemies that endanger or assault their charges.

### Many Faces (Life ●●●●)

The mage can change another human being's features as per the Life 3 "Two Faces" spell, p. 188.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The mage must touch the target. With Life 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range. The target can choose to contest with a reflexive Composure + Gnosis roll.

**Mysterium Rote: Perfected Disguise**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Life

Mysterium mages often use this rote to send cabal-mates or other allies into questionable situations without the risk of their being recognized.

### Shapechanging (Life ●●●●)

The mage takes on the physical characteristics, including Attributes and Size, of an average member of the biological type into which he changes. The mage learns how to alter his shape into that of any other form of natural biological life more advanced than a single-celled organism. He can become anything from an elephant or blue whale, to an earthworm or a black ant, to a fern or a wood mushroom. If he is not careful, however, he can lose himself in the mindset (such as it is in some cases) of whatever organism into which he transforms, his intellect overwhelmed by either instinctual responses and brain chemistry, or in the case of plants neurology completely unsuited to voluntary thought.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage suffers dice penalties for Sizes significantly smaller than his own. To reduce oneself to Size 2 (cat-sized) is –1 dice, while Size 1 (rat-sized) is –2 dice, and Size 0 (ant-sized) is –3 dice.

In addition, increasing one's Size can also levy dice penalties:

| Size Increase | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| +5 | –2 |
| +10 | –4 |
| +15 | –6 |
| +20 | –8 |
| +25 | –10 |

The mage may augment the Physical Attributes of this form with other magic, but cannot add the features of other living things to this changed shape (thus, while he could become a lion and could use spells to become a stronger, faster, more resilient lion, he could not also add wings to that form). Whenever the mage is faced with an overwhelming inborn response (such as a male lion's need to kill all cubs not sired by itself), Composure + Resolve must be rolled reflexively for the mage to assert his reason over his new instincts. Failure means that the sorcerer acts out the instinctual response.

Note that none of the mage's clothes or gear is altered, and if he shifts to a creature of larger Size than himself, he'd best remove his clothes (two to three turns) or they are ripped to shreds. If he shifts to a smaller size, his clothing might fall off of him. If the caster adds a conjunctional Matter 4 to the casting, his clothes and equipment can transform to fit the new shape and size. With Matter 5, his clothes and gear can be incorporated into his new form (his cotton shirt turns to fur or feathers, his holstered gun becomes an oddly shaped scar), and transform back into their original forms when the spell ends.

**Mysterium Rote: Wearing the Animal Shirt**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Animal Ken + Life

Mysterium willworkers cast this magic for a variety of reasons. Animals can go unnoticed in many places that humans can't. Likewise, there are times when it would be more useful to be a rat, a wolf, an eagle or even a fern than a human being. Some mages use this rote almost purely for the experience of being other than human, discovering new perceptions of the universe through other creatures' eyes (or photoreceptors, or whatever). Adamantine Arrow mages are also practitioners of this magic, changing into whatever form is most advantageous in a given situation.

### Supreme Honing (Life ●●●●)

The mage can raise more than one of his Physical Attributes or those of a base or median life form.

**Practice:** Perfecting

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

As per the Life 3 "Honing the Form" spell, p. 186, but the mage can now divide his successes between his Physical Attributes in any combination he prefers. The total that each Attribute can be boosted is still limited by the mage's total Life dots.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Fulfillment**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Athletics + Life

By means of this rote, Silver Ladder mages enhance their physical capabilities to the limits of human perfection and beyond. A willworker under the effects of this magic can seem like a demigod to lesser specimens, able to run faster, leap farther, endure more and otherwise perform far beyond what could be expected of her. (Although she needs to beware showing off too much, lest Sleepers begin to Disbelieve what they see.)

### Transform Other (Life ●●●●)

The mage can give another human being features from a base or median life form, as per the Life 3 "Transform Self" spell, p. 187.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Atavistic Brand**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Animal Ken + Life vs. Stamina + Gnosis

Guardians use this rote to stigmatize others, perhaps drawing attention away from a more troubling supernatural occurrence or forcing subjects to hide (lest they be seen as monsters). This rote can also be used to bestow more survivable characteristics upon allies in a dangerous or alien environment.

### Trigger the Lizard Brain (Life ●●●●)

The mage can control the instinctual reactions of human beings as he does with lower life forms using the "Control Median Life" spell, p. 185.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Pulling the Strings of Fear**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Life vs. Resolve + Gnosis

Fear is a powerful tool. Adamantine Arrow willworkers who learn the casting of this rote understand the utility of such a resource. Of course, other instinctual reactions, such as deference to a superior or even the urge to mate, can be brought on through the use of such magic. Free Council mages use their own rote (Wits + Intimidation + Life) to trigger those sorts of reactions in other human beings.

### Uplift the Species (Life ●●●●)

The mage can change a form of base life into a form of median life.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

This rote enables the elevation of a base life form into a higher evolutionary state. Without other magics, such altered creatures have only the most basic instinctual programming of the life forms into which they're changed. A planarian changed into a cat does not possess the cat's superior intelligence, and a patch of moss transformed into a snake is apt to lie exactly where it is altered and act only if harmed or otherwise forced to react.

At this level, the mage must touch the target. With Life 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Free Council Rote: Genetic Tampering**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life vs. Stamina

Free Council mages sometimes use this rote to create strange pets with the docility of lower life forms but the bodies of dogs or cats.

### Create Life (Life ●●●●●)

The mage can create a living biological creature up to the most complex of natural organisms. Granted, without the uses of other Arcana like Mind, this construct is mindless, motivated only by instinct, but few can argue with the sheer, godlike authority possessed by one who is able to conjure up life at will.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended

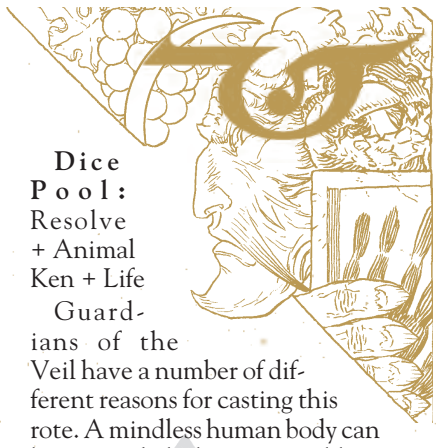
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target number of successes is determined by the creature's Size (on a one-for-one basis) and Physical Attributes (also on a one-for-one basis).

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: New Beginnings**



**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Animal Ken + Life

Guardians of the Veil have a number of different reasons for casting this rote. A mindless human body can be created, bribing a troublesome spirit with a host, or a Siberian tiger could be spun out of nothing, giving the mage a body to control with other Life Arcanum spells. Some Free Council mages use this rote to conjure up a desired sample of flora or fauna so as to have a life form on which to pattern transposed characteristics for the "Transform Self" spell (see p. 187).

### Evolutionary Shift (Life ●●●●●)

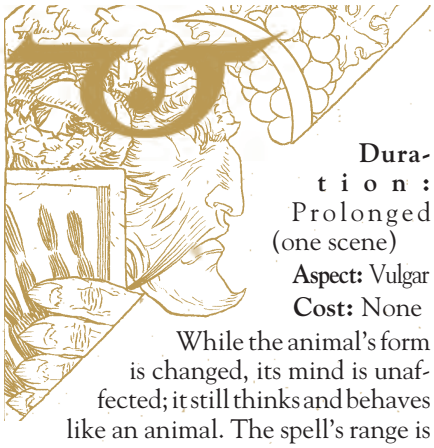
The mage can transform a base or median life form into a human being.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

### ●●●●● Master of Life

I wear any and every shape with equal facility and can transform others into any beast I envision. That which I change passes on the vicissitudes of its form to all its progeny, begetting new things upon the earth. Lesser creatures may be raised up by my magic to take on human identity, and human beings dance on my strings as surely as does any lesser thing. I wield the authority of the gods themselves, for mine is the power to create life.



**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

While the animal's form is changed, its mind is unaffected; it still thinks and behaves like an animal. The spell's range is sensory.

**Free Council Rote: The Frog King**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Animal Ken + Life vs. Stamina

Perhaps more a product of intellectual curiosity than anything else, this rote enables a Council mage to elevate a lesser life form to human state. While some mages of exceptional skill in the Mind Arcanum use this magic to develop the consciousness of such a being, others find their own uses for it, not all of them scrupulous. Some particularly vicious Adamantine Arrow willworkers use this rote to transform lesser life forms into humans, upon whom they hone their combat skills.

### *Fantasia (Life ●●●●●)*

The mage can perform the most fantastic of alterations to extant life, creating beasts directly out of myth and legend, or if she is inclined, mind-shattering horrors dredged out of the depths of the most fevered of imaginations. Any ability that can conceivably be possessed by a normal living creature (whether or not such is a characteristic that is or has ever been intrinsic to a specimen of earthly flora or fauna) can be imparted, such as the ability to mix certain enzymes to produce flame, or sacs of biochemical gas that can be used to float on water or even in air. More mundane qualities, such as a fly's ability to vomit digestive fluids, a cat's enhanced night vision or a moose's incredible sense of smell can all be given.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage targets an existing animal from which to add and subtract various features. Each success allows the mage to exchange a single feature, although unnatural but theoretically possible features such as the ability to exhale fire might levy a –1 dice penalty per unnatural feature. Changes in Size (either up or down) require successes on a one-for-one basis. The spell's range is sensory.

In the case of creatures with unnatural features, Sleeper Disbelief can dispel the Fantasia spell, restoring the creature to its natural form.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Bygone Menagerie**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics + Life vs. Stamina

Silver Ladder willworkers use this rote to create beautiful and terrible forms of life, with which they defend their homes and sanctums, impress and horrify allies and rivals, and lay siege to enemies.

### *Greater Shapechanging (Life ●●●●●)*

The mage can change shape without the possibility of becoming "lost" in her new form, and can change others with the same facility with which she transforms herself. The mage retains full control of her reason in this form, as do any she chooses to change (unless she would rather have another be forced to fight for control of his faculties, as per lesser "Shapechanging" at Life 4).

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant or contested; target rolls Stamina + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (vs. Sleepers and willing supernatural targets) or transitory (vs. unwilling mages and other supernatural targets)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must deal with the same modifiers for Size as he does with lesser "Shapechanging" (p. 190). He may also cast the Life 3 "Transform Self" spell, p. 187, to add different features to the changed form, but he is not restricted to lesser life forms.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Hour of the Wolf**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Animal Ken + Life vs. Stamina + Gnosis

Without the threat of losing herself in the form she adopts, this rote can be one of the strongest weapons in an Arrow's arsenal, especially considering her ability to freely modify her new shape. Such a willworker can become a veritable living siege engine, combining all of the deadliest characteristics in the plant and animal kingdoms, as she wills. Mysterium mages are also known to use a version of this rote for their own purposes.

### *Hereditary Change (Life ●●●●●)*

The mage can bestow upon a creature the characteristics of other life forms, with the ability to pass such characteristics along through heredity (effectively, for the scientifically minded, altering the subject's genome permanently and seamlessly). This spell is cast in combination with one that alters a creature's features, such as "Transfer Median Features," p. 187, or "Fantasia," above. See "Combining Spells," p. 128.

Some mages choose to perform this spell upon creatures that have already been born, whether in their youth or their adulthood, while others prefer to use only unborn beings, altering them within the womb (or inside the egg) so that their changed characteristics are manifest at birth. In theory, anything from a slug to a bird to a dog to a chimpanzee can be physically manipulated in this way.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina reflexively

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must touch the target (or its egg, or the belly of the beast carrying the unborn animal).

The features are lasting. Effectively, the new form is considered the creature's natural form unless the being is altered again through another use of Life magic. The traits are hereditary, creating a magical bloodline.

Mages who make fantastic creatures are well advised to hide them away from prying eyes, such as deep within an isolated sanctum or in the remote wilderness. Truly fantastic beasts created using the "Fantasia" spell (such as ambulatory pine trees with eyes, fangs, predatory instincts and the ability to spit digestive enzymes, or winged crocodiles with venom) tend to sicken and die when witnessed by Sleepers. The Sleeper's Disbelief successes (Resolve + Composure roll) deliver bashing damage to the creature once per scene in

which it is witnessed, each time a new Sleeper sees it. The Disbelief dice pool may be reduced by one or two dice by playing to prevailing local myths (making a *chupacabra* in South or Central America, for example), or by putting an altered creature somewhere far away from the general run of humanity, where there are those who still believe the impossible can happen.

**Mysterium Rote: The Dragon's Egg**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life vs. Stamina

In a few isolated sanctums, Mysterium mages still practice the timeless art of shaping life itself, giving rise to entirely new creatures. Some believe that the strange flora and fauna being discovered even today is the result of such tampering. Some Silver Ladder willworkers, reveling in the sheer power of their magic, use their own variant of this rote (Resolve + Medicine + Life).

### *Human Minion (Life ●●●●●)*

The mage exerts gross bodily control over human beings. As per the Life 4 "Animal Minion" spell, p. 188. The mage controls the affected creature like a marionette.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Unlike an animal, a human cannot be made to do anything that endangers his survival or that might harm him. Also, if he is made to do something that is radically against his beliefs (such as harm his lover), a fresh contested and reflexive Resolve + Gnosis roll is made to resist the command (his successes must exceed the spell's Potency).

**Silver Ladder Rote: Flesh Puppet**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Life vs. Resolve + Gnosis

With this magic, even the mightiest foe can be turned to the service of a Ladder mage. Guardians of the Veil also use a version of this rote to control the actions of others when needed.

### *Regeneration (Life ●●●●●)*

The mage can temporarily regenerate his own or another person's lost limb or organ.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Lost limbs can be regrown and damaged or faulty organs can be restored to health. The number of successes needed depends on the limb or organ restored.

| Body Part | Target Number |
|---|---|
| Finger or toe | One success |
| Eye, ear, nose, or tongue | Two successes |
| Hand or foot | Three successes |
| Arm or leg | Four successes |
| Genitals | Five successes |
| Internal organ (lung, kidney) | Six successes |
| Heart | Seven successes |
| Brain | Eight successes |

Once this spell has been cast, the restored body part does not immediately appear. It grows at a rate of one success per minute until the total successes required for that organ are achieved, at which point the organ is fully functional. For example, a person can have a new arm (four successes) in four minutes.

Obviously, a mage can only cast this spell upon a living target. The willworker cannot regenerate someone who has died (perhaps due to the loss of the body part concerned). This spell does not affect the target's Health rating.

Note: This spell's Duration can be extended using the advanced prolonged Duration factors, but it cannot be made indefinite. When the spell expires, the body part withers back to its state before the casting (and disappears in the case of a restored limb) within one minute. It is rumored that archmasters might have the ability to cast this spell with indefinite Duration.

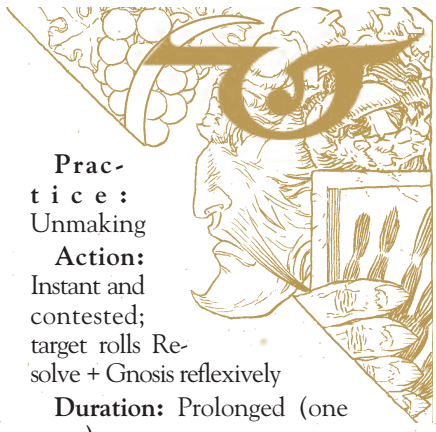
**Free Council Rote: Salamander's Tail**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine + Life

Free Council mages make regular use of this rote to restore the functionality of their comrades' lost or damaged limbs. The less altruistic among them charge for the service and then refuse to recast it when the original spell expires should the subject lack the funds or ability to fulfill the favor levied.

### *Ultimate Degradation (Life ●●●●●)*

The mage can lower more than one of a person's Physical Attributes.



**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

This spell can be cast at sensory range. Successes can be allocated among the target's Physical Attributes in any combination. The total by which each Attribute can be lowered is limited by the mage's Life dots.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Lay Him Low**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics + Life vs. Resolve + Gnosis

True power lies not in being well armed, but in denying the opposition access to weapons. By using this powerful magic, an Arrow mage can render an enemy all but incapable of standing up to a stiff breeze, let alone being a threat in combat.

### *Ultimate Honing (Life ●●●●●)*

The mage can raise more than one of another human being's Physical Attributes, as per the Life 4 "Hone Another's Form" spell, p. 189.

**Practice:** Perfecting

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

This spell can be cast at sensory range. Successes can be allocated among the subject's Physical Attributes in any combination. The total that each Attribute can be boosted is limited by the mage's Life dots. The target can choose to resist; subtract its Resolve dots from the spellcasting dice pool.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Perfection of Form**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Medicine + Life

This rote gives the Adamantine Arrow a means of equipping an army with boosted performance techniques.



Empiricism begins with observation. Even the primitive researchers of centuries past could deduce that simple truth for themselves. I gaze upon lifeless matter and see into it, witness to the intertwined strands of atoms and molecules that comprise such substances. At a glance, I know one material from another, even those that are, to the eyes of the mundane, seemingly identical. I look into such constructs and discern their secrets, their strengths and their flaws.

# Matter

**Purview:** Alchemy, elemental air, elemental earth, elemental water, shaping, transmutation

Matter is an Arcanum concerned with lifeless material, the building blocks of the world. Through use of this magic, a mage gains control over raw elements and complex alloys alike. The Matter Arcanum encompasses everything from a simple puddle of water, to a chunk of uranium, to a plank of wood, to the most intricately structure polymer.

Those mages who set out to control the enigmas of Matter are often not what others would consider "people-friendly." Many enjoy the static predictability of base materials, as opposed to the rampant chaos engendered by primal energies or living beings. These individuals are often as reliable as they are routine-oriented and many of them are capable of seeing beauty in places that others simply don't know to look. They prize solidity, stability and conformity and a good number wish that human beings were as readily pliant as the objects with which they work (a condition they believe would make the whole world a much easier and more rewarding place to live).

## Ruling Realm: Stygia

The gross/subtle pair of Matter/Death provides the ruling Arcana of Stygia, that bleak land where disincarnated souls gain rest until called upon to incarnate again into the cycle of life. Matter is the material expression of the pair.

## • Initiate of Matter

### Alter Conductivity (Matter •)

The mage alters the conductivity of a simple object. An electrical cord can be rendered completely non-conductive, while concrete can be made to conduct electricity like copper.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The number of objects that can be affected increases with each success.

| Successes | Targets |
|---|---|
| 1 success | One |
| 2 successes | Two |
| 3 successes | Four |
| 4 successes | Eight |
| 5 successes | 16 |

Note that objects of up to Size 20 can be affected. The caster suffers dice penalties to affect larger objects. This includes such things as a concrete slab; unless additional Size factors are added, the mage affects a single slab of up to Size 20.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Extinguish the Invisible Fire**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science + Matter

A common tactic of modern law enforcement and military personnel is to cut the power to a location shortly before storming it. Adamantine Arrow mages also make use of this tactic by way of this rote. Conversely, those with access to the Forces Arcanum occasionally grant conductivity to substances not normally possessing such a characteristic, in order to electrocute their enemies in combat.

### Craftman's Eye (Matter •)

The mage can discover the proper function of an object with moving parts. At the Storyteller's discretion, this might aid Craft Skill rolls.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

**Mysterium Rote: Rube Goldberg's Brain**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation or Science + Matter

Elaborate moving-part puzzles and ancient machines of unknown purpose, among many other things, can be deciphered by means of this Mysterium rote. Free Council mages are also known to favor such magic in their work to modernize the face of magic.

### Dark Matter (Matter •)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). This spell is especially good for reading resonance that is ponderous ("thick", "sluggish" or "dense" as some have called it).

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with this spell. The mage gains a +1 dice bonus when studying dense/very dense resonance, but suffers a –1 dice bonus when reading refined/very refined resonance.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Seizing the Threads**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Matter

Guardians often find the ability to perceive "heavy" resonance useful in the course of their tasks. Such influences can have a profound impact on both the Awakened and Sleeping worlds, often on such a deep-rooted and basic level as to be virtually invisible to more refined senses.

### Detect Substance (Matter •)

This spell enables a mage to discern the presence of a given sort of material in her immediate vicinity. She could decide to search for ferrous metals, clean water or a particular kind of plastic, even a unique object known to her (meaning that the mage almost never needs to worry about where she left her car keys, unless she lives in a singularly enormous house). Among other things, this spell can reveal if a person is carrying a handgun (by looking for gunpowder) or is wearing a wire (by examining for copper wiring on the torso).

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

One success affects a one-yard radius. Additional successes extend the radius:

| Successes | Radius |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | 2 yards |
| 3 successes | 4 yards |
| 4 successes | 8 yards |
| 5 successes | 16 yards |

The Storyteller levies penalties based on how much or how little of the substance is present. A guy carrying an arsenal of guns under his trench coat has a lot of gunpowder on his person: +2 or +3 bonus. Someone who is hiding a transmitter in his gold fillings has only a tiny amount of the copper wiring sought: –2 or –3.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Glimmer in the Shadows**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Composure + Matter

This rote gets its name from mages who use it to seek out precious metals in old abandoned attics, basements, mines and the like (though some think it refers to dragons' hoards from truly ancient days). Silver Ladder mages use it to detect the presence of that which they seek, whether such is lost treasure or just a measure of leverage in a conversation or hostile encounter.

### Discern Composition (Matter •)

The mage can perceive the fundamental makeup of material structures and discern their composition, determining their weight and density.

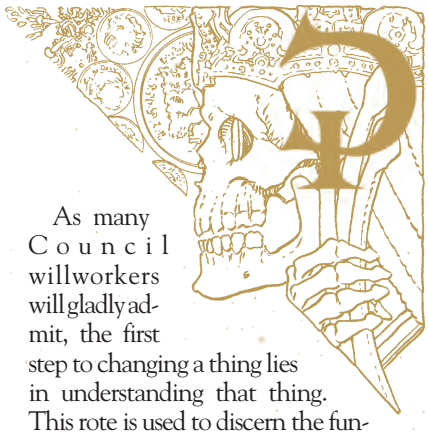
Most technologically minded willworkers tend to see Matter in much the same way as most modern people: a scientifically grounded, predictable phenomenon. Other mages see things in a different light. Some describe "threads" interwoven throughout a "Tapestry" ("This unique thread indicates the presence of gold," for example), while some speak of the Classical Elements — Air (gas), Earth (solid) and Water (liquid).

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Success allows a mage to determine an object's Durability, Size and Structure ratings.

**Free Council Rote: Diagnostic Scan**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Crafts or Science + Matter



As many Council willworkers will gladly admit, the first step to changing a thing lies in understanding that thing. This rote is used to discern the fundamentals of an object's composition. Mysterium mages often use slightly different magic (Intelligence + Crafts or Science + Matter) to accomplish the same ends.

### Find the Hidden Hoard (Matter •)

The mage can find secret compartments within inanimate matter, discovering hidden doors, safes and vaults.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Extremely well-designed hidden compartments or rooms might levy a –1 or –2 dice penalty, but usually only the most refined or precise of such misdirectional architecture imposes this penalty.

**Mysterium Rote: Mapping the Tomb**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Crafts + Matter

With this rote, a Mysterium willworker is capable of detecting the presence of unseen spaces within seemingly solid structures.

## •• Apprentice of Matter

*The workmanship of a simple device is improved by my art, rendering swords with perfect balance or hammers with perfect weight. The very shape of water or rain is mine to form, and the composition of liquid is determined by my desires — a glass of water can be made into coffee or even the finest of aged wines.*



### Alter Accuracy (Matter ●●)

The mage improves the balance and heft of a simple item. This application could, for example, improve the accuracy of a sword since it is easier and smoother to wield, a screwdriver turn more quickly (its weight shifts so well it practically turns itself) or a hammer hit harder. Any object that might conceivably benefit from a more efficient or better-weighted design could serve as the target of this spell.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The object gains the 9-again quality (reroll results of 9 and 10) on the next dice roll made using it. Extra successes on the spellcasting roll affects successive rolls with the tool, one extra roll per success. Neither the spellcaster nor the tool user can choose which rolls are affected by the magic. Each successive use of the tool gains the 9-again benefit until the number of affected rolls have been used or the scene ends, whichever comes first.

Note that this spell does not affect a chance die, should the object wielder's dice pool be reduced to one. Only a result of 10 is a success.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Sword of the Slayer**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Crafts or Occult + Matter

Adamantine Arrow mages are quick to turn any useful innovation to defense and this rote is no exception. Swords, knives or even simple sticks can be made deadly, and common house tools can be made better.

### Eyes of the Earth (Matter ●●)

As the Matter 1 "Dark Matter" spell, p. 194, except that the mage casts this upon another mage or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may resist with a reflexive contested Resolve + Gnosis roll.

**Free Council Rote: Imparting the Alchemist's Eye**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Matter

As members of the Free Council well understand, mages unskilled in the Arcanum of Matter can sometimes benefit by enhanced material perceptions. Silver Ladder willworkers use their own magic (Presence + Occult or Science + Matter) to bestow such revelations upon others.

### Shape Liquid (Matter ●●)

The mage can impart cohesion to liquid or vapor, forming it into shapes of his choosing or moving it as he desires. He could, for example, carve a corridor through fog or rain so that he doesn't get wet.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

At this level, the mage must touch the targeted liquid (or vapor) to be able to affects its adjacent volume or area. With Matter 3, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

The mage can affect liquid vapor, like fog or mist, but not any substance whose single natural state is gaseous (like mustard gas or helium). He affects a volume of liquid or area of vapor based on successes rolled. He can also allocate successes to the density of the water, giving it Strength.

At the Storyteller's discretion, a reflexive Dexterity + Crafts roll might need to be made for the caster to achieve a particularly complex shape, such as forming rain into the shape of a person. Exacting details such as facial features might even require an exceptional success on this roll. The liquid form is obvious for what it is. It cannot fool anyone into thinking it's a real version of whatever solid object it mimics (at least, not without an accompanying Mind spell to make the viewer think otherwise).

The shaped liquid's surface tension depends on its Strength. If no successes are allocated to Strength, it has only enough to keep its shape. It provides no barrier whatsoever to obstacles or attacks, although it retains its shape for the Duration of the spell even when it is pierced by bullets or fists. Dots of Strength act as Durability (as with cover; see pp. 162-163 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) against projectiles or other attacks that must first get past the shaped liquid to reach their target (unless the liquid is in vapor form, in which case it provides no protection).

The caster can reflexively control and move the shaped liquid up to one yard per dot of Gnosis that he has per turn. If he uses Forces 3 in the casting of the spell, he can impart even greater motion to the water: 10 yards per dot of Gnosis per turn. People standing in the path of the onrushing water might be knocked over. If the water's Strength *exceeds* an affected person's Strength, a successful, reflexive Strength + Athletics roll must be made for that person or he is knocked down and swept along with the tide (as per the knockdown effect, p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

**Mysterium Rote: Dredging the Bay**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Occult + Matter

Mysterium mages find this rote most useful for uncovering artifacts buried in shallow water, or for allowing spellcasters to ford a river and restore its natural flow before pursuers arrive.

| Successes | Volume | Vapor | Strength |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 success | Milk jug | 5-sq. yard area | • |
| 2 successes | Gas tank | 10-sq. yard area | •• |
| 3 successes | Bathtub | 20-sq. yard area | ••• |
| 4 successes | Swimming pool | 40-sq. yard area | •••• |
| 5 successes | Olympic swimming pool | 80-sq. yard area | ••••• |

### Transmute Water (Matter ●●)

The mage can transmute one common liquid substance into another common liquid substance. The mage could turn water into milk or orange juice into gasoline. (Even though milk and orange juice are organic derivatives, they are not alive, so can be manipulated with this Arcanum.)

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

At this level, the mage must touch the targeted liquid (or vapor) to be able to affect its adjacent volume. With Matter 3, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

The mage can affect liquid vapor, like fog or mist, but not any substance whose single natural state is gaseous (like mustard gas or helium). He affects a volume of liquid or vapor based on his successes:

| Successes | Liquid Volume | Vapor Volume |
|---|---|---|
| 1 success | Milk jug | 5-cubic yard |
| 2 successes | Gas tank | 10-cu. yard |
| 3 successes | Bathtub | 20-cu. yard |
| 4 successes | Swimming pool | 40-cu. yard |
| 5 successes | Olympic swimming pool | 80-cu. yard |

With Matter 3, a volume of liquid composed of more than one liquid substance can be affected (although it must still be touched). Matter 4 is needed to transmute multiple liquid substances at sensory range.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Lesser Transfiguration**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Matter

Guardians of the Veil find this rote useful for preventing an enemy's escape by automobile, turning gasoline to water. Of course, at this level of casting, touching the gas to affect its adjacent volume can be tricky, but that's what siphons are for.

### Steel Windows (Matter ●●)

The mage can make an opaque object transparent or vice-versa, or he could choose to affect only one surface. He could, for example, make the outer surface of a bank vault door transparent, allowing him to see the mechanisms within.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

At this level, the mage must touch the targeted object (although he can do so using forceps or other tools). With Matter 3, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

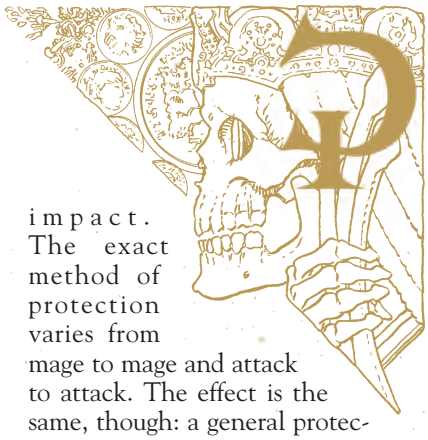
**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Gaze through the Mountain**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts or Occult + Matter

Sometimes, a Guardian is an investigator, sometimes an assassin, and sometimes she must be a spy. This rote enables a mage to literally see through walls that occlude her activities. While the transparency or opacity of the affected material goes both ways, a clever willworker can find ways to use such magic to her advantage.

### Unseen Aegis (Matter ●●)

This spell acts subtly upon inert material in the mage's immediate vicinity, which defends her from harm. Air forms a "cushion" that blunts the inertia of an incoming fist. Ambient moisture acts to douse a hurled bolt of flame. A bullet temporarily becomes a bit softer in mid-flight, blunting its impact. The exact method of protection varies from mage to mage and attack to attack. The effect is the same, though: a general protection from almost all sorts of physical harm.



**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Matter Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

Note that this magical armor does not apply against an opponent's attempts to achieve a grappling hold on the mage (the Fate, Mind, Space and Time Arcana provide shielding spells to do that). Nor does the spell apply against a grappling opponent's attempts to overpower the mage. It does, however, protect against attempts to inflict damage upon him (subtract armor points from any overpower roll that intends to damage the mage or attack him with a drawn weapon).

**Free Council Rote: Hard Air**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Matter

This rote defends a Free Council mage behind a shield of lifeless elements: air, water and whatever else is nearby. Many Mysterium mages use a similar rote (Intelligence + Occult + Matter) that owes more to alchemy than chemistry.



●●●

## Disciple of Matter

*Could you punch through that wrought-iron gate? Of course you couldn't, but not because it is impossible. It only seems impossible to you, because you do not yet know how such a feat might be accomplished. With a bit of time and preparation, I can render this iron as soft as warm butter and as easy to manipulate as clay. With my Knowledge, it is the simplest of things to transmute mud into the finest steel. I mend that which is sundered and render even glass as unyielding as stone.*

### Alter Integrity (Matter ●●●)

The mage can reinforce or degrade an object's Durability.

**Practice:** Perfecting or Fraying
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The player adds or subtracts one point per success achieved on the casting roll. Note that altering Durability with this spell also alters the object's Structure accordingly.

At this level, the mage must touch the targeted object (although he can do so using forceps or other tools). With Matter 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Sorcerer's Forge**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts + Matter

Silver Ladder mages use this rote to fortify or destroy the material integrity of objects. A car door can be rendered almost indestructible during a firefight, or a stone wall made brittle enough to be damaged with a single stout blow. Adamantine Arrow willworkers use their own version of the same magic (Wits + Crafts + Matter) in the defense of their fellows.

### Armor Piercing (Matter ●●●)

The mage bestows the "armor piercing" quality upon an object.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The object gains the armor-piercing quality on the next dice roll made using the object. Each extra success affects the object for one additional roll. The player cannot choose which rolls are affected; each successive roll bestows the benefit until the number of affected rolls has been used or the scene ends, whichever comes first.

Armor piercing also applies against an attacked object's Durability. The amount of armor points the object can ignore depends on the caster's Matter proficiency:

| Matter Dots | Armor/Durability Piercing |
|---|---|
| 3 | Ignore one armor or Durability point |
| 4 | Ignore two armor or Durability points |
| 5 | Ignore three armor or Durability points |

Instead of affecting a single object, the mage can affect a number of bullets: one bullet per success. He can double this number for each additional Target factor he adds to the casting, with a cumulative penalty of –2 per extra Target factor. In the case of autofire, a short burst with the Armor-Piercing spell cast upon at least one of its three bullets gains the full effect of the spell for that burst. For a medium burst, at least five of the 10 bullets must be subject to this spell for the burst to ignore armor. For a long burst, 10 of the 20 bullets fired in the burst must be subject to this spell for the entire burst to ignore armor. (See "Autofire," pp. 160-161 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Sharpening the Blade**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Crafts + Matter

Even the most heavily armored foe can be laid low by an Arrow mage with this rote. Bullets pierce ceramic plates as though they were tissue paper, and even a seemingly crude blade penetrates the most advanced forms of protection. Guardians of the Veil use their own rote (Wits + Crafts + Matter) to enhance their weaponry.

### Jury-Rig (Matter ●●●)

There are times when you just need a machine to work a certain way and you don't have time to adjust it or they just don't make one that does everything you need. Jury Rig is the answer. The spell allows a mage to swiftly superimpose pieces of various machines 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. Or he could combine a coffeemaker and an ice-cream mixer for making one-step, coffee-flavored ice cream, or a washer and dryer together to do laundry in one cycle.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

For each success, 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).

At this level, the mage must touch the jury-rigged object. With Matter 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Mysterium Rote: Hybridized Device**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts + Matter

Mysterium mages find a wide variety of uses for this rote. A last-resort handgun can be integrated into a stapler or a hairdryer, for example, or a pen and a flashlight can be merged to produce a writing implement that provides its own illumination (for taking notes in the dark). Some Guardians of the Veil transpose a number of different objects into one another to create elaborate multipurpose tools for all situations.

### *Plasticity (Matter ●●●)*

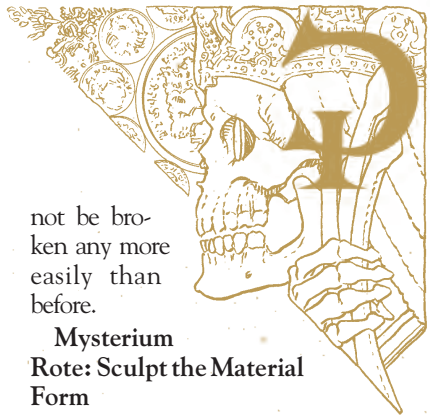
Through the use of this spell, it is possible to render any reasonably homogeneous material malleable for a time, even materials that are normally completely inflexible (such as ice, coal or lead crystal). While a substance is under the effects of this spell, the material can be molded by hand (or with magic, if the willworker chooses), creating truly fantastic shapes. The mage could, for example, draw amber like taffy and work it into a spiderweb or push an enemy's hands and feet into concrete, knead any gaps shut and leave her trapped there, as though the concrete had originally been cast that way.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

At this level, the mage must touch the targeted object (although he can do so using forceps or other tools). With Matter 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

The spell renders hard materials about as soft as very stiff clay, and as easy to sculpt by hand as a mass of butter. The object's Durability determines the ease of the spell, levying penalties on the roll on a one-for-one basis. Wood (Durability 1) is easier to warp than reinforced steel (Durability 4 or higher). In the case of objects with mixed materials, use the highest Durability. Once cast, the effect takes place in the subsequent turn. If the mage attempts to create something complex or artful from the substance, an instant Dexterity + Crafts roll might be called for.

Once the Duration expires, the object returns to its original solid state, but retains whatever shape it is currently in. This spell does not alter an object's Durability or Structure. While a bank vault door can be made to bend inward, it cannot be broken any more easily than before.



**Mysterium Rote: Sculpt the Material Form**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Crafts + Matter

This rote has seen use by Mysterium mages for innumerable purposes. Any source of normally hard material can be shaped into almost any simple tool as needed. A massive stone or metal door can be bent like a slab of clay, or a hostile mage's weapon can be rendered soft, pliant and useless. Adamantine Arrow mages sometimes use this rote to create improvised weapons and armor.

### *Repair Object (Matter ●●●)*

The mage can repair an object without leaving seams (it appears like it was never broken).

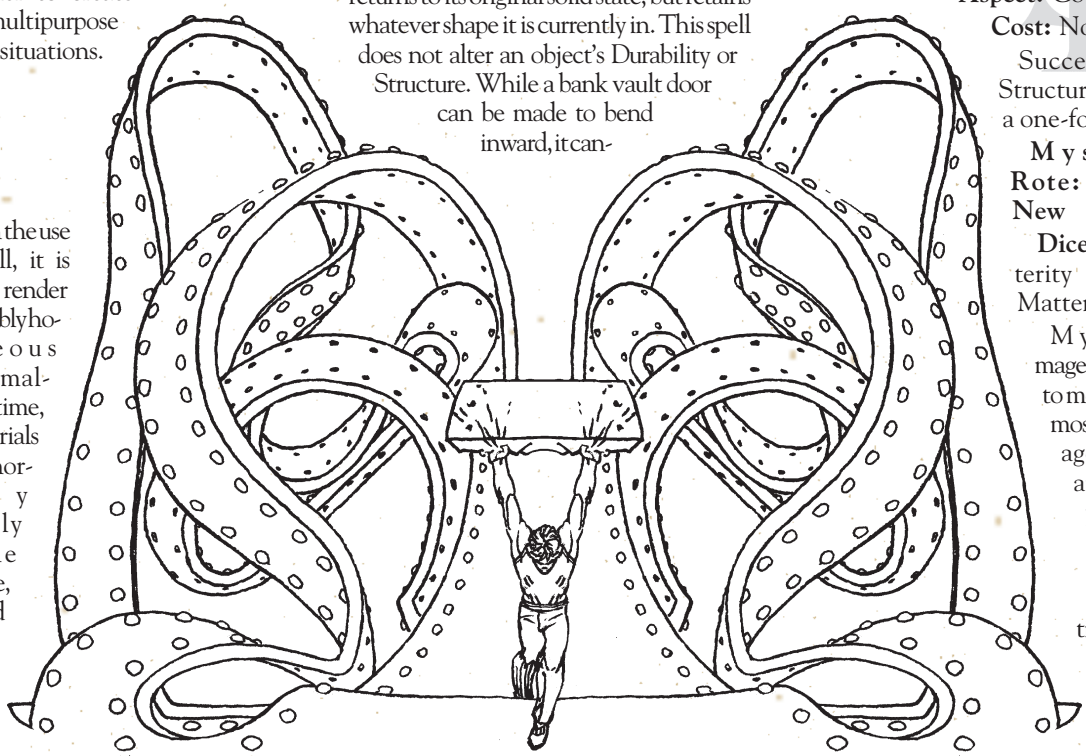
**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

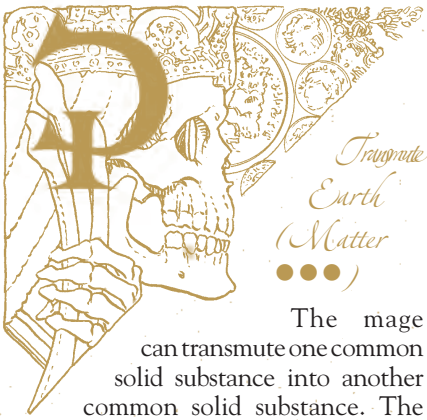
Successes repair Structure points on a one-for-one basis.

**Mysterium Rote: Good as New**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Crafts + Matter

Mysterium mages use this rote to mend even the most badly damaged objects, and are capable of restoring them to perfect functionality.





### Transmute Earth (Matter ●●●)

The mage can transmute one common solid substance into another common solid substance. The mage could turn a small chunk of granite into glass or a plaster paperweight into a wooden one. At this level, however, a mage cannot transform the substance of multiple materials at once. Thus, she could not transmute an entire car, but she could turn its fender to balsa wood or its frame to rubber.

Transformations that involve precious metals or otherwise rare materials are not possible at this level. (That is, "precious" and "rare" by common Sleeper estimation. While diamonds are by no means rare, they have significant metaphysical weight based upon the importance most people believe them to possess.) Such workings require use of the Matter 4 "Transmute Gold" spell, p. 202.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

At this level, the mage must touch the targeted object (although he can do so using forceps or other tools). With Matter 4, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

Radical transmutations might levy spellcasting penalties. Changing rock to metal has no penalty, but changing rock to paper might be –1.

Note that this spell does not alter the shape or Size of the object, just its material substance. Its weight becomes heavier or lighter by whatever degree is most appropriate for the new substance.

With Matter 4, a solid object composed of more than one material can be affected with a single casting (although it must still be touched; Matter 5 is needed to transmute multiple solid substances at sensory range). The mage can affect multiple kinds of materials at once (such as the different parts of a revolver) or just one piece or sort of material. (Thus, she could transform the bullets, which are made of a number of substances, or just the hammer, or the entire weapon according to her wishes.) This ability also allows the mage to transform complex materials into simple ones. The willworker is capable of turning a diamond into a small lump of clay, or a priceless centuries-old Japanese metal *tachi* into a sword made entirely of wood.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Lesser Material Transfiguration**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Matter

This classic act of alchemical wizardry sees use by many mages of the Silver Ladder. A flimsy card table could be overturned and transformed into a steel barrier, or a stout door could be turned into cheap glass. Naturally, this useful magic is practiced by members of all orders with sufficient skill in the Matter Arcanum.

### Verminous Metamorphosis (Matter ●●● + Life ●●●)

Much like the miracle that allowed for the transformation of Moses' staff, this spell enables a mage to alter a piece (or pieces) of lifeless material into simple vermin, such as spiders, scorpions or biting flies. Some mages are known to fling a fistful of small change or pebbles, transforming the objects in mid-flight to harry (or even seriously harm) enemies.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Successes determine the number of objects (coins, staves) that are transformed, and the size of the swarm created.

| Successes | Targets |
|---|---|
| 1 success | One (becomes a 1-yard radius swarm) |
| 2 successes | Two (becomes a 2-yard radius swarm) |
| 3 successes | Four (becomes a 4-yard radius swarm) |
| 4 successes | Eight (becomes an 8-yard radius swarm) |
| 5 successes | 16 (becomes a 16-yard radius swarm) |

The creatures can be various types of vermin. In the case of a swarm of stinging insects, it usually attacks any person or persons within its radius. (The caster can direct the swarm with the Life 2 "Control Base Life" spell, p. 182.) The damage the swarm inflicts depends on its density. All sizes listed above deliver one die of bashing damage to anyone within the radius. A swarm can inflict more damage by condensing. Using the success chart above, add one die per step smaller on the chart. For example, a 16-yard-radius swarm (five successes) that condenses to a two-yard radius (two successes) inflicts four dice of bashing damage. Armor is effective only if it covers the full body, and then it provides only half its rating (rounded down).

In addition, the vermin can be given venom if the caster imposes a –2 dice penalty on the casting roll. If a victim suffers at least one Health wound, he must contend with the venom with a reflexive Stamina + Survival roll. If it succeeds, he suffers no effect; if it fails, his physical-action dice pools suffer a –2 penalty for the rest of the scene or until he receives an antivenin (based on whatever creature the mage conjures). This penalty is cumulative. If a victim suffers successive bites and the Stamina + Survival roll fails, his penalties are added together.

The vermin created are mindless and act solely on instinct (and thus this spell is best used to create naturally aggressive insectile vermin).

**Free Council Rote: Stinging Pestilence**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Animal Ken + Life

Council willworkers use this rote to buy precious time when being pursued by those hostile to them, or to sow confusion and fear among foes. Silver Ladder mages use their own version of the rote (Intelligence + Animal Ken + Life) to turn even random detritus into a weapon again enemies.

## ●●●● Adept of Matter

*What I can create, I can also destroy. Wood. Rock. Even diamond. I can give solidity to air itself, trapping others in invisible cages. Should I need to prove the worth of my Art to those of lesser imagination, I can turn lead into gold to satisfy their trite expectations. Such is the power of my craft. One day, if you are diligent in your studies, it can be yours as well.*

### Alter Efficiency (Matter ●●●●)

The mage can improve or degrade a mechanical object's workings. Complicated items such as mechanical devices might be made more or less efficient through the careful manipulation of the quality of their inner workings.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Equipment modifiers can be increased or decreased by one die per success (to a maximum limit of plus or minus five dice). A vehicle's maximum speed can be increased or decreased by 10 mph per success (max: plus or minus 50 mph), or its acceleration can be increased or decreased by five per success (max: plus or minus 25).

At this level, the mage must touch the targeted object. With Matter 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Overdrive**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts or Science + Matter

When the mundane devices a Guardian depends upon in his work don't quite measure up to his needs, he can turn to this rote to improve their performance. Free Council willworkers often make use of this same rote to enhance equipment as needed.

### Annihilate Matter (Matter ●●●●)

The mage can destroy inert matter, reducing it to nothingness and utterly dissolving its atomic lattice. In effect, he makes it cease to be. A material's hardness or density does not appreciably factor into this destruction; only sheer quantity (in terms of cubic volume) really has much bearing on the process.

**Practice:** Unraveling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Each success inflicts one point of damage on an object, without the need to overcome the object's Durability. The exception is for magical items, such as enhanced or imbued items or Artifacts, or supernatural compounds and alloys. They cannot be destroyed with this spell, although Matter 5 "Annihilate Extraordinary Matter," p. 203, can affect them.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Disintegration**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult or Science + Matter

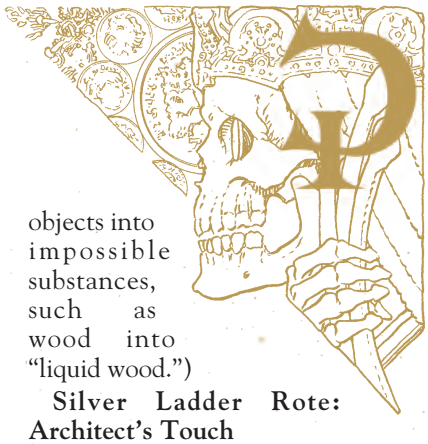
On occasion, protecting lives involves breaking things. Sometimes an Arrow mage needs to get heavy debris off of someone quickly, or must break through a wall, annihilate a weapon, or destroy an animate pile of lifeless matter. Guardians of the Veil use the same rote in the course of their work as well.

### Lesser Transmogrification (Matter ●●●●)

The mage can turn a single liquid substance into a single solid substance, and vice-versa.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

As with Matter 2 "Transmute Water" (p. 197) and Matter 3 "Transmute Earth" (p. 200), except that now the mage can mix and match liquid and solid states, turning water into stone or wood into ink. (This spell cannot turn objects into impossible substances, such as wood into "liquid wood.")



**Silver Ladder Rote: Architect's Touch**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Matter

Mages of the Silver Ladder use this rote to remodel a rival's sanctum, perhaps transforming furniture into oil and sturdy walls into paper, teaching others that nothing is safe from their Art.

### Reconfigure Object (Matter ●●●●)

The mage can turn an object into a different type of object. He could, for example, turn an aluminum baseball bat into an aluminum sword. Its form is altered, but its material substance remains unchanged.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

A simple or complex object can be transformed into a different simple or complex object. Its Durability, Structure and Size are not changed, however.

If the caster combines this effect with "Transmute Earth," p. 200, he can change a subject's material composition with the same casting. (See "Combining Spells," p. 128.)

**Silver Ladder Rote: Artisan's Hand**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Crafts + Matter

Silver Ladder mages can exert their will even over the shape of lifeless matter through use of this rote, reshaping such objects into more useful forms. Mages of all orders with sufficient training in the Matter Arcanum make use of this rote.

### Shape Air (Matter ●●●●)

The mage can control the flow and density of air or control the dispersion of a gaseous substance, such as mustard gas, sarin (nerve gas) or helium.



**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage affects a volume of air or gas based on his successes. When applied to air, successes are allocated between the volume affected and the increase or decrease in pressure (the density of air molecules), measured in Strength.

| Successes | Defined Volume | Pressure |
|---|---|---|
| 1 success | 5 cubic yards | • |
| 2 successes | 10 cu. yards | •• |
| 3 successes | 20 cu. yards | ••• |
| 4 successes | 40 cu. yards | •••• |
| 5 successes | 80 cu. yards | ••••• |

When shaping air or gas, a Dexterity + Crafts roll might be required to achieve a particularly complex shape, such as forming air into the form of a person. Exacting details such as facial features might even require an exceptional success on this roll (although the air is invisible unless someone throws paint or mud onto it). Dots of Strength act as Durability against projectiles or other attacks that must first get past the shaped air to reach their target (see the rules for cover, pp. 162-164 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

When moving air, the Storyteller assigns a Strength rating to an existing force of wind. The caster can increase or decrease that trait by the amount of Strength allocated with his successes. A normal day might have only Strength 0, while a very blustery day might be Strength 1. A hurricane might be Strength 2 or even 3.

The caster can reflexively control and move the affected area of air up to one yard per dot of Gnosis that he has per turn. If he uses Forces 3 in the casting of the spell, he can impart even greater motion to the air: 10 yards per dot of Gnosis per turn. People standing in the path of the wind might be knocked over. If the wind's Strength *exceeds* an affected person's Strength, a successful, reflexive Strength + Athletics roll must be made or he is knocked down (as per the knockdown effect, p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

When applied to gas, the mage can control the vapor's flow, preventing it from dispersing into certain areas and even reflexively moving it at a rate of one yard per dot of Gnosis per turn (or 10 yards per Gnosis per turn with Forces 3).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Favorable Winds**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult + Matter

With this rote, Adamantine Arrow mages literally blow down their enemies and are rendered effectively immune to the use of biochemical gaseous agents, as they prevent such gases from coming anywhere close by.

### *Transmute Air (Matter ●●●●)*

The mage can transform one gaseous substance into another gaseous substance, such as turning nerve gas into harmless oxygen or oxygen into laughing gas.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Note that this spell does not alter the dispersion of the gas, just its substance.

**Mysterium Rote: Fresh Air**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Matter

The mages of the Mysterium are known for crawling into ancient tombs sealed for ages. This rote allows them to conjure fresh air into such dusty places.

### *Transmute Gold (Matter ●●●●)*

The mage can transmute a precious or rare substance, such as gold or diamond, into a common substance, such as wood or mud.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

This spell is like "Transmute Earth," p. 200, except that it can be cast on precious substances or materials that are rare or valuable (bearing metaphysical weight based on the importance the mage's culture assigns to them). The caster cannot alter the substance's state (liquid or solid) unless he combines the casting with "Lesser Transmogrification," p. 201.

**Guardians of the Veil: Fool's Gold**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult or Science + Matter

Guardian mages use this rote to punish those who think they can buy their way out of everything, rendering riches into dead leaves or clay.

### ●●●●● Master of Matter

I create alloys beyond the knowledge of any ordinary man, and elements beyond the Periodic Table. I can make objects grow or shrink at will, and annihilate even the most legendary and prized of Atlantean Artifacts. I have the power of a god at my fingertips, seizing it through the auspices of true science.



### Alter Size (Matter ●●●●●)

The mage can alter an object's Size, making it larger or smaller.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

One point of Size can be altered per success, within the limits of the caster's Matter dots.

**Free Council Rote: Shrink Ray**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Matter

By expanding or compressing the amount of space between the atoms in an object, a Free Council mage can increase or decrease the subject's size without altering any of its material qualities. Adamantine Arrow mages sometimes use this rote to hide secret weapons or other supplies on their persons.

### Annihilate Extraordinary Matter (Matter ●●●●●)

This is identical to the ability to destroy normal materials, as with "Annihilate Matter", p. 201, save that it affects enchanted substances that are normally protected such as enhanced or imbued items, Artifacts and thaumium (see "Forge Thaumium," below).

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Each success inflicts one point of damage on an object, without the need to overcome that object's Durability.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Unto Dust**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult or Science + Matter

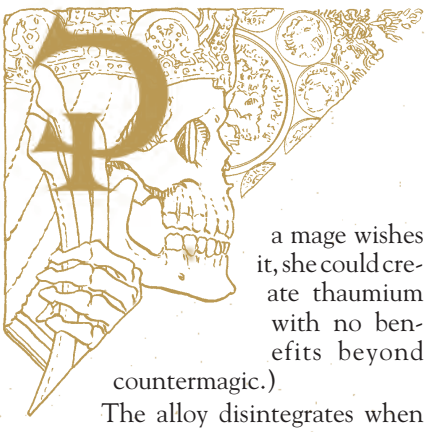
Even the most resilient of materials is not safe from an Arrow mage wielding this rote. Thaumium and other such substances can be destroyed by a willworker, stripping opponents of even the most powerful forms of protection or most puissant weapons.

### Forge Thaumium (Matter ●●●●● + Prime ●●●)

Masters of Matter can forge a substance, when charged with Mana, that's capable of serving as a shield against mystic will. Called "thaumium" (from the Greek word for "wonder" or "marvel"), this material is created as an alloy of perfected gold (orichalcum), silver (lunargent) and mercury (hermium). (Note: Transmuted versions of such materials are not acceptable.) The result, when properly crafted, a flawlessly mirrored substance. When charged with Mana, thaumium has a faint luminescence. A thaumium object may take the form of a necklace, breastplate, a watch or a sword. The shape and size of an object is irrelevant to how much inherent countermagic it provides.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana (minimum)

One success creates a Size 1, Durability 1 piece of thaumium that has the ability to hold one point of Mana, which it spends to shield against magic. The mage needs additional successes per extra Mana point capacity, and successes are also added to the target number to increase the thaumium's Durability, Size, armor and equipment modifier (all one point per success). (If



a mage wishes it, she could create thaumium with no benefits beyond countermagic.)

The alloy disintegrates when the Duration expires, so mages often cast this spell with an indefinite Duration. Use the following Duration factors:

| Duration | Successes Needed |
|---|---|
| One scene/hour | 1 success |
| 24 hours | 2 successes |
| Two days | 3 successes |
| One week | 4 successes |
| One month | 5 successes |
| Indefinite | 6 successes |

***Example:*** *Crucible creates a thaumium ring. It has Size 1, Durability 4, a Mana capacity of five points, and an indefinite Duration. It requires 14 successes to make. One success provides Size 1, Durability 1 and a Mana-capacity of one point, while three successes boost the Durability to 4. Four successes boost the Mana-capacity to five, and six successes are needed to make its Duration indefinite.*

Once made, the thaumium must be charged with Mana points. Each time it shields against magic (a reflexive action unless the wearer does not want it to), it uses up one of these points. If it runs out of points, it cannot shield magic until it is recharged. This shielding takes the form of a reflexive counterspell, effective against any Arcana and both vulgar and covert magic. The protection's dice pool is equal to the thaumium maker's Gnosis + Matter.

The wielder of a thaumium weapon can use the item's stored Mana to make the weapon's damage aggravated. This is a reflexive action requiring one Mana from the thaumium weapon's stores. Thaumium must be Size 3 or more to act as effective armor.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Hephaestus' Forge**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Occult + Matter

Named for the smith of the gods, this rote enables Silver Ladder mages to create thaumium, perhaps the most perfect of all substances. With this material, hostile magics can be deflected and grievous wounds can be inflicted upon foes. Adamantine Arrow mages who have attained mastery of this Arcanum are also known to make use of this rote.

### Greater Transmogrification (Matter ●●●●●)

The mage can now transform liquids and solids into gases, and vice-versa in any combination.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

As the Matter 4 "Lesser Transmogrification" spell (p. 201), except that now the mage can freely interchange liquid, solid and gaseous states, including precious or rare substances (as described with the "Transmute Gold" spell, p. 202).

**Free Council Rote: Playing God**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science + Matter

The Free Council mages use this rote to do nearly anything imaginable with matter. Guardians of the Veil use the same rote in their work, erasing evidence of the paranormal through material transformation.

### Raw Creation (Matter ●●●●)

The mage can create an object out of nothing.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The object created can be of Size 3 or smaller, with one additional Size point per extra success rolled on the casting. Its Durability is based on the material created, but additional successes can be allocated to reinforce Durability.

Complex objects such as automobiles might require a reflexive Intelligence + Crafts or Science roll to get right. At the Storytellers discretion, the caster might even need an appropriate Skill Specialty (such as Auto Repair) before he can create certain objects. A BMW sports car (Size 10) requires seven successes on a spellcasting, in addition to a successful Intelligence + Crafts or Science roll.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Ex Nihilo**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Science + Matter

The power to create materials out of thin air can be seen in some ways as godlike. Unsurprising, then, that the Silver Ladder devised this rote for just such a purpose. Any real material can be created and acted upon, either by mundane artifice or through other applications of this Arcanum. Free Council mages use a similar rote (Intelligence + Science + Matter), making use of "ambient energy," "Dark Matter" or any number of other sources.

### Self-Repairing Machine (Matter ●●●●●)

The mage can give objects a self-repairing function. The willworker's understanding is such that he can fabricate materials that "heal" themselves by bonding with nearby molecules, atomically restructuring them in ways considered impossible to modern science.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Each success allows the object to automatically recover Structure points of damage at a rate of one point per 15 minutes.

**Mysterium Rote: Out of the Ashes**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Crafts + Matter

Even if it is utterly destroyed, an object treated with this Mysterium rote can mend itself, reconstituting out of nothing more than powder and miniscule fragments if need be. Silver Ladder mages take a different approach (Presence + Crafts + Matter) to accomplish similar ends.

# Mind

**Purview:** Communication, hallucinations, mental projection, mind control, telepathy

This is the Arcanum used to connect with the Universal Consciousness shared by all beings possessed of thought: humans, animals, spirits and anything capable of in any way distinguishing between itself and its environment. This is an Arcanum of thoughts, dreams, emotions, motivations, memories, primal instincts, elevated precepts and ideas. Those who seek to master Mind attempt to grow closer to the unity of thought shared by all intelligent life, turning their mystic will inward, there to discover the simple truth that all Creation exists only in the eye of the beholder.

Mind is an Arcanum for those who are introspective without losing themselves in self-important reverie, and also outgoing, but not to the point of being incapable of useful reflection. Mind Arcanum mages are interactive sorts of people, whether that interaction takes the shape of social dealings or intense contemplation of a rich and vibrant inner life is immaterial. Surprisingly few of these individuals ignore the physical in favor of the cerebral, employing a well-balanced approach to existence. There certainly are no few seemingly half-mad ascetics out there, though, who deny the needs and desires of their "crude terrestrial forms." Of all the different types of mages, those who pursue the study of Mind are the most apt to change radically as they grow in understanding, becoming open to avenues of thought literally unfathomable to them previously.

## Ruling Realm: Pandemonium

The gross/subtle pair of Space/Mind provides the Ruling Arcana of Pandemonium, the place of soul scourging, where the sins committed during the soul's sojourn in the material world are purged so that it might ascend to its source. Mind is the ephemeral expression of the pair.

## • Initiate of Mind

### Aura Perception (Mind •)

The mage can discern the mental and emotional states of a thinking being by reading his aura. Some mages perceive auras as a series of colors, while others describe them in terms of musical notes, odors, tastes or other purely non-physical senses.

**Practice:** Unveiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

See the sidebar, below, for specifics. Note that this spell does not allow a mage to read a target's nature. That requires the "Supernal Vision" spell, p. 221.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Know the Wolf by His Stance**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy + Mind

In nature, most creatures give their emotional state away through a combination of body posture, facial expression and other physiological cues (such as musk or excessive saliva). Humans have learned to suppress many of these cues for the sake of "polite" social interaction, but a mage of the Adamantine Arrow can look past these civilized contrivances and read an individual's true intent. Willworkers of the Silver Ladder are also known to employ this rote; the power to control a person through understanding of her emotions is not to be underestimated.



Reach out and touch the surface of the World Mind. You see it reflected in others around you, and thereby within yourself.

Can you not sense the flow of consciousness around you? You will discern the particular qualities of more disciplined minds, those capable of feats of psychic prowess, as well as sense the feelings of those around you. You will become capable of thinking with two minds, rather than just one.



## Aura Signifiers

| Mental or Emotional Condition* | Color |
|---|---|
| Afraid | Orange |
| Aggressive | Purple |
| Angry | Bright Red |
| Bitter | Brown |
| Calm | Light Blue |
| Compassionate | Pink |
| Conservative | Lavender |
| Depressed | Gray |
| Desirous/Lustful | Deep Red |
| Distrustful | Light Green |
| Envious | Dark Green |
| Excited | Violet |
| Generous | Rose |
| Happy | Vermillion |
| Hateful | Black |
| Idealistic | Yellow |
| Innocent | White |
| Lovestruck | Bright Blue |
| Obsessed | Bright Green |
| Sad | Silver |
| Spiritual | Gold |
| Suspicious | Dark Blue |
| Confused | Mottled, shifting colors |
| Daydreaming | Sharp, flickering colors |
| Frenzied | Rapidly rippling colors |
| Psychotic | Hypnotic, swirling colors |

* Requires the Mind 1 "Aura Perception" spell, p. 206, to read an aura's mental or emotional state.

| Nature** | Color |
|---|---|
| Awakened | Myriad sparkles in aura |
| Sleeper | Weak, muted aura |
| Sleepwalker | Muted aura with faint glimmers within |
| Lacking a soul | Empty void where the aura should be |
| Under a Fate *geas* | Dark bands criss crossing aura |
| Vampire | Aura colors are pale |
| Shapeshifter | Intensely vibrant aura |
| Ghost | Splotchy, intermittent aura |
| Lich | Black veins in aura |

** Requires the Prime 1 "Supernal Vision" spell, p. 221, to read an aura's nature.

### One Mind, Two Thoughts (Mind ●)

This spell enables the mage to hold two individual and wholly distinct trains of thought at once, provided neither is intensely physically demanding. He creates parallel processes within his conscious mind. While he cannot do anything that requires intense or exacting physical labor (like fixing a computer and planning out a rousing speech at the same time), one of his two actions can require extremely minimal physical exertion (like planning a speech and typing an editorial for the local paper).

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The willworker can hold two thoughts in mind simultaneously, allowing him to perform two separate extended-action knowledge tasks (as opposed to instant actions or extended tasks involving physical labor) at the same time. He could, for example, research an occult fact while composing a poem, but could not do either while also fixing a car.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Thinking for Many**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Mind

Leaders think not only for themselves, but also for those whom they would keep as vassals. Willworkers of the Silver Ladder use this rote to conduct the many tasks of rule in the limited time usually available to them. Mages of the Mysterium also occasionally use the same rote, especially when considering weighty matters of exceedingly obscure lore.

### Sense Consciousness (Mind ●)

The mage can detect the presence of minds in the material world or mental projections in the state of Twilight (see "Psychic Projection," p. 215). He knows how to detect the presence of psychic activity, from the basest (that possessed by the simplest of animal life) to the most complex and elevated (powerful lords among spirits, the most enlightened of willworkers and the like). This sense allows the mage to know when other thinking creatures are present, and roughly what sorts of minds are present. (Experience may not teach a mage the distinction between a cockroach's mind and a dung beetle's, but it does tell her the difference between an insect and reptile mind.)

The mage detects the general type of mind she senses (a ghost, disembodied consciousness or spirit, for example) and this sense is useful for helping the mage to know when she is spied upon or just watched by a being currently lurking in refined dimensions.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage can detect the presence of minds within sensory range. Successes are used to pierce any supernatural occlusion a mind may possess. While the spell is in effect, it creates a "safety zone" around the mage into which no mind can enter without his knowledge.

**Mysterium Rote: Eye of the Mind**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy + Mind

Mages of the Mysterium use this rote to discern the presence of other thinking beings nearby. While skulking through ancient ruins, the revelation of thousands of insect minds nearby may indicate some sort of trap, while one vast and potent intelligence could mean an entirely different sort of guardian. Some Guardians of the Veil also make use of this magic, sensing for the presence of witnesses to the inexplicable, the better to act quickly and conceal any potential breaches of the veil.

### Third Eye (Mind ●)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). He senses when others nearby use exceptional mental powers, such as telepathy, psychom-

etry or ESP, reading the telltale ripples left by the movements of exceptionally advanced thought.

The mage can also read resonance, discerning the emotional and psychic qualities of it: the particular nuances of will, conscious or otherwise that went into creating it. He can feel the mental processes that went into creating the resonance (such as strong emotional states or a powerful exercise of will), effectively detecting its context within reality, the "why" behind the resonance.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 227-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with this spell.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Scales of Thought**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy + Mind

Perhaps one of the most useful senses for resonance available to the Guardians, this rote enables such willworkers to dissect thought processes and background reasons, thus bringing them closer to their quarry. Free Council mages enjoy the use of similar magic (Presence + Empathy +Mind), delving into the echoes of consciousness to better understand the underlying factors behind the changing face of magic.

## ●● Apprentice of Mind

**Speak to the hearts and minds of others. Control the thoughts and actions of the simple things of the earth: insects, reptiles and the like. Defend your consciousness, your secrets and even your physical form. These are the gifts to which you now open your eyes.**

### Alter Aura (Mind ●●)

The mage can alter his own aura. She can create the seeming of any mental or emotional state she wishes (she does not actually alter her emotional state, only its appearance in her aura). She cannot, however, alter her nature to appear to be something she is not (she can't take on the aura of a Sleeper or vampire).

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Aura Signifiers," p. 206. If cast conjunctionally with Prime 2, this spell can also alter the nature of the mage's aura as per the "Transform Aura" spell, p. 223.

This spell cannot be detected except by a "Third Eye" (p. 206) or "Supernal Vision" (p. 221) Mage Sight spell with a higher Potency. Even once this spell is detected, the true mental or emotional state of the mage can only be perceived by overcoming this spell's Potency with that of a spell designed to read an aura's mental state, such as "Aura Perception," p. 205, unless the altered aura is dispelled.

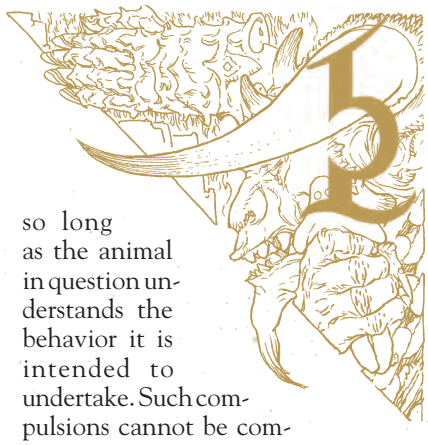
**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Donning the Inner Mask**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mind

Perhaps most commonly employed by Guardians to disguise their true intent, this rote nevertheless sees use for a wide variety of ends. Silver Ladder willworkers sometimes use a variant (Composure + Subterfuge + Mind) to conceal the truth of their feelings.

### Beast Control (Mind ●●)

The mage manipulates a simple mind (that of a reptile, insect, fish or invertebrate), imposing basic telepathic control on it. He can compel such a creature to act in ways he commands,



so long as the animal in question understands the behavior it is intended to undertake. Such compulsions cannot be completely inimical to the creature (like commanding ants to march into a fire or the average deep-sea fish to leap onto land). Otherwise, the mage has fairly complete command.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The animal can be commanded to perform one distinct task per success achieved. It might be something like "swim that way" or "stand still" or "eat that food." With two successes, it could be "find the rat and kill it," and with three successes a command could be "bite that guy, fetch the matchbook from his pocket and bring it to me." The task could involve a series of actions, as long as each is simple and direct.

The effect lasts until the tasks are complete or for one scene, whichever comes first.

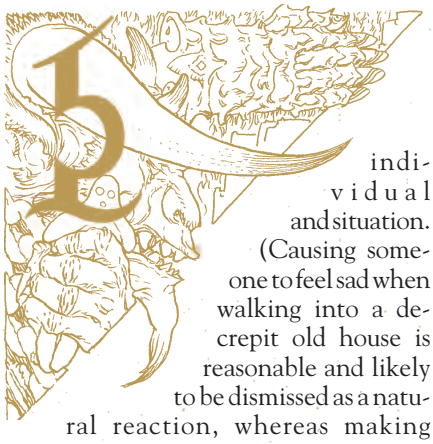
**Silver Ladder Rote: Usurping the Lesser Crown**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Animal Ken + Mind vs. Resolve

Some Ladder mages enjoy use of this rote as a means of keeping order in their homes. They drive out unwanted insects and other pests, and can even command dangerous lower creatures kept as pets or guardians (such as alligators or sharks). No order spurns so utilitarian a rote.

### Emotional Urging (Mind ●●)

The mage can project emotions. These feelings are more a suggestion than a mandate, though they are apt to be heeded if they make sense for the



individual and situation. (Causing someone to feel sad when walking into a decrepit old house is reasonable and likely to be dismissed as a natural reaction, whereas making someone feel sadistic glee at the funeral of a sibling almost certainly causes the subject to question from whence that emotion came).

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

If the target is a mage with at least Mind 1 he might have an inkling via his Unseen Senses (see p. 110) that he is manipulated. A reflexive Wits + Composure roll is made to sense the manipulation of his emotions. He can know nothing further unless he casts magic (such as "Third Eye," p. 206) to learn more. Most mages react by first erecting a "Mental Shield," below.

**Mysterium Rote: Sculpt the Heart**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Empathy + Mind vs. Composure + Gnosis

Blatant displays of power are not always necessary or even prudent. Mages of the Mysterium can often get by with nothing more than a subtle emotional suggestion. Guardians of the Veil also use such magics (Wits + Empathy + Mind) to carefully nudge the unknowing away from secrets they are not yet ready to glimpse.

### First Impressions (Mind ●●)

Sometimes you just get the feeling you know someone, can trust him or are meant to be his friend. A mage with this spell can generate that sensation, regardless of whether or not it is genuine. This sort of normally spontaneous connection can make a chosen person feel more at ease in the mage's presence and may help to lay the groundwork for a friendship, love affair or even just a con.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Each success adds one die to the dice pool of the *first* Social Attribute-based roll made for the mage in regard to an individual she meets for the first time. The result of that first impression tends to stick with the subject and color the rest of her interactions with the mage.

**Free Council Rote: A Face You Can Trust**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Socialize + Mind

It helps when you can back up charm with some substance, but charm alone can do the trick if it's possessed in abundance. Council mages make use of this rote to set the tone for interactions with others. Members of the Silver Ladder are also known to use the same magic, seeing nothing wrong in stacking the deck in their own favor.

### Incognito Presence (Mind ●●)

Despite the spell's name, the mage is not forgotten by those who witness her passing or otherwise interact with her. Rather, they sense nothing special about her and so are as apt to dismiss her presence as they are that of anyone else. On the street, they take no more notice of her than they would were she just a Sleeper, and are likely to forget ever having seen her soon thereafter.

**Practice:** Veiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Each success adds to the difficulty of noticing or remembering the mage. Note that any blatantly attention-grabbing actions automatically violate the subtle occlusion of the spell.

The spell affects anyone who witnesses the mage. It does not need special Target factors to affect more than one person. Those who possess some form of supernatural mental protection (such as a "Mental Shield," below) are subject to a reflexive contested Gnosis + Mind roll upon first encountering the caster. If the roll's successes equal or exceed the Incognito Presence spell's successes, the onlooker can remember the mage normally.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Forever Stranger**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Subterfuge + Mind

A Guardian employing this rote is a stranger everywhere she goes, unnoticed by all if she does nothing to draw attention to herself. Others go about their business, unconcerned at her passing.

### Memory Hole (Mind ●●)

By compartmentalizing his mind, the mage can make it so that even he does not remember certain thoughts hidden within his mind (whether temporarily or permanently), allowing for convincing lies to even a polygraph or telepathic scan.

**Practice:** Veiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage partitions parts of his consciousness off, subtracting one die per success from others' dice pools for rolls undertaken to detect specific lies he might tell. In other words, he could choose to hide the fact that he killed a member of his cabal by obfuscating his memory of the event, but couldn't conceal every truth he knows at one time.

**Free Council Rote: Bastion of Thought**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Mind

Advancing the science of magic is not always honest work. Members of the Free Council use this rote to conceal the unsavory business in which they must occasionally indulge.

### Mental Shield (Mind ●●)

The mage can erect a mental shield to protect himself. He can defend his thoughts, shielding them against the notice of others. This may mean concealing his mind from any kind of detection, blatantly preventing others from reading any of his thoughts or just concealing particular thoughts.

**Practice:** Shielding

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage subtracts one die per dot he possesses in the Mind Arcanum from spells or supernatural powers that attempt to mentally control, detect or influence him. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

In addition, the Mental Shield helps its caster see through mental illusions such as "Misperception" (p. 211) or "Imposter" (below). Upon first encountering such a spell, the user can see through the illusion with reflexive and contested Gnosis + Mind roll.

This spell can be cast at any point in a turn, even if the caster's Initiative would have him act later than an attacker. In this way, it is similar to a dodge action (see p. 156 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Steel Trap**

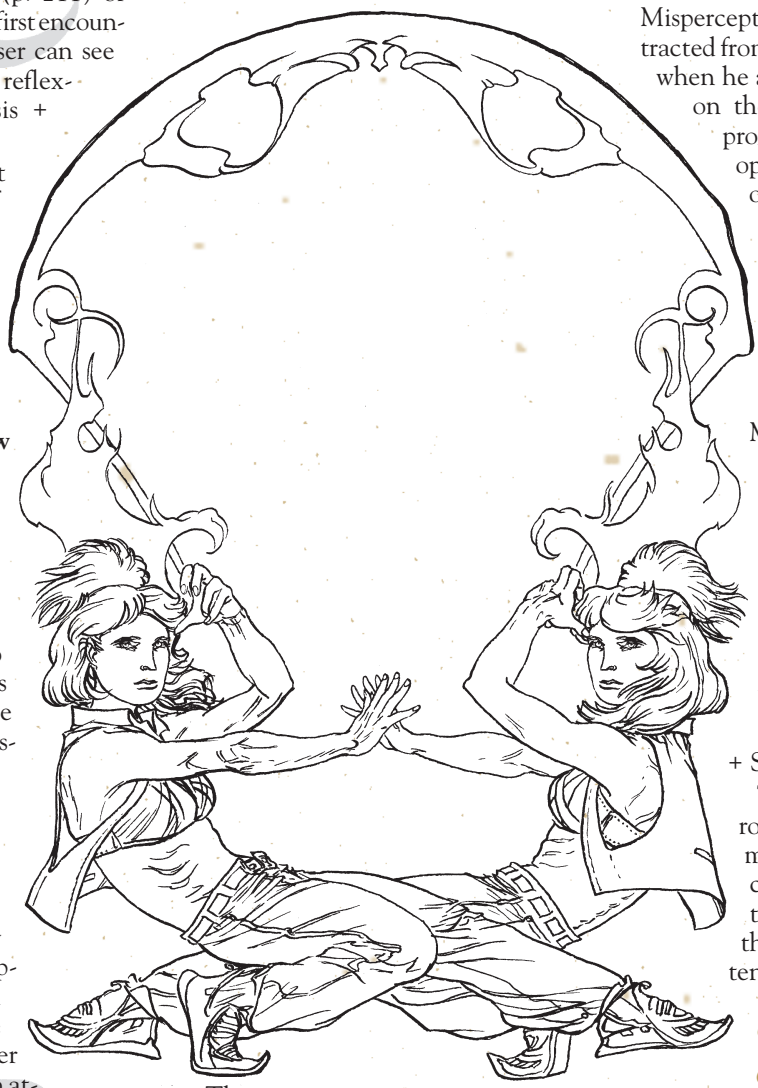
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Mind

Adamantine Arrow mages like the psychic bulwark such magic provides. Silver Ladder mages also value this rote, as it assures them that no rival gets the better of them through mystic means.

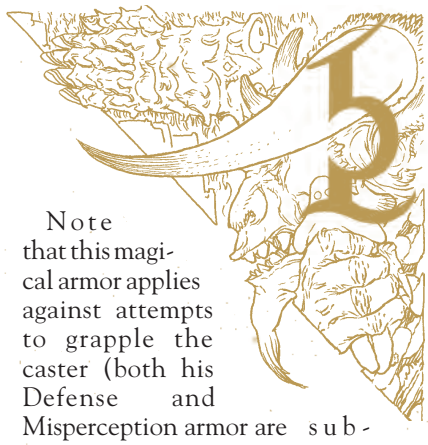
### *Misperception (Mind ●●)*

The willworker can protect herself from harm by manipulating the perceptions of others and convincing them that she is slightly displaced from her actual location, causing an attacker to momentarily believe that the mage is a half-step to the left, for example. Alternately, the caster might project subtle but persistent suggestions, compelling enemies to hesitate at critical moments and turn blows astray. A fatal shot to the chest could be turned into a graze, or a crippling blow to the leg might be reduced to a painful strike that leaves the leg functional. Such magic is of no help in dealing with attacks that cover a wide area (such as explosives) or those that don't depend on the mage being exactly where she appears to be (like a fall from a high ledge).

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None



The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Mind Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.



Note that this magical armor applies against attempts to grapple the caster (both his Defense and Misperception armor are subtracted from the grappler's dice pool when he attempts to achieve a hold on the mage), but it does not protect against attempts by an opponent to overpower and/or inflict damage once he has managed to gain a hold on the mage.

The drawback of this spell is that an attacker protected by a "Mental Shield" spell (p. 208) might see through Misperception's illusions with a reflexive and contested Gnosis + Mind roll. If the roll's successes equal or exceed the Misperception spell's successes, the attacker ignores Misperception's armor.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Whispering Shield**

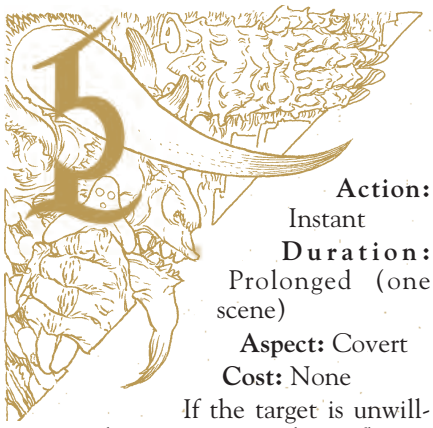
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Stealth + Mind

This rote protects an Arrow mage with a collage of minor hallucinations and compulsions. Would-be attackers become uncertain of their senses or even their intentions.

### *Opening the Lidless Eye (Mind ●●)*

As the Mind 1 "Third Eye" spell, p. 206, except that the mage casts this upon another mage or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling



**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may resist with a reflexive and contested Resolve + Gnosis roll.

**Silver Ladder Rote: See With My Eyes**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Mind

It can be difficult to inspire others to follow one's plan if they lack an understanding of its details. Mages of the Silver Ladder use this rote to reveal the nuances of a situation to others, enabling subjects to comprehend why the mages' designs are ultimately for the best. Guardians of the Veil open others to the sorcerers' exceptional senses (Wits + Persuasion + Mind) so that all might act in concert to defend the sanctity of the Mysteries.

### Voice from Afar (Mind ●●)

The mage can employ limited telepathic projection. This mental communication carries no supernatural compulsion with it and a recipient knows that he does not think the thoughts for himself, unless he is mentally disturbed or inclined to believe that he might hear voices. Such communication may serve as the carrier of an empathic projection (see "Emotional Urging," p. 207).

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resolve
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage can project one word per success.

If the target is aware and willing, his Resolve is not subtracted from the caster's dice pool.

**Mysterium Rote: Words on the Wind**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Expression + Mind – Resolve

There are times when mundane communication is inconvenient or even dangerous, but members of the Mysterium must get word to their comrades, whether it's "Help!" or "Duck!" Likewise, a psychic statement of "It's here" may bring about the conclusion of months of research and questing. In combat, Arrow mages are known to use variant magics (Presence + Expression + Mind) to communicate.

## ●●● Disciple of Mind

Relinquish yourself and enter into deeper consciousness. Listen to the thoughts of another and hear the truth of her words, no matter what tongue she speaks. Protect her consciousness from harm or detection, or harm her by striking at her psychic presence. Fortify your own thoughts and capabilities. Divide your mind yet further without losing focus or clarity. Be the master of your own imaginings, whether sleeping or wakeful.

### Augment the Mind (Mind ●●●)

The mage can raise one of his Mental or Social Attributes.

**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

A single Mental or Social Attribute may be raised by one dot per success, up to a maximum of the caster's Mind Arcanum dots. For example, if a mage has Intelligence 3 and Mind 3 and three successes are achieved on this spell to boost his Intelligence, that trait becomes six dots for the spell's Duration. If four successes were rolled, he could still only boost Intelligence by three dots, since he has only Mind 3.

Raising Resolve and/or Composure also raises Willpower *dots*, but these extra dots do not provide Willpower *points*. The boost raises a target's Willpower *capacity* but not her actual *supply* of points. In addition, the target's Willpower cannot exceed 10 dots, no matter how high his Resolve and/or Composure is boosted with this spell.

***Example:*** *Arethusa uses Augment the Mind to boost her Resolve. She gets two successes on the casting, adding two dots to her Resolve. This also adds two dots to her Willpower. She does not, however, gain two extra Willpower points.*

Note that the same spell cast to boost a different Mental or Social Attribute does not combine with the first spell — only the highest Potency spell takes effect. For example, if a mage boosts his Intelligence by two dots and then casts a spell boosting his Wits by one dot, only the first spell applies, since it has the higher Potency. (With the Mind 4 "Supreme Augmentation" spell, the mage can allocate successes among different Mental and Social Attributes.)

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Illuminating the Inner Temple**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Academics + Mind

Guardians are called upon to be brilliant, forceful and persuasive. Such acumen in all fields is not often found within a single individual. Indeed, Guardians must occasionally be far *more* brilliant, forceful or persuasive than any normal human being could possibly be. This rote enables such willworkers to become veritable Einsteins, rivaling the genius of even the most renowned intellect.

### Aura Cloak (Mind ●●●)

The mage alters another person's aura as he does for himself with "Alter Aura," p. 207. He does not actually alter the person's emotional state, only its aura appearance.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The target can choose to contest the spell with a reflexive Composure + Gnosis roll.

**Mysterium Rote: Gift of Masks**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mind

It is well and good to conceal one's own emotional state, but an elaborate ruse can fall apart entirely if even one conspirator betrays her true feelings. For just such circumstances, Mysterium willworkers use this rote to conceal the auras of their companions. Conversely, Guardians of the Veil use the rote to alter the aura of another so as to create false trails leading away from the Mysteries.

### Greater Beast Control (Mind ●●●)

The mage can manipulate a median mind (anything up to, but not including, primates, cetaceans and cephalopods). He can exert control over most animal life, compelling such creatures to perform actions according to his desires so long as they are not completely inimical to such actions.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

This spell works the same as "Beast Control," p. 207, except that median minds can be commanded.

The effect lasts until the tasks are completed or for one scene, whichever comes first.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: The Way of Fang and Claw**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Animal Ken + Mind vs. Resolve

Human allies, whether Awakened or otherwise, can be reliable, but they are sometimes insufficient to a task. A rat can scamper between the walls of a house much more easily than any person, and rare indeed is the human being capable of eliciting the same sort of response from others as a full-grown charging grizzly bear. Mages of the Silver Ladder use the same magic to control the actions of both treasured pets and less valued animal servants.

### Imposter (Mind ●●●)

The mage can cloud another's perceptions to make him think the caster is someone else. The mage's false image can mimic an actual person or a fictional persona she creates for herself.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success makes the false image seem true to one sense: sight, sound, touch, etc. For example, with one success the mage might make the target believe she looks like a different woman (or man), while with two she can make her voice sound completely different.

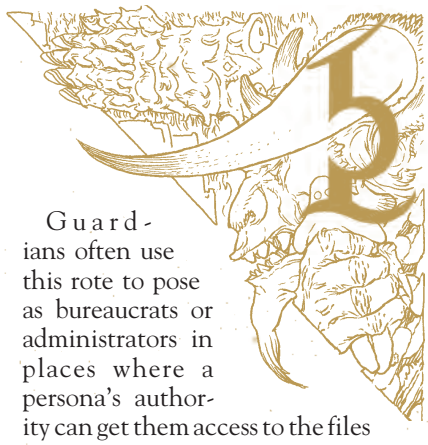
Occasional Manipulation + Expression or Subterfuge rolls may need to be made for the mage to convincingly act like someone she's not. If such a roll fails or the target becomes suspicious (through the mage committing an obvious faux pas, perhaps), a reflexive Intelligence + Investigation roll can be made for the onlooker to realize that something fishy is going on.

Note that this spell cannot emulate the rules benefits of the Striking Looks Merit. The caster can make herself look exactly like someone with that Merit, but unless she uses another Mind spell to gain Social-roll bonuses, she lacks the mimicked person's *joi de vivre*.

A target who possess some form of supernatural mental protection (such as "Mental Shield," p. 208) is subject to a reflexive and contested Gnosis + Mind roll upon first encountering the caster. If the roll's successes equal or exceed the imposter's casting successes, the witness knows the caster is a fraud.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Mask of Conformity**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Mind vs. Composure + Gnosis



Guardians often use this rote to pose as bureaucrats or administrators in places where a persona's authority can get them access to the files or data they seek.

### Mental Wall (Mind ●●●)

The mage erects a mental shield on another person, as with "Mental Shield," p. 208.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Extending the Wall of Thought**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult + Mind

Guardians' companions must sometimes be protected from deleterious influences, and Sleepers (or others meant to remain ignorant of the Awakened world) can occasionally be kept in the dark with nothing more than a simple ward to put alien influences out of their minds.

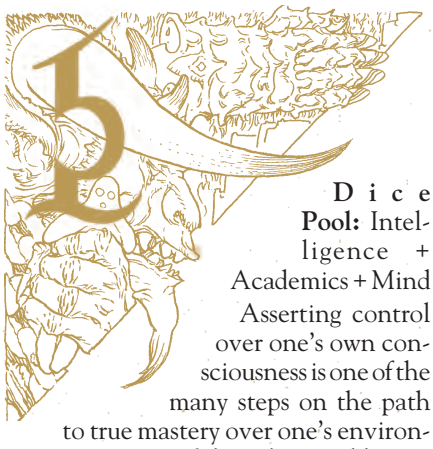
### Multi-Tasking (Mind ●●●)

The mage performs complex multitasking.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage can perform three mental extended actions or two mental instant actions simultaneously. Note, however, that none of these can be spellcasting, which is more than just an exercise of consciousness. See also the Mind 1 "One Mind, Two Thoughts" spell, p. 206.

**Silver Ladder Rote: One Mouth, Many Voices**



**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics + Mind

Asserting control over one's own consciousness is one of the many steps on the path to true mastery over one's environment. Mages of the Silver Ladder use this rote to encompass numerous trains of thought at once, outthinking less gifted individuals and holding their own against many quick-thinking rivals. Guardians of the Veil also favor this rote, as it allows them to better analyze difficult situations before they turn to disasters, or to salvage disasters.

### Psychic Assault (Mind ●●●)

The mage can perform a crude psychic assault, causing psychic trauma that translates into damage on a victim's body as neurons misfire and muscles spasm damagingly.

**Practice:** Fraying

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resolve

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Successes inflict bashing damage on a one-for-one basis.

This spell also affects vampires, even though their brains might not function in the same manner as living creatures'; their minds are still susceptible to the Mind Arcanum.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Psyche's Dart**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Intimidation + Mind – Resolve

There are those who think the Adamantine Arrow is nothing more than a gang of thugs who brandish vulgar magic in the name of peace. Most mages of that order are content to allow detractors such illusions, keeping their silence about rotes such as this one. Often dismissed as a seizure or other neurological ailment, this magic constitutes a potent weapon in the Arrow arsenal. In fact, it is so effective and discrete that it is used, in one form or another, by most mages sufficiently skilled in the Mind Arcanum.

### Sleep of the Just (Mind ●●●)

The mage can control her sleep cycle and dreams. She can cast spells to regulate her sleep cycle, sleeping as much or as little as she desires (though deleterious physical consequences can set in if the willworker sleeps too much or too little, unless Life Arcanum magic is used to compensate for radically altered patterns). The mage also controls when and about what she dreams.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Special

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

For each success on this spell, the mage automatically succeeds with a single roll to remain awake after 24 hours of no sleep (that is, the roll need not even be made; she stays awake). See the rules for "Fatigue," pp. 179-180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. She still suffers the dice penalties for impaired performance with each six-hour period. In addition, each spellcasting success also extends by one the maximum number of days the mage can potentially stay awake before passing out.

The mage could instead choose to remain asleep for a long time, for up to 24 hours per success.

During sleep, she can control the content of her dreams. Each success allows for a single mental-action task roll, whether for an instant or extended action, as long as she remains asleep. She could, for example, write a speech, poem or song, or puzzle through an enigma or riddle as if awake. In the case of extended-action tasks, she retains any accumulated successes upon waking and can continue the task while awake or wait until she sleeps again (assuming she casts this spell again before she next sleeps). Any supernatural attempts to intrude into her dreams or to force her to dream of certain things (such as with the "Dream Traveler" spell, p. 214) must contend with this spell's Potency.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Sands of Morpheus**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Mind

A leader's work is never truly done. A Silver Ladder willworker can use this rote to work through his plans even while he sleeps, creating vivid and realistic scenarios in his dreams, preparing for the difficulties of his ascent through the ranks of the Awakened. Free Council mages also make use of such magic, using lucid dreaming and regimented control of sleep patterns to ponder the difficulties of their waking lives.

### Telepathy (Mind ●●●)

This spell enables the mage to make direct mind-to-mind contact with another sentient being (usually but not always a human), and to converse, share thoughts, images and emotions in a medium free of the awkward constraints of physical communication. With some creatures (goats or exceedingly alien spirits, for example) this is largely an exercise in futility and frustration for anything more complicated than the most basic of concepts. Ideas, images and words can all be shared freely between the mage and another individual.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The target cannot be compelled to act in any particular way, although the mage could use the telepathic link to try to socially persuade him (or to use other spells that do allow for psychic command). Only conscious thoughts are gleaned at this level. It requires Mind 4 to read someone's subconscious thoughts.

The Duration at this level is transitory. Additional successes extend that time:

| Successes | Duration |
|---|---|
| 2 successes | Two turns |
| 3 successes | Three turns |
| 4 successes | Four turns |
| 5 successes | Five turns |

With Mind 4, the mage can cast this spell with a prolonged Duration. With Mind 5, he can use advanced prolonged Duration factors.

Those with telepathic abilities (whether bestowed by this Arcanum or by some other source) may sense the mind-to-mind contact initiated in their vicinity (if successes on an instant Wits + Occult roll exceed this spell's Potency). Such an observer may attempt to "barge" into the contact (if the newcomer also has Mind 3), which requires a contested Resolve + Composure roll against the casting mage's Potency on the spell.

More minds can be contacted by adding Target factors to the casting, but those minds have only two-way communication with the caster. The willworker does not serve as a "psychic switchboard." With Mind 5, multiple minds can be "networked." This web can be intruded or spied upon in the same manner as ordinary one-on-one telepathy by those with the means.

Contacting a Sleeper with this spell causes Disbelief.

**Free Council Rote: Psychic Communion**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy + Mind vs. Resolve + Gnosis

Telepathy and other "psychic" phenomena are staples of modern occult lore. Mages of the Free Council capitalize upon these ideas through use of rotes such as this one.

### Universal Language (Mind ●●●)

The mage can translate any idea into or out of any language based upon root concepts. This spell works for spoken words, written words, encoded signals and concepts that exist only as thought. The mage must be able to perceive the medium in which the idea exists (meaning telepathy for thoughts in another's mind, for example) and may be limited in his ability to express a concept he can translate (like trying to tell something to a hyper-intelligent insectoid life form while lacking the appropriate mouth parts to speak its language).

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The obscurity of the language, or sheer alien-ness of the concepts might levy dice penalties from –1 to –3.

**Mysterium Rote: Bricks of Babel**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics + Mind

Mages of the Mysterium reduce all languages to their root concepts, ideals potentially shared by all forms of communication, in all times, in all places, and indeed among all forms of consciousness. In so doing, they decipher long-dead tongues, converse with beings that have never before set eyes on a human, and never need to ask someone to translate a road sign in a foreign country. Calling upon the Universal Unconscious, Free Council willworkers make use of the same rote, delving into ideas shared by all minds.

### Augment Other Minds (Life ●●●●)

The mage can raise one of another human being's Mental or Social Attributes, as per the Mind 3 "Augment the Mind" spell, p. 210.

**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target can choose to contest the spell with a reflexive Resolve + Gnosis roll.

With Mind 5, the caster can allocate successes between different Mental and Social Attributes as a mage can do for himself with the Mind 4 "Supreme Augmentation" spell, p. 216.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Perfect Poise**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Persuasion + Mind

The Silver Ladder likes its servants and bodyguards to perform at peak potential, whether to perceive enemy incursions (Wits) or to scare off potential troublemakers (Presence).

### Befuddle (Mind ●●●●)

The mage can lower another's Mental or Social Attributes.

**Practice:** Unraveling



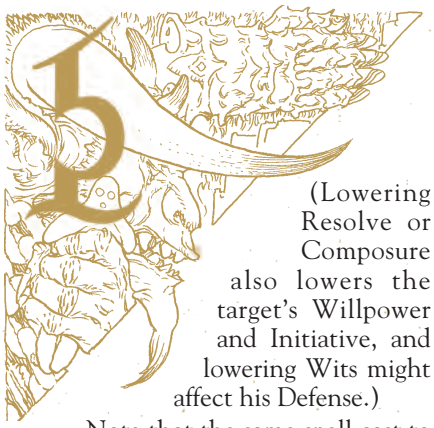
### ●●●● Adept of Mind

You are now a conduit between the Self and the Other and are able to traverse the threads that bind all minds. Memories, dreams, conscious thoughts and volition are real to you and can be touched and controlled. You may confound the senses of others, and where you once could batter thoughts, you can now turn the mind against the body, destroying instead of merely harming.

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Composure
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must first grab hold of or touch the target with a Strength or Dexterity + Brawl – the target's Defense. If that's successful, he can cast this spell as an instant action in the following turn. (With Mind 5, he can cast this spell at sensory range as an instant action. He needs Mind 6 before he can add Space 2 for a sympathetic casting.)

Each success subtracts one dot from one of the target's Mental or Social Attributes, down to a minimum of 1. The maximum amount by which an Attribute can be lowered is equal to the mage's dots in the Mind Arcanum.



(Lowering Resolve or Composure also lowers the target's Willpower and Initiative, and lowering Wits might affect his Defense.)

Note that the same spell cast to lower a different Mental or Social Attribute does not combine with the first spell — only the highest Potency spell takes effect. For example, if a mage lowers a target's Intelligence by two dots and then casts a spell lowering the victim's Wits by one dot, only the first spell takes effect since it has the higher Potency.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Belittle the Brain**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Mind

The mages of the Silver Ladder often know how to degrade the reasoning abilities or social grace of debating rivals, reducing them to confused and stammering fools.

### Breach the Vault of Memory (Mind ●●●●)

This spell gives the willworker power over that which helps define a person: memory. The mage can add to, modify or delete a subject's memories in whatever way he sees fit. (It helps but is not necessary to cast "Read the Depths," p. 215, first.) An individual could be made to forget where she parked her car, the fact that she likes strawberry ice cream, or even why she wears a wedding band. Naturally, short-term and less deeply ingrained memories are easier to manipulate than those that are long term or more fundamental to a person's identity, but just about any memory can be sculpted according a mage's desires.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage might suffer a penalty, depending on how deep the memory to be altered lies.

| Penalty | Memory |
|---|---|
| None | The willworker can manipulate, destroy or create a trivial memory (causing the subject to forget where she left her lunch money or making her believe that a man in a garish hat walked by her office window earlier). |
| –1 | Deep-seated but not life-affirming memories (such as making the subject's favorite color red instead of green, causing her to forget ever having gone to a favorite restaurant, or making her believe that there has been a shy-but-friendly kid named Roger working in the mailroom for the past year). |
| –3 | Shape memories on a life-altering level (causing the subject to forget that she has a 10-year-old child, making her believe that she was paralyzed from the neck down until she was 17, or implanting memories of having spent two years wandering the American southwest with Jesus Christ). |
| –5 | Almost completely eradicate a person's memories and redefine that individual on all but the most fundamental levels (making someone forget everything she ever learned about communicating with others or making her believe she is Joan of Arc). |

Once the spell expires, the memories return. During the spell's Duration, psychotherapy and hypnosis might be able to restore the victim's memories. Each success on the spellcasting roll levies a –1 dice penalty on any attempt to restore the subject's memory to normal (or to otherwise influence an implanted or altered memory).

A subject cannot be made to forget that she is Awakened (or is otherwise a supernatural being of some sort) or how to use her paranormal abilities. That part of her identity is too deeply bound into the mind and soul alike to be tampered with. Virtue and Vice may not be changed at this level. They are facets of who a person is, rather than just a product of her memories (see "Psychic Reprogramming," p. 218).

If a target is a mage with at least Mind 1, he might have an inkling via his Unseen Senses (see p. 110) that he is attacked mentally. A reflexive Wits + Composure roll allows him to sense attempts to alter his memories. He can know nothing about the intrusion unless he casts magic (such as "Third Eye," p. 206) to learn more. Most mages react by first erecting a "Mental Shield," p. 208.

This presence of this spell on a target cannot be detected unless its Potency is overcome by a "Third Eye" spell, p. 206.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Reshaping Yesterday**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mind vs. Resolve + Gnosis

If at all possible, most Guardians prefer not to cause harm in the course of their work. This rote enables such mages to alter the memories of those who have seen what they ought not. Silver Ladder willworkers also use this rote, creating friendships and enmities where none existed before, winning lifetimes worth of trust in a matter of hours, and forging loyal servants out of bitter foes.

### Dream Traveler (Mind ●●●●)

The mage can psychically enter the dreams of another. This spell is much the same as "Psychic Projection," p. 215, save that the willworker enters the dreams of a sleeping individual. The mage can use Mind spells while within those dreams to alter the subject's "psychic landscape," controlling the complexion of dreams with as much or as little precision as she wishes.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

If the mage wishes, she may link her dreams to those of others (by adding extra Target factors to the casting), enabling all to share a common dream.

**Mysterium Rote: Morpheus' Road**
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Mind vs. Composure + Gnosis

Mages of the Mysterium use this rote to delve into the secrets of the inner universe, seeking answers within the thoughts and dreams of others. Such a willworker could seek the source of a psychosis, help an individual to combat her nightmares, or even just use one person's dreams as a convenient meeting place for a cabal. Guardians of the Veil are also known to use this rote, carefully sculpting the dreams of those who grow too close to the Mysteries and encouraging them to seek their answers upon false trails, or to abandon such quests entirely.

### Hallucination (Mind ●●●●)

The mage creates false sensory input — a sensory hallucination.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

This hallucination affects one of the target's five senses, plus one additional sense per extra success. The hallucination can be anything the mage can conceive of that could reasonably be experienced through the five senses: A woman in a white dress walking by and whistling, an inexplicable foul smell and bad taste or even physical pain. In the case of tactile sensations intended to hinder or incapacitate, such as a hallucination of a guard who grabs the target by the shoulder to prevent him from entering a room, the dice pool for the image's "physical" action is equal to the caster's Gnosis. Of course, the hallucination doesn't actually grab the target through physical means. It is merely a convincing illusion, such that the target is fooled into thinking that the guard touches and hinders him.

The caster must either give the illusion a specific "programmed" action, or maintain concentration per turn, directing the illusion to do whatever he wants it to. The programmed action must be very simple, such as a person walking one way down a street and ignoring others. An implausible action on the part of a hallucination might allow a target a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll to realize that his senses lie to him.

**Free Council Rote: Induced Delusion**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Mind vs. Resolve + Gnosis

Council willworkers use this rote to misdirect those who mean them harm, or who could benefit from a humbling lesson. Some use this rote as a means to lead an individual into insanity, or away from the Lie and toward the Awakening. Of course, Guardians of the Veil also use a variant of this rote (Wits + Subterfuge + Mind) to protect the Mysteries from compromise.

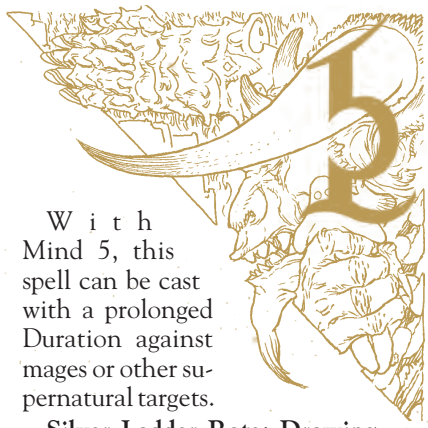
### Read the Depths (Mind ●●●●)

The mage can telepathically enter a subject's subconscious. This includes the ability to read an individual's memories as opposed to just his surface thoughts.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (vs. Sleepers) or transitory (vs. mages and other supernatural targets)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Particularly remote or traumatic memories (such as an instance of child abuse) might levy penalties to access (perhaps –3 for the child abuse). The ability to enter a subject's subconscious allows the mage to divine that individual's Virtue and Vice, among other things.

If the target is a mage with at least Mind 1, he might have an idea via his Unseen Senses (see p. 110) that he is being "read." A reflexive Wits + Composure roll is made to sense intrusion into his subconscious. He can know nothing about the intrusion unless he casts magic (such as "Third Eye," p. 206) to learn more. Most mages react by first erecting a "Mental Shield," p. 208.



With Mind 5, this spell can be cast with a prolonged Duration against mages or other supernatural targets.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Drawing Aside the Inmost Veil**
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Empathy + Mind vs. Composure + Gnosis

By delving into the hidden memories of others, a Ladder willworker can determine how best to exert her will over them. Some people can be manipulated through their altruism, others through their greed. Mages of all orders recognize the usefulness of this rote, so all with the means are known to employ it.

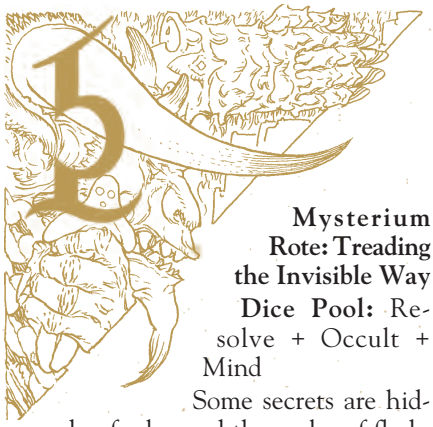
### Psychic Projection (Mind ●●●●)

The mage can project his mind into the state of Twilight. This mental form has no Corpus or ephemeral body, just an intangible, semi-transparent image that can be affected only by mind-affecting powers. Likewise, the mentally projecting mage cannot affect creatures or things physically except through magic.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

During the time he is mentally projected, the mage's body is alive but comatose. He has no way of knowing his body's current state of health or any other information about it unless he uses other magic. Should the mage's body die while psychically projected, he most likely becomes a ghost and moves to an appropriate anchor. (See "Ghosts," pp. 208-216 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

While the caster is projected his soul continues to reside within his body, as well as in his distant consciousness, serving as a conduit between the two.



**Mysterium Rote: Treading the Invisible Way**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Mind

Some secrets are hidden far beyond the realm of flesh, and mages of the Mysterium go where they must to seek them out. By entering the state of Twilight, they wander amongst fleshless entities and spy upon others without heeding physical obstructions like walls.

### Psychic Sword (Mind ●●●●)

The mage performs a greater psychic assault.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resolve

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Successes inflict lethal damage on a one-for-one basis.

With Mind 5, one Mana can be spent to make the damage aggravated. Such a neuron-frying assault exceeds any known scale for headache pain.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Unseen Blade**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Mind – Resolve

Guardians use this rote to preserve the integrity of the hidden world, causing those who delve too deeply into secrets they were not meant to know to fall dead by unknown causes. Adamantine Arrow mages use similar magic (Strength + Intimidation + Mind) to strike down their enemies subtly.

### Supreme Augmentation (Mind ●●●●)

The mage can raise more than one of his Mental and Social Attributes.

**Practice:** Perfecting

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

As per the Mind 3 "Augment the Mind" spell, p. 210, but successes can now be allocated among the mage's Mental and Social Attributes in any combination. The total that each Attribute can be boosted is limited by the mage's total Mind dots.

**Mysterium Rote: Acquired Genius**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Academics + Life

Mages of the Mysterium know that they must sometimes be everything to everybody — or at least pretend to be that good. This rote allows them to back up such claims.

### Telepathic Control (Mind ●●●●)

The mage exerts telepathic control over humans and other higher minds. At this level, subjects cannot be compelled to undertake actions inimical to their nature (so most people could not be made to undertake blatantly suicidal actions, for example).

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (vs. Sleepers) or transitory (vs. mages or other supernatural targets)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Additional targets can be added by increasing Target factors. All affected minds must be controlled in precisely the same way. In other words, the mage could command all affected subjects to protect her or dig a hole, but with a single spell could not make one person wash dishes, another make dinner and a third clean the bathroom.

If the caster tries to command the target to put himself in a dangerous situation, a fresh reflexive and contested roll is made for the victim to ignore the command (the new roll's successes must exceed the spell's).

With Mind 5, this spell can be cast with a prolonged Duration against mages or other supernatural targets. (Or the mage could cast the more powerful "Psychic Domination" spell, p. 217, instead.)

**Silver Ladder Rote: Crown of Kings**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Mind vs. Resolve + Gnosis

This rote is not used lightly by any save the most callous (and foolish) willworker of the Silver Ladder, as its abuse can easily lead one far from the path of Wisdom. Members of all orders find some use for such magics on occasion.



### ●●●●● Master of Mind

**Wander out, through the mind, into the Realms Invisible. Forge a psyche from out of nothingness and alter any aspect of consciousness you desire. Walk for a time in the flesh of another. Manipulate the substance of the immaterial world and compel obedience in any task from any mind. These are the powers of the master, the powers that now belong to you.**





### Network (Mind ●●●●●)

Whereas with "Telepathy," p. 212, the willworker could contact other individual minds telepathically, she can now connect multiple minds, creating a network.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The number of successes determines how many targets can be networked simultaneously with a single casting.

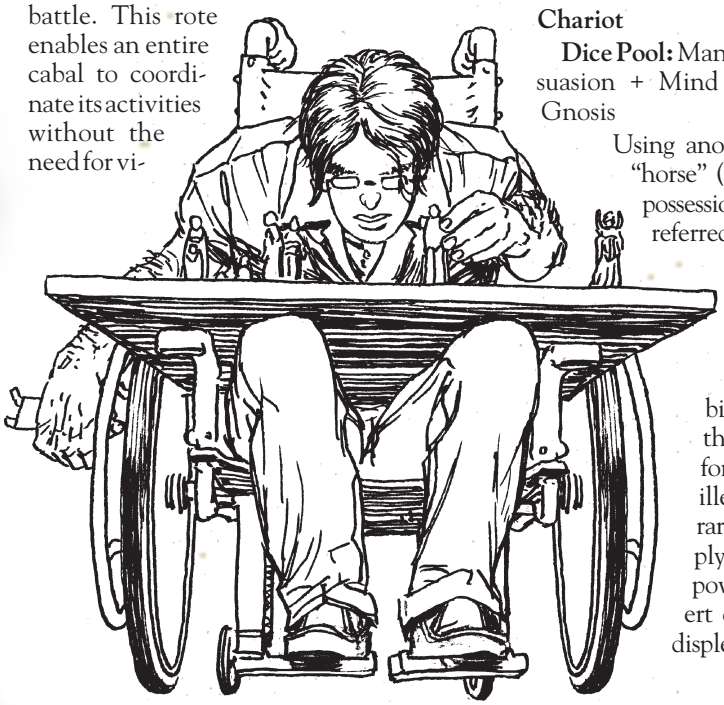
| Successes | Targets |
|---|---|
| 1 success | Two |
| 2 successes | Four |
| 3 successes | Eight |
| 4 successes | 16 |
| 5 successes | 32 |

Targets can choose to contest the spell with a reflexive Resolve + Gnosis roll each.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Tactical Coordination**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Empathy + Mind

Arrow mages capable of assembling the equivalent of a "psychic switchboard" are valued by members of the order as assets in battle. This rote enables an entire cabal to coordinate its activities without the need for visual contact or even a spoken word.





### Possession (Mind ●●●●●)

The mage can psychically possess another.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (vs. Sleepers) or transitory (vs. mages and other supernatural targets)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The caster's body becomes comatose as under the description of "Psychic Projection," p. 215 (although the mage can simply check in on his body if close by). While possessing another, the mage uses the Physical Attributes of his host, as well as any Merits or Flaws tied up in that individual's physical or social identity, but otherwise retains all of his own qualities. The willworker may choose to utterly suppress the host's consciousness or may keep it active as an impotent spectator.

If the possessor tries to put the host in harm's way, a fresh reflexive and contested roll is made for the victim to break the possession (the new roll's successes must exceed the spell's).

**Silver Ladder Rote: Driving the Chariot**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Mind vs. Resolve + Gnosis

Using another being as a "horse" (as the host of a possession is occasionally referred to), the Ladder willworker assumes that creature's identity and physical capabilities. Some use this magic to perform dangerous or illegal acts, while a rare few do so simply to illustrate the power they can exert over those who displease them.



### Psychic Domination (Mind ●●●●●)

The willworker can utterly dominate the mind of another thinking being, subjugating the entity's survival instincts or most deep-seated moral convictions. He could issue a suicidal command and compel another to heed it or force her to do something she considers absolutely abhorrent. This is exactly the same as manipulating a mind or telepathically controlling it, save that there is literally no limit to the sorts of thoughts and behaviors the willworker can force upon a subject.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

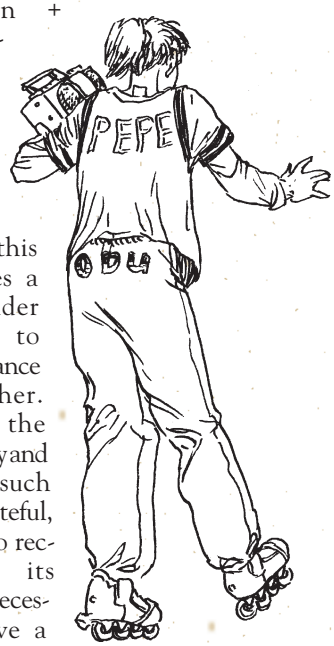
**Duration:** Prolonged (vs. Sleepers) or transitory (vs. mages or other supernatural targets)

**Aspect:** Covert

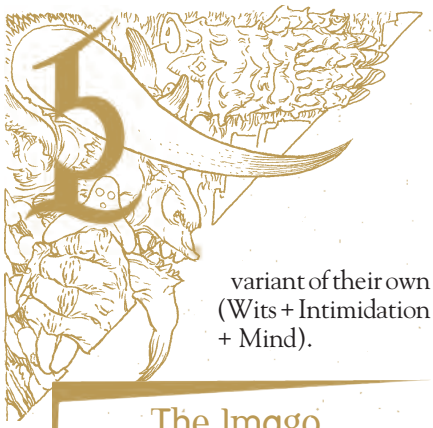
**Cost:** None

**Silver Ladder Rote: Your Will Is Mine**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Mind vs. Resolve + Gnosis




The ultimate act of mental influence, this rote enables a Silver Ladder willworker to force compliance in another. Mages of the Mysterium by and large find such magic distasteful, but they also recognize its occasional necessity, so have a



variant of their own (Wits + Intimidation + Mind).

## The Imago and the Mind

Every spell involves an Imago, an image in the caster's mind of what the spell will be. (See "Imago," p. 111.) Without an Imago, a spell cannot be envisioned. The Imago is not just a mental process or image; it is a production of the Awakened soul, an imagination that reaches to a higher world. Mind 5 is not enough to affect a mage's ability to form an Imago, although Telepathic Control (p. 216) and Psychic Domination can certainly be used to control what sorts of actions a mage will take (including whether he will or will not cast a spell).

### Psychic Genesis (Mind ●●●●●)

The mage can create a consciousness. He could generate a self-aware intelligence with a Twilight presence, possibly investing it into a physical shell. The caster could therefore create, say, a sentient computer or something similar. He could put the mind in a form incapable of anything other than telepathic interaction, but such is exceedingly cruel and almost always leads to the creation's insanity, unless the consciousness is frequently interacted with or created without a need or desire for contact.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

A simple success creates a bodiless, Twilight consciousness (as in "Psychic Projection," p. 215) with the following traits: Intelligence 1, Wits 1, Resolve 1, Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 1, Virtue and Vice. Additional successes are allocated to increase the mind's Mental and Social Attributes on a one-for-one basis. In addition, successes can be allocated to certain Mental or Social Skills, such as Academics or Empathy, to give the consciousness a knowledge base or some facility for interacting with others. The mind has as much of its creator's basic personality and memories as the caster wants it to have (although its ability to reason using those memories or even recall them when needed is based on its assigned Intelligence).

By adding other appropriate Arcana to this spell, such a mind could be tethered to a vessel made specifically to hold it (such as a body created with Life 5).

Note that at this level of mastery, this spell cannot be given an indefinite Duration (i.e., the mind cannot have a "natural" life span of human years). The consciousness dissolves when the spell expires. Unless the creation is specifically designed to accept the inevitability of its own dissolution without emotional trauma, a Wisdom degeneration roll may be required for the creator (unless he has Wisdom 2 or lower). The mage could, however, recast the spell before the previous one expires, giving the mind a new Duration. Note that such extension is an exception to the normal rules for spell control. The created mind is allowed to persist over a series of castings, as long as the previous casting does not expire before a successive spell is cast.

**Free Council Rote: Artificial Intelligence**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Empathy + Mind

Using innovative means, the willworkers of the Free Council use this very ancient art. Some powerful mages give consciousness to mystically fabricated servants, while others bestow such a gift upon a particularly advanced computer. Guardians of the Veil occasionally use a similar procedure to add a new consciousness into the blank mind of a dangerously intrusive Sleeper whose entire psyche has been erased through unfortunate circumstances, allowing the individual to carry on as normal, very nearly the person she once was.

### Psychic Reprogramming (Mind ●●●●●)

The mage can perform psychic reprogramming.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Lasting (vs. Sleepers) or prolonged (vs. mages and other supernatural targets)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

A subject's Virtue and/or Vice may be changed (each requires a target number equal to the subject's Composure), and other parts of the subject's fundamental psychic makeup can be altered or even deleted. Each success can affect a single aspect of the subject's fundamental psychic makeup, such as turning a friendship into a rivalry, making the target fall out of (or into) love, or making him follow a new career calling.

Although this spell's effect is lasting against Sleepers, it can be dispelled (using Prime 1 "Dispel Magic," p. 220, Prime 4 "Supernal Dispellation," p. 229, or Death 5 "Quell the Spark," p. 145) to undo reprogramming and to restore the target to his previous state. Dispelling successes must exceed those achieved in this spell.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Mindscaping**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Mind vs. Composure + Gnosis

Guardians use this rote to deal with those individuals whose interference cannot be addressed in any way save but to completely alter who they are. By doing so, Guardians preserve life (either out of necessity or personal ethics) and still protect the Mysteries.

### Shadow Projection (Mind ●●●●●)

This spell enables the mage to send her consciousness past the Gauntlet into the Shadow Realm.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage creates a psychic projection as she did to become Twilight with the "Psychic Projection" spell, p. 215. This psychic form manifests an ephemeral silver cord connecting back to the body, with armor equal to the mage's Gnosis and Health

equal to her Willpower. The cord can be harmed only by aggravated damage. If this cord is severed, the mage must try to find her way back to her body by some other means (a daunting proposition).

**Mysterium Rote: Walking with Gods**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Mind

When necessary (and typically *only* when absolutely necessary), mages of the Mysterium are known to delve into the deepest reaches of the Shadow in search of long-lost knowledge. Such journeys are incredibly dangerous, and have been known to lead to encounters with things forgotten since the age of Atlantis (or perhaps even before).

### Twilight Temple (Mind ●●●●●)

This spell enables a willworker to sculpt the ephemeral stuff of Twilight to create an immaterial abode for himself that can be accessed and used by his psychic form.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

While within his temple, the mage's psychic form (see "Psychic Projection," p. 215) is protected. Anyone who wishes to attack him must first breach the abode, which only he can enter at will. It has a Durability equal to the mage's Mind Arcanum and a Structure equal to his Gnosis. The temple cannot be moved once it is erected. Spirit 2 wards against spirits so that they cannot approach the temple, while Death 2 wards against ghosts.

Using the "Shadow Projection" spell, p. 218, the mage can enter the Shadow Realm with a psychic projection and cast this spell there, creating a Shadow Temple.

The Duration depends on casting successes (this spell uses the advanced prolonged Duration factors):

| Successes | Duration |
|---|---|
| 1 success | One scene |
| 2 successes | 24 hours |
| 3 successes | Two days |
| 4 successes | One week |
| 5 successes | One month |
| 6 successes | Indefinite |

**Free Council Rote: Castles of the Mind**
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Mind

Mages of the Free Council use this rote to create a temporary shelter within Twilight from where they can watch and observe a ghost's haunt or spirit locus while protected from easy assault.

## Prime



**Purview:** Hallows, illusions, magical imbuement, Mana, resonance, tass

Prime is the light that burns without heat, the energy that defies description. It is the power that courses through all things in material existence and which serves as the skeleton on which all willworkers hang their magic. Prime is an Arcanum of mystic power, named for the *prima materia*, the Supernal substance. Thus, it is often practiced by those who would seek to possess mastery over the subtle and otherwise largely unquantifiable substance that serves as mages' medium.

Awakened who concentrate on Prime tend to be passionate, though they are often driven to loftier ends than the majority of people: self-mastery, understanding of Creation and enlightenment. These sorts usually have an intense drive to understand the "whys" and "wherefores" of reality. Some have their curiosity satisfied merely by learning answers to their questions, while others capitalize on knowledge to control what they understand now. Many Prime willworkers have a particular lust for life, an energy that impels them to be ever active, moving forward toward some objective (which need not be easily quantifiable).

> I look with unclouded sight upon the wonders of magic, my gaze penetrating the crude material world to look upon the naked glory of the hidden currents that move beyond. I see the Mana that pools within you, my hallow, in this enchanted dagger belted at my hip and in the tass I carry. I see through illusions wrought of mystic power and know the secrets of the threads of magic, perhaps even better than those who cast such spells and forge such wonders. No Awakened power is unknown to me.

### Ruling Realm: The Aether

The gross/subtle pair of Forces/Prime provides the ruling Arcana for the realm of the Aether, the celestial space where the heavenly fire burns. Prime is the ephemeral expression of the pair.

### ● Initiate of Prime

#### Analyze Enchanted Item (Prime ●)

The mage can scrutinize an enchanted item —an Artifact, enhanced item or imbued item — to discern its powers.



**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing items. With an exceptional success, the mage can tell if the enchanted item is cursed or has other exceptional circumstances (deleterious or benign) connected to its ownership or use.

The effect lasts for one scene, during which extended Intelligence + Occult rolls can be made to examine the enchanted item. Ten minutes' time per roll; target number is equal to twice the enchanted item's Merit dots. See the following Merits for more details on each type of item: "Artifact" (p. 80), "Enchanted Item" (p. 82), "Imbued Item" (p. 84).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Artifact Hunt**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Prime

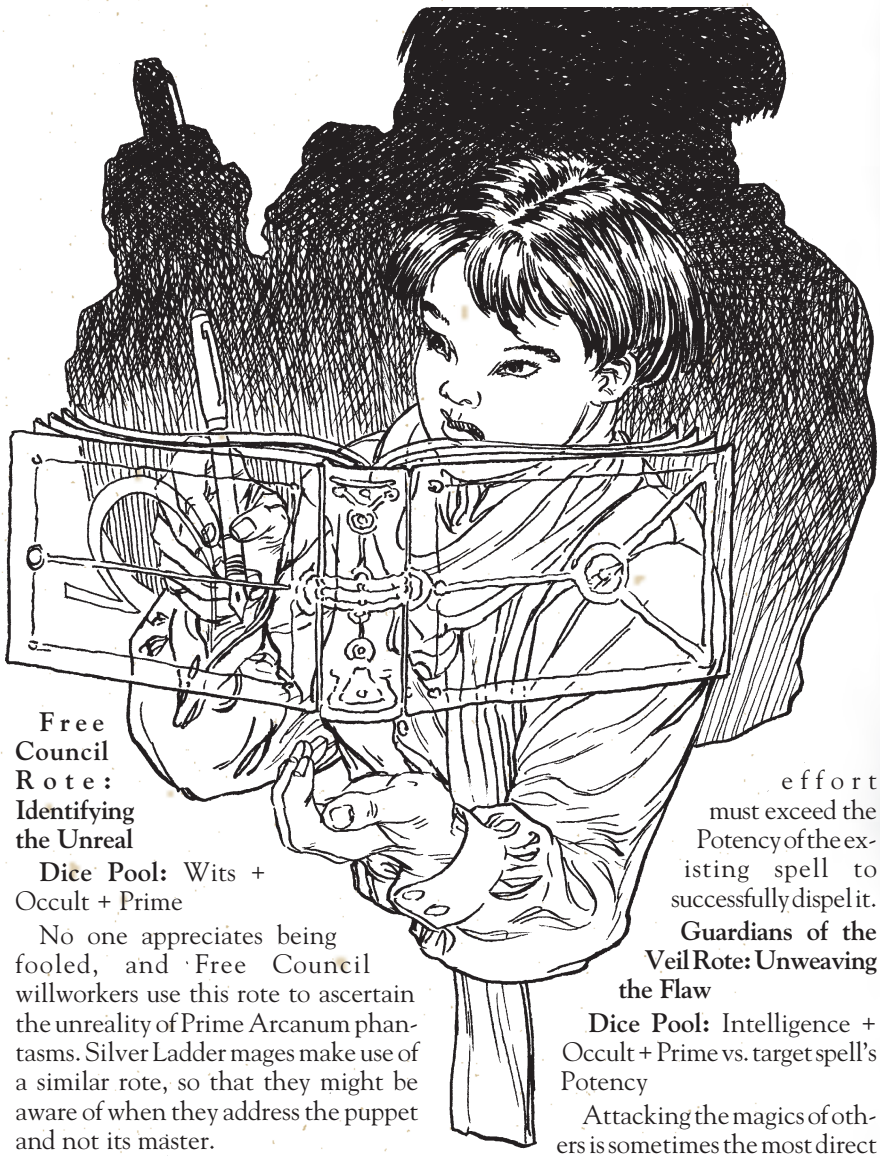
No weapon is truly useful until its wielder comprehends its nature. Members of the Adamantine Arrow use this magic to learn the capabilities of enchanted items with which they come into contact, and to see if there are any strings attached to use of such items. Given that a misunderstood Artifact is a dangerous Artifact, all orders make use of this rote.

### Discern Phantasm (Prime ●)

The mage can see through Prime-based illusions (those created with manifested Mana; see "Phantasm," p. 227), knowing them for what they are. Having substance, however, they do not vanish from her sight.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The phantasm's Potency levies dice penalties on the roll.



**Free Council Rote: Identifying the Unreal**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Prime

No one appreciates being fooled, and Free Council willworkers use this rote to ascertain the unreality of Prime Arcanum phantasms. Silver Ladder mages make use of a similar rote, so that they might be aware of when they address the puppet and not its master.

### Dispel Magic (Prime ●)

Mages can dismantle or *dispel* existing spells, a process also known as "unweaving."

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant and contested; successes are compared to the target spell's Potency
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must have at least one dot in *each* Arcanum used in the spell to be dispelled, unless he has Prime 4 (see "Supernal Dispellation," p. 229). (Note: This effect differs from "Counterspell," which requires one dot in only one of the Arcana used by the target spell.) The successes of the dispelling mage's effort must exceed the Potency of the existing spell to successfully dispel it.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Unweaving the Flaw**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Prime vs. target spell's Potency

Attacking the magics of others is sometimes the most direct and practical means of protecting the secrecy of the hidden world. Guardians are not the only ones to use such magic, however. This useful rote is practiced by any mage with any degree of skill in the Prime Arcanum.

### Inscribe Grimoire (Prime ●)

The mage can record the secrets of his rotes into a magical book readable by other Awakened minds.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Inscribing a grimoire is a bold act, for the mage puts part of his magic into the book by removing it from himself. In doing so, the mage forgets how to cast

a rote. He can later re-learn it by studying his own grimoire (or learning from another mage who knows the rote) and with the expenditure of the proper experience points, but until he does he cannot cast that rote on his own again (although he can use the grimoire to cast it; see below). Recording would seem at first to be a selfless or foolish thing to do, but orders are hungry for grimoires with which to teach young mages, and pay for them in favors. Also, certain Mind spells or creatures can take knowledge from a mage's mind, leaving a void in its place. In case rotes are lost in this way, it's good to have them "backed up" in a book.

The spell's target number equals one success per Arcanum dot used in the rote to be recorded. For example, a Life 3, Mind 2 rote requires five successes. The grimoire's Duration is lasting; it cannot be dispelled and does not expire unless the grimoire itself is destroyed.

Grimoires allow mages to learn their contents without requiring a teacher, although the experience point cost is the same. Additionally, the mage can cast a grimoire's rotes even if he does not personally know the rotes, as long as he references the book during casting. Doing so requires one turn of reference, during which the mage can do nothing but read the book and move up to his Speed. In the following turn, he can cast the rote. If he is interrupted before casting, he must reference the book all over again. If he already knows the rote, referencing the grimoire gives a +1 bonus to casting it.

Grimoires cannot be copied without going through the same spellcasting process used to create them. Only the original is enchanted; mundane copies produce only a mess of meaningless words. Despite the name, grimoires don't have to be books. They can be computer programs or databases, or anything used to store knowledge.

Sleepers cannot use grimoires. They cannot make sense of their contents, at least not on the esoteric level required. Only Awakened minds can grasp the lore contained within.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Inscribing the Ineffable Words**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Expression + Prime

Great leaders often record their wisdom for later generations, and willworkers of the Silver Ladder are no exception. By creating grimoires, teachers can pass on knowledge to their students, and some Ladder mages use the very grimoires they have penned to facilitate their own subsequent castings. Mages of all orders make use of this magic, thereby preserving their arts for the future.

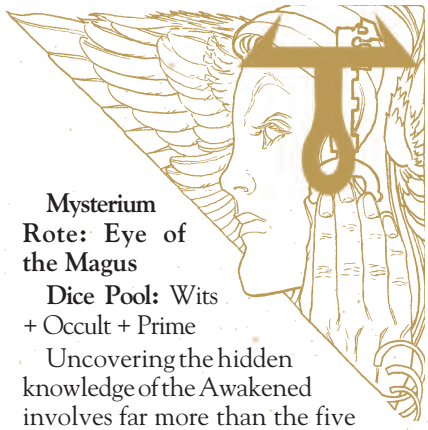
### Supernal Vision (Prime ●)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). This is the most potent of the resonance-detecting senses and the Storyteller should be lavish with its details, explaining intricacies of any given source of resonance that would likely be invisible to one using another Arcanum. Some details, however, are best analyzed with other Arcana (in the way that Matter is best suited to "thick" or "ponderous" resonances), or better still in conjunction with Prime. Many mages describe this sense as sight, though some claim to "smell" or "taste" lingering sorcery on a person or place. Others simply speak of a sixth sense or other esoteric perception that defies ordinary categorization.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with this spell. A +1 dice bonus is gained on perception and scrutiny rolls to sense Awakened magic of any kind, as well as for detecting Mana, tass, enchanted items and Hallows. If the source of mystic power is concealed, the mage's successes must exceed the Potency of the magic used to conceal the source.

In addition, the mage concentrates (an instant action during which he can move only his Speed and loses his Defense) to read a person's aura to determine her nature (see "Aura Signifiers," p. 206), but not her mental or emotional condition (which requires the Mind 1 "Aura Perception" spell, p. 205; adding Mind 1 to the casting of Supernal Vision allows the perception of both mental state and nature).



**Mysterium Rote: Eye of the Magus**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Prime

Uncovering the hidden knowledge of the Awakened involves far more than the five mundane senses. Willworkers of the Mysterium use this magic to attune themselves to virtually any sort of paranormal phenomenon, detecting the presence of mystic artifacts and unseen spells. The mages of the Silver Ladder use this rote to discern the intricacies of nearby magical phenomena. After all, a diplomat from another Consilium carrying a small item heavily enchanted with potent Death magics may, in fact, be an assassin.

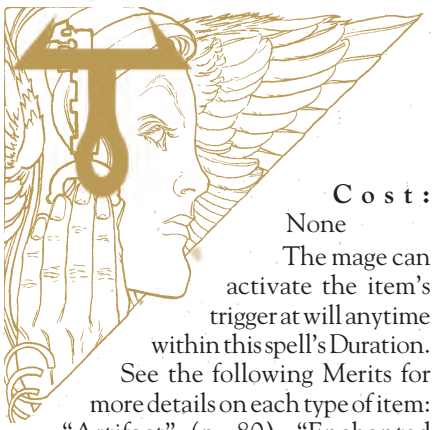
### ●● Apprentice of Prime

While others fumble with crude powers, I weave the unseen fire with adroitness and conviction. By my craft, I disperse the sorceries of others and conceal the marks of my magic. I discover the secrets of ancient mystic treasures and command them to yield up their powers.

### Activate Enchanted Item (Prime ●●)

The willworker gains the ability to activate a contingent Artifact or imbued item, artificially satisfying the trigger of such an item (usually after having carefully analyzed it with "Analyze Enchanted Item," p. 219).

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert



**Cost:** None

The mage can activate the item's trigger at will anytime within this spell's Duration. See the following Merits for more details on each type of item: "Artifact" (p. 80), "Enchanted Item" (p. 82), "Imbued Item" (p. 84).

**Mysterium Rote: Claiming the Ancient Heritage**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Prime

It happens on occasion that old words of power are lost and ancient lineages die out. Mysterium mages developed this rote as a means to make use of Artifacts for which no normal trigger can be deciphered or is possible.

### Counterspell (Prime ••)

The mage can counter spells from any Arcanum, and he can counter covert spells without first identifying their components.

**Practice:** Shielding

**Action:** Instant; successes subtract from the target spell's Potency

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

As the rules for "Counterspell," p. 123, but the mage can now counter spells from any Arcanum (he does not need one dot in at least one of the spell's Arcana) and he can counter covert spells even if he has not had time to identify their components.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Rend the Weave**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Prime

This rote enables a Guardian to stop magics before they can take effect, preserving the secrecy of the Awakened world with preemptive action. Silver Ladder willworkers have their own variant on this rote (Resolve + Occult + Prime) that wills offending sorceries out of existence.

### Magic Shield (Prime ••)

This spell creates a shield against outside magic. Such a matrix of power is visible to those with Mage Sight, appearing as ghostly white flames limning the form of the caster.

**Practice:** Shielding

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** Special

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Prime Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day.

This armor works only against spells that target the mage. It does not shield against magic that is not directly cast at the mage. A bolt of electricity thrown at him is shielded, while damage suffered by falling through a floor rotted through by magic is not. This shield functions against spells such as mind control or soul theft that do not directly inflict damage.

A magical shield requires one Mana each time it contends with an incoming spell. If the mage does not (or cannot) spend the Mana, the shield provides no armor against the attacking spell, although the shield remains until its Duration expires, so it can be activated later. Among other things, this spell allows a mage to use his magical shield selectively, blocking hostile spells but allowing friendly ones through. Mages often invest their shields with multiple charges, spending Mana during casting so that each charge already stores its own energy.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Aegis Magicus**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime

Ladder willworkers often have to contend with hostile magics of one sort or another, so the order developed this rote to defend against such unwanted influences. All Awakened who are capable of doing so can enjoy the protection of this rote; only fools go without its protection when expecting trouble.

### Primal Flow (Prime ••)

As the Prime 1 "Supernal Vision" spell, p. 221, except that the mage casts this effect upon another mage, or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may resist with a reflexive contested Resolve + Gnosis roll.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Mass Hallucination**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Prime

There are times when it is beneficial to extend one's mystic perceptions to another. Perhaps a single person can be shown too much and then marginalized as a potentially dangerous crackpot when he tries to convince others of what he has seen. At other times, allowing multiple Sleepers to perceive the same phenomenon can, with a measure of diligent effort, ultimately serve to convince them that nothing supernatural took place, that everything is normal.

### Sense the Threads (Prime •• + Space ••)

Like a spider sitting at the center of its web, the mage can detect whenever something disturbs any portion of the web. She can sense when someone scrutinizes or tries to dispel one of her spells. This detection is not a spell in itself, but an ability the mage gains with Prime 2 and Space 2. It allows the willworker to passively monitor the health of her spells, sensing whenever someone else tries to magically scrutinize them (see "Scrutinizing Spells," p. 278) or dispel them (see "Dispel Magic," p. 220). Armed with such knowledge, she can choose to intervene using other magics. One Mana must be spent toward such observation during the casting of whatever spells are to be monitored. A mage can

monitor only those spells for which this cost is paid.

To sense scrutiny or tampering, make a reflexive Wits + Occult roll. This sense can potentially be foiled by the "Unseen Spy" spell, below.

### Squaring the Circle (Prime ●●)

The mage creates a mystical space where two mages can engage in the Duel Arcane, a wizard's war. See "The Duel Arcane," p. 286, for rules on using this spell.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana
**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Squaring the Circle**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime

It sometimes happens that the surest path to protecting the Mysteries involves allowing two willworkers to settle their dispute in a duel. Guardians of the Veil use this rote to give such irreconcilable mages the opportunity to settle their accounts in the ancient way. Silver Ladder mages also use this very rote for keeping peace within a Consilium or cabal.

### Transform Aura (Prime ●●)

The mage can alter his aura's nature. While many mages can manipulate the quality of their personal resonance or cloak it entirely, none do so with the finesse of a willworker skilled in Prime. He can alter the nature of his aura, appearing to be a Sleeper (or even an inhuman creature), or he can hide it or even disperse it completely for a time. Though an aura returns to its original state once the spell expires, it can be warded away for quite some time.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Only by overcoming the Potency of this spell (with a spell such as "Supernal Vision") can a mage detect the true aura.

See "Aura Signifiers," p. 206, for a list of some aura natures. If this spell is cast conjunctionally with Mind 2, the mage can alter the appearance of his aura's mental and emotional state, as per the Mind 2 "Alter Aura" spell, p. 207.

This spell cannot be detected except by a "Supernal Vision" (p. 221) Mage Sight spell with a higher Potency. Even once this spell is detected, the true nature of the mage cannot be perceived until the Transform Aura spell expires or is dispelled.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Wolf in the Fold**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Prime

Guardians must be able to vanish into the ranks of the mundane when their work calls for anonymity. This rote enables such mages to do just that.

### Unseen Spy (Prime ●●)

The mage can hide himself from other willworkers' magical senses when he attempts to scrutinize or dispel their magic.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Method:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Normally, mages cannot sense if their spells are being tampered with, but the "Sense the Threads" ability, p. 222, allows a mage to monitor the status of his spells. With Unseen Spy, a mage can attempt to hide from such a mage's magical senses.

Whenever a spy scrutinizes a vigilant caster's spells or tries to dispel them, a reflexive Intelligence + Subterfuge roll is made for the spy, contested by the subject's reflexive Wits + Occult roll. If the Unseen Spy exceeds the caster's successes, his spying goes undetected.

**Free Council Rote: Innocuous Presence**
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Subterfuge + Prime

Free Council mages have always liked to study the spells of the Atlantean orders, but those societies usually don't like upstarts meddling in their business. Hence, councilors resort to this spell to hide their surreptitious observations or even manipulations. Other orders also find use for this spell, such as the Guardians of the Veil in their ongoing efforts to police the practice of magic.



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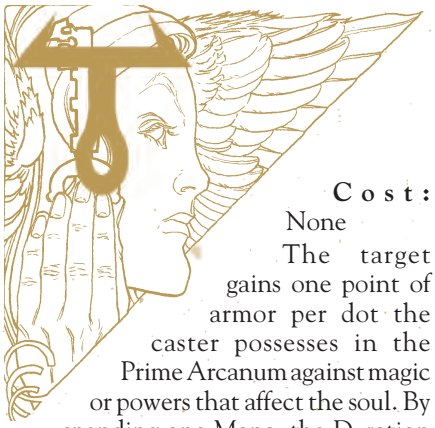
### Disciple of Prime

*I enchant material objects in fantastic ways, bestowing great powers upon them. The illusions I spin of the prima materia deceive the eyes of the Sleeper and the imperceptive willworker alike. I give substance to Mana itself, making the immaterial physically real. I draw upon Mana in its myriad forms, adding its energy to my own. And, upon those who displease me, I unleash the cleansing wrath of the celestial flame.*

### Armor of the Soul (Prime ●●●)

The mage can weave a barrier around a soul, protecting it from being stolen by a spirit or severed by an adept of Death.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert



**Cost:** None

The target gains one point of armor per dot the caster possesses in the Prime Arcanum against magic or powers that affect the soul. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for a day. This spell can be combined with a "Magic Shield" spell (p. 222), and the armor points from both are added together against magic that affects the soul.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Shield the Fragile Link**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Prime

Some of the most vicious and terrible among the Awakened are known to interpose themselves between Guardians of the Veil and their appointed objectives, and many of these intruders have no compunction about tearing out a soul or two. Guardians use this rote to defend themselves against such awful magics. Adamantine Arrow willworkers have their own version of this rote (Resolve + Occult + Prime) that they use to protect their own souls, even as they defend their allies from harm.

### Celestial Fire (Prime ●●●)

The mage manifests celestial fire.

**Practice:** Fraying

**Action:** Instant and aimed

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The mage flings a ball of glowing, fiery energy at a target. This projectile is large enough that targets gain their Defense against it. One point of bashing damage is inflicted per success. (Note that "celestial fire" is not the same thing as mundane fire; vampires are not especially susceptible to it and it does not induce Rötschreck.)

This spell affects beings or objects in the Twilight state (although the mage needs "Supernal Vision," p. 221, or some other magical sense that allows him to see Twilight beings to be able to target such creatures, or else he fires blind).

With Prime 4, damage is lethal and the mage can choose to directly attack a target's Pattern instead of casting it as an aimed spell (the target resists, subtracting Stamina from the caster's roll). With Prime 5, one Mana can be spent to make the damage aggravated.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Bolt of Heaven**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Occult + Prime

A brutal and straightforward assault, this rote is used by Arrow mages to strike down their enemies, corporeal or otherwise, to destroy arms and armor, or to breach defenses. Perhaps one of the most efficient weapons in the Awakened arsenal, this rote sees use by members of all orders.

### Channel Mana (Prime ●●●)

The mage can channel Mana from a Hallow without need of an hour-long oblation (see p. 77), or he can take it from tass or an enchanted item.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Each success allows the mage to channel one Mana point from a source to his own Mana pool, up to a maximum of his Prime dots. The mage must touch the source (with Prime 4, he can channel within sensory range, and with Prime 5 he can use Space 2 for sympathetic range).

Tass can be drawn upon for its Mana with this spell, meaning that it can potentially serve as a form of currency. The mage must touch the tass to channel from it (with Prime 4, he can channel from it at sensory range). For each point of Mana siphoned out of tass, subtract one point from the tass' Mana and its Structure. If it is siphoned to zero Mana or Structure, the tass collapses back into the Tapestry. See "Create Tass," below, for more information.

An enchanted item that holds its own Mana stores (such as certain imbued items and Artifacts) can also be channeled. The subject must be touched, and one Mana is channeled per success, up to a maximum of the caster's Prime dots.

**Free Council Rote: Feedback**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Prime

Free Council mages often see use of this rote as nothing more than returning the energy bound up in physical form into the Tapestry, and some point to Einsteinian physics to explain the process. Silver Ladder willworkers view use of this magic (Manipulation + Occult + Prime) as their rightful due, the bounty owed a leader.

### Controlled Dispellation (Prime ●●●)

The mage can unravel an existing spell against only those targets he chooses, letting the spell continue to affect others.

**Practice:** Fraying

**Action:** Instant and contested; successes are compared to the target spell's Potency

**Duration:** Lasting

**Method:** Covert

**Cost:** None

This spell is like "Dispel Magic," p. 220, in all its Arcana requirements (unless the caster has Prime 4, in which case he can perform it with "Supernal Dispellation," p. 229). Controlled Dispellation allows a mage to protect himself or other select individuals from spells while still allowing those spells to take effect. He effectively makes his Pattern (and other targets of his choice) invisible to the spell.

***Example:*** *Arctos is thrown into a dungeon that's protected by an area-affecting spell designed to befuddle anyone within its confines. He casts Controlled Dispellation to prevent the spell from affecting his own Pattern. Since he has not dispelled the magic — only its effect upon himself — his captor does not necessarily know that he is not affected. Arctos can pretend to be befuddled if it suits his escape plan.*

**Mysterium Rote: Slipping the Bonds**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime

Mysterium mages might find ancient spells guarding old temples. Rather than dispel them and risk the activation of some arcane trap, they can exempt themselves and others from the effects.

### Create Tass (Prime ●●●)

The mage creates tass, solidified Mana. Tass can look like anything: a rock, a hammer, a table or even a car or a dog. (If it manifests as a seemingly living creature, the tass sits, inanimate, in

whatever position it was created until such time as an outside force acts upon it. In other words, the mage could create a tass dog if he really wanted to, and curl it up by his fireplace, but as a lifeless, inanimate thing, it won't go anywhere or do anything of its own accord.)

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (minimum)

Successes are allocated between the tass' Size and Durability. At least one Mana must be channeled into the tass. This Mana can be siphoned out of the tass using the "Channel Mana" spell, above.

While the object is real, it does not behave like an object made from the proper materials. In other words, a tass hammer is not as good as a metal one. If this spell is cast as an extended action, an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll can also be made for a mage to create tass that behaves much like its representative object would. The target number of success is based on the Size and complexity of the object to be crafted (one success for a simple hammer, three successes for a table, five successes for a cushioned recliner chair.). Tass objects inflict only bashing damage, unless carefully crafted with sharp edges (add one success to the extended Crafts roll's target number per lethal damage modifier).

Tass dissolves into the Tapestry at the end of the spell's Duration.

**Free Council Rote: Celestial Sediment**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Craft or Occult + Prime

Just as matter and energy are different ends on the same spectrum, so too are raw Mana and manifested tass.

### Disguise Resonance (Prime ●●●)

The mage can change the appearance of an area's resonance, making it appear to possess different qualities or even hide its magical signature, meaning that she could make a powerful Hallow look like a magical dead zone.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Even spirits, who rely on certain qualities of resonance for feeding, can be fooled by this spell. Each success also masks one level of a Hallow's power. For example, two successes make a 3-dot Hallow look like a 1-dot Hallow. Or she could make it appear to be a greater place than it is, making a 3-dot Hallow appear to be a 5-dot Hallow with two successes.

This spell cannot be detected except by a Mage Sight spell with a higher Potency. Even once this spell is detected, the true resonance of the area cannot be perceived until the Disguise Resonance spell expires or is dispelled.

**Mysterium Rote: Mask of the Spirits**
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Subterfuge + Prime

An ounce of misdirection can be far more effective at times than a dozen trained guardsmen. When a Mysterium mage skilled in the Prime Arcanum wishes to protect a site, she can use this rote to alter its seeming resonance.

### Dissolve Tass (Prime ●●●)

The mage can dissolve tass back into the Tapestry.

**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success dissolves one point of the tass' Mana and Structure.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Unstitch**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime

Just as a skilled tailor can unravel a garment by pulling out relatively few threads, a Guardian can pick apart the weave of a source of tass and unmake it, releasing its energy back into the Tapestry. Adamantine Arrow mages also use this rote to dissolve the tass of enemy willworkers, robbing them of a precious resource.

### Ephemeral Enchantment (Prime ●●●)

The mage enchants an object, allowing it to strike (if it is a weapon) or protect (if it is armor) against Twilight or Shadow Realm entities.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)



**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

If the weapon is a gun, all the bullets within its magazine, cylinder and/or chamber are enchanted. To enchant extra magazines or ammunition, additional Target factors must be added to the casting.

With Prime 5, the object can be given the power to inflict aggravated damage (one Mana must be spent for the caster or user with each aggravated strike).

**Mysterium Rote: Ghost Stick**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime

Not all threats faced by a Mysterium mage walk in flesh, and so this rote enables such a willworker to defend herself against hostile incorporeal entities.

### Imbue Item (Prime ●●●)

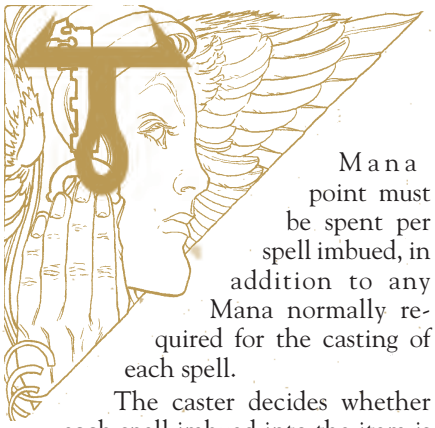
The mage can imbue an item with magical powers.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Extended
**Aspect:** Special
**Cost:** 1 Mana per spell

Imbued items are granted one or more magical powers. In effect, whoever wields the imbued item gains the benefits of its spells, even though he did not necessarily cast them. See the "Imbued Item" Merit, p. 84.

The target number is equal to the successes required for all the spells imbued into the item. The mage must be able to cast each spell he wants to imbue, and each spell's target number is determined as if he were casting that spell as an extended action. The target numbers of all spells to be imbued are combined to find the successes needed for the Imbue Item casting.

Each spell remains imbued for as long as its Duration. Most imbued items are made with spells of indefinite Duration, and the caster usually relinquishes such an item from his control so it no longer applies to his maximum spell limit. Doing so costs one Willpower dot. See "Relinquishing Control of Spells," p. 220. One



Mana point must be spent per spell imbued, in addition to any Mana normally required for the casting of each spell.

The caster decides whether each spell imbued into the item is persistent (always active) or contingent (triggered by a word, gesture or condition). Even contingent spells imbued into an item must be made indefinite, or they disappear from the item when their Duration expires.

The caster can give the item the capacity to hold Mana points. Doing so requires three successes and the item has a capacity of 10 points plus one per spell imbued. Mana must be spent for the caster to actually fill the capacity of points, or else someone with the "Channel Mana" spell (p. 224) can do so later.

The aspect of casting (covert or vulgar) depends on the spells imbued into the item.

If the item is imbued with vulgar spells, it risks a Paradox whenever these powers are used. The Paradox dice pool is based on the Gnosis of the imbued item's creator at the time of the item's creation (if his Gnosis later rises, the item's Paradox dice pool does not also rise).

**Mysterium Rote: Forge of Power**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Crafts + Prime

Just as Mysterium mages seek out relics long lost, they create new objects of power, applying ancient arts to modern artifice. Silver Ladder willworkers use the rote as well in the crafting of their own enchanted items.

### *Imbue Mana (Prime ●●●)*

The mage can imbue a living creature with Mana.

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage gives a living creature one of his Mana points per success. The caster must touch the target during casting (with Prime 4, he can affect the subject at sensory range). If combined with "Channel Mana," p. 224, or "Siphon Mana," p. 231, the mage can take Mana from one source (other than himself) to give to another.

Channeling Mana into a living being usually does nothing to it (save perhaps for a feeling of being energetic or edgy) unless the subject is Awakened, in which case she adds the Mana to her total.

If the number of points of Mana invested in a Sleeper's Pattern exceeds her Size, the subject suffers one Health wound of bashing damage per point of Mana by which her Size is exceeded, as the celestial fire literally tears her Pattern apart like an over-inflated balloon rupturing. In this case, the target can resist the spell by subtracting her Stamina from the caster's roll.

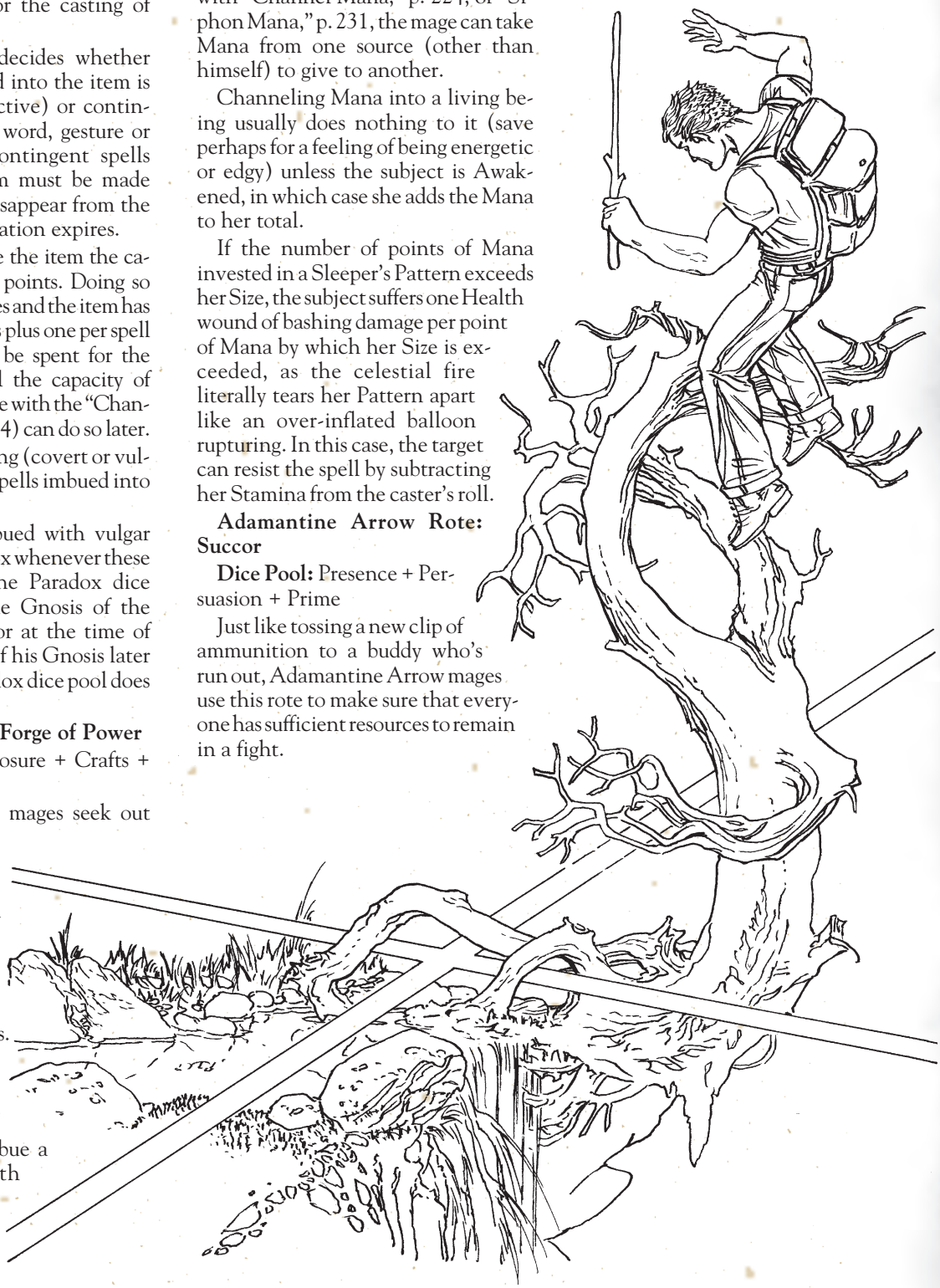
**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Succor**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Prime

Just like tossing a new clip of ammunition to a buddy who's run out, Adamantine Arrow mages use this rote to make sure that everyone has sufficient resources to remain in a fight.

### *Ley Lines (Prime ●●●)*

This spell harnesses the subtle power of the Earth's ley lines, enabling a willworker to generate perpetual free energy for any number of purposes. Ley energies course unseen and unnoticed by most over the contours of the planet. It is said that the ancients realigned and manipulated such sources of perpetual power.



**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

This spell bestows upon the mage a source of perpetual energy, a node from which ley energy wells up. The mage determines the form of the node, whether it is the source of a pure spring, the center of a tranquil valley or a mountain peak, for example.

The effect is lasting — the energy of the earth replenishes itself, unless something later disrupts the ley lines. Such disruption can be done by altering the architecture or geography of the node, perhaps by simply damming its spring or flooding its valley.

The target number depends on how much power the node generates per day. One success makes enough energy per day to power a small room, such as a home office (for its usual day-to-day energy needs in mild temperatures). Three successes can power a small home. Five can power a large home or mansion. Seven successes can power an office building. The power is generated from a single node, so these buildings must have a central hook-up that is placed within the node. For example, a circuit box can be placed in the node, powering anything that leads to it, such as an electrical socket in an upstairs bedroom.

This spell does have a couple of drawbacks. First, the mage can create a ley-energy node only at a point at which energies actually converge. Such spots occur at the Storyteller's discretion, but it is said that ancient cultures knew these places. Following old Roman roads or exploring the ruins of ancient villages might lead a mage to such a nexus. Most of the best and most accessible of these junctures have already been claimed. Second, this magic can be dispelled just as any other, causing all that is being powered by the subtle energies to cease functioning until the spell is cast anew (or an alternate power source is arranged).

**Free Council Rote: Atlantean Generator**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Prime

While the Free Council as a whole seeks to advance the practice of magic, the old ways are still sometimes best. Using ancient techniques based on geography, sacred mathematics and other such disciplines, the willworker employs this rote to provide an essentially limitless source of free energy. Mysterium mages use similar magics to power sanctums and esoteric devices.

### Magic Wall (Prime ●●●)

The mage can now cast a Magic Shield on another person.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** Special

See "Magic Shield," p. 222, for the effects. If the target does not have his own Mana, the caster must incorporate Mana during casting to allow it a number of charges. The subject can choose when a charge is activated.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Invisible Boon**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Prime

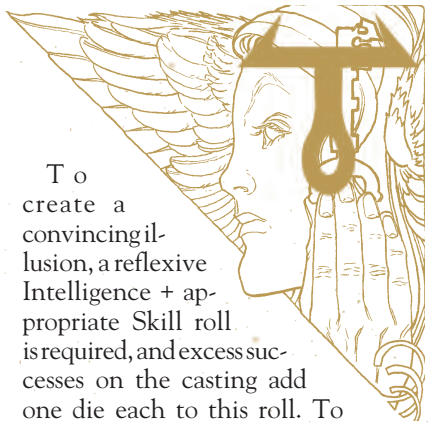
Guardians sometimes cast this rote on Sleepers to keep them safe from spells that might otherwise alert mundane folk to the working of magic.

### Phantasm (Prime ●●●)

This spell creates an inanimate phantasm, a construct woven of Mana threads. Such a creation possesses a degree of substance and appears to be a normal object of its type to Sleeping eyes, but is in reality a solidified illusion. The mage can create books, knives, chairs, stones or any other lifeless, inanimate objects she can think of. These objects do not and cannot possess qualities such as conductivity, magnetism or the like. Phantasmal wood does not float in water and it does not fuel a fire (though it can still be destroyed by such, it does not sustain the flame on its own).

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The spell creates an object of Size 5 or less. The phantasm has one point of Durability. It is fragile and breaks easily. The mage cannot create functional tools, weapons or armor at this level.



To create a convincing illusion, a reflexive Intelligence + appropriate Skill roll is required, and excess successes on the casting add one die each to this roll. To simulate an animal, use Animal Ken. For an object, use Crafts. For a person, use Medicine or perhaps Empathy.

At the Storyteller's discretion, magically "dead" areas may not contain enough ambient Mana to fabricate such an object without the expenditure of a point of Mana, but this should be the case only rarely.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Loom of the Gods**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Craft + Prime

When a Ladder mage wishes to impress others with a collection of rare antiques or artwork behind glass, she can craft them from the Prima Materia itself.

### Transform Other Aura (Prime ●●●)

The mage can alter another's aura, changing the appearance of his true nature just as he does for himself with Prime 2.

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Transform Aura," p. 223.

**Free Council Rote: Running with the Pack**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Prime

A Free Council mage who intends to masquerade as a Sleeper — or even a vampire or werewolf — might want others of his "kind" nearby to back him up in case of trouble. With this rote, he can make his entire cabal look to be something its members are not, at least to the eyes of those who can read auras.



With will alone, I rend the magic of my enemies and drink deeply of the Mana hidden in even the most base of things. I am suffused with powerful energies and command them to take on physical shape, given motion by my thoughts. Long-dead Hallows return to life at my approach and the fonts of power commanded by my foes are made dry and barren.

## ●●●● Adept of Prime

### Awaken Hallow (Prime ●●●●)

The mage awakens a dormant Hallow.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target number is equal to the original level of the Hallow before it became dormant.

**Mysterium Rote: Aligning the Stars**
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Survival + Prime

On occasion, secrets lay dormant within the quieted flow of a Hallow. Mysterium mages that return such a flow to life have been witness to wondrous secrets. Of course, some would argue that having an active Hallow at one's disposal is reward enough. Mages of all orders with access to it make use of this rote, as there are few who would pass up the chance to tap into the power of a Hallow.

### Eyes of the Awakened (Prime ●●●●)

The mage allows a Sleeper to possess Mage Sight. For the Duration of the spell, the Sleeper sees things see that she did not believe possible before. During this period, her witnessing the Mysteries does not invoke Disbelief, but she still adversely influences a Paradox as a normal Sleeper witness.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None
**Silver Ladder Rote: Fitful Sleep**
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Empathy + Prime

One of the greatest powers is that of controlling knowledge. Ladder mages use this rote to bestow some small glimpse of the truth upon those who would otherwise remain forever blind. Sometimes they do so to win the loyalty of Sleepers, and sometimes their fear, but given the risks inherent to such an act, they rarely do so without good reason.

### Marionette (Prime ●●●●)

By way of this magic, the willworker creates a potentially animate phantasm of an animal or other obviously non-human creature. It can move, but only as she directs it through active concentration. The phantasm moves as it would normally be able to, so a phantasm of a monkey can walk or run on all fours, walk awkwardly upright and swing by its hands or its tail, while a remote control car moves on its wheels. A ferret phantasm could, for example, filch a set of keys, while a wolf could be used to attack someone.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

As with the "Phastasm" spell, p. 227, except that each success grants two dots of Physical Attributes to the phantasm, allocated however the caster wishes, up to a limit of the mage's Prime dots in any one trait. A combined casting with "Phantasmal Weapon," below, gives the Marionette more solidity and allows successes to be allocated to an equipment modifier (including weapon damage) or armor. (With Prime 5, the mage doesn't need to combine castings to gain this effect for his Marionette.) When calculating the phantasm's Defense, use its Dexterity or the mage's Wits, whichever is lower. If the phantasm runs out of Health or Structure, it disintegrates back into the Tapestry.

The mage must concentrate to direct the phantasm's movements, and he cannot direct it out of the range of his mundane senses, unless he is scrying it with the Space Arcanum (a mage's own phantasms are always treated as Intimately connected for such purposes). While concentrating on moving the phantasm, the mage can still use her Defense, but cannot initiate her own attacks or cast any other magic; her attention is too absorbed.

Note that the same sorts of "magic dead areas" that necessitate spending a point of Mana to create a static phantasm with the "Phantasm" spell (p. 227) require the same for this spell.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Unreal Servitor**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Prime

When Ladder mages need capable and obedient servants quickly, many turn to this rote. Such a phantasm can serve as a laborer, a bodyguard, an attack dog—virtually anything the willworker can conceive of and mentally direct. Free Council mages interested in the nature of material existence sometimes experiment with a similar rote.

### Phantasmal Weapon (Prime ●●●●)

The mage creates a sturdy phantasm, and can even create functional weapons and armor.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

As with Prime 3 "Phantasm," p. 227, except the object has a Durability equal

to the caster's Prime dots. Successes can be allocated to create an equipment dice modifier or armor points for the object, or even to increase the Size above five points (on a one-for-one basis).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Forge of the Gods**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Craft + Prime

Adamantine Arrow willworkers use this rote to fabricate arms and armor from thin air.

### Siphon Essence (Prime ●●●●)

The mage can pull the Essence out of a spirit, ghost or locus and convert it to personal Mana. He may either add it to his Mana store or disperse it into the Tapestry, as he wishes. Most experienced willworkers are quick to point out the folly almost always inherent to pillaging a locus. Even if there are no werewolves present (a rare enough occurrence), spirits regard loci in the same way that mages look at Hallows, and resent those who cheat them of their rightful sustenance. While not all spirits have the means to exact immediate retribution, most have long memories and at least a few allies willing and able to make life hell for pirating mages.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resistance

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Each success siphons one Essence from the targeted spirit, ghost or locus. See **Werewolf: The Forsaken** for more information on loci.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Ehrlik's Due**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime – Resistance

Most Adamantine Arrow mages who make use of this rote see it as a simple case of requisitioning needed resources. Sometimes this spell is used offensively, stripping power from enemy spirits before it can be used against a mage and her allies. Guardians of the Veil apply the same rote to drain Essence from spirits, robbing them of their ability to cause mischief or harm, and potentially endanger the anonymity of the occult world and its denizens.

### Siphon Integrity (Prime ●●●●)

The mage can pull the Mana out of a mundane lifeless object. He may either add this Mana to his own or disperse it into the Tapestry, as he wishes. Most such Patterns have but little Mana invested in them and siphoning it all away (or simply dispersing it) damages the item.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Each success gives the mage one Mana and inflicts one point of Structure damage to the object, making it brittle. (This damage circumvents the object's Durability.) Only one point of Mana may be gleaned per three points of Size (rounding down); mundane objects smaller than Size 3 simply do not have enough material substance and presence to hold a full point of Mana.

The caster can replenish his own Mana reserves with this spell only once every 24 hours. The frayed Mana from successive castings cannot be integrated into the mage's Pattern during that time, although he could use the "Channel Mana" spell, p. 224, to divert it elsewhere.

Enchanted items cannot be siphoned with this spell.

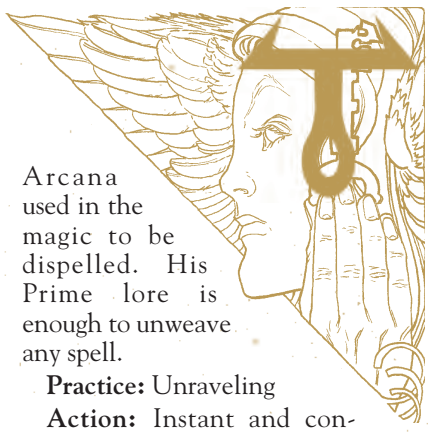
**Mysterium Rote: Hidden Stores**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime

For a Mysterium mage skilled in the Prime Arcanum, stores of Mana are hidden in plain sight throughout the Tapestry. Providing a much-needed boost on short notice, this rote draws on the willworker's immediate environment to replenish his power. Members of the Adamantine Arrow use similar magics (Strength + Occult + Prime) to simultaneously strip their opponents of needed items or protections while recouping their own stores of Mana.

### Supernal Dispellation (Prime ●●●●)

The mage can dispel magic. He can attack the Pattern of a spell, destroying it by pulling apart the threads that comprise it. At this level, the mage does not need to have any dots in the Arcana used in the magic to be dispelled. His Prime lore is enough to unweave any spell.



**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant and contested; successes are compared to the target spell's Potency

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

This effect works like "Dispel Magic," p. 220, but the mage does not need to posses all the Arcana involved.

**Free Council Rote: Undo the Art**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Prime vs. target spell's Potency

Free Council mages use this rote to dissipate the magics of enemies, rivals, and sometimes people who need a lesson in humility. Guardians of the Veil use this magic in the execution of their duties, destroying all blatant manifestations of wizardry before they can be witnessed by the uninitiated.

### Suppress Hallow (Prime ●●●●)

The mage suppresses an active Hallow.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

One dot of the Hallow's rating is diminished per success.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Shutting the Gate**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Survival + Prime

Given the strange activity that often manifests around an active Hallow, Guardians are occasionally called upon to temporarily suppress such sources of power.



*My power is such that I can create simulacra of human beings, animated according to my wishes and heeding my commands. Hallows are conjured by my Great Work. I demand my due in mystic power from others, or create regions where none may partake of such.*

## ●●●●● Master of Prime

### Create Complex Phantasm (Prime ●●●●●)

The mage creates a complex phantasm. These beings can mimic living people and complex objects (computers), and stand up to some degree of mundane scrutiny. Such a phantasm is subject to the same rules as a simple moving phantasm (see "Marionette," p. 228). A mechanical or electronic device, however, doesn't conduct electricity (and doesn't work if plugged into a socket; only the mage's concentration makes it *seem* to work normally).

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

A phantasmal person appears to possess the same Mental and Social Attributes as the caster (or fewer, if he wishes it) and can speak if compelled to by the mage, but has no individual initiative and collapses into a lifeless heap if the willworker doesn't actively pay attention to it.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Tin Soldier**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts (for objects) or Medicine (for people) + Prime

When there isn't time enough to call in backup (or someone is needed to walk into an untenably dangerous situation), some Adamantine Arrow mages make use of this powerful rote. The phantasm acts as directed, heedless of reason or its own personal wellbeing, making it an ideal decoy or suicide soldier. Mysterium mages on the trail of old Artifacts or forgotten lore and who are uncertain of what lies ahead sometimes create such simulacra by means of the same rote.

### Create Hallow (Prime ●●●●●)

The mage can create a temporary Hallow.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target number equals the dots of the Hallow. The Hallow immediately yields up its rating in Mana, which can be harvested through normal means (by performing an oblation, p. 77, or casting "Channel Mana," p. 224).

The effect lasts for one hour, but if it is made to last longer, the Hallow does not yield up more Mana until the same hour as its creation on each day for as long as the spell lasts. The spell uses the following Duration factors, but cannot be made to last indefinitely.

| Successes | Duration |
|---|---|
| 1 success | One scene/hour |
| 2 successes | 24 hours |
| 3 successes | Two days |
| 4 successes | One week |
| 5 successes | One month |

While Hallows can conceivably be created anywhere, certain places are more conducive than others. High places, such as at the top of a mountain, tall hill, tree or skyscraper are the best. If a mage attempts to cast this spell anywhere else, he suffers dice penalties. Casting at sea level is –1 die, while casting slightly below sea level, such as in a hollow, is –2 dice. Casting in a deep hole or pit is –3 dice.

**Mysterium Rote: Sanctum Flow**
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Prime

When there are no uncontrolled Hallows nearby, the master of Prime creates one of his own. Mysterium mages in need of a source of Mana use this rote to provide themselves with the necessary power without having to return to a familiar Hallow or wrest free an unfamiliar one. Silver Ladder mages interested in forming sanctums of their own sometimes use similar magics to demonstrate the benefits of service to other willworkers.

### Dead Zone (Prime ●●●●●)

The mage expels the ambient Mana from an area, creating a "magic dead zone."

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

A weak Gauntlet levies a –1 penalty on the spellcasting roll. Successes determine the Dead Zone's radius or volume (the mage chooses which during casting).

| Successes | Radius or Defined Volume |
|---|---|
| 1 success | 1-yard radius<br>5 cubic yards |
| 2 successes | 2-yard radius<br>10 cu. yards |
| 3 successes | 4-yard radius<br>20 cu. yards |
| 4 successes | 8-yard radius<br>40 cu. yards |
| 5 successes* | 16-yard radius<br>80 cu. yards |

* Add an extra x2 radius or x2 volume per additional success

While a mage can spend his own Mana within a dead zone, he cannot use the "Channel Mana" spell, p. XX, to draw them from another source.

Small animals, children and the elderly may sicken and even die in places devoid of a natural flow of Mana energies.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Banishing**
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Prime

By disrupting the local flow of Mana, a Guardian can sometimes stop conspicuous paranormal activity in an area.

### Forge Tulpa (Prime ●●●●● + Mind ●●●●●)

A tulpa, an idea-form so forcefully visualized that it assumes material substance, is known to Tibetan mysticism. The tulpa is dreamed into being by a creative mind in a state of intense and deliberate imagination. Such creations often grow beyond the direct control of their creators, becoming free-willed beings halfway to possessing reality of their own. Sometimes a tulpa becomes wicked or even physically monstrous, but this is the product of flawed discipline on the part of the creator, rather than any fault of the dream-being itself. A tulpa may look like a human being, an animal, a monster or just about any kind of physiologically plausible being of which the willworker can conceive.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

Successes are allocated to construct the tulpa's Mental, Physical and Social Attributes (to a maximum of the mage's Prime dots in any single Attribute; at least one dot must be placed in every Attribute), and extra damage and armor (on a one-for-one basis). The tulpa possesses a Willpower score (the sum of Resolve and Composure as normal) and self-awareness, no matter how rudimentary. Its Size is 5 or less (the caster can decide to make it less than average human Size). The tulpa may be free-willed or bound to the will of the caster, as desired. An especially strong-willed tulpa may defy its binding creator and escape.

A physically monstrous or otherwise bizarre tulpa invokes Disbelief (p. 274) when witnessed by Sleepers.

Note that at this level of mastery, this spell cannot be given an indefinite Duration (i.e., the tulpa cannot have a "natural" life span of human years). The being dissolves when the spell expires. Unless the tulpa created is specifically designed to accept the inevitability of its own demise without emotional trauma, a Wisdom degeneration roll might be required for the caster (unless he has Wisdom 2 or lower). The mage could, however, recast this spell before the previous one expires, giving the tulpa a new Duration. Note that this is an exception to the normal rules for spell control. The tulpa is allowed to persist over a series of castings as long as the previous one does not expire before a successive spell is cast.

**Free Council Rote: Dream Warrior**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Prime

This Free Council magic forms a sentient being of pure Mana, invested with at least minimal social skills and reason. Those mages who cannot afford to give indefinite existence to such a creation do not use this rote lightly, as it is often cruel to craft an essentially living being with so brief an existence. Silver Ladder mages sometimes use their own rote (Presence + Occult + Prime) to create perfect servants, entrusting their personal care to no being they themselves have not fabricated.

### Siphon Mana (Prime ●●●●●)

The mage can siphon Mana at sensory range from an unwilling mage and add it to his own pool.

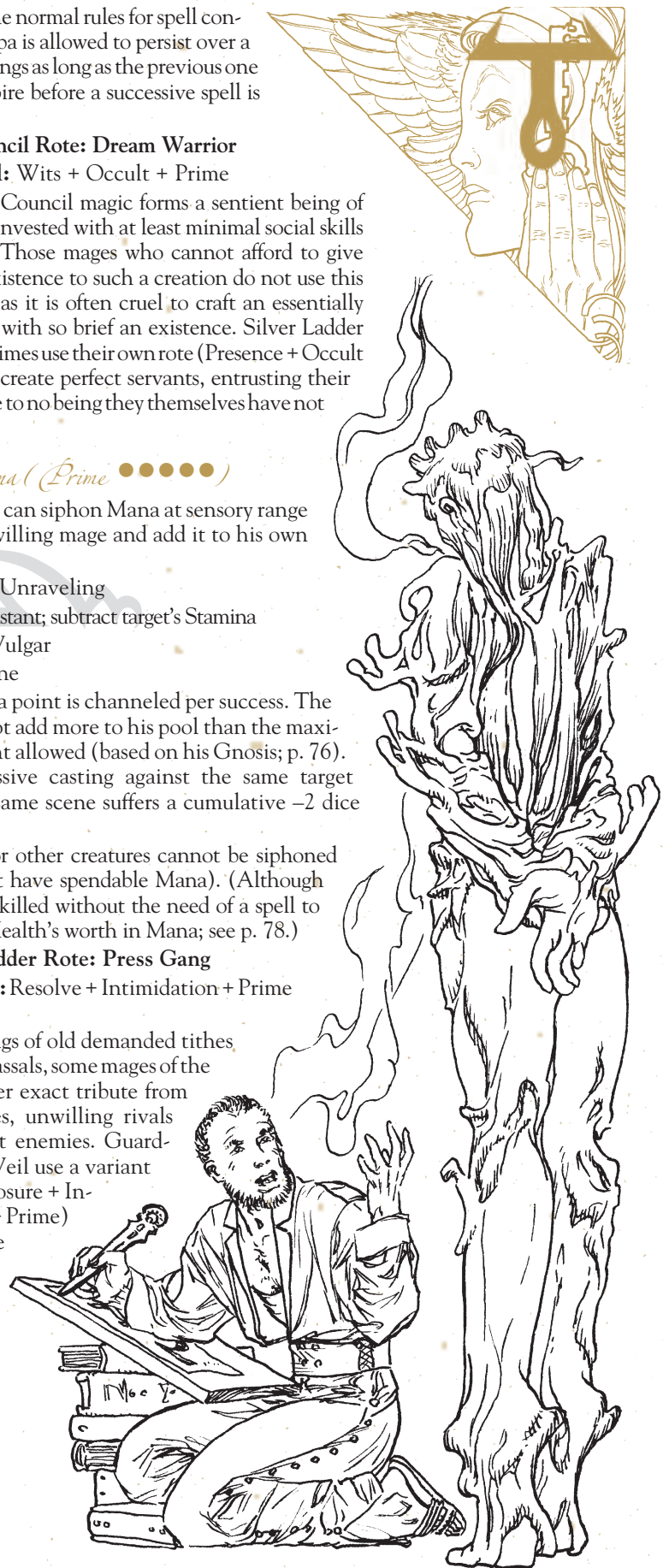
**Practice:** Unraveling
**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Stamina
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

One Mana point is channeled per success. The caster cannot add more to his pool than the maximum amount allowed (based on his Gnosis; p. 76). Each successive casting against the same target within the same scene suffers a cumulative –2 dice penalty.

Sleepers or other creatures cannot be siphoned (they do not have spendable Mana). (Although they can be killed without the need of a spell to yield their Health's worth in Mana; see p. 78.)

**Silver Ladder Rote: Press Gang**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Intimidation + Prime – Stamina

Just as kings of old demanded tithes from their vassals, some mages of the Silver Ladder exact tribute from willing allies, unwilling rivals and outright enemies. Guardians of the Veil use a variant rote (Composure + Intimidation + Prime) to mitigate the threat posed by a hostile willworker.





I can wrap my gaze around the Tapestry of space as it moves around me and discern the hidden, so long as I know what I am looking for. I know when others have tampered with the threads of distance and place. I can perceive those unseen energies that move around and radiate from beings, objects and places with a particular emotional or even mystic weight to them.

## Space

**Purview:** Conjuration, scrying, sympathy, teleportation, wards

Space is the art of connection, of the ties between things, the illusion of distance and the means by which one traverses all of reality with a single step. It is an Arcanum for travelers, trailblazers, heralds and all those who seek to dispel ignorance and replace it with knowledge, even if only for their own sake. Space illustrates the ties between people and things, an Arcanum of sympathy, contagion, emotional bonds, roads and doorways.

To the mage versed in Space, spatial extension is an illusion; all points are one. The willworker is capable of traveling without moving by navigating the illusion of distance with acumen unknown to mundane human beings. Likewise, he can extend his senses far beyond the range of the natural, listening to what goes on in a home two towns over, watching what unfolds in a particular restaurant in Tokyo while he is in Cleveland. He could even, with the right combination of other Arcana, hold a conversation with a person 10,000 miles away as though he were sitting across a table from her.

Space is a difficult Arcanum to understand and learn. While most people (thanks to books and films) can conceive of magic that allows one to conjure flames from nothingness, to peer into another's mind or to place a blessing upon a favored child, few have any sense of the kind of power it takes to alter the dimensions of a building to be larger inside than outside, or to weave a small universe of one's own out of newly spun threads of space. These capabilities are the province of a reality more akin to that envisioned by M.C. Escher or H.P. Lovecraft than the magic commonly attributed to snowy-bearded wizards of yore.

Mages who devote themselves to learning the Arcanum of Space are often curious individuals, those who are not content with what is already known or has already been done. They set out to learn Truth and are not dissuaded by obstacles set in their path. Mages who specialize in Space are often adaptable people, capable of going around, over or even through roadblocks set in the way of their objectives.

### Ruling Realm: Pandemonium

The gross/subtle pair of Space/Mind provides the Ruling Arcana of Pandemonium, the place of soul scourging, where sins committed during the soul's sojourn in the material world are purged so that it might ascend to its source. Space is the material expression of the pair.

### • Initiate of Space

### Correspondence (Space •)

The mage can analyze the connections between things, people and places, determining their degree of sympathetic connection. This spell provides useful information to the caster who intends to affect a subject through someone or something to whom or to which the target is emotionally bound. It might be a very dear friend, a treasured childhood possession, or that nook beneath the old oak where the subject fell in love for the first time.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

This sense is sometimes modified by the strength of the bond (the Storyteller might award a bonus for a strong bond, or levy a penalty for a weak one). If the sympathetic bond has been concealed (see "Conceal Sympathy," p. 234), this spell's successes must exceed the disguise spell's Potency.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Revelation of the Unseen Thread**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Space

Protecting the Mysteries sometimes involves a great deal of detective work. This rote enables a Guardian to track leads through the esoteric connections that bind them. Perhaps a troublesome Sleeper grows too close to the secrets of the occult, because he seeks a cure for his daughter's terminal ailment, or an Artifact exerts a sympathetic pull on him. This sense allows a mage to discern such influences and gives him the opportunity to adjust his tactics accordingly.

### Finder (Space •)

The mage can flawlessly track an item in his immediate surroundings.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage chooses a specific object as the target of this spell, such as a weapon, idol or even a ballpoint pen. By means of this spell, no matter where a targeted object goes within the mage's vicinity, she knows its movements. While this effect applies only within a mage's sensory range, with Space 2 she can cast this as a sympathetic spell and track the item anywhere.

**Mysterium Rote: Eyes on the Prize**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Space

Mysterium mages often use this rote to track a relic to be traded (or one that has already been traded but which the mage intends to get back), a weapon or any other inanimate item.

### Omnivision (Space •)

The mage can perceive 360 degrees around himself. He essentially has "eyes" on the back and sides of his head.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The spell extends the mage's vision around him. As long as he can see (i.e., the area isn't dark), he can perceive in 360 degrees with a reflexive Wits + Composure roll. It is almost impossible to surprise the mage by sneaking up from behind (a person would need to be well camouflaged, and the mage might need to be heavily distracted by something in another direction).

**Free Council Rote: Spatial Topography**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Composure + Space

Some Free Council willworkers like to think of this rote as an updated version of Zen archery or similar styles of combat, wherein the master is instinctually aware of his surroundings. Adamantine Arrow mages use this very rote for martial purposes.

### Spatial Awareness (Space •)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). He can detect spatial distortions and manipulations. He is capable of discerning disturbances in the local fabric of space (typically caused by use of more advanced applications of this very Arcanum). He can detect when someone has altered the spatial axes of an area (for example, making a place larger on the inside than outside), used a location as the origin point or terminus for teleportation, or created (or overcome) a Space Ward (see below). This sense transcends the normal five senses, but most mages tend to understand it in terms of sight.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

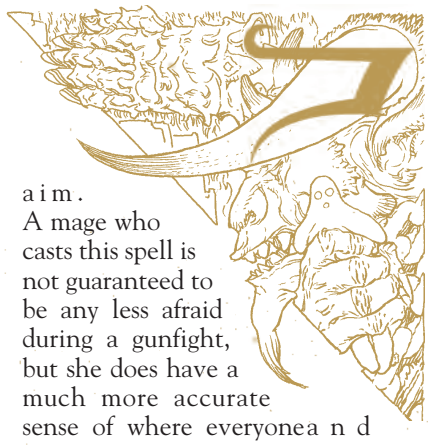
This sense is modified by the degree of the distortion/manipulation (the Storyteller might award a bonus for an extreme distortion or levy a penalty for a subtle one). See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with this spell.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Trailing the Long Stride**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Space

Silver Ladder willworkers named this rote for its practical application in detecting the passage of those who had fled by means of the Space Arcanum. It is also frequently used to discern the presence of ongoing spatial warps, such as gateways or locations that have been altered indefinitely to be smaller, larger or more convoluted than they should be. Mysterium mages use a similar rote (Wits + Occult + Space) to sense similar disturbances, as they know the objects they seek are sometimes hidden beyond such magics.

### Spatial Map (Space •)

Statistics show that each individual involved in the average gunfight stands only a relatively small chance of being fatally wounded. Fear distorts spatial perception, just as it distorts the perception of time, influencing shooters' aim. A mage who casts this spell is not guaranteed to be any less afraid during a gunfight, but she does have a much more accurate sense of where everyone and everything is. The spell creates a mental spatial map that constantly updates the mage on the changing topography of her surroundings, from the guy with the shotgun sneaking up among the parked cars, to the stray leaf blowing by in that sudden breeze.



**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success eliminates one penalty die to the mage's ranged attack dice pool in the following turn, helping her to offset (or eliminate) penalties for opponents' concealment or other spatially based conditions such as hitting a prone target. She cannot gain bonus dice by virtue of this spell; it simply eliminates penalties. This effect also allows a mage who is temporarily or permanently blinded to perceive her immediate surroundings with an acuteness transcending mundane sight (ignore blindness penalties when locating or targeting beings or objects).

This spell cannot be combined with the Fate 1 "Sharpshooter's Eye" spell (p. 149).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Ballistic Targeting**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Space

Arrow mages who learn this rote can be crack shots during a blizzard in the middle of the night (or at least not have whatever prowess they naturally possess suffer for adverse conditions). Any willworker in need of a good spatial sense in a tense situation can benefit from this rote.



*I have discovered the arts of casting my senses beyond the rude confines of flesh, espying the far corners of the world without the need for physical motion. I can bring my power to bear on others from across great distances, and with the use of simple magics can transport objects, energies and even creatures through the hidden pathways of space. Just as I can direct my own perceptions into faraway places, so too might I guard my own sanctum from such scrutiny, warding it against prying eyes.*

## ●● Apprentice of Space

### Apportation (Space ●●)

With the aid of another Arcanum, the mage can move something to a remotely viewed location or remove something from it. (The "Scrying" spell, p. 235, allows a mage to remotely view a location.) She can, with the appropriate dots of Forces, Matter or Life (Matter 2 for a brick, for example, or Life 2 for a guinea pig), draw an item through a scrying window to her current location if the object, creature or energy source is small enough. If she wishes, she can also send such subjects from her location through the window to the other location. Naturally, this use of scrying (which either causes a disembodied hand to reach out of thin air and grab or deposit something, or makes that something appear or disappear without any plausible explanation) is quite vulgar.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure reflexively

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

For each success (or additional Target factor prefigured into the casting), the mage can move one Size point. The maximum Size limit he can move is equal to his Space dots, regardless of successes. The type of thing that can be moved depends on the conjunctional Arcanum used: Matter for objects, Life for living creatures, and Forces for energy. This spell affects only base or median creatures (a "Portal" spell, p. 238, is required to teleport higher life forms), and they can contest this spell's grasp.

**Free Council Rote: Nothing Up My Sleeve**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Investigation + Space vs. Composure

In addition to being an astounding magic trick, this rote allows a Council willworker to summon a much-needed resource to hand quickly, or to send something away just as quickly (definitely useful when an officer is about to pat one down for drugs or weapons). Adamantine Arrow mages who favor firearms typically use this rote to produce clips of ammunition or even entirely new firearms from "concealed inner pockets" in jackets and such when one gun runs dry.

### Boston Spatial Awareness (Space ●●)

As the Space 1 "Spatial Awareness" spell, p. 233, except that the mage casts it upon another mage or a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may resist with a reflexive contested Resolve + Gnosis roll.

The effect lasts for one hour.

**Mysterium Rote: Derangement of the Senses**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Investigation + Space

Mysterium mages sometimes need to show others exactly what it is they themselves see. This rote enables a mage to pass on her own sense of resonance to one who would otherwise be unable to benefit from such perception.

### Conceal Sympathy (Space ●●)

The mage can conceal any sympathetic connections he has to people, places or things, making it appear that he might know a lover only casually or not know her at all.

**Practice:** Veiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Each success allows the mage to decrease the apparent sympathetic connection (p. 114) he has to a single person, place or thing. He might have an Intimate connection to a cabal-mate, but with three successes, he can make that connection appear (to the eyes of anyone who can see it, such as with the "Correspondence" spell, p. 232) to be merely an Encountered connection. The true connection is unaffected; it only appears to be more distant.

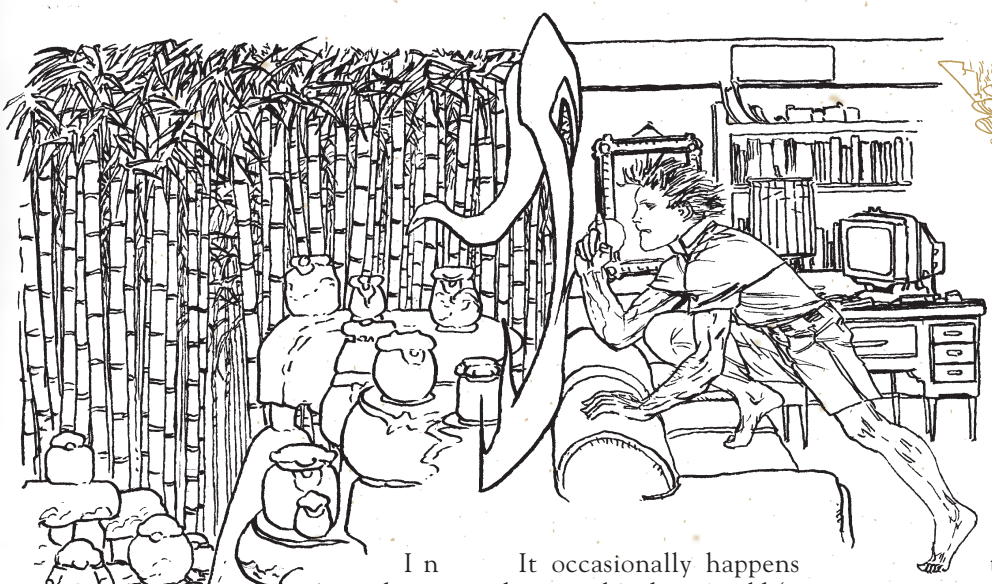
**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Dispersing the Threads**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Subterfuge + Space

A Guardian who fears that enemies will try to strike at her through friends and loved ones can baffle them by making it appear that connections are more aloof than they truly are.

### Follow Through (Space ●●)

The mage can step through a nearby spatial doorway (such as one created with the "Portal" spell, p. 238) to its point of destination. He can follow such a doorway only to its original terminus.



In other words, the mage using this spell has no choice but to go exactly where the previous spatial door went. This limitation can obviously prove to be quite problematic if the passage leads to, say, a room full of heavily armed men or an active volcano.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The mage suffers penalties based on distance as if he were scrying (below). Successes apply to the Duration factor (p. 118), which must equal or exceed the time elapsed since the door was opened. For example, the spell requires a Duration factor of four successes to open a portal that has been closed for 24 hours (with Space 3, four successes covers doors that were opened up to one month ago).

**Mysterium Rote: Taking the Road Once Traveled**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Space

It occasionally happens that a trail ends at an old (or perhaps even recent) doorway in Space and the only thing to do is turn back or move forward and hope for the best. Mages of the Mysterium use this rote to pursue Artifacts and lore, seeking them through the many lapsed portals riddled through the Tapestry. Adamantine Arrow willworkers use this spell when in hot pursuit of a fleeing adversary.

### Scrying (Space ●●)

The mage can view a location remotely. She can employ all of her senses through these "perceptual windows," allowing her to see, hear, smell and even touch things on the far side. This spell can be used for a variety of purposes, from checking up on a loved one to spying on a hated enemy. Mages through time have doubtlessly used it for virtually every possible reason.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

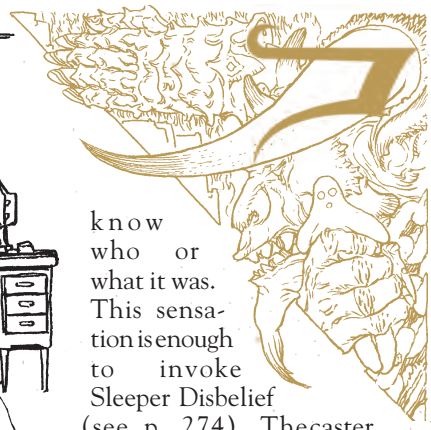
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The spellcasting roll is modified by the mage's sympathetic connection to the location (see p. 114). The Duration at this level is transitory (once the mage ceases concentration), but with Space 3 the mage can cast the spell with a prolonged Duration (and Space 4 allows him to use advanced prolonged Duration factors; p. 118).

If he touches someone through the scrying window, a reflexive Wits + Composure roll is made for that person to notice. If it succeeds, he knows that something just touched him, but unless he has magical senses, he doesn't know who or what it was. This sensation is enough to invoke Sleeper Disbelief (see p. 274). The caster cannot actually affect anything with his touch unless he combines this spell with another Space spell such as "Apportation," p. 234.



Cast conjunctionally with Spirit 2, the caster can scry across the Gauntlet.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Remote Viewing**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Space

Guardians of the Veil often use magics such as this to spy on quarries before determining appropriate courses of action. Likewise, Mysterium mages use the same rote to peer ahead and ascertain whether a destination is safe.

### Sympathetic Spells

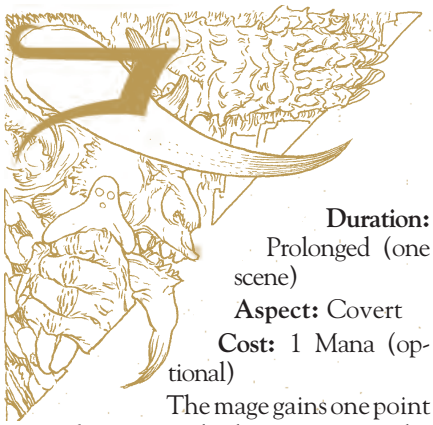
By adding Space 2 to a spell, a mage can affect targets at far distances through a sympathetic connection. See "Sympathetic Spells," pp. 114-116.

### Untouchable (Space ●●)

The best policy for avoiding harm in a fight is to not be where attacks are directed. This spell enables a mage to perform slight intuitive "tweaks" on the local fabric of space to slip away from hostile attention. Generally speaking, this exceptional avoidance looks coincidental, something plausible for the individual in question. Thus, a seemingly clumsy mage blunders his way out of harm's way, while a lithe, graceful martial artist flows like water, managing to avoid her enemy's path at the last possible moment.

**Practice:** Shielding

**Action:** Instant



**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Space Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

Note that this magical armor applies against attempts to grapple the caster (both his Defense and Untouchable armor are subtracted from the grappler's dice pool when he attempts to achieve a hold on the mage), but it does not protect against attempts by an opponent to overpower and/or inflict damage once he has managed to grapple the mage.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Twisting Threads**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Space

By bending the weave of Space, a Ladder willworker can evade harm at the hands of enemies, as well as avoid injuries stemming from simple happenstance. Naturally, mages of all orders make use of similar rotes.

### Ward (Space ●●)

This spell creates a barrier to bar the passage of other Space spells, closing a given locale out from remote sensing, teleportation, spatial tampering and the like. Effectively, this spell "locks" the current Space template of an area into place, making it difficult to overcome that inertia without considerable effort.

The Ward effectively renders a person, place or thing immune to Space tempering, monitoring and the like until such time as the spatial barrier is overcome. (In the case of particularly old and/or paranoid willworkers, it could literally take months or years of casting to whittle their Space shields away, during which time the subject is free to fortify his Wards or seek out the one who would so crassly intrude upon his privacy.)

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

A simple success protects an area of five square yards and gives the Ward a Potency of 1. Additional successes add to the Ward's Potency. The mage can add Target factors to increase the area.

Space-based spells (sympathetic magic, scrying, teleportation and the like) that try to pierce the Ward must exceed the protection's Potency with their own Potency. Each time one of these spells breaches the Ward, it erodes the Ward's Potency by one point, reducing its efficacy. Reinforcing a ward is an exception to the normal spell-control rules. Successive Ward spells add their *excess* Potency to the Ward (that is, any Potency in excess of the Ward's existing Potency), repairing any damage inflicted and perhaps even improving upon defenses. (The defending mage does not need to create a Ward all over again unless it has been destroyed by incoming spells).

***Example:*** *Morvran has a Ward with a Potency of 5. His old rival Angrboda uses a sympathetic spell to send a telepathic threat. The Potency of Angrboda's spell must exceed the Ward's Potency. Amazingly, Angrboda's spell has a Potency of 7, so it gets through. Breaching the Ward erodes the Ward by one point of Potency (even though Angrboda's spell exceeds the Ward's Potency by two points, the Ward is only lowered by one point with each breach). Morvran casts the Ward spell again, but only points of Potency in excess of those already possessed by the existing Ward shore it back up. That means Morvran needs an exceptional success (five successes), since the Ward now has Potency 4.*

The Space 3 "Ban" spell, p. 237, allows a mage to add Bans to his Wards, keeping certain phenomena from insects to motor vehicles from entering his Ward.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Unseen Guard**
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Space

Protecting a sanctum against spies is a duty gladly undertaken by most members of the Adamantine Arrow. For those who have mastered this rote, such work is perhaps a bit easier. Willworkers of the Silver Ladder use the same magics to defend their private quarters.

### Avoidance Tactics (Space ●●●)

The mage can now cast the "Untouchable" spell, p. 235, on others.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The target gains one point of armor per dot the caster possesses in the Space Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day.

**Free Council Rote: Sideslip**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Space

### ●●● Disciple of Space

**While you may gird yourself with deadly weapons and powerful allies, they cannot enter my sanctum unless I will it, for the weave of space itself bars their passage. I look into many places at once and rearrange the threads that tie all things together, binding them tightly or severing them completely. When I wish it, I can open a door across all of space to step wherever I like.**

The Free Council uses this rote to defend its cabal members and allies from the sorts of harm they all too commonly encounter.

### Ban (Space ●●●)

The mage can create a Ban to restrict something from passing through a Ward (see "Ward," p. 236).

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

This spell is an exception to the normal spell-control rules (see "Spell Control," p. 128), allowing the mage to add a Ban to a pre-existing Ward. (Or he could combine this spell with Ward during casting; see "Combining Spells," p. 128.)

When combined with the appropriate dot of the Arcanum governing a given phenomenon (say, Forces 2 for fire or Forces 5 for nuclear radiation), the Ban can prevent that phenomenon from entering an area at all, by any means. Thus, a mage with the right Arcanum knowledge could prevent insects (Life), metal objects (Matter), spirits (Spirit) or even people (Life) — or all four if he desired — from intruding upon a given location.

The subject of a Ban can be as general or specific as a mage wishes, ranging from "all energy" (meaning that the energy currently within the location remains there and no new energy can enter), to "thrown rocks" (meaning that rocks can be carried in, but those thrown at the space are repelled), to "Jerry's albino boa constrictor, Lucifer" (which keeps that one snake, and only that snake, out). "All energy" might impose a –3 penalty (and require Forces), while "Jerry's albino boa constrictor, Lucifer" might invoke no penalty.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Barring the Ways**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Space

A Ladder mage's sanctum is inviolate to him. By means of this rote, he can render it thus to others, forbidding passage to inanimate objects, outside sources of energy, or even living things. Guardians of the Veil are known to use the same rote to cordon off potentially hazardous areas while they determine what to do about the sites.

### Destroy the Threads (Space ●●●)

The mage destroys a sympathetic connection.

**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Composure
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success destroys one degree of sympathetic connection that a target holds for a single person, place or thing, as per the chart on pp. 114-115. For example, this spell can be cast upon a mage to erode the Intimate sympathetic connection he has to his best friend. It does not affect his mental or social feelings or interactions with his friend, but does make it harder for him to connect with that friend using sympathetic magic.

A living creature unconsciously resists this spell's attempts to alter its connections with its Composure. These threads can be re-established normally over time in the usual fashion (i.e., through physical contact or even repeated mental and/or emotional association).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Shattering the Invisible Bonds**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Investigation + Space

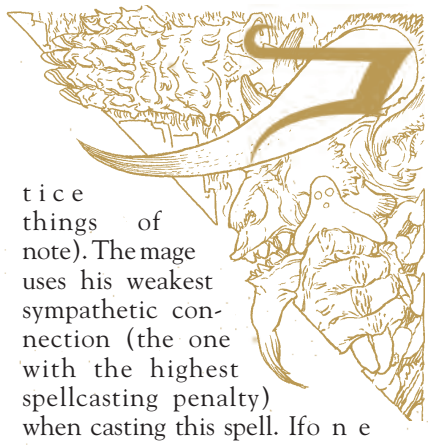
As willworkers of the Arrow know, any kind of vulnerability can and eventually is exploited by an enemy. This rote drastically reduces the likelihood of an attack via sympathetic magic. Mages of the Mysterium, who are occasionally pursued by hostile willworkers (or even stranger beings) in the course of their work value similar magic (Resolve + Investigation + Space).

### Multispatial Perception (Space ●●●)

The mage can scry multiple locations simultaneously.

**Practice:** Fraying
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

One location can be scryed per success. The mage catches only a glance at each location. If he concentrates on details at one location, he notices less of what's going on at others (–2 dice penalty on any perception rolls to notice things of note). The mage uses his weakest sympathetic connection (the one with the highest spellcasting penalty) when casting this spell. If one place is Intimately known (–2) but another has only been Described (–10), the spell suffers the higher –10 penalty. If the mage wishes to focus intently on more than one location at once, he must use the Mind 1 "One Mind, Two Thoughts" spell, p. 206, or the Mind 3 "Multi-Tasking" spell, p. 211, to multitask on that level.



**Free Council Rote: Spatial Collage**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Space

This rote enables a Council willworker to glimpse multiple locations simultaneously. While he might have some difficulty processing what he sees without the Mind Arcanum, he is definitely able to notice any obviously strange occurrences, and anything blatantly out of place in familiar locations.

### New Threads (Space ●●●)

The mage creates a sympathetic connection by fortifying that elusive bond between things that creates the principle of sympathy (using a favored childhood treasure, for example, to work either deleterious or beneficial magic upon another).

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Composure
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success creates one degree of sympathetic connection between the target and a single person, place or thing, as per the chart on pp. 114-115. For example, a mage who barely knows a woman he just met (an Encountered connection) can be given a greater degree of sympathetic connection to her (with three successes, this can be-

come an Intimate connection). This does not change the normal mental and social relationship between the two, only their mystical connection that can be exploited through Space magic.

A living creature unconsciously resists this spell with its Composure.

**Free Council Rote: Spinning the False Strand**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Space – Composure

Sometimes the only way to get close to someone is to create the means oneself. Free Council mages use this rote to forge an artificial sympathetic connection with another person, usually for the purposes of targeting that individual remotely with other magics. Guardians use a rote much like it (Composure + Occult + Space) to affect others at great distance, without ever needing to reveal themselves.

### Portal (Space ●●●)

This spell creates a spatial warp through which the caster (and anyone else who uses it) can move from one point in Creation to another without traversing the intervening space. The mage steps forward and "vanishes" from one place to arrive at another, "appearing" instantaneously. For those who hold to such tales, it is believed that many Awakened survived the fall of Atlantis through use of this spell, opening portals in space to flee to distant sanctums to lick their wounds.

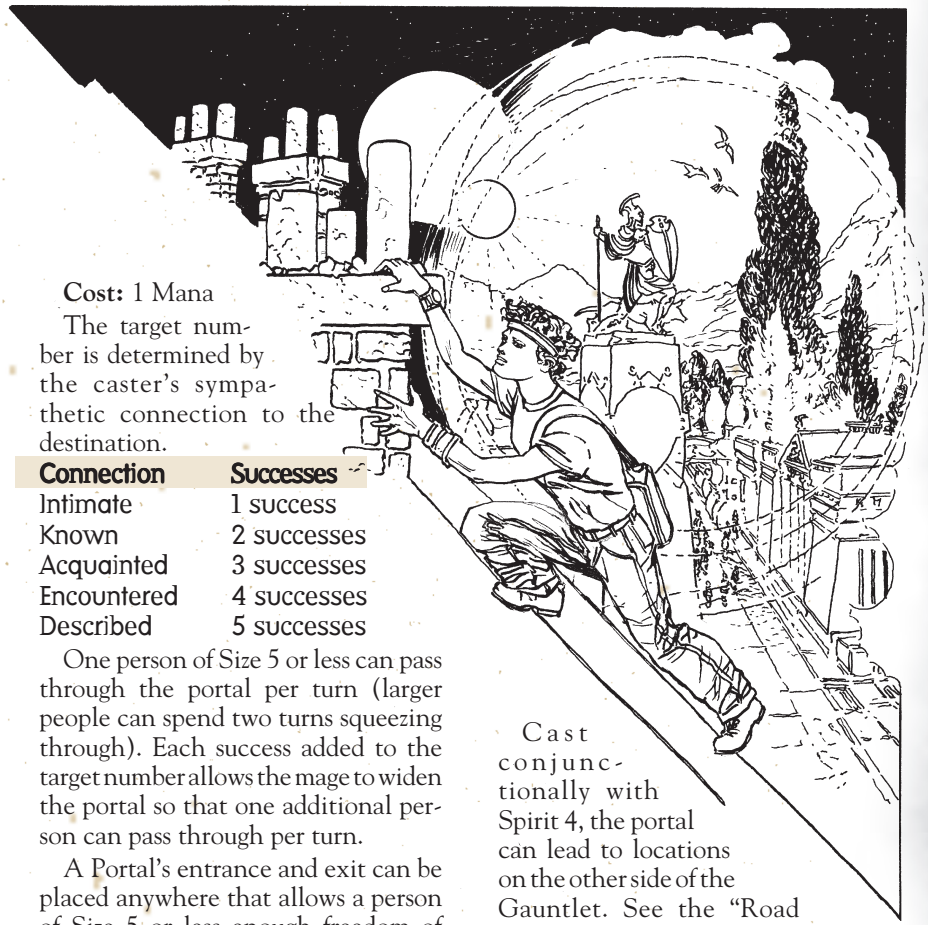
Naturally, the wise mage takes some time to scry the layout of the place to which he teleports (even if it is familiar to him), just to be certain that no unwelcome surprises await.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended (target number = degree of sympathetic connection)

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar



**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target number is determined by the caster's sympathetic connection to the destination.

| Connection | Successes |
|---|---|
| Intimate | 1 success |
| Known | 2 successes |
| Acquainted | 3 successes |
| Encountered | 4 successes |
| Described | 5 successes |

One person of Size 5 or less can pass through the portal per turn (larger people can spend two turns squeezing through). Each success added to the target number allows the mage to widen the portal so that one additional person can pass through per turn.

A Portal's entrance and exit can be placed anywhere that allows a person of Size 5 or less enough freedom of movement to enter or exit it in a single turn. Most Portals are used like doors, with the entrance and exit perpendicular to the ground, but the caster can be creative. The entrance and exit, however, must mirror each other on the same plane. For example, the entrance could be placed below a falling person, but the exit cannot be set to eject the falling person sideways. It must face down (as its opposite faces up).

Note that, without applying the "Portal Key" spell, p. 240, the caster cannot limit who can use the Portal. Nearby enemies can attempt to step through it, too. A person can be thrown through a portal forcibly. A hold must first be achieved in a grapple action (see "Unarmed Combat," pp. 157-159 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), after which the grappler can shove the person through the Portal as an overpower maneuver.

With Space 4, this spell can be cast with a prolonged Duration. With Space 5, it can be cast as an instant action (and with advanced prolonged Duration factors).

Cast conjunctionally with Spirit 4, the portal can lead to locations on the other side of the Gauntlet. See the "Road Master" spell.

**Mysterium Rote: Escape Hatch**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Investigation + Space

Mysterium mages use this rote to move friends and allies from dangerous locations. Silver Ladder willworkers often use their own version of the rote (Presence + Investigation + Space) to send servants on errands of various sorts.

### Ranged Blow (Space ●●●)

The mage can punch, kick or stab a target from afar.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana (per attack)

For the scene following casting, the mage can make ranged Brawl or Weaponry attacks against targets within sensory range. One Mana must be spent for the caster per attack. These attacks have all the benefits (the target does not get his Defense) and drawbacks (range penalties as per an aimed spell; p. 116) of a ranged attack.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Far Strike**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Investigation + Space

Rare martial artists of great skill can land a blow on a subject from considerable distances, transferring energy through empty space to inflict damage without ever touching an enemy conventionally. Adamantine Arrow mages make use of such a concept with this rote, allowing them to damage a foe from a distant range, even when no suitable ranged weapon is at hand.

### ●●●● Adept of Space

Unbound by space,
I walk in many places
at once,
and with the aid of
other magic can physically interact with the
people, places and
things of Creation in
multiple locations
simultaneously.
I can use the threads
of space to entangle
my foes and bind
them within a given
place in the universe,
or travel without
motion, vanishing and
reappearing as I will
across the illusion of
distance. I can spin a
universe of my own
and seek solitude there
or dismiss to that
place those things that
are precious to me,
there to await mycall
beyond the grasp
of others.

### Co-Location (Space ●●●●)

The mage performs personal co-location, being in two or more places at once. He creates multiple images of himself, one of which is really him. Without the use of the Mind Arcanum for multi-tasking, these duplicates are just that, reflections like those in a mirror, all performing the same tasks, saying the same things simultaneously. These duplicates are normally insubstantial, but the mage is capable of choosing which location she is actually at from moment to moment.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage can exist simultaneously in one location plus one per success and can reflexively choose (during his action in the Initiative roster) which of these locations he actually physically inhabits (through a form of reflexive teleportation) from turn to turn. Only his real self can be affected by attacks; duplicates have no substance. The mage uses his weakest sympathetic connection (the one with the highest spellcasting penalty) when casting either version of this spell. (In other words, if he wants copies of himself in Prague, Reykjavik and Tokyo, but has only briefly been to Prague, he applies that location's sympathetic penalty to the overall difficulty of the spell.)

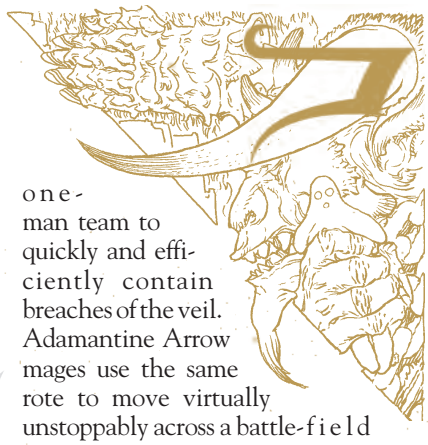
By using the Mind 3 "Multi-Tasking" spell, p. 211, when creating these duplicates, the mage can make one or more of his immaterial duplicates say or do something different than he himself does (as per normal multi-tasking rules). Without use of other sympathetic spells, the mage can only interact with the location he is physically in, though he can perceive (as per "Multispatial Perception," p. 237) what goes on in each reflection's immediate surroundings.

With Space 5, this spell can be cast with prolonged Duration.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Cleanup Crew**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Space

With this rote, a Guardian can be in many places at once, able to move effortlessly between locations and act as a one-man team to quickly and efficiently contain breaches of the veil. Adamantine Arrow mages use the same rote to move virtually unstoppably across a battle-field or through an enemy holding.



### Pocket Realm (Space ●●●●)

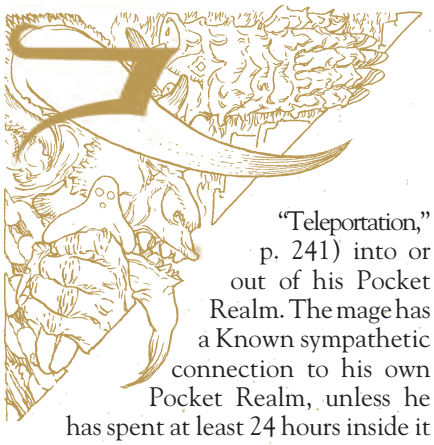
The mage creates a pocket universe to which he can escape (with his familiar, provided he chooses to brings it, along with any possessions he might wish to carry). This "space" has no particular size beyond that imparted upon it by the mage himself.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

One success provides Size 20 or less, +10 per additional Target factor. Without use of other Arcana (such as Forces for light), it is a "place" (a term best used only loosely in this regard) devoid of features, dimensions, energy or boundaries. While it defies the classification of color (having no true light beyond that which the mage brings with himself), most describe it as being gray and lifeless. It is neither small nor large (though, without the presence of any phenomena other than the mage herself, such distinctions are virtually useless), but simply *is*. Those who dwell upon the school of esoterica call this location a Correspondence Point, wherein the enigma of the non-existence of space is truly revealed.

Unless Matter 4 is included in the casting (or used once the mage is within the Pocket Realm), the mage eventually exhausts the air supply (the Matter spell transforms molecules to recycle oxygen). He can breathe there for one hour, minus 10 minutes per point of Size over 5. Life 5 can be used to create a mystical life-sustaining effect.

A mage can open portals (see "Portal," p. 238) or teleport (see



"Teleportation," p. 241) into or out of his Pocket Realm. The mage has a Known sympathetic connection to his own Pocket Realm, unless he has spent at least 24 hours inside it (requiring an extended Duration), after which his connection becomes Intimate.

If the Pocket Realm spell expires with the mage still in it, he appears in space exactly where he was before going to the realm. He and anyone (or anything) within the same space in which he appears must contend with Knockdown (see "Knockdown," p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

If he used the "Safe Keeping" spell (below) to place items in his Pocket Realm, they are ejected when the spell maintaining the realm expires. They appear in the same space they occupied when they were placed into the realm. (If the mage placed things in his realm while traveling far and wide, he now has to travel back to those places to retrieve the items — assuming nobody moves them before he gets to them.)

**Free Council Rote: Non-space**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Investigation + Space

Some Free Council mages use the pocket of nil-space provided by this rote as a place to hide out, and perhaps even as something of a "home away from home," a safe haven during dangerous times. Mysterium mages use a variant rote (Composure + Investigation + Space) to access a quiet place to rest, meditate and ponder away from distractions.

### Portal Key (Space ●●●●)

The mage can attune a portal (see "Portal," p. 238) he creates to some kind of activation trigger (such as a particular word or phrase, a given gesture or even something inherent, such as the presence of a redhead or a member of the mage's own family), so that the portal opens and is usable by anyone who performs the trigger, but it otherwise remains closed. The mage can also use the Portal Key to declare who can (and cannot) pass through the portal.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Unlike the normal rules for spell control (see "Spell Control," p. 128), the mage can cast this on a pre-existing portal of his own or he can combine it with the creation of a portal.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Attuning the Gateway**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Space

Silver Ladder mages use this rote both as a means to program their spatial gateways and to craft instantaneous portals when a situation suddenly turns unfavorable.

### Safe Keeping (Space ●●●●)

The mage can place an item into his Pocket Realm (see p. 239) for safekeeping and retrieve it with another casting of this spell.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The item's Size cannot exceed the pocket universe's own Size. The Pocket Realm must be pre-existing or cast in combination with this spell.

The effect of this spell is lasting, but if the Pocket Realm spell expires, the item appears in space exactly where it was before being placed into the Pocket Realm. It and anyone (or anything) within the same space in which the reappearing item arrives must contend with Knockdown (see "Knockdown," p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

**Free Council Rote: Storage Space**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Investigation + Space

Over time, some Free Council mages find that their Correspondence Point spaces end up as something of a dumping ground for useful items or those too precious to leave anywhere in the universe. This rote enables the willworker to place inanimate objects (quite a large quantity of them, actually, should such prove necessary) in one of the safest possible locales. Some Adamantine Arrow mages use such a non-place as a secret weapons cache.

### Suspension (Space ●●●●)

By means of this spell, the mage essentially entangles a given being or object with invisible spatial strands, rendering him incapable of leaving.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The subject is boxed in and cannot leave under his (or its, in the case of moving objects) own power, detained until such time as the spell expires or the mage chooses to grant release (or someone else with an advanced understanding of spatial magics undoes the imprisonment). From the subject's point of view, no amount of movement in any direction results in progress toward escaping the zone of confinement. Outside observers see the subject moving but not getting anywhere. Although the subject cannot travel anywhere, he still gains his Defense against attacks to which it normally applies.

This pocket of "looped" spatial strands can be placed directly upon a subject (in which case the subject can contest it with a reflexive Composure + Gnosis roll), or it can be set up so as to snare any who physically enter the space. With a single success, the Suspension snare covers a defined volume of five cubic yards; additional Target factors can increase this volume. The snare does not hold more cubic mass than it is designed to encompass. Made too small, it cannot hold the desired volume. Too large, and it may capture unintended individuals and objects.

As the strands close about a living target, he can attempt to slip free in the first turn of contact with a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll as a contested and reflexive action. If his successes exceed the spell's Potency, he slips free of the strands. (If he is a mage, he can attempt to use countermagic instead. See p. 122.)

Once suspended, the subject can attempt to wriggle free of the strands with

an extended Dexterity + Athletics roll, with rolls once per turn and a target number equal to the Suspension spell's Potency plus its caster's Space dots. Note that a mage with Space 4 can use the "Teleportation" spell (below) to instantly extricate himself from the strands.

In conjunction with Death 2 or Spirit 2, Suspension affects (or can be made to ensnare) Twilight ghosts or spirits, respectively. If such beings have powers that allow them to step across the Gauntlet, they can circumvent Suspension (as can a mage using the Spirit 4 "Road Master" spell, p. 254). In conjunction with Spirit 3, Suspension can be extended to snare beings on the other side of the Gauntlet, in the Shadow Realm, making escape via Numina or spells that cross the Gauntlet impossible.

With Space 4, this spell can be cast with a prolonged Duration.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Spider and Fly**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Space

Like a spider enmeshing its quarry in a web, an Arrow mage uses this rote to bind an enemy in place, rendering her easy prey. Guardians of the Veil also use this magic to ensnare escaping witnesses before they can do anything foolish.

### Teleportation (Space ●●●●)

The mage can traverse space without moving, all without the need to open a Portal (p. 238). Through use of this spell, which is invaluable to spies, couriers, fighters and just about anyone else who has reason to get to (or away from) somewhere in a hurry, mages get where they need to be, no matter how distant from where they are.

As with creating a Portal, the wise mage first scrys his destination. Sometimes there is no time for such caution, however, and the willworker must simply hope that wherever he's going is better than where he is.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage must have a sympathetic connection to his destination. The weaker the sympathetic connection, the more penalties his spellcasting roll suffers (see "Sympathetic Spells," p. 114). A location that he is currently scrying is a Known sympathetic connection (–4). He can teleport himself, his familiar (if he has one) and anything he wears or carries (provided it's not too large; he needs one extra success per Size rating above 3). Cast conjunctionally with Spirit 4, this spell can teleport the user across the Gauntlet.

**Mysterium Rote: Wormhole**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Space

Sometimes used as an escape route and sometimes as a means to reach otherwise inaccessible locales, this rote is occasionally employed simply as a mode of transportation. Silver Ladder mages who do not wish to resort to mundane conveyances sometimes make use of this magic (Presence + Occult + Space).

## ●●●●● Master of Space

### Dimensional Axis (Space ●●●●●)

The mage performs complex co-location on an area, causing multiple locations to exist in the same space. She can, for example, "stack" multiple locations in space, making them coexist for however long she wishes (even permanently, should she decide to expend the time and resources to do so). While thus layered, places and things do not normally interact with each other — meaning that a lamp, a couch and a bowl of cereal, each drawn from one of three different places, can all occupy the same space without interacting. An onlooker might think that he sees an optical illusion where perspective tricks his mind. The lamp, couch and bowl of cereal all appear to be the same distance from him, but surely he's mistaken — or so he might assume if he does not have Mage Sight or otherwise suspect that magic is at work.

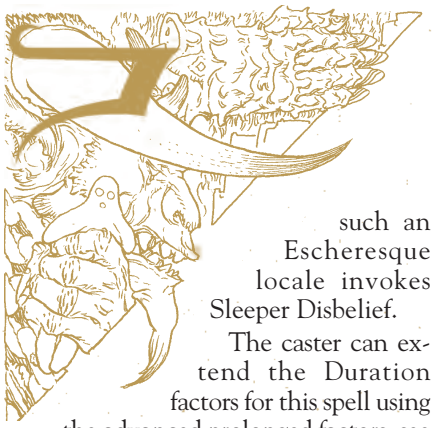
The mage can decide to make things in space interact (usually disastrously); see "Worlds Collide," p. 244.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Extended (target number = one success per location)
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None



With mastery of Space, I am able to bend the very axes on which the universe rests, reducing a house to the size of a housecat or stretching a lonely road out to infinity. Just as I am able to be in several places simultaneously, I can draw objects, places and even other people into the same space, causing them to coexist harmlessly or violently, as I desire. I can warp the tapestry of space upon itself in ways others can scarcely imagine, concealing my sanctum among paths unknown to mortal senses, or ensnaring those who offend me within a hell of twisting roads possessed of no origin or destination.

The target number is one success per overlapping location. Navigating through these stacked locations can be confusing, especially when trying to pick up one object that rests in the same space as three others. A reflexive Intelligence + Investigation roll must be made for a person to interact with the intended space. Needless to say,



such an Escheresque locale invokes Sleeper Disbelief.

The caster can extend the Duration factors for this spell using the advanced prolonged factors; see p. 119.

**Free Council Rote: Many-Roomed Mansion**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Space

A Council willworker with knowledge of this rote can have an entire mansion's worth of rooms in a studio apartment — provided, of course, he's willing to have all of the rooms existing in the same space. At the very least, this magic serves as quite the space-saver, allowing the mage to "stack" tremendous quantities of materials "inside" one another and to interact with each individual item as desired through use of the Space Arcanum.

### *Hide Space (Space ●●●●●)*

In many stories, the abodes of wizards are hidden from the eyes of ordinary people and can be accessed only through special paths unknown to most. This spell enables a mage to create just such a sanctum, spinning complex barriers of space to guard against unwanted intrusion. In effect, the chosen area exists only partway inside the conventional concept of a place, hidden within a convoluted knot of twisted paths through which a would-be visitor must travel in very specific ways. Thus, while logic might dictate that walking straight for a mile from the north bank of the river gets one to a destination, in practice, 10 miles of twists and turns, which seem to lead through much more terrain than could be possible, intervene. Taking any wrong turns waylays the journey, meaning that the traveler must find his way out (by no means a guarantee) and start over. Therefore, unless an individual is *extremely* lucky, he must know the way to reach his intended destination.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Attempting to find the hidden site can be undertaken as an extended Intelligence + Investigation or Survival (whichever Skill is higher) action, with a target number equal to one higher than the spell's Potency and 30 minutes' time spent per roll. Any failure forces the seeker to start over. A dramatic failure gets him lost within the tangle of space surrounding the location, meaning that he must now navigate his way back to square one (a difficult task at best; he must collect the same number of successes that got him there). A person with the Direction Sense Merit (p. 110 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) is allowed one roll for every 10 minutes spent searching instead of every 30 minutes.

The caster can extend the Duration factors of this spell using the advanced prolonged factors; see p. 119.

**Mysterium Rote: The House in the Woods**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Space

Mages of the Mysterium often become collectors of strange, wonderful and dangerous treasures. This rote allows such a willworker to protect his possessions and his abode from intruders, confounding perceptions and driving would-be thieves away. Guardians also make use of this rote, protecting unusual places and paranormal phenomena from prying eyes.

### *Labyrinth (Space ●●●●●)*

The mage can mutate dimensional axes. A hallway can be made to go on for miles (despite the fact that it is in a building that is only a hundred feet across).

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

A simple spatial warp, making one direction appear to be another, might levy no penalties, while a complex one, making all roads lead to one junction, might be –3 or more, depending on how much space is affected.

The mage is capable of sculpting bizarre vicissitudes of place and distance through this level of Space, folding space in ways that defy the senses. For example, the horror-movie staple of causing every possible path of egress from a given locale to instead lead back to isolated wilderness is possible. So is making a road that a person can visually confirm leads to the store down the street, but traveling that way actually leads in the opposite direction. Needless to say, this use of the Arcanum is extraordinarily vulgar and potentially insanity-inducing if practiced in sufficiently blatant ways upon another person (almost assuredly requiring reflexive Resolve + Composure rolls for the subject to remain calm and rational).

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Sundered Path**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Space

Guaranteed to eventually dissuade all save the most dogged of interlopers, this rote helps a Guardian of the Veil defeat Sleeper (and others') curiosity with frustration, fear or despair, as the caster sees fit. Roads that go on a little too long leave inquiring souls feeling tired and most eventually lose interest. Paths that double back on themselves in some nightmarish Möbius loop can erode the courage and even sanity of one unprepared for such inexplicable experiences.

### *Manifold Presence (Space ●●●●● + Life ●●●● or ●●●●●; optional Matter ●●●●● and/or Mind ● or ●●●)*

Just as the sun is one thing and yet exists everywhere in half of the world at once, a mage with an advanced knowledge of Space and Life (and, quite possibly, some understanding of Matter and/or Mind) can simultaneously be in several places physically. The mage could, if he wished, chop a winter's worth of firewood in an hour or so, guard every entrance to a building, or even become a one-man mob.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** Varies

This spell is an advanced version of "Co-Location," p. 239. With the Life 4 version of this spell, the mage's dupli-

cates (one per success) are substantial, but are all extensions of the same physical presence. When one is wounded, for example, all feel pain and suffer Health wounds of damage. (The casting mage himself does not suffer wounds unless he is attacked directly.) Without adding the appropriate level of Mind (1 or 3 for multitasking), these copies do exactly what the mage does and all share in a single Defense (meaning that any attack against any copy causes the Defense of all to erode by the same amount over the course of a turn). It costs one Mana to add multitasking to the spell, regardless of the number of duplicates.

With the Life 5 version of the spell, the mage can create distinct clones of himself at different locations, one clone per success and one Mana per clone. Each clone has its own Health and Defense.

If a mage wants his duplicates' equipment (items intended to interact with other beings such knives or guns) to be substantial, regardless of which version of the spell is used, Matter 5 must be added to the casting and one Mana per object must be spent (which gives physical substance to each copy of the item possessed by all duplicates).

As with the simpler Co-Location spell, the mage's weakest sympathetic connection (the one with the highest spellcasting penalty) is used when casting this spell.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Walking with the Sun**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Space

An Arrow willworker with this rote at her disposal becomes a veritable army unto herself. Likewise, a Mysterium mage using this rote is a one-man research team.

### Oubliette
(Space ●●●●● + Forces ●●●, Mind ●●●●, Time ●●●●)

On occasion, the most effective way to deal with a foe is to break her mind. Some mages favor psychic intrusions, others use threats, while still others favor old-fashioned torture. A willworker armed with this magic need not resort to such indelicate methods. The spell banishes a person into a pocket of looped space in which the victim sees herself reflected, as though in some especially deranged funhouse. Images created through both the Forces and Time Arcana allow her to see herself in various states of disarray: maddened, starving, dying of self-inflicted wounds, and the like. No matter where she flees, she hears her own voice, screaming at her, and hears what she believes to be her own desperate thoughts, echoing back to her from across gulfs of space and time. Implanted suggestions and false memories make moments feel like days.

Needless to say, use of this magic can easily lead a mage astray from the path of Wisdom.

**Practice:** Making and Unmaking

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

During the Duration of this spell, an extended roll (with the same dice pool used to cast the spell) is made for the caster once every 10 minutes, contested reflexively by the victim's Composure + Gnosis. If the caster's successes exceed the target's successes, each excess success causes the target to lose one Willpower point as visions drive her mad. If the victim is reduced to zero Willpower points, she suffers a severe derangement (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 96-97) and returns to normal space/time a gibbering wreck, likely capable of little more than curling up in a fetal ball or screaming herself hoarse. After she returns from this imprisonment, she truthfully answers any questions put to her by the spell's caster. If the subject successfully contests a roll made for the mage at any point, she returns to mental reality. She is almost certainly shaken and scared, but is perfectly capable of acting normally.

**Mysterium Rote: Hell of Many Mirrors**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Space

Sometimes employed in combat, and sometimes simply as a punishment, this rote sees some use on the part of Mysterium mages who are more concerned with ends than means. A few Free Council willworkers have their own version of the rote (Wits + Occult + Space), which they use to wrest forth magical secrets from those who refuse to share.



### Shrink/Expand
(Space ●●●●● + Life ●●, ●●● or ●●●● or Matter ●●)

The mage can warp spatial axes to cause an object to become smaller or larger.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

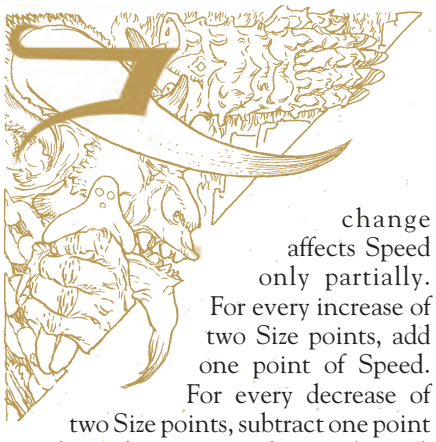
**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage can decrease or increase a target's Size by one point per success, to a minimum of Size 1 (when shrinking) or additional Size points equal to his Gnosis (when expanding). An SUV can be reduced to the dimensions of a toy car (though it is still a fully functional toy car, which weighs thousands of pounds). Mages who would perform such alterations are advised to remember the way in which these changes can interact with the environment. In the example of the SUV, it's recommended that one not allow the vehicle onto a muddy road (where it will sink like a stone in water due to its immense weight condensed to a tiny surface area). A target made larger through use of this spell is not made heavier; he still might be able to walk across rotting boards or thin ice that might otherwise give way to someone with a larger mass but smaller size.

Affecting a base life form requires Life 2, a median life form Life 3, and a human being Life 4. Affecting an object requires Matter 2.

A being's species factor is partially based on Size and partially on metabolism — some creatures are slower than others, even though their large stride would seemingly make them faster (as with giraffes and elephants). Since this spell doesn't alter metabolism, the Size



change affects Speed only partially. For every increase of two Size points, add one point of Speed. For every decrease of two Size points, subtract one point of Speed. An average human (Size 5) who becomes Size 7 gets a +1 Speed bonus, while he suffers a –1 Speed if he becomes Size 3.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Loom of Space**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine (for living creatures) or Crafts or Science (for objects) + Space

This rote grants a Silver Ladder willworker the ability to increase or decrease the spatial axes of any person, place or thing he can affect. Thus, a small steel plate could be expanded to serve as a shield, a rare relic made small enough to evade all save the most thorough mundane examinations, or the mage himself rendered sufficiently tall to reach a height twice or more than normal. Given the utility of this magic, it sees use by mages of every order.

### Worlds Collide (Space ●●●●●)

The mage can co-locate people or objects with one another and cause them to physically interact. When two or more objects (including people) are superimposed upon one another and allowed to interact, they are usually destroyed in a very messy fashion, as molecular lattices collide and drive each other apart. For living creatures, the result is usually crippling at the very least.

**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Stamina + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

One subject per Target factor can be affected. If even a single target succeeds in the contested resistance roll, none of the targets are co-located.

The spell inflicts one point of aggravated damage per success. Once the targets contact one another, they are immediately repulsed (see "Knockdown," p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). They do not remain fused.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Shattered Images**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Investigation + Space vs. Stamina + Gnosis

By crudely superimposing the spatial axes of multiple foes atop one another, a Ladder willworker is capable of striking them down, no matter where they stand or how they move. Those affected by such magic are often horribly maimed if not killed outright. Most mages caution against the spell's indiscriminate use, lest Wisdom be forsaken.

## Spirit

**Purview:** Exorcism, the Shadow Realm, soul retrieval, spirits, the Gauntlet

By setting out on the path of the Spirit Arcanum, a mage seeks to become an intermediary between realms. Spirit mages are often thoughtful people, those who consider the consequences of their actions well beyond the immediate — not only forward into time, but also outward, mindful of the ripples their deeds can cause. Many Spirit mages were religious (or at least faithful) people before the Awakening, though some were incapable of articulating what it was they felt, and others believed in nothing before the revelation came that stole their ignorance. Many of those who delve into this Arcanum are willing to admit that there are things beyond the comprehension of man, and they're comfortable with that notion. They walk into the shadows beyond the firelight, knowing full well that there are things to be afraid of out there, and are perfectly happy with that understanding. Unlike Space mages, they do not blaze a path for others. The road such mages walk is a solitary one undertaken only by those who accept that the world is grander, stranger and more dangerous than humanity can possibly comprehend.

### Ruling Arcanum: Primal Wild

The gross/subtle pair of Life/Spirit provides the Ruling Arcana for the Primal Wild, the vast, primordial Eden of forests, mountains, rivers and plains where Nature holds sway. Spirit is the ephemeral expression of the pair.

### • Initiate of Spirit

#### Coaxing the Spirits (Spirit •)

The mage can whisper to a spirit sleeping within a material object and ask for its aid, making it easier to use the object. The spirit does not awaken, but it does yield its power a bit, allowing the mage to pick a lock easier and faster, carve a wooden statue with more ease and grace, or even drive a car with more facility.

**Practice:** Compelling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

Each success provides a +1 dice bonus on a single roll made within the spell's scene-long Duration. This bonus applies only to actions over which the object itself might conceivably have some sway, such as a car's ability to steer straight, but not a rock's power to be thrown more accurately (it has no control over the air).

***Example:*** *Harbinger has coaxed the spirit of his Chevy convertible to help him maneuver a hairpin curve coming up in the road. He gets three successes on the casting, which gives him +3 dice on a single roll for controlling the car.*

**Free Council Rote: Helping Hand**
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Socialize + Spirit

Some Free Council mages understand that consciousness exists in more varied forms than most modern Sleepers know. Calling upon traditional wisdom, they use this rote to speak to the slumbering presence within most things, requesting aid in a task at hand. Silver Ladder mages are often more direct and forceful in casting their own version of this rote (Presence + Socialize + Spirit).

#### Exorcist's Eye (Spirit •)

This spell enables a mage to detect the presence of a possessing entity within a terrestrial being, often to the end of expelling that spirit by means of the "Exorcism" spell, p. 248. Those who are knowledgeable in the ways of the spirit realm may be able to identify what sort of spirit inhabits a given individual, but such information is not necessarily conveyed by this spell.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

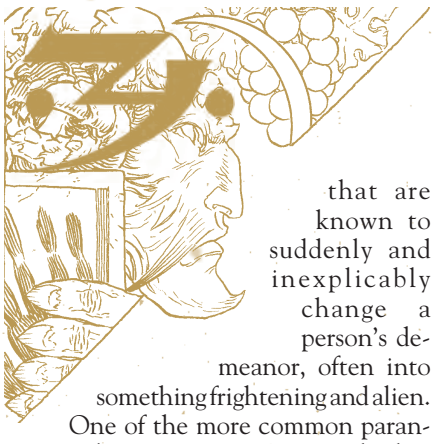
If a spirit has the ability to hide and wishes to do so, it may use such a power and pit its own successes directly against this spell's successes (the spell's Potency) in an attempt to remain hidden.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Parting the Shadow**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Spirit

The Guardians of the Veil have catalogued a wide variety of phenomena



I see the coming and going of my brothers and sisters in the spirit realm. I know where they are, whether they hide in the invisible spaces, or within a flesh-and-blood being's body. I see the wall between realms with perfect clarity and know its strength. I speak the tongue of spirits, and my voice is known to them.



that are known to suddenly and inexplicably change a person's demeanor, often into something frightening and alien. One of the more common paranormal causes is possession, whether on the part of a ghost, a spirit or something else entirely. This rote enables a Guardian to detect the presence of an ephemeral entity "riding" a host. Mages of the Mysterium use the same rote when searching out possession in the course of their work.

### Second Sight (Spirit •)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). He can also determine the Strength of the local Gauntlet (see "Gauntlet Strength," p. 282).

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

See "Resonance," pp. 277-280, for rules on scrutinizing magic with this spell. The caster gains a +1 dice bonus (regardless of the number of casting success) on perception and scrutiny rolls to sense spirit Numina and werewolf Gifts and rituals, as well as loci.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Solomon's Sight**
**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Spirit

King Solomon was said to be wise in the ways of magic, a master of the spiritual realms. This rote allows a Ladder willworker to emulate that ancient ruler, perceiving the most intricate and delicate nuances of magic, and the local complexion of the barrier holding spirit apart from flesh. Mages of all orders use this rote, but Mysterium willworkers often do so under urgent circumstances (Wits + Occult + Spirit).

### Spirit Tongue (Spirit •)

The mage can see, hear and speak with spirits. He can also detect their unseen presence if they are hiding or have chosen to not reveal themselves. Unless the mage has some means of peering across the Gauntlet or affecting the Shadow World, he can converse only with Twilight spirits. (The mage can speak across the barrier of the Gauntlet with the Spirit 2 "Peer Across the Gauntlet" spell, p. 247.)

The mage can see ghosts, too, but they appear hazy and indistinct and he cannot hear them unless he also uses Death 1 while casting this spell. He cannot perceive mental projections in Twilight unless he adds Mind 1 to the casting.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

This spell's successes must exceed the Potency of any power (if any) used to conceal the spirit.

## •• Apprentice of Spirit

I speak and my words are heard by the spirits, who come in answer to my call. I touch that unseen wall parting spirit from flesh and can strengthen it or sap its potency, as I desire. With my bare flesh, I touch beings in Twilight.

**Mysterium Rote: Fleshless Speech**
**Dice Pool:** Presence + Socialize + Spirit

Mages of the Mysterium have many reasons for dealing with the denizens of Twilight (or the Shadow Realm). Some spirits recall the crafting (or final resting places) of ancient relics, and might be willing to share such knowledge for a price. Conversely, some spirits pay close attention to the happenings of the world of flesh and can prove invaluable informants. This rote enables a member of the Mysterium to communicate with a spirit currently inhabiting the same plane of existence as her (though it by no means guarantees civil or any discourse on the part of the spirit). Silver Ladder willworkers use the same rote in their own dealings with entities of the unseen world.

### Ephemeral Shield (Spirit ••)

The mage protects himself with ephemeral armor that defends against physical attacks or attacks made by ephemeral entities.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Spirit Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

Note that this magical armor does not apply against an opponent's attempts to achieve a grappling hold on the mage (the Fate, Mind, Space and Time Arcana provide shielding spells to do that). Nor does it apply against a grappling opponent's attempts to overpower the mage. It does, however, protect against attempts to inflict damage upon him (subtract the armor points from any overpower roll that intends to damage the mage or attack him with a drawn weapon).

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Ghost Shirt**
**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult + Spirit

Not all threats come from this world. Arrow mages use this rote to armor themselves against physical attacks

from beings native to the Shadow Realm. Guardians of the Veil, who also have occasion to meet with spirits under less-than-friendly circumstances, use their own magic (Resolve + Occult + Spirit) to achieve the same effect.

### Gossamer Touch (Spirit ●●)

Through the casting of this spell, the mage gains the power to physically interact with spirits and spiritual things in the Twilight state, as the Death 2 "Touch of the Grave" spell, p. 138. She can also touch spirits and be touched in turn by any nearby spirit. She cannot affect ghosts or affect mental projections (she needs the Death and Mind Arcana, respectively, for those effects).

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None
**Free Council Rote: Grasp the Otherworld**
**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Spirit

Free Council mages cast this rote in order to interact physically with Twilight spirits. While under the effects of this magic, they can make contact with such beings, whether to offer a friendly touch or a closed fist. Adamantine Arrow willworkers use the same magic in the defense of cabal and sanctum.

### Grant the Second Sight (Spirit ●●)

This is as the Spirit 1 "Second Sight" spell, p. 246, except that the mage casts it upon another mage or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, even if its Duration is less than one scene.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may resist with a reflexive contested Resolve + Gnosis roll.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Imparting the Spirit Gaze**
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Spirit

Members of the Silver Ladder use this rote to bestow Spirit Arcanum perceptions upon allies of supernatural origin, mage or otherwise. Free Council mages are known to extend similar perceptions through alternate means (Intelligence + Persuasion + Spirit).

### Lesser Spirit Summons (Spirit ●●)

The mage calls out to a spirit, either summoning a specific spirit or sending out a general call to the nearest one within sensory range. (If the mage is in the material realm, the call summons a nearby Twilight spirit, if any. If he is in the Shadow Realm, it summons a nearby spirit there.) He may either call one or more spirits personally known to him, or he may specify any type of spirit of his choosing (tree spirits or bird spirits, for example), or even send out a general summons to *all* spirits within his range (by spending one Mana; the closest spirit responds). The spirit comes to the caster with as much speed as it can muster, although it cannot be made to go farther than the maximum distance it is allowed to travel from its anchor.

The call may be a gentle request for audience or it may be an irresistible compulsion, at the mage's discretion. Many spirits do not appreciate being called in the latter fashion, though some are too mindless to care and others may actually esteem the mage's boldness in demanding their presence in so unhesitating a manner.

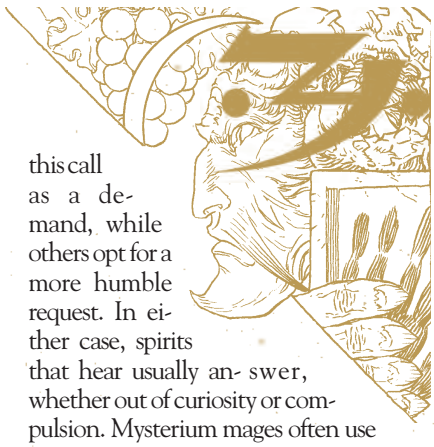
**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

A curious spirit usually answers a general call or personal summons, but a reflexive and contested roll is made if it does not wish to respond. This spell does not allow the mage to command the spirit or force it to manifest (see the Spirit 3 "Control Spirit" spell, p. 248).

The summoned spirit must remain near the summoning mage for the rest of the scene, unless the caster allows it to leave.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Gather the Unseen Host**
**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Spirit vs. Resistance

Silver Ladder willworkers cast this rote to summon wandering spirits. Some phrase



this call as a demand, while others opt for a more humble request. In either case, spirits that hear usually answer, whether out of curiosity or compulsion. Mysterium mages often use ancient formulae and mystic signs to perform such a call (Intelligence + Persuasion + Spirit), rather than resorting to force of personality as Ladder willworkers do.

### Peer Across the Gauntlet (Spirit ●●)

The mage can peer across the Gauntlet into the Shadow Realm, the spiritual reflection of the material world. If he is in the Shadow Realm, he can use this spell to peer into the material realm.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

During the spell's Duration, the mage can take an instant action to concentrate and glimpse past the Gauntlet. Any perception rolls made are modified by the Gauntlet's Strength (see "Gauntlet Strength," p. 282). With Spirit 3, glimpsing across the Gauntlet can be performed as a reflexive action, requiring no concentration.

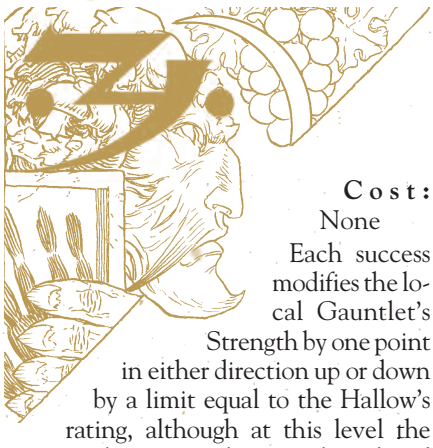
**Mysterium Rote: Otherworldly Sight**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Spirit

The power to gaze into the Shadow is prized by many Mysterium willworkers. With this rote, a mage can watch that other world, espying its details as easily he normally does in his own native plane.

### Place of Power (Spirit ●●)

The mage can fortify or weaken the Gauntlet at a Hallow.

**Practice:** Ruling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar



**Cost:** None

Each success modifies the local Gauntlet's Strength by one point in either direction up or down by a limit equal to the Hallow's rating, although at this level the Gauntlet's Strength cannot be reduced to zero. With the Spirit 5 "Control Gauntlet" spell, p. 254, the Gauntlet can be made to fade, creating a Verge where any being may step over instantly without using a spell.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Closing the Ways**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Survival + Spirit

Most commonly used by Guardians of the Veil to render the Gauntlet virtually impermeable at a Hallow, this rote can also be used to reduce the Strength of that barrier. Silver Ladder mages occasionally use the same magic to make manifestation easier for spirit allies.

### Soul Jar (Spirit ●●)

As the Death 2 "Soul Jar" spell, p. 137.

### Control Spirit (Spirit ●●●)

The mage can force a spirit to perform an action. A single, simple command ("Attack!" "Flee!" "Stand there!") can be issued per success.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Complex commands require multiple successes. For example, "Go to the Contessa's mansion and steal the Borgia Diamond!" might require three successes.

If the spirit has not completed the action by the time the Duration expires, it does not have to finish the job.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Crown of the Incarna**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Death vs. Resistance

The Adamantine Arrow's relations with spirits are often as martial as their relations with mages. This rote is no exception, and Arrow mages use it to enlist spirits as soldiers in their wars. The Mysterium uses a similar rote to turn aside the assaults of spirit guardians.

### Exorcism (Spirit ●●●)

The mage can exorcise a possessing spirit or haunting ghost, forcing it out of the body it possesses or freeing it from its physical fetter.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended (target number = spirit's Willpower) and contested; target rolls Power + Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Lasting

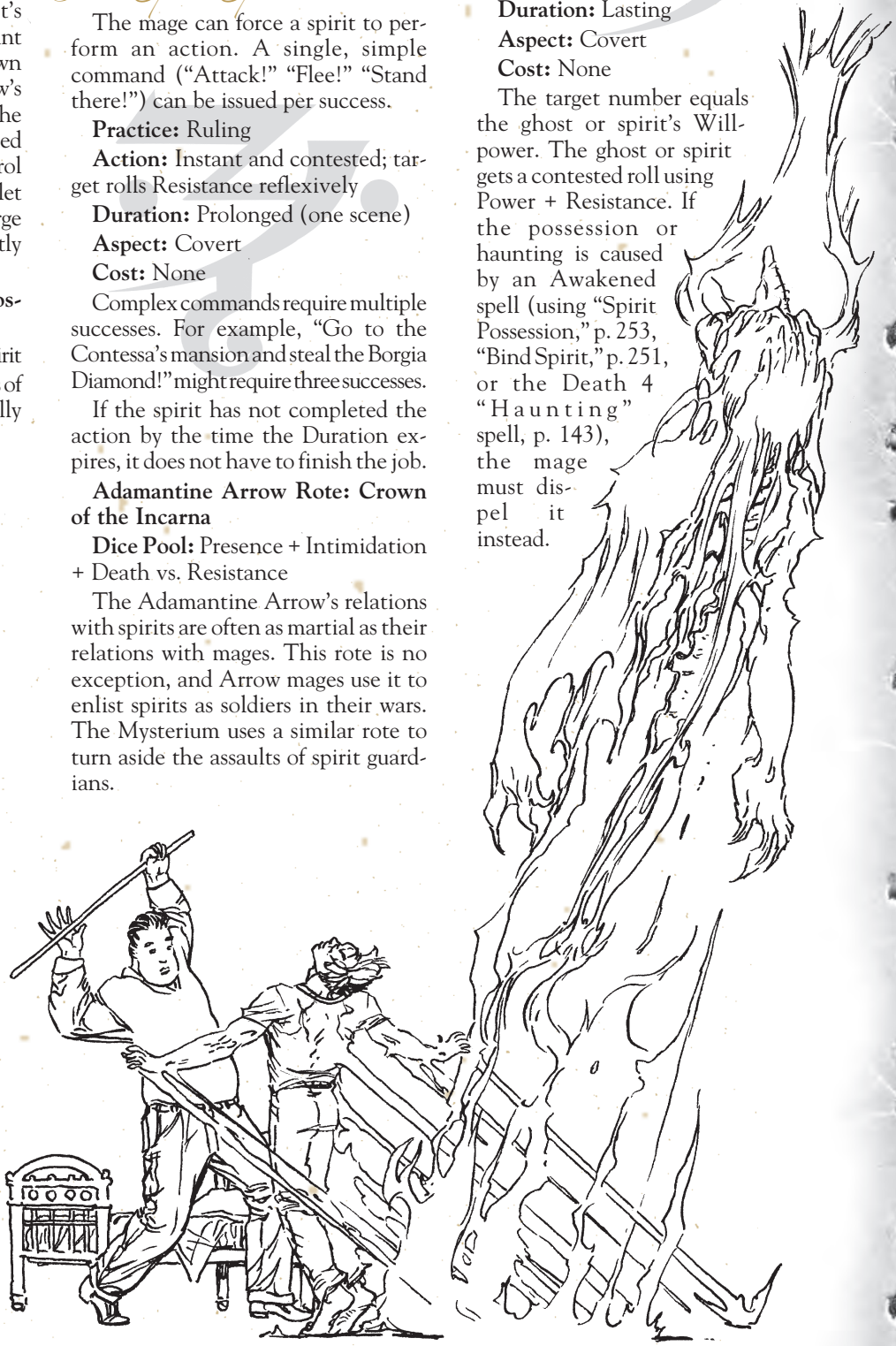
**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The target number equals the ghost or spirit's Willpower. The ghost or spirit gets a contested roll using Power + Resistance. If the possession or haunting is caused by an Awakened spell (using "Spirit Possession," p. 253, "Bind Spirit," p. 251, or the Death 4 "Haunting" spell, p. 143), the mage must dispel it instead.

### ●●● Disciple of Spirit

*I walk in worlds unseen, companion and peer to the gods. I speak gentle words to that which sleeps, waking the spirits of base matter and mindless life. I mend the hurts of my invisible kin with kind words and healing hands. I cast out dark spirits and haunting ghosts alike, and am shielded against their wiles. I have forged a bond with my familiar, a friend and ally.*



Note that in the case of the Ridden (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, pp. 242-244), the mage can drive the spirit out of a Spirit-Urged host but not out of the Spirit-Claimed. (He can, however, use the Spirit 5 "Shape Spirit" spell, p. 255, to separate the merged spirits).

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Exiled from the Flesh**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Spirit vs. Power + Resistance

Often making use of forceful chants, invocations of divine powers and the like, Guardians use this magic to drive out a spiritual entity possessing a terrestrial host.

### Familiar Pact (Spirit ●●●)

The mage can forge a personal pact with a familiar.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended (target number = Merit dots)

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

See the "Familiar" Merit, p. 82, for more details. The target must have purchased the Familiar Merit to cement the bond. Such a bond cannot be dispelled. Only one familiar may be pacted at a time to the same person.

The caster must be able to see and speak to the desired spirit (see "Spirit Tongue," p. 246), and he must be able to touch it during each extended roll (see "Gossamer Touch," p. 247). A spirit in the Shadow World cannot be targeted by this spell. It must first be brought across the Gauntlet to become a Twilight spirit, either by coaxing or command (see "Control Spirit," p. 248). The spirit cannot be forced by magic to accept the familiar bond. It must enter willingly into such an agreement.

**Mysterium Rote: Soul-Bonding**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Socialize + Spirit

Supplemented by conversation, coaxing and even by threats and bribery, this rote enables a mage of the Mysterium to enter into a bond that ties a willworker to her familiar. Mages of every order make use of this magic, though, as familiars are popular among the Awakened.

### Greater Spirit Summons (Spirit ●●●)

By means of this spell, a mage can issue a summons to a Shadow Realm spirit of whatever power, known or unknown to her. It is easier and often safer to call known entities, but sometimes mages do not have the luxury of ease or safety.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The target spirit's rank levies penalties on the spellcasting roll. See "The Spiritual Hierarchy," p. 317. Spirits forcibly called are almost always resentful and may be enraged. Unless the spirit has some means of manifesting or attacking across the Gauntlet (or the mage is foolish enough to be in the same realm as the spirit), it is impotent to do anything but remain for the spell's Duration. Note, however, that this spell does not of itself convey any particular protection against that which is called.

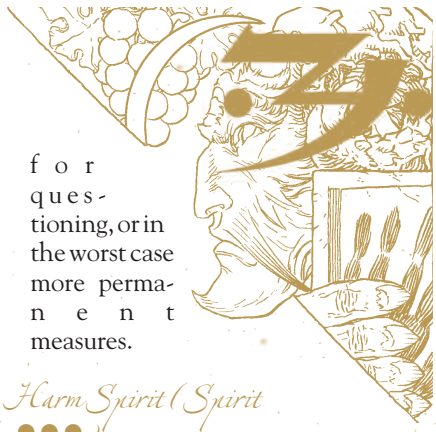
This is not a conjuring spell in that it does not teleport the spirit to the mage's vicinity. The range, as with all spells, is the mage's sensory perception, unless Space 2 is used to extend his senses. If the spirit has a power that allows it to teleport, it must use the capability to come to the mage. Otherwise, it travels as best it can unless the Duration expires before its journey is complete. Conjunctional use of Space 5 can conjure the spirit from its location to the spiritual location contiguous to the mage (but Spirit 4 is needed to bring it across the Gauntlet).

The summoned spirit must remain near the mage for the spell's Duration, unless the caster allows it to leave.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Whisper to the Ancients**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Spirit vs. Resistance

A traditional sorcery employed in almost every culture's myth and legend, this rote is used by the Silver Ladder to compel an audience with the spirits. Guardians of the Veil sometimes use their own magics (Manipulation + Persuasion + Presence) to call up otherworldly entities for questioning, or in the worst case more permanent measures.



### Harm Spirit (Spirit ●●●)

The mage can damage a spirit's Corpus.

**Practice:** Fraying

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resistance

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The spirit must be manifested in the material realm or exist within Twilight (in which case the mage must be able to see it, using a spell such as "Gossamer Touch," p. 247). The caster must have Spirit 4 to attack a spirit across the Gauntlet (and his spellcasting dice pool is penalized by the Gauntlet's Strength).

One point of lethal damage is inflicted per success. With Spirit 4, the damage may be made aggravated with the expenditure of one Mana.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Strike the Unseen**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics + Spirit – Resistance

Bypassing the need for weapons to strike through the Gauntlet, or spells to draw spirits into the material world, this rote enables an Adamantine Arrow mage to attack a spirit's ephemeral substance directly. Guardians of the Veil use the same rote when such direct methods become necessary.

### Numinous Shield (Spirit ●●●)

The mage creates a personal ward against spirit powers and Numina.

**Practice:** Shielding

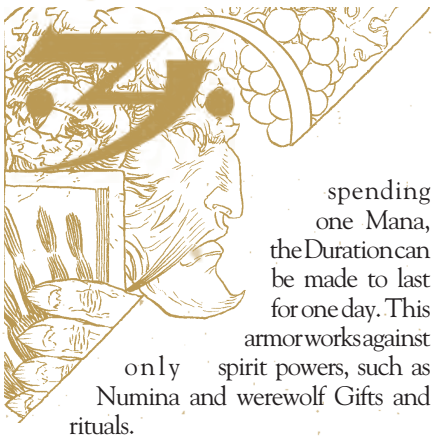
**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot he possesses in the Spirit Arcanum. By



spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. This armor works against only spirit powers, such as Numina and werewolf Gifts and rituals.

A Numinous Shield requires one Mana each time it contends with an incoming power. If the mage does not (or cannot) allocate the Mana, the shield provides no armor against the attacking power, although the shield remains until its Duration expires, so it can be activated later. Among other things, this spell allows a mage to use a Numinous Shield selectively, blocking hostile powers but allowing friendly powers through. Mages often invest their shields with charges, spending Mana during casting so that each charge already stores its own energy.

In addition, the mage can use a counterspell to prevent a spirit power from taking effect. See "Counterspell," p. 123.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Ephemeral Ward**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult + Spirit

An invaluable asset to the Adamantine Arrow willworker anticipating hostile attention from spirits, this rote guards against the paranormal abilities of such beings in the same way that the Prime Arcanum wards against magic. Silver Ladder mages use similar magics (Composure + Occult + Spirit) when aware of an ephemeral threat.

### Reaching (Spirit ●●●)

The mage can physically reach through the Gauntlet in a limited fashion, touching and being touched by beings and objects in the Shadow Realm. While this contact can be perilous (such as when in the vicinity of a dangerous spirit with many natural weapons), it can also enable a mage to interact with the spirit realm when he does not want to cross the Gauntlet or is incapable of doing so. The mage could, for example, easily pick up a Shadow Realm object and move it to somewhere more advantageous (provided no Shadow Realm entity grabs hold of it and tries to take it away), or he could place a comforting hand upon an allied spirit when it is anxious or in pain. The willworker can also use this ability to strike a dangerous being with his fists (or with a weapon awakened with "Rouse Spirit," below) and (hopefully) remain beyond its ability to effect in kind.

This spell also allows the mage to reach into the material realm from the Shadow Realm.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

During the spell's Duration, the mage can reflexively reach across the Gauntlet as he desires. He must have some means of seeing what he interacts with (such as the "Peer Across the Gauntlet" spell, p. 247), or he acts blindly.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Shadow Strike**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Spirit

Reaching across the Gauntlet to take hold of an ephemeral weapon or to strike a spirit, the Arrow mage lets nothing, not even the span between worlds, stand in the way of her duty. This rote grants a willworker the ability to pierce the barrier between spirit and flesh. Mysterium mages often use their own version of the rote (Wits + Athletics + Spirit) to freely interact with the ephemeral environment.

### Restore Corpus (Spirit ●●●)

The mage can heal a spirit's Corpus.

**Practice:** Perfecting

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The spirit must be manifested in the material realm or exist within Twilight (in which case the mage must be able to see it, using a spell such as "Gossamer Touch," p. 247). The caster must have Spirit 4 to heal a spirit across the Gauntlet (and his spellcasting dice pool is penalized by the Gauntlet's Strength).

One Corpus point of damage is restored per success.

**Free Council Rote: Spirit Mending**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Empathy + Spirit

Free Council willworkers use this rote to repair damage done to the insubstantial flesh of spirits. Such magic can be a powerful bargaining tool in dealing with such entities, though not all use it for such purely mercenary purposes. After all, this magic can also repair harm done to an immaterial familiar. The Mysterium variant of the rote (Resolve + Empathy + Spirit) uses different methods to obtain the same effect.

### Restore Lost Soul (Spirit ●●●)

The mage can restore a severed or stolen soul. A mage with Death 3 can sever a soul (see "Sever the Sleeping Soul," p. 141), and certain spirits have powers that allow them to steal souls. The mage must have the soul and its original owner at hand, unless he has a Space 2 sympathetic connection to both (or a Space Portal that transcends distance, allowing him to teleport one to the other). Retrieving the soul might be dangerous, since it usually requires confronting the being that took it and who might have wards protecting it from being snatched away.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended (target number = weeks the soul has been lost)

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The target number is one success per week the soul has been gone, but the spell's effect is lasting. If the stolen soul has been attached to a new body, the mage must first use the Fate 4 "Destroy Bindings" spell, p. 156, to detach it before he can restore it to its rightful owner.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Restoring the Stolen Light**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Empathy + Spirit

Not all of a Guardian's duties are unpleasant, though it might sometimes seem that way. This rote enables such a mage to restore a stolen soul to its rightful owner.

### Rouse Spirit (Spirit ●●●)

The willworker learns how to awaken the dormant spirit slumbering within an object. Such objects or places then gain a measure of sentience that increases with time, use and care. Roused

objects can be used to affect beings in Twilight or across the Gauntlet.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

An awakened object begins as a Rank 1 spirit (see pp. 317-318), but can grow more powerful over time. It can be used to affect Twilight beings, and can be coaxed into using its Numina for the mage's benefit. Unless it grows to become at least rank 3, it acts only in accordance with its simple nature and does not usually do anything that is not directly related to its Influence. A baseball bat wants to be used to hit things and a bomb shelter wants to protect people.

An object can be interviewed about its former owner, although its knowledge may be limited to only those times it was actually used for its purpose (a knife used to cut, a hammer to drive nails).

A roused object has an ephemeral presence in Twilight. If it is destroyed in the material world, its ephemeral presence is thrust across the Gauntlet into the Shadow Realm, where it continues to linger for a while before it goes dormant again.

Most mages assign extra Duration factors to castings, giving roused spirits time to grow in Rank.

**Free Council Rote: Stirred from Sleep**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + Spirit

Mages of the Free Council use this rote to wake the sleeping spirits within objects and places. A house or sanctum enhanced by judicious use of this rote takes care of its inhabitants of its own accord, and items so modified can be used to interact with the ephemeral world. Silver Ladder mages often choose to inspire (Presence + Persuasion + Spirit) such slumbering spirits to wakefulness, rather than subtly coaxing service out of them.

### Spirit Road (Spirit ●●●)

The mage opens a road across the Gauntlet, a lane where he can cross over to the Shadow Realm and where spirits from the Shadow Realm can cross over into the material world (although they are in the state of Twilight unless they can manifest with their own power). The mage cannot stop other beings from using the road unless he works to physically or mystically bar them.

In ancient days, it is said, the worlds of spirit and flesh were one and there was no need for such a road. Now, the invisible realms are well hidden from the eyes of ordinary men and only those who understand the secrets of spirits can lower the wall between flesh and spirit.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended (target number = Gauntlet Strength)

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

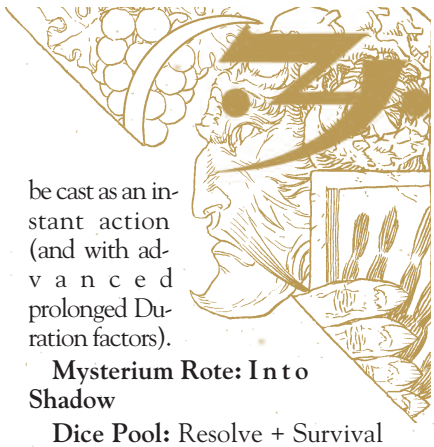
The target number is equal to the local Gauntlet's Strength (p. 282; minimum one success even with a weak Gauntlet). A dramatic failure on the casting means the mage may not attempt to create a Spirit Road again for another day (24 hours), which may leave him in a precarious position if he's currently in the Shadow Realm trying to get back to the material realm (although he may be brought across by another mage's spell).

When stepping from the material realm into the Shadow Realm, the mage appears in the Shadow Realm location contiguous with the place he just left in the material realm.

One person or spirit of Size 5 or less can walk the road per turn (larger beings can spend two turns walking it). Each success added to the target number allows the mage to widen the road so that one additional person can walk it per turn. The road remains for one hour.

Note that the caster cannot limit who can use the road; nearby enemies can attempt to walk it. A person can be thrown forcibly through the Gauntlet onto the road. He must first be grabbed in a grapple action (see "Unarmed Combat," pp. 157-159 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), after which the grappler can shove him onto the road as an overpower maneuver.

With Spirit 4, this spell can be cast with a prolonged Duration. With Spirit 5, it can be cast as an instant action (and with advanced prolonged Duration factors).



**Mysterium Rote: Into Shadow**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Survival + Spirit

While a dangerous undertaking, the creation of a Spirit Road is occasionally necessary for Mysterium mages. Through such a path, a willworker and his entire cabal might enter the Shadow Realm, or something residing in that plane can be brought into the world of flesh.

### Adept of Spirit

I can imprison any spirit, binding it into steel, stone or flesh according to my desires. I can guide young mages through the first steps of taking on their own spirit kin, and I can walk across the barrier of worlds without need of roads.

### Bind Spirit (Spirit ●●●●)

The mage can bind a spirit into the material world. In some cases, this means tying the creature to a given location (which may be a form of imprisonment or even torture). When undertaken with indefinite Duration (with Spirit 5), this spell can confine a being to a place forever (usually somewhere out of the way and well guarded against intrusion), unless it is freed by other magics.

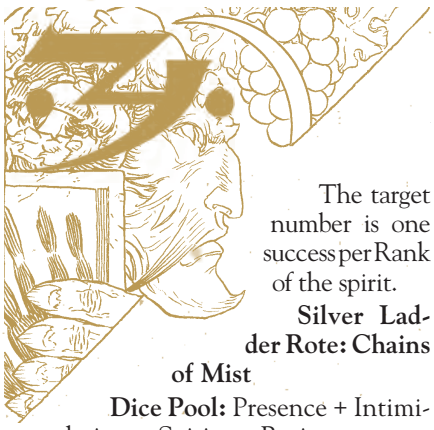
**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended (target number = spirit's Rank) and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None



The target number is one success per Rank of the spirit.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Chains of Mist**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Spirit vs. Resistance

Sometimes cast as a reward, but commonly as a punishment, this rote enables a Silver Ladder mage to bind a spiritual entity in place in the material world (although the spirit is in the state of Twilight unless it has the ability to manifest). Most spirits fear confinement and do as they are bidden to avoid such a fate. Ladder willworkers, however, caution their students to use such this cruel magic as a scalpel rather than as a hammer — sparingly, and only as often as *absolutely* necessary. Spirits have long memories. Mysterium mages use a similar rote in their own bindings.

### *Create Fetish (Spirit ●●●●)*

The mage invites or compels a spirit to inhabit an object and lend its powers to that object in the form of a fetish. Such beings (for those who care about such things) often wish to be placed within an object somehow appropriate to their nature, and grant use of their Numina to whomever holds the object in question. Thus, a fire-spirit may inhabit a dagger of obsidian, or a healing-spirit could possess a container meant for holding water. The spirit still uses its own Essence to fuel its powers and can lapse into slumber if overtaxed. A spirit forced into a fetish rails to be set free, cries that can be heard by any with active Spirit senses.

**Practice:** Patterning

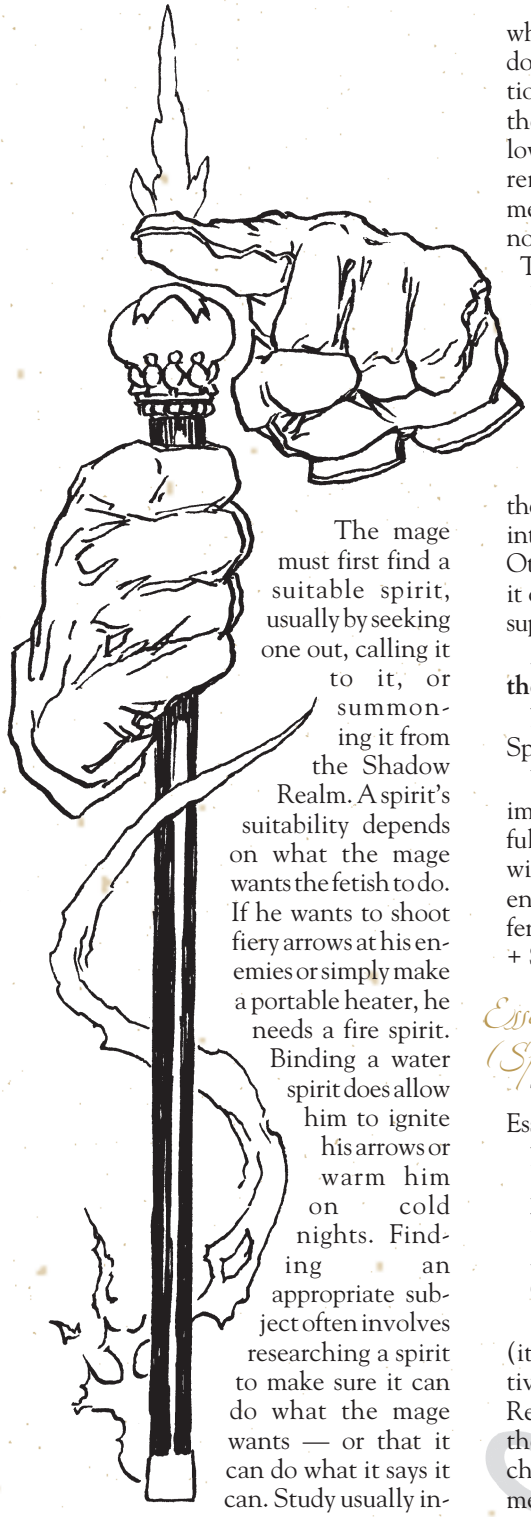
**Action:** Extended (target number = spirit's Rank) and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The spirit must be bound into a material object. The spell's target number equals the spirit's Rank.



The mage must first find a suitable spirit, usually by seeking one out, calling it to it, or summoning it from the Shadow Realm. A spirit's suitability depends on what the mage wants the fetish to do. If he wants to shoot fiery arrows at his enemies or simply make a portable heater, he needs a fire spirit. Binding a water spirit does allow him to ignite his arrows or warm him on cold nights. Finding an appropriate subject often involves researching a spirit to make sure it can do what the mage wants — or that it can do what it says it can. Study usually involves an occult library or past training on the subject. If the Storyteller feels it necessary, he can require an Intelligence + Academics or Occult roll for the mage to properly identify a suitable spirit.

The spirit releases its Numina only upon the fetish's activation; it sleeps the rest of the time. The user must request or command the spirit to act whenever he seeks its power. This is done non-verbally with an instant action Gnosis + Spirit roll. Success allows the mage to use the fetish for the following scene. Failure means the spirit remains asleep. A dramatic failure means the spirit is angered and does not respond for at least the next scene.

The spirit's powers do not invoke Paradoxes or Disbelief. Spirits are native to the Fallen World and do not invoke the same reactions as Supernal magic.

If a fetish's material object is ever destroyed, the spirit is released and becomes a Twilight being. If it has the proper Numina, it can escape back into the Shadow Realm on its own. Otherwise, it is trapped in Twilight until it can find a Verge or a mage (or other supernatural being) to help it pass over.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Blade of the Gods**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Persuasion + Spirit vs. Resistance

With this rote, Arrow willworkers imbue weapons, armor and other useful items with the powers of spirits, with or without the consent of such entities. Silver Ladder mages use a different method (Presence + Persuasion + Spirit) to the same effect.

### *Essence Gift (Spirit ●●●● + Prime ●●●●)*

The mage can convert Mana into Essence and channel it into a spirit.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

If the spirit doesn't want the Essence (its quality might be considered negative), it can contest with a reflexive Resistance roll. Each success allows the mage to convert one Mana and channel it as Essence. Unless he has a means of taking this Mana from another source (such as with the Prime 5 "Siphon Mana" spell, p. 231), he must spend his own Mana.

**Mysterium Rote: Word of Honor**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Socialize + Spirit

The mages of the Mysterium use this rote to prove to a skeptical spirit that their pledge and bond is good, usually

to coax it into a fetish or convince it to act as a familiar.

### Grant Familiar (Spirit ●●●●)

The mage can forge a pact with a familiar for another mage. This is how most inexperienced mages (those who begin play with the Familiar Merit) get such helpmates.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended (target number = Merit dots)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

See "Familiar Pact," p. 249. The subject pays the Merit cost. This spell uses the advanced prolonged Duration factors. The familiar bond cannot be forced onto a mage and a spirit; both parties must be willing.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Mentor's Gift**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Spirit

By casting this rote, a Ladder mage can bond another willworker to a familiar, provided that neither already shares in such a bond and that both parties are willing. Mysterium mages impart familiars upon their apprentices by way of their own variant of the rote (Intelligence + Persuasion + Spirit).

### Medicine Bag (Spirit ●●●●)

The mage can create an object that can store Essence.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended (target number = Essence capacity)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Any object can serve as a Medicine Bag (it doesn't even have to be a bag — it could be a rock or a knife), but those made from organic materials (leather, bone, plant fiber) are best. Plastics and metals impose a –1 dice penalty on the casting. The target number is one success per point of Essence the bag can hold, up to a maximum equal to the caster's Gnosis + Spirit.

Note that the bag does not have any Essence points until some are placed in it. Any mage can use the Medicine Bag by casting the "Sacramental Chain" spell, below, using it to store Essence or take it out of the bag.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Palm of Plenty**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts + Spirit

Guardians sometimes make these bags so that they always have some form of bribe to dispose of any troublesome spirits. Mysterium mages also employ this rote; it gives them a place to put some of the spoils from their explorations.

### Sacramental Chain (Spirit ●●●●)

The mage can channel Essence from a spirit or locus (or a Medicine Bag) and give it to another spirit or to place it into something that can hold it.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Resistance

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

One Essence point is channeled per success.

With Prime 4, the caster can convert the Essence into Mana for his own use or channel it to another mage or source that can hold it.

**Mysterium Rote: Spirit Gold**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Spirit – Resistance

Mysterium mages tread into territory rich with Essence, such as loci guarded by spirits or werewolves. This spell makes such dangerous journeys worth the risk, giving them something with which to barter when dealing with spirits.

### Spirit Guardian (Spirit ●●●●)

This spell enables a mage to bind a spirit guardian to a person, object or place. The entity watches over its charge to the best of its ability, protecting the subject with the powers available to it. While weak spirits have few powers to offer, they are easy to bind. While strong spirits are difficult to fetter with this spell, they usually have many capabilities to bring to bear.

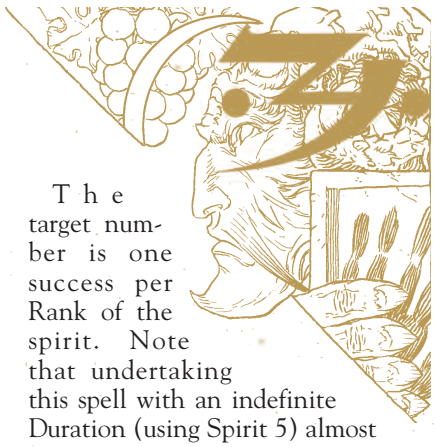
**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended (target number = spirit's Rank) and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None



The target number is one success per Rank of the spirit. Note that undertaking this spell with an indefinite Duration (using Spirit 5) almost certainly earns the everlasting enmity of an unwilling spirit that's bound to duty.

**Mysterium Rote: Watch Over My House**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Spirit vs. Resistance

Through force of personality and a measure of cleverness, a member of the Mysterium can bind a spirit to the defense of a person, place or thing. Free Council mages make use of similar magic, though their methods are often considered more understanding and perhaps kinder.

### Spirit Possession (Spirit ●●●●)

The mage can cause a spirit to possess a living creature's body.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

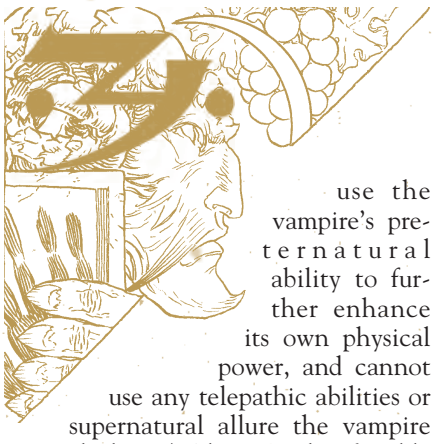
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

The targeted spirit gains the Possession Numina (p. 212 of the **World of Darkness** rulebook) if it does not normally possess that power, and must use it to possess an indicated target.

When a possessed individual is about to be made to do something totally antithetical to her beliefs, a reflexive and contested Resolve + Composure roll is made for her to regain control and push the entity out. Successes rolled for her are compared to the successes won for the spirit on the possession roll. A possessing spirit retains access to all of its own applicable powers, but has none of the paranormal capabilities of its host save for the purely physical. (Thus, a spirit possessing an ancient vampire with a Strength of 6 has access to that prowess, but cannot



use the vampire's preternatural ability to further enhance its own physical power, and cannot use any telepathic abilities or supernatural allure the vampire might have.) Also note that forcibly binding a spirit (whether in a place, object or being) against its will could constitute an act of cruelty sufficient to challenge a mage's Wisdom.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Breaking the Horse**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Spirit vs. Resistance

Ladder mages use this rote for any number of reasons. A powerful enemy can be transformed into an ally by allowing a friendly spirit to possess him, for example, or a problematic Sleeper can be made to seem like a delusional madman. Free Council mages use a different method in their own magic (Intelligence + Persuasion + Spirit), but the effect is essentially the same.

### Road Master (Spirit ●●●●)

The mage can control access to the Spirit Roads he creates to cross the Gauntlet, as described in "Spirit Road," p. 251. He can also choose to cross the Gauntlet on his own without creating a Spirit Road.

**Practice:** Patterning
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

The mage can approve who can walk his Spirit Roads. This is an ability he simply has. He does not need to cast this spell to have the power over any Spirit Road he creates.

He does cast this spell to "step sideways" across the Gauntlet without the need for a Spirit Road. Doing so costs one Mana and the roll is modified by the Gauntlet's Strength.

**Mysterium Rote: Shadow Gate**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Spirit

With this rote, a Mysterium willworker can control who and what is permitted to cross through the roads he makes through the Gauntlet, or he can simply step through without the need for such a gateway. Guardians of the Veil use much the same magic (Composure + Occult + Space) in the pursuit of their work.

### Control Gauntlet (Spirit ●●●●●)

The mage can increase or decrease the Gauntlet's Strength as per the Spirit 2 "Place of Power" spell, p. 248, but without the need for a Hallow. The local Gauntlet can be made nonexistent or nigh impermeable.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Watchman Between Worlds**

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Survival + Spirit

A more potent and versatile version of the "Place of Power" spell, this magic is used by Guardians of the Veil for the same purposes.

### Materialize Spirit (Spirit ●●●●●)

The mage can cause a spirit (including a ghost) to materialize. A spirit that cannot normally incarnate may be given physical substance by way of this spell. (A spirit with the power to manifest can be compelled to do so with the "Control Spirit" spell, p. 248.)

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

If the target is on the other side of the Gauntlet, the spellcasting roll is penalized by the strength of the Gauntlet. Success forces the targeted spirit across the Gauntlet and into a manifest form in the material realm. Its manifestation takes whatever form the spirit naturally has, although it is slightly transparent, like a ghostly apparition.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Descending from Heaven**

### ●●●●● Master of Spirit

I bring down the wall between worlds at will, or shore up its strength. I am regarded as a nobleman among spirits. I shape their substance as I will and spin them out of the ephemera, forging new beings born entirely of my will. I give flesh to the fleshless. I walk where I will, in whatever world, a native of all realities and none.

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Spirit

Despite the name of this rote, it need not be used on angelic or beatific spirits. Indeed, it is most commonly cast on hostile and malevolent entities so that Arrow willworkers and their allies can bring the fight directly to the beings. Conversely, a friendly spirit can be incarnated, whether in combat or in time of peace.

### Shadow Slave (Spirit ●●●●● + Death ●●●)

This gruesome spell infuses conjured shadows (using the Death Arcanum) with an animating spirit, a soul spun of ephemera, and binds the grim creation to the caster's will. Some mages choose to stuff a corpse with these oozing shadows, animating the inert flesh with living darkness, while others use no crude mortal shell to contain the roiling blackness.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Successes must be used to grant Physical Attributes, Wits, Skills and points of armor (on a one-for-one basis) to the shadow creation (regardless of whether or not it inhabits a corpse). It possesses one dot in Intelligence and Presence, and zero in Composure, Manipulation and Resolve. It knows no fear and, as an only marginally sentient entity, is not subject to mind control or any effect that is contested by Composure and/or Resolve. The entity, while itself nearly mindless, is fettered to the mage's will, performing even complicated tasks with aplomb (like firing a pistol or punching numbers into a keypad in a certain sequence). The mage gives it commands as an instant action, but only one task at a time.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Call to Darkness**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Spirit

Unthinking obedience and a terrifying presence combine in this Silver Ladder rote to create a fantastically efficient servitor. Mysterium mages sometimes use a variant (Intelligence + Intimidation + Spirit) to similar effect.

### Shape Spirit (Spirit ●●●●●)

The mage can create or fundamentally alter a spirit. She can generate a spirit out of free-floating ephemera or so alter an extant spirit as to make it a new entity, one (should the caster wish it) possessed of appearance, mindset, traits and powers so distinct from the original as to be indiscernible as what it once was by any who did not witness the transformation.

**Practice:** Making or Unmaking

**Action:** Extended and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

If creating a spirit, successes buy dots of Rank, Attributes, Influence, and Numina for the being on a one-for-one basis. Similarly, changing a spirit (adding to, altering or subtracting from its Attributes) requires the mage to devote one success per dot to the trait to be added or changed. A mage cannot create a spirit of a greater Rank than the lesser of his Spirit Arcanum or Gnosis. Nor can he advance an extant spirit beyond such a degree or alter one of a Rank greater than the lesser of his Spirit Arcanum or Gnosis.

***Example:*** *Nine Jade Thunder creates a spirit. Since she creates one from scratch, rather than altering an existing spirit, she does not have to worry about it contesting her efforts. She decides to make a tree spirit for her garden sanctum, and wants it to have the following traits:*

*Rank: 2 (which requires two successes)*

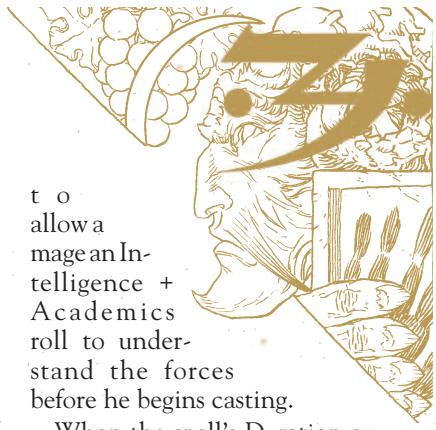
*Attributes: Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 4 (10 successes total; traits like Willpower and Size are derived from these Attributes and do not cost extra successes)*

*Influence: Wood 3 (three successes)*

*Numina: Wilds Sense (one success)*

*The total target number for the spell is 16 successes. She wants her special creation to last for more than one hour, so she increases the Duration to indefinite, adding six successes to the target number for a total of 22.*

The mage must be familiar with the powers with which he works. That is, he must have studied a spirit who already has those powers before he can imbue them into a spirit. At the Storyteller's discretion, an occult library might hold enough information



to allow a mage an Intelligence + Academics roll to understand the forces before he begins casting.

When the spell's Duration expires, the spirit ceases to exist (if it was created) or reverts back to its natural state (if it was modified). Note that familiars cannot be affected by this spell.

**Free Council Rote: Transformation of the Timeless**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Spirit vs. Resistance

By way of this magic, a Council willworker can utterly transform a spirit, changing its strengths, powers and even fundamental nature, or else create a spirit where none existed before. Some use this rote to make an intractable or dangerous spirit more pliant or friendly, while others do so to fortify an allied spirit, and still others in order to custom craft an ephemeral entity for a specific purpose.

### Spirit Court (Spirit ●●●●●)

This spell enables a mage to create a spirit court of her own, one in which she is the ranking "spirit noble." The court can be filled with its own courtiers, enforcers, spies, hangers-on and such.

**Practice:** Making

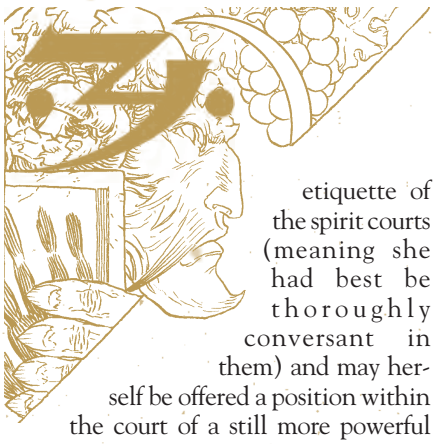
**Action:** Extended (target number = spirit Rank desired)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

By casting this spell, the mage takes on a Rank (see pp. 317-318) among spirits no higher than the lesser of her Spirit Arcanum or Gnosis. Spirits of lesser Rank than the mage seek (or may be persuaded) to attach themselves to her court, and she is treated with the respect, honor and dignity due one of her station. Of course, the mage is expected to uphold the dictates and



etiquette of the spirit courts (meaning she had best be thoroughly conversant in them) and may herself be offered a position within the court of a still more powerful entity.

When calling, controlling, binding or otherwise using sympathetic magic upon members of her court, the mage may cast spells as though a spirit were in Intimate sympathetic contact (p. 114) with her, without need of the Space Arcanum. Thus, she can easily heal one of her courtiers, regardless of where it is, but could not cast an offensive spell at other spirits through her subject without an appropriate Space component.

Any spiritual alliances the mage makes are rendered null and void when the spell expires (at least, spirits don't uphold their end of any bargains, though many continue to expect the willworker to fulfill her outstanding obligations). The willworker is expected to support, protect and advise her vassals (and they are expected to do the same for her).

**Silver Ladder Rote: Throne of the Celestial Potentate**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Spirit

By claiming lordship within the hierarchies of the spirit world, a Silver Ladder mage can strengthen his aspirations to leadership among mortals. The use of this rote can entail a great deal of peril, as the willworker is sometimes embroiled in millennia-old allegiances, conflicts and rivalries, but many in the order would argue that such danger is truly worth its potential rewards.

### Spirit Manse (Spirit ●●●●●)

The mage creates a sanctum in the Shadow Realm.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The target number of successes is based on the volume of the manse. See the "Area-Affecting" chart for extended spellcasting, p. 120. The caster also adds one success to the target number per point of Durability of the outer wall (on a one-point-per-success basis). Ordinary features (a normal chair or a bookshelf) are woven out of ephemera and require no successes to create. Exceptional features (an elaborate pair of golden double doors or a fountain or glittering crystal) require one or more successes, depending on their size.

***Example:*** *Nine Fox Thunder creates a Spirit Manse to host a meeting with a spirit from which she desires to learn some gossip. She wants it to cover a volume of 20 cubic yards, which costs two successes. Since she doesn't expect trouble, she decides that the walls don't need to be very strong (Durability 1, for one success). Finally, she wants it to have a luminously glowing reflecting pond at the center, which costs one success. Since her meeting will only last a few hours, but she doesn't want the manse disappearing prematurely, she extends the Duration to 12 hours for two successes. The total target number is six successes.*

The mage can control who comes or goes from his manse. All others must forcibly breach the walls to get in. The mage can increase Duration using the advanced prolonged Duration factors.

**Mysterium Rote: Spirit Sanctum**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Spirit

With this rote, a Mysterium mage can craft a stronghold far from the prying eyes of ordinary mortals. Despite the dangers inherent to doing so, such a domain has its advantages.

## Time

**Purview:** Divination, prophecy, temporal acceleration/ deceleration

Time is probably the most complex of the Gross Arcana, since it describes a phenomenon as yet incompletely understood by modern man. With it, a mage can redefine the way in which every other Arcanum interacts with the linear progression of events, and with great mastery can unravel the mysteries of choosing the manner in which things move in that flow. Extraordinarily powerful mages see the way in which an individual participates in Time as a choice, rather than a cosmic absolute.

Those who would deal with the Arcanum of Time are advised to heed the counsel of those who have come before. Though few primers exist on the subject (few that are of much use to those lacking an advanced understanding of Time magics, at any rate), most well versed in the Arcanum's intricacies agree upon one basic axiom: Nothing within Time is fixed. Events in the past are harder to alter than those in the present and future (only magic allows for the past to be changed), but no event seems to be *truly* eternal.

Mages who devote themselves to the Arcanum of Time tend to be reflective people, given to careful contemplation of all of an action's potential consequences. They often look to both the mistakes and great successes of the past and cast their gaze forward with a mind for how things should properly unfold. Such mages learn quickly what sort of damage can be done when actions are taken without exhaustive consideration, and they actually possess the ability to see how history will judge them. With such a weighty burden, it is unsurprising that those who seek to unravel the mysteries of Time do so with a sense of reverence, whether that stems from *noblesse oblige*, respect for the lessons of the universe, or active devotion to a Divine Plan.

### Ruling Realm: Arcadia

The gross/subtle pair of Time/Fate provides the ruling Arcana for the land of Arcadia, the enchanted realm inhabited by fickle spirits of immense beauty and cruelty. Time is the material expression of the pair.

### • Initiate of Time

#### Momentary Flux (Time •)

This is the power to discern the "Butterfly Effect." The mage can judge a currently ongoing event, one about to take place (within the next five turns) or one that has just taken place (again, within five turns) and discover whether it will be beneficial or adverse for her. For example, she could check to see if letting a sketchy-looking valet take her car keys turned out to have been a bad decision (and maybe stop him before he drives off). Or she could, when being chased by police, learn whether or not it's a good idea to turn down the alley ahead. This sense does not say what *will* happen, only whether it will be a boon or a hindrance to the mage. If all possible choices are equally beneficial or adverse, this sense will tell the mage as much.

If all options are based entirely on the results of random chance, rather than any actor's intention, then the mage gains a rough idea of the odds — that the guy in the black jacket has the edge in the fight that's about to break out (because his Strength + Brawl dots are higher than his opponents' — not enough to ensure victory, but enough to make him the odds-on favorite).

**Practice:** Knowing

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

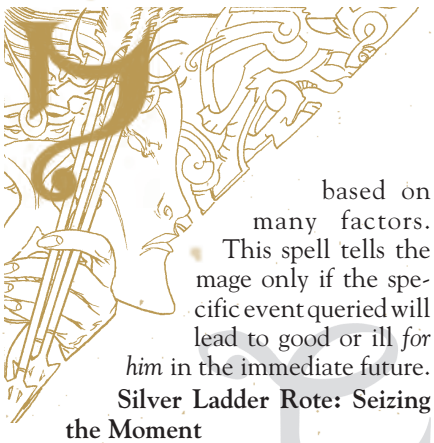
**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

A simple success is enough to get an answer concerning one action or event. The Storyteller answers this question as well as he can, knowing what he knows about the situation and the intentions of his Storyteller characters. However, there is no guarantee that the new course of action the mage chooses based on this knowledge will not eventually lead to an adverse choice, since events are always in flux



I am privileged to see Creation with the universe's own eyes, for what else can it be called to see past, present and future as one? I know what must come to pass, when and how. I witness the march of the hours without the need for crude devices. I know when others have impeded time's proper flow, and am gifted with foresight and the knowledge of when to act in accord with the Universe in order to be thereby blessed with success.



based on many factors. This spell tells the mage only if the specific event queried will lead to good or ill *for him* in the immediate future.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Seizing the Moment**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Time

To mages of the Silver Ladder, the use of this rote is nothing less than asserting power over an instant in time and shaping its outcome according to one's own will.

### Perfect Timing (Time •)

This spell allows a mage to accurately assess all of the temporal components occurring in her immediate presence, giving her an opportunity to act at *exactly* the proper time to have the maximum effect. If she wants to throw a punch, she knows how and where to strike with the greatest possible (mundane) precision and force. Or if she wants to convince someone of something, she knows the most opportune instant in which to speak.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Reflexive
**Duration:** Special
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Each success grants the mage a single extra die in the next roll that has to — or is chosen to — be made. This does not include spellcasting rolls. If the next roll is for a spell (perhaps the mage needs to quickly cast a countermagic), the character loses the benefit.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Strike True**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Composure + Time

Mages of the Adamantine Arrow who master this rote find that they need strike only once in order to fell their enemies. By attuning his perceptions to the perfect instant in time in which to act, the willworker attacks with efficiency.

### Temporal Eddies (Time •)

The mage gains the Mage Sight (see "Mage Sight," p. 110). He perceives resonance through the way in which it "snags" things, people and events moving through the timestream, by the magnitude of its presence (in much the same way as scientists determine the presence of a black hole by witnessing the phenomena around it). He can also tell perfect time, anywhere, discerning the passage of instants with such clarity that his sense is more precise than even those most carefully maintained clock.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

**Free Council Rote: The Gravity of Instants**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Time

Free Council willworkers use this rote to perceive the ways in which Time clings to people, places and things, and how more or less "substantial" pockets of Time accrue within the flow of the greater whole.

### Temporal Wrinkles (Time •)

The mage can sense temporal disturbances. She can detect the presence of temporal phenomena, such as the subtle distortions clinging to a person suffering from "lost time" or those surrounding advanced uses of this Arcanum.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

During this spell's Duration, a reflexive Wits + Investigation roll can be made for the mage to detect a temporal disturbance that occurs within his sensory range. She can also examine such phenomena.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Espying the Graven Hour**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Time

With this rote, Guardians of the Veil are able to discern Time magics (or similar powers) that have been used to somehow alter the natural flow of past, present and future. Some describe such phenomena as being "etched" or "engraved" on the progression of Time. Mages of the Adamantine Arrow prefer not to be surprised by other uses of the Arcanum (such as "Prepared Spells," p. 260), so use this rote as a matter of security.

### Augury (Time ••)

The mage sees the future in terms of generalities.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

The mage must declare a target — a person, place or thing. (Temporal sympathy modifies the casting roll; see p. 259.) He can then ask a simple question about that target's future and gain a general answer. Examples of proper questions include: "Will Tony

## •• Apprentice of Time

*I look back into history and forward into the future, learning the hidden secrets of the past and speaking words of prophecy. According to the great design, I am defended from harm, sending astray the assaults of my enemies. My face is hidden from those who would use the Universe's gifts wrongfully and would impede my service, and I overcome all adversity by seeing my actions before I act.*

get the job he just interviewed for?" "Will Charlotte marry George?" "Will Angrboda kill again?"

Improper questions get no answers. Examples of improper questions include: "How much money will that lottery ticket win me? (Too specific; try instead: "Is this the winning ticket?") "Will my son be a good man?" ("Good" is too relative a term — good to whom, exactly?)

The Storyteller decides what the future holds for the target, knowing that knowledge of the future is often enough to change that future. A woman who is told she will be a store clerk for the rest of her life might then quit her job to go back to school. Some mages don't even need to cast this spell to effect change. Their reputations for prophecy can be used to make others *think* they have read the future by means of magic. In this way, a mage might influence a friend's behavior in hopes of turning her toward a more productive life by scaring her with predictions of just where her current path will lead.

The same person can be targeted with this spell only once every 24 hours. Any attempts to augur him again before 24 hours have passed reveal meaningless echoes of myriad possible actions the target could take, but with no clue as to which might occur, or which is even more probable than the others. If the mage persists, the spell becomes vulgar.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Seer's Song**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Time

Leadership carries many burdens, among them the need to know what may yet come to pass. Mages of the Silver Ladder use this rote in their constant efforts to bring order to chaos, and to have some sense of how best to provide wise counsel during uncertain times.

### Temporal Sympathy

Just as the Space Arcanum uses ties of sympathy to determine the ease or difficulty of making a connection with another place, being or thing, so does Time rely on esoteric ties. In order to use "temporal sympathy" when working with the past, present or future, simply apply the sympathetic modifiers for the Space Arcanum to Time spells (see pp. 114-115). In other words, holding the very "magic bullet" that killed JFK or trying to prophesy about a child's future with that a lock of hair counts as having an Intimate connection. Trying to peer into Cleopatra's court while utterly without any factual knowledge or object of significance to that place and time counts as an Unknown connection (having seen a movie on the subject doesn't count as factual knowledge). Likewise, looking at a time and place where one once was (or immutably *will be*) counts as a Known or Acquainted connection, depending on how long one stayed there.

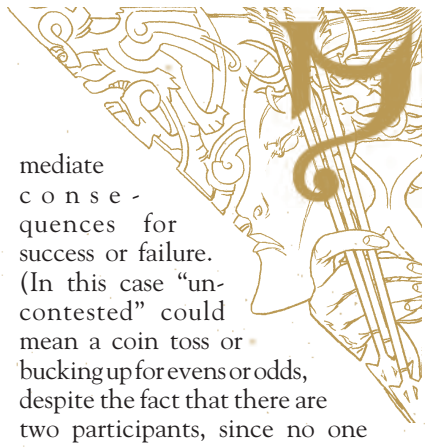
Like the Space Arcanum, some of these sympathetic connections can be tough calls, but it's not an exact science and a little guesswork is expected in such situations.

### Flip of the Coin (Time ●●)

The mage can glance forward and check the outcome of a simple undertaking, one with only two major variables (heads or tails, for example, or cutting the red wire instead of the green one). This sense works only under circumstances where consequences are immediate (someone wins the coin toss or the bomb blows up).

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Even one success accrued in the casting of the spell enables a mage to automatically succeed (or fail if he wishes) at an uncontested action with only two possible outcomes and immediate consequences for success or failure. (In this case "uncontested" could mean a coin toss or bucking up for evens or odds, despite the fact that there are two participants, since no one can normally exert effort to win.) Note that this effect cannot be used in relation to combat, since a fight is contested (opponents exert effort to win) and the variables are more than simple success or failure (one can win but at the cost of major wounds, or the fight can result in a draw or surrender).



**Free Council Rote: Instant Gratification**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Time

Mages of the Free Council understand that sometimes what others perceive as luck or a good sense of intuition is nothing more than the product of knowing how it's all going to turn out.

### Glimpsing the Future (Time ●●)

The mage can study the outcome of a current personal action. The willworker can quickly scan the immediate future and determine whether her next action will go well or not, and adjust to improve her chances of success. Effectively, the mage watches herself perform an action in the immediate future in an instant and then decides how it could be done better.

**Practice:** Knowing
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

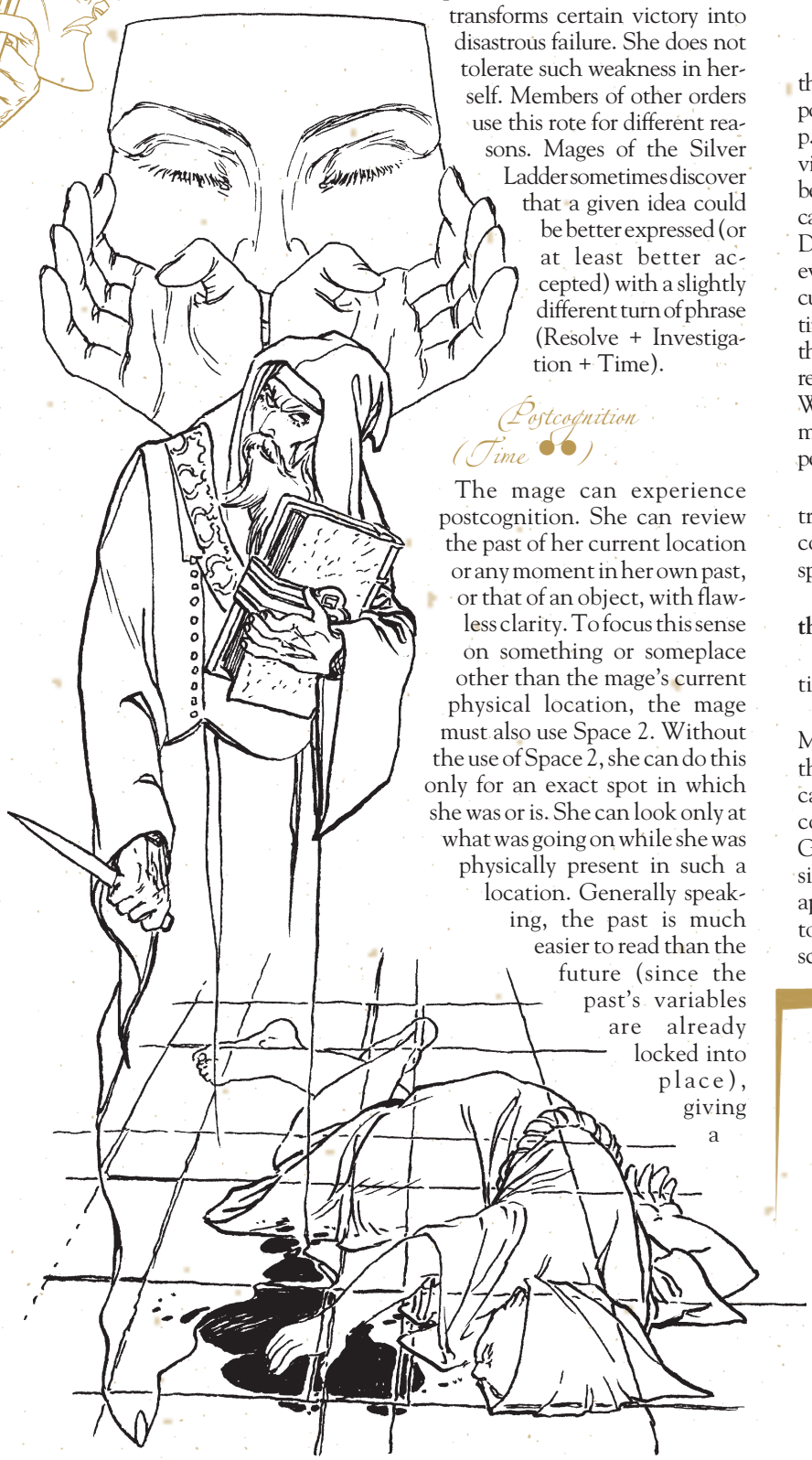
Success allows the player to roll twice for a single instant action his character performs in the following turn, taking the better of the two results.

With Time 3, this spell can be cast reflexively, applying to an instant action taken in the same turn in which the magic is cast.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Failure is Death**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Time

The Adamantine Arrow willworker knows that when battle is joined a misplaced blow or inaccurate shot transforms certain victory into disastrous failure. She does not tolerate such weakness in herself. Members of other orders use this rote for different reasons. Mages of the Silver Ladder sometimes discover that a given idea could be better expressed (or at least better accepted) with a slightly different turn of phrase (Resolve + Investigation + Time).



### *Postcognition (Time ●●)*

The mage can experience postcognition. She can review the past of her current location or any moment in her own past, or that of an object, with flawless clarity. To focus this sense on something or someplace other than the mage's current physical location, the mage must also use Space 2. Without the use of Space 2, she can do this only for an exact spot in which she was or is. She can look only at what was going on while she was physically present in such a location. Generally speaking, the past is much easier to read than the future (since the past's variables are already locked into place), giving a more-or-less objective view of how things unfolded at a given time, in a given place.

**Practice:** Unveiling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage declares the time and place that she wishes to view, and casting dice pool is modified by temporal sympathy (see p. 259). Each success allows the mage to view up to one turn of time in that place, beginning at the moment declared during casting (such as "Midnight on New Years Day, 1999, at Times Square"). She views events in real time (it takes one turn of current time to review one turn of past time) as if through a camera placed amidst the scene, but she can fast forward and replay any part within the viewing period. With Time 3, the mage can view one minute of time per success, and 10 minutes per success with Time 4.

The Duration of this spell is concentration; as soon as the mage ceases to concentrate on viewing the past, the spell expires.

**Mysterium Rote: Gazing Through the Sands**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Time

With this rote, a mage of the Mysterium can bear witness to events that have already transpired, a useful capability for those who seek to uncover the lost secrets of the past. Guardians of the Veil use this rote for similar purposes, though they usually apply whatever knowledge they glean to protecting the occult world from the scrutiny of the unenlightened.

### Prepared Spells (Time •• + conjunctional Arcanum)

**Cost:** 1 point of Mana (spent when the spell is activated)

Some mages choose to prepare a number of spells in advance. The mage performs the casting normally (including spending any required Mana), but

when the spell is complete (in the case of extended actions, when enough successes have been accumulated to meet the target number) the caster suspends the spell and sets a trigger to activate it later. The caster must perform this trigger. It's usually a magic word or a particular gesture, accompanied by the mage's intent to activate the spell (so accidental uses of the trigger phrase or gesture don't set the spell off).

Activating a prepared spell is an instant action; the mage can do it almost any time. Since all the ritual of casting the spell is already accomplished, mages can use prepared spells subtly, without drawing undue attention from Sleepers. (It's easier to hide a quick gesture or a whispered word of power than it is a magic staff or a pentagram surrounded by burning candles.) The Storyteller decides if the prepared spell is Improbable to Sleepers depending on the circumstances of its use. If he deems it to be sufficiently subtle, Sleeper witnesses might not impose dice modifiers on the Paradox roll. Any Paradox roll is made when the spell is triggered, not when it is prepared.

The amount of time the spell can be held depends on how many factors are incorporated into it.

## Instant-Action Casting

| Hold spell for up to... | Dice Penalty |
|---|---|
| 10 minutes | None |
| 30 minutes | –2 |
| One hour or scene | –4 |
| 24 hours | –6 |
| Two days* | –8 |

* Add an additional two-die penalty per extra two days.

## Extended-Action Casting

| Hold spell for up to... | Target Number |
|---|---|
| 10 minutes | – |
| 30 minutes | +1 successes |
| One hour or scene | +2 successes |
| 24 hours | +3 successes |
| Two days* | +4 successes |

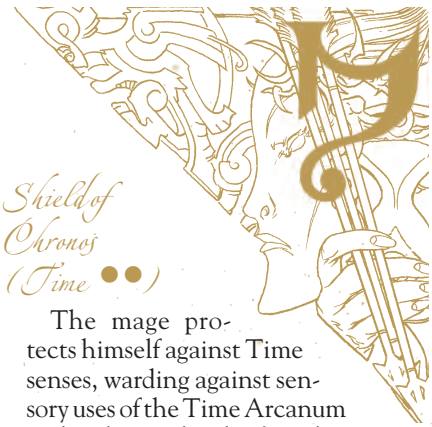
* Add an additional success per extra two days.

Activating a prepared spell requires the mage's player to spend a point of Mana, which is a surge of focused energy that sets the prepared spell into motion. If the mage doesn't or can't dedicate Mana to activate the spell, nothing happens, although the spell remains prepared. If the holding time expires without the spell being activated, it dissipates and is lost.

The target of the spell is chosen when the spell is activated. If the spell allows its target a resisted defense (i.e., the target's Resistance Attribute is subtracted from the spellcasting dice pool), the effect must instead be cast as an aimed spell (see "Aimed Spells," p. 116). Contested spells function normally.

A mage can hold a number of prepared spells simultaneously equal to his Gnosis. He cannot cast them all at once, however. He can activate only one per turn.

A prepared spell, even one that has not yet been triggered, is considered an active spell when counted toward the total number of spells a mage can have active simultaneously or cast upon himself (based on Gnosis; see p. 75).



### *Shield of Chronos (Time ●●)*

The mage protects himself against Time senses, warding against sensory uses of the Time Arcanum and making it harder for others to scry upon his past or future (or, for those who look *from* the past or the future, his present).

**Practice:** Veiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage becomes invisible to prophecy, divination and other forms of temporal scrying unless the caster overcomes the Potency of the occluded mage's spell.

By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day.

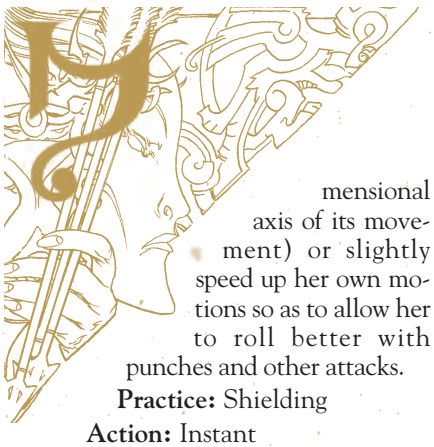
**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Breaking the Trail of Days**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Stealth + Time

For many Guardians of the Veil, the first, best secrets to keep are one's own. With this rote, the mage becomes invisible to all save the most persistent and invasive searches of the Time Arcanum. Willworkers of the Silver Ladder use such magic (Presence + Stealth + Time) to occlude any unsavory activities upon the long road to rule, while those of the Adamantine Arrow employ this spell as yet another means to approach their enemies unseen.

### *Temporal Dodge (Time ●●)*

The mage protects herself from harm. She creates a small bubble of "warped" time, either speeding herself up or slowing things down as they approach her. She performs small manipulations to her immediate temporal surroundings, protecting herself from harm by delicately twisting the fabric of time. She could, for example, decelerate incoming gunfire (by expanding the fourth-di-



mensional axis of its movement) or slightly speed up her own motions so as to allow her to roll better with punches and other attacks.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage gains one point of armor per dot she possesses in the Time Arcanum. By spending one Mana, the Duration can be made to last for one day. Most mages cast such a shielding spell at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals. Successes are used to combat attempts to dispel the shield.

Note that this magical armor applies against attempts to grapple the caster (both his Defense and Temporal Dodge armor are subtracted from the grappler's dice pool when he attempts to achieve a hold on the mage), but it does not protect against attempts by an opponent to overpower and/or inflict damage once he has managed to grapple the mage.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Dancing upon the River**

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Time

The River of Time is a dangerous place. One who knows how to dance upon its surface understands that danger, like all other things, is fleeting and can be circumvented by those with understanding of Time's intricacies.

### Temporal Flow (Time ●●)

As the Time 1 "Temporal Eddies" spell, except that the mage casts this upon another mage, or even a supernatural being such as a ghost or werewolf. If this spell is cast upon a Sleeper, it invokes Disbelief immediately, regardless of the spell's Duration.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** None

If the target is unwilling, he may resist with a reflexive and contested Resolve + Gnosis roll.

The effect lasts for one hour.

**Silver Ladder Rote: A Glance Through the Hourglass**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Time

Sometimes it just isn't enough to explain a thing to another. On occasion, one must *show*. This rote enables a willworker to extend his temporal perceptions to someone else so that she might perceive resonance as he does.

### Acceleration (Time ●●●)

The mage accelerates his personal temporal motion, enabling her to move and act quicker than is normally possible.

**Practice:** Perfecting
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None during casting, 1 Mana per turn after casting

This spell boosts the mage's ability to avoid attacks, her Initiative and Speed. Although the spell's Duration lasts for one hour, the mage gains its benefits only in those turns in which she spends one Mana reflexively, and the benefits last for that turn. (Once the Duration has expired, Mana can no longer be spent to gain the benefits.)

The benefits are as follows:

- For each Time dot the mage possesses, one die is subtracted from *any* and *all* attackers' dice pools (including ranged attacks), as the mage moves much more quickly than normal and is harder to hit. This penalty to attackers' pools applies in addition to any armor the mage may have, as well as to Defense (though note, like armor, Acceleration's benefits do not diminish based on how many attacks the character faces). For example, if the mage has Time 4, four dice are subtracted from any assailants' dice pools.
- Adds one to the mage's Initiative per dot of Time. This allows her to move up the initiative roster for that turn by one point for each bonus. In the following turn, she drops back down to her original position in the roster.
- Finally, each dot of Time allows the caster's Speed to be added again to his total Speed rating. Thus, Time 3 enables a mage with Speed 9 to move at Speed 36 (9 + 9 + 9 = 27 + base Speed of 9 = 36).

With Time 4, the mage can cast this spell on others.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Swift as Death**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + Time

Mages of the Adamantine Arrow must be ready for battle at all times. As history has proven, speed is one the most crucial advantages in combat. With this rote, the willworker can close on an enemy with preternatural speed and avoid attacks with ease. Naturally, this utilitarian rote sees use by members of every order.

## ●●● Disciple of Time

I strike with preternatural speed and my enemies are robbed of their fleetness.

I alter the cadence of Time's march and can even reverse its movement.

I look to the future with the eyes of a seer, blessed by the Universe with the power to read that which must be.

### Divination (Time ●●●)

The mage can read the future. As per the Time 2 "Augury" spell, p. 258, save that the mage receives more specific details.

**Practice:** Unveiling
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Concentration
**Aspect:** Covert
**Cost:** 1 Mana

As with the Augury spell, the mage must declare a target. (Temporal sympathy modifies the casting roll; see p. 259.) One success allows the mage to ask one question about the target's future and get an answer. Additional successes allow follow-up questions, allowing the mage to get more specific details.

***Example:*** *Arethusa gets three successes on her Divination roll, so she can ask one lead question and two follow-up questions. She's trying to find out if a rival mage named Garrik is planning on attacking her. Her first question is: "Will Garrick attack us tonight?" She gets a vision of Garrick standing in her foyer, readying a spell. Her first follow-up question is "When will Garrick attack?" The image changes "camera" angles, and she can see the large grandfather clock in the foyer past Garrick, showing 10 minutes until midnight. Her final follow-up question is "Is he working alone?" She sees a new image, this one showing her a number of stealthy, black-clad figures sneaking through the bushes outside her home.*

The same person can be targeted with this spell only once every 24 hours. Any attempts to divine him again before 24 hours have passed reveal only meaningless echoes of myriad possible actions the target could take, but with no clue as to which he might take, or which are even more probable than others. If the mage persists, the spell becomes vulgar.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Speaking the Name of Tomorrow**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Time

Time presents innumerable variables and one who would guard the Mysteries must be apprised of them in order to perform his duty. Guardians of the Veil cast this magic when vague predictions simply will not do. Mages of the Silver Ladder are often known to use such magic when attempting to discern the designs of their rivals.

### Shifting Sands (Time ●●●)

The mage rewinds time. He grabs hold of the threads of time and pulls himself back one turn, allowing him to choose a different approach to a situation (though, from the perspective of all save the willworker himself, this is the first and only time this moment has occurred or will occur).

**Practice:** Weaving
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Special
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

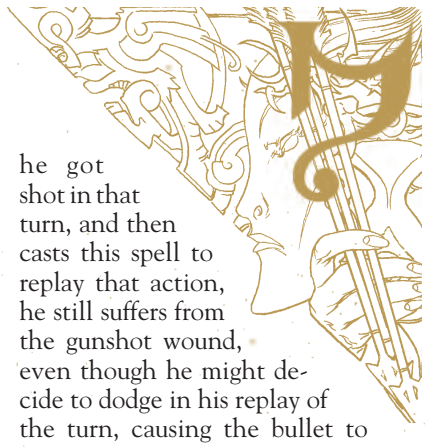
This spell can be cast anytime in the Initiative roster from when the caster performed his action until his place in the roster in the next turn. If the player does not declare this casting before then, the previous turn cannot be replayed.

If the casting roll fails, the mage does not rewind time (he essentially spends that turn casting and nothing else). If it succeeds, he rewinds himself through time and can then replay his action from the last turn, changing it however he wants (he might decide *not* to the open the door that released a spirit guardian, for example). Doing so, of course, might change other characters' actions that occurred after his action in the turn he replays and before he casts this spell.

***Example:*** *Zeno steps into an alley and is confronted by a gang of submachine-gun-toting thugs. They smile at him and heft their guns, ready to fire, but delay for a moment to savor Zeno's obvious dismay. Smirking at Zeno is their action for the turn. The next turn now plays out. Zeno has a higher Initiative than all the thugs but one. That thug fires a short burst of autofire, missing. On his turn in the Initiative roster, Zeno casts Shifting Sands, rewinding himself through time by one turn.*

*In the original turn, he entered the alley. This time, during his replay, he decides to turn the other way and run, never even showing his face around the corner. From that point on, all other characters redo their actions as if the original turn never happened. Since Zeno doesn't enter the alley, the thug doesn't fire his gun (as he did in the original flow of time). He still awaits Zeno's appearance as his cue.*

This spell cannot undo any effects the mage suffered the first time he experienced the turn that he replays. If he got shot in that turn, and then casts this spell to replay that action, he still suffers from the gunshot wound, even though he might decide to dodge in his replay of the turn, causing the bullet to miss him. (And if it *does* hit him, he suffers a second wound!). This spell does not erase the effects of time on the mage. It merely allows him to step back in the river of time by one turn and replay its flow. Although he cannot reverse any harm he himself has suffered, it can be instrumental in allowing the mage to save the lives of others.



Those other than the caster may feel a sense of *déjà vu* about the situation, but for them the caster's new action is the first and only time this turn has happened or will happen. Participants remember the turn only as it has just been played, not as it was previously played before Shifting Sands altered it. (Unless one of them uses the "Temporal Wrinkles" spell, p. 258, in which case he is aware of what happened.)

With Time 4, the mage can cast this spell upon others, allowing them to alter their actions when replaying the turn.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Turn Back the Page**

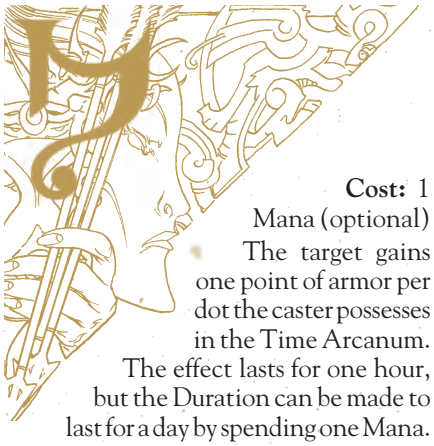
**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Time

A leader must sometimes acknowledge that things have not gone as planned. For mages of the Silver Ladder, the ability to admit the possibility of failure is not nearly so laudable as the power to erase such mistakes and see things done *correctly*. Mages of all orders manage to find uses for this rote.

### Temporal Shift (Time ●●●)

The mage protects others. This works like the Time 2 "Temporal Dodge" spell, p. 261, except that the mage can now cast it upon others.

**Practice:** Shielding
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Covert



**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The target gains one point of armor per dot the caster possesses in the Time Arcanum. The effect lasts for one hour, but the Duration can be made to last for a day by spending one Mana.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Bending the River's Flow**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Investigation + Time

Often cast in preparation for battle, this rote enables a mage to defend a charge, dispersing the force of incoming attacks along the unseen axes of Time.

### Chronos' Curse (Time ●●●●)

Through the use of this spell, a mage can cause an individual to "lag" within the flow of time. As she sees it, everything around her occurs at an accelerated rate and she struggles to keep up.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant; subtract target's Composure

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The target suffers a –1 penalty to Defense per success on the casting roll. Additionally, the subject's Speed is halved per success (rounding up), to a minimum of 1. When the victim of this spell attacks others with a ranged attack, her targets gain their Defense (even if the attack is not at point-blank range). The attacker moves slowly enough that others can anticipate her attack.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Crushed Beneath the Sands**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Occult + Time – Composure

When afflicted by this magic, enemies of the sanctum or cabal usually prove easy prey. Mages of the Mysterium sometimes use a variant of this rote (Wits + Occult + Time) while making an escape with lore or relics "appropriated" from jealous owners.

### Present as Past (Time ●●●●)

The mage predicts the immediate future with absolute clarity.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

On the turn following a successful casting, the mage's player can require that every player who has a character affected by the spell's Target factors declare what his character's action will be for that turn. The Storyteller does the same for his characters. The player does not need to declare his own action for the turn, but can wait to act at any point within the initiative order, trumping all other supernatural Initiative effects. (In the event that two or more willworkers use this spell during the same scene, determine their Initiatives normally, in the event that more than one attempts to act at the same time.)

In addition, the character gains +1 Defense per spellcasting success against attacks from those affected by the spell. (This is in addition to any benefit provided by the "Acceleration" spell; see p. 262)

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Measure the River's Flow**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Time vs. Composure + Gnosis

Ultimately, knowledge and understanding can overcome any strength of arms. Mages of the Adamantine Arrow understand this wisdom and use this rote to predict, and thus dictate, the pacing of a violent encounter. Willworkers of the Silver Ladder have sometimes been known to use this magic (Presence + Occult + Time) in order to control less physical (but no less dangerous) situations.

### Prophecy (Time ●●●●)

The mage can gain prescriptive advice on how to alter the future, perhaps to make something come true or to avert an event he fears or knows is coming.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

As with "Divination," p. 263, the mage can ask one question about a target or event per success. Instead of reading the future, however, he reads how things *might* be, provided some action or event comes to pass. Note that a target's dots in the Destiny Merit (if any) levy penalties on the spellcasting roll — it is more difficult to find an alternate future when a person's fate is ordained.

***Example:*** *Bahazid has learned that a certain boy is destined to become a great leader. She uses Prophecy to find out how she might avert that fate, for she does not want it to come to pass. She gains an image of somebody murdering the boy's mother, and knows that if this comes to pass the boy shall become a tyrant.*

Because of the vagueness of prophetic ability at this level, the mage learns only broad and sweeping details. Bahazid might not, for example, discover that saving the boy's mother will lead to his *sister* becoming a great leader.

The same target can be targeted with this spell only once every 24 hours.

## ●●●● Adept of Time

I step beyond the motions of time itself, unfettered by their flow. I see not only what will be, but what might be and how it can be made to come to pass. I move the hand of time with as much swiftness or slowness as I require. I walk through the present and into the future as easily as others might cross the street.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Merlin's Foresight**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Time

Protecting the Mysteries is not always simply a matter of knowing the past or perceiving the present. Sometimes such work involves discerning that which has not yet come. In this fashion, the ignorant can be shepherded away from perils they lack the discernment to understand, and the occult world can be shielded from the gaze of those who might seek to do it harm in their blindness.

### Temporal Pocket (Time ●●●●)

This spell enables a mage to withdraw into a personal temporal pocket, there to take whatever actions she sees fit during the subjective time allotted to her. If hunted and exhausted, she could take a nap outside of "mainstream" time and emerge a few minutes later, awake, alert and ready to keep moving.

While existing within such a temporal pocket, the mage cannot interact with or be interacted with by others, save for others proficient in the Time Arcanum who attempt to "break in" to her time bubble. The mage's own subjective time continues to flow at the same rate within this pocket, but time passes at a different rate outside, determined by the strength of the mage's spell. While within, she could set up an elaborate ritual and return to "mainstream" time with a powerful casting at the ready.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Successes are assigned to increasing the time that passes within the Pocket relative to what time passes without.

| Time within Pocket | Target Number |
|---|---|
| x2 | 1 success |
| x3 | 2 successes |
| x4 | 3 successes |
| x5 | 4 successes |
| x6 | 5 successes |

***Example:*** *One success allows two turns to pass within for every one turn that passes without, or two minutes within for one minute without, or two hours per one hour.*

This spell affects only the mage. The maximum target number the caster can aim for is equal to his Gnosis or Time, whichever is higher. Once the Duration expires (measured in time without), the Pocket ceases to exist and the mage returns to normal time.

**Free Council Rote: Seven Breaths in an Instant**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Time

This rote enables a Free Council willworker to step outside of Time, assess his situation, and make any preparations he requires in order to be at his most effective when he returns. After all, adaptability is sometimes nothing more than a chance to evaluate a difficulty from a safe vantage and with plenty of time to plan.

### Temporal Stutter (Time ●●●●)

The mage causes people or things to stutter forward in time.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

This spell affects only a living creature (and what he wears and carries), stuttering him forward for one turn per success. (If cast over an area, only people or objects that are wholly within the defined area are affected.)

Onlookers simply see those affected disappear for up to several seconds, while those affected lurch forward in time (to find whatever changes having occurred outside of the spell's area of effect during those seconds). Thus, reinforcements three turns away might, in the subjective time of those affected by the spell, arrive in one.

If, in the intervening turns, a person or object moves into the space occupied by one or more of the time-stuttering targets, a clash ensues when the time travelers arrive back in their places. Compare the Size of each person or thing who now shares the same space. Those with the smallest Size suffer a knockdown effect (see p. 168 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). If Sizes are equal, both must contend with a knockdown.

***Example:*** *Zeno, standing next to his motorbike, uses Temporal Stutter to shift forward in time for three turns (three successes were rolled for him). In the intervening turns, Arctos sees Zeno's bike and walks over to check it out. In the fourth turn, Zeno reappears — exactly where Arctos is standing. Both mages are Size 5, so both must contend with knockdown. A reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll is made for each. Zeno succeeds, but Arctos fails, so falls down, knocked aside by Zeno's sudden appearance.*

**Mysterium Rote: Cresting the Wave**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Time

Sometimes the flow of history doesn't move quite fast enough for a willworker's purposes. The mages of the Mysterium have circumvented that restriction by means of this rote. While it moves subjects forward in time only by several seconds, those seconds have occasionally meant the difference between a fantastic discovery and a grisly demise. Mages of the Adamantine Arrow have been known to use this very same rote in combat (perhaps vanishing into the immediate future just before an explosion and then reappearing seconds afterward).

### Faerie Glade (Time ●●●●●)

It is said that, in elder days, the Fair Folk lived in places that were not quite in synch with time as mortal creatures knew it. Thus, the tales of men who bedded down in mushroom rings, only to wake a century later or the next morning, as bent and hobbling ancients. This spell mimics such faerie enchantments, allowing a mage to push a place outside of the normal flow of time so that those within experience a lot of subjective time in a very short period of "mainstream" time, or vice-versa.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively

## ●●●●● Master of Time

*I sculpt the fourth dimension in the same manner that a master of Space molds the other three. Understanding that time is an artificial construct, I spin as much of it as I desire out of the ether, molding it to my command, and I can capture a person or thing within the fabric of time itself. My own past is mutable, rewritten however I wish it.*



**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

This spell acts like the "Temporal Pocket" spell, p. 265, except that the mage can now cast it upon an area. One success affects a five-foot square area and anything within it, and additional Target factors can be devoted to increasing this area.

The flow of time can also be reversed so that time within the Pocket moves more slowly than time without. For example, with one success the time within the pocket moves at half the rate as time without: one turn within for every two turns without. With three successes, four turns pass within for every one turn that passes without. A person who enters the area must succeed in a reflexive and contested Composure + Gnosis roll or be caught within the time flux.

**Mysterium Rote: Temporal Bastion**
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Time

Mages of the Mysterium often use this rote to provide themselves with nearly limitless quantities of time to devote to their esoteric research. Some members of the Silver Ladder, when pondering a particularly difficult course of action, may use the same magic (Composure + Occult + Time) to afford themselves weeks or even months in which to consider a decision that must be made by tomorrow morning.

### Future Legacy (Time ●●●●●)

The mage shunts an object forward in time. While he could previously move things forward in time for a few turns using "Temporal Stutter," p. 265, mastery of this level allows him to move an object far into the future, perhaps to keep it out of enemy hands or to ensure that only an heir will wield it.

**Practice:** Making
**Action:** Instant
**Duration:** Lasting
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** None

The number of successes determines how far into the future the object can be sent. The mage can opt to send it to any time between now and that allowed by his successes.

| Successes | Future Time |
|---|---|
| 1 success | One year |
| 2 successes | Two years |
| 3 successes | Five years |
| 4 successes | 10 years |
| 5 successes* | 20 years |

* Add 10 years per additional success.

The object appears at the future time in the exact same space it occupies in the present, unless Space 2 is added to locate it elsewhere. (See "Apportation," p. 234.)

The drawback to this spell is that, once cast, the object cannot be retrieved, except at the point in the future in which it appears. It is said that archmasters of Time have the power to reach forward and snatch back objects that have been sent forward.

**Free Council Rote: Archeologist's Boon**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Investigation + Time

A few Free Council mages use this rote to plant buried treasures from their own past, although they can't mine such bounties until well into the future. At least they assure that nobody else can use them, either.

### Rewrite History (Time ●●●●●)

The mage can sculpt his personal history, within normal possibility. The willworker can perform extensive modifications to his own past, enabling him to redefine the person he currently is, even if only temporarily. He cannot, however, change his *soul's* history, remaking his magical past (he cannot change his Path, Gnosis or Arcana).

**Practice:** Making and Unmaking
**Action:** Extended
**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Each success allows the mage to shift one dot from a mundane trait (an Attribute, Skill or Merit, but not a magical trait such as Gnosis or an Arcanum) to another within the same trait category (dots of Social Attributes switch with other Social Attributes, etc.), up to his normal maximum within a given category (five dots for most humans). (Dots cannot be added directly to or subtracted directly from Advantages.) It is as if he had made different choices in the past, leading to different personal results. For example, in his newly rewritten past, a mage went to the gym rather than to the library he actually frequented in his real past, allowing him to shift traits from Mental Attributes to Physical Attributes.

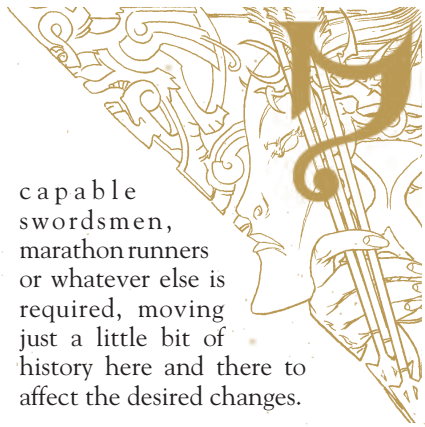
Note that changing a number that has derived characteristics (Composure or Stamina, for example) alters any such derived characteristics appropriately (say, Willpower or Health).

When the spell expires, the caster's real history is restored and his traits return to their original distribution.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Thief of Years**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Investigation + Time

The Silver Ladder's willworkers will not be ruled by any force outside of their order, not even the immutability of Time itself. By means of this rote, such mages become eloquent speakers,



capable swordsmen, marathon runners or whatever else is required, moving just a little bit of history here and there to affect the desired changes.

### Stop Time (Time ●●●●●)

The mage suspends time around the target. The target's subjective perception shows him as existing in one moment and then, instantaneously, another later time. To onlookers, it appears as if the target is perfectly still, even if he's in mid-air.

**Practice:** Unmaking
**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Composure + Gnosis reflexively
**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)
**Aspect:** Vulgar
**Cost:** 1 Mana

Each success allows the subject to be frozen in time for one turn. The field of suspended time exists immediately around the target. If anyone or anything enters this field — that is, if the target is touched — the spell is broken and the target is restored to normal time.

**Free Council Rote: Hand of Glory**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Time vs. Composure + Gnosis

Willworkers of the Free Council use this rote for a wide variety of purposes, such as stealing money from a wealthy countesses' safe right before her very (unseeing) eyes, or giving a conspiracy theorist a case of "lost time," so that he might think that aliens had abducted him in the interval of time of which he has no memory (but which clocks clearly show having passed).

## Paradox

Mages call down a higher reality with their spells, superseding the laws of nature. Their enlightened will guides the merging of worlds, creating a seamless conjunction between disjointed realities. But sometimes their will stumbles. When two realities collide, a *Paradox* occurs.

A Paradox arises from the conflict between the energies channeled from a mage's Path realm and prevailing reality, compounded by the unenlightened gaze of any Sleepers who witness the mage's handiwork. The mage's Path realm says something is possible, common reality says it's impossible, and a Paradox occurs. The result most often manifests as a strain within the mage's own Pattern, as the forces of Creation attempt to right the problem. The more the mage changes the universe through force of will, the more the universe may change the mage in turn. Mages who push their powers too far descend into madness and delusion. Paradox can even tear the fabric of reality asunder, allowing strange *things* from Outside to find their way in.

Mages believe that the Tapestry was once more supple and yielding to changes wrought by Awakened will. Before the Celestial War of Atlantis, magic did not clash with reality. With the shattering of the Ladder and the creation of the Abyss, however, the Shadow and Fallen Worlds were shifted askew. The risk of a Paradox haunts those mages who are not careful to hide their lights behind bushels.

For rules on the chances of invoking Paradox and its kind, see "Invoking a Paradox," pp. 123-125.

### Paradox Duration

Paradox's duration depends on the Wisdom of the caster who invokes it. (The duration of a Havoc Paradox is equal to the Duration factors of the spell that goes haywire.)

| Wisdom | Bedlam | Anomaly, Branding, Manifestation |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | One scene | One scene |
| 9 | One scene | One scene |
| 8 | One scene | One scene |
| 7 | One scene | One scene |
| 6 | One scene | One scene |
| 5 | One scene | One scene |
| 4 | Two hours | 24 hours |
| 3 | 12 hours | Two days |
| 2 | 24 hours | One week |
| 1 | Two days | One month* |

* If the mage has a Wisdom score of 0, the Paradox might be of indefinite Duration, at the Storyteller's discretion. The method of canceling such an effectively permanent Paradox effect is likewise up to the Storyteller.

## Havoc

The mage's spell is no longer under his control and is considered a Havoc spell. It affects a randomly chosen target (or targets, if multiple targets were factored into the casting) instead of the caster's declared target(s). The caster himself is included in this pool of random victims. The new target must be of the same type — if the mage targeted a living person, then the pool of random targets include only living people. If the mage's target is an object, then only objects are affected. If the caster is the only viable target present, he is the target of his own spell (unless he was its originally intended target, in which case the spell affects a target of a different kind, such as an object).

The new target — including the mage himself if he is the spell's new target — can contest or resist the spell if it is normally allowed (see the spell's description).

In addition, the mage's Wisdom is rolled:

**Dramatic Failure:** The spell's desired effect is reversed. A blessing becomes a curse, a magical perception spell blinds the mage to all resonance, or an attack spell helps the target instead.

**Failure:** The spell's desired effect is reversed, as above.

**Success:** The spell's effect is unaltered.

**Exceptional Success:** The spell's effect is unaltered and the mage gains a +2 dice bonus for any attempts he might make to dispel the Havoc spell.

Since the spell is no longer under the caster's control he cannot dismiss it at will.

A Havoc lasts for only as long as the spell's Duration. Note that spells with a concentration-based Duration become transitory; the Storyteller rolls a single die and the result is the number of turns the spells lasts.

## Bedlam

The mage gains a derangement as if he had suffered Wisdom degeneration, although his Wisdom is unaffected. The player and Storyteller decide which derangement is most appropriate for the situation. Unlike a normal derangement, the player does *not* get to make the customary reflexive Resolve + Composure roll to resist its effects — he is considered to have failed that roll by invoking the Paradox. The derangement is fully active for the duration of the Paradox, as listed on the Paradox Duration chart, but goes away once the Paradox ends.

A Bedlam derangement is generally more dramatic than its mundane counterpart. The player is expected to roleplay it as creatively as he can imagine. If the Storyteller feels that the character acts in opposition to the derangement, he can warn the player to change his action. If the player persists, the Storyteller can levy a Willpower point penalty against the character, rationalizing that he exerted his will to go against the grain of his Bedlam's madness.

| Arcanum Dots | Derangement Severity |
|---|---|
| 1 | Mild derangement |
| 2 | Mild derangement |
| 3 | Mild derangement |
| 4 | Severe derangement |
| 5 | Severe derangement |

In addition, the player rolls Wisdom:

**Dramatic Failure:** The mage's madness is contagious. One other mage per dot of the invoker's Presence also suffers from the Bedlam derangement for as long as the Paradox lasts (based on the invoker's Wisdom, not the victim's). Randomly choose targets from within the spell's range, including any sympathetic targets. The target may contest the Bedlam

with a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll. If successful, he is unaffected.

**Failure:** As above, but only one other target is affected.

**Success:** Only the mage is affected by Bedlam.

**Exceptional Success:** Only the mage is affected by Bedlam.

### Bedlam Derangements

Unlike a normal derangement, a Bedlam derangement makes the mage especially susceptible to certain types of magic, described with each derangement, below.

If the mage already suffers from the same derangement, the Storyteller can choose a new derangement or the more severe form of a mild derangement.

| Mild | Severe |
|---|---|
| Depression | Melancholia |
| Phobia | Hysteria |
| Narcissism | Megalomania |
| Fixation | Obsessive Compulsion |
| Suspicion | Paranoia |
| Inferiority Complex | Anxiety |
| Vocalization | Schizophrenia* |
| Irrationality | Multiple Personality* |
| Avoidance | Fugue* |

* The mage does *not* need to first experience a life-altering trauma to acquire one of these extreme derangements through a Bedlam Paradox.

**Depression (mild):** The invoking of a Paradox sends the mage into a bout of depression for the Paradox's duration. He loses one Willpower point and no Willpower points can be spent. In addition, he suffers a –1 dice penalty when contesting or countering Death magic. He suffers –1 dot to his Resistance Attribute when resisting Death magic (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Melancholia (severe):** Severe depression. In addition to the above effects of Depression, all dice pools suffer a –2 penalty for the remainder of the scene. This includes dice pools for contesting Death magic, and the mage suffers –2 dots to his Resistance Attribute when resisting Death magic (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Phobia (mild):** The mage is scared of a particular type of person, place or thing, perhaps the target of her Paradox-inducing spell or some other nearby subject who she might conceivably blame for the Paradox or her troubles in general.

She must move away from the object of her phobia. If she must be near it, she can tolerate being no closer than her Speed in yards. If it approaches her, she must move away at least her Speed in distance in her next action. She cannot easily target the object of her phobia with spells, close combat or ranged attacks. Such attacks suffer a –5 penalty as she shakes just looking at it. If space or circumstances don't allow her to maintain her distance, she freezes like a deer in headlights until she finds an opening by which to escape. (Her Defense still applies if attacked and she can choose to dodge and can take cover from firearms attacks, but she can take no other actions while "frozen.")

In addition, when she is targeted by supernatural powers from the object of her fear, she suffers a –1 dice penalty on any roll to contest or counter the power. She suffers –1 dot to her Resistance Attribute when resisting magic from the object of her fear (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Hysteria (severe):** This condition operates as a phobia, but the mage cannot be in the same room with the object of her fear. She must run away from it immediately, and cannot tolerate being within sensory range (sight, sound, smell) of it. Nor can she target it with sympathetic magic. If the trigger comes within sensory range, she must run away at full running Speed as soon as she can take an action. She cannot target it for an attack under any circumstance. If it touches her, she'll freak out and run as far away as she can, thinking of nothing else until she's left the subject far behind. If she is unable to escape, she faints and loses consciousness for the remainder of the scene.

In addition, when she is targeted by supernatural powers from the object of her fear, she suffers a –2 dice penalty on any roll to contest or counter the power. She suffers –2 dots to her Resistance Attribute when resisting magic from the object of her fear (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Narcissism (mild):** The mage is overcome with a sense of his own greatness — even if the spell that invoked the Paradox fails. For the duration of the Bedlam Paradox, he does not work and play well with others. When called upon to aid in a task, he does so only half-heartedly, unless it's a task focused on him or his own needs or wants. He suffers a –3 penalty when participating in teamwork efforts (see p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), and he's a self-obsessed bore whose Social rolls suffer a –1 penalty.

In addition, he suffers a –1 dice penalty on Wisdom rolls to resist gaining a derangement whenever his Wisdom drops (such as if he murders someone and his Wisdom is degraded for it).

**Megalomania (severe):** The effects of Narcissism apply, except that the penalties intensify by one. The mage is also highly competitive. He cannot allow himself to fail a contest (even a contested roll). If he does, he obsesses about it and works to arrange a rematch when it's most beneficial for him. If, for example, he fails to get his car over the finish line in time while an ally succeeds, he doesn't let it go. He constantly insists that he did the job just fine and that his successor took the glory, and demands that similar efforts be tried again, even under inappropriate circumstances such as at an office or restaurant.

If the character ever loses a contest to someone he feels is socially inferior, he loses one point of Willpower due to shame and self-loathing (which is at the heart of his megalomania; he secretly fears that he's a fraud).

In addition, he suffers a –2 dice penalty on Wisdom rolls to resist gaining a derangement whenever his Wisdom drops (such as if he steals from someone and his Wisdom is degraded for it).

**Fixation (mild):** The mage fixates on his a recent loss or victory. This could be the failure or success of the spell that invoked the Paradox, or an event that preceded the casting,

The mage's player rolls a single die. The result is the number of scenes (regardless of Wisdom) in which the character is focused on the offending or inspiring event or task, to the possible exclusion of more important goals. He fixates on what he believes caused him to lose or win his goal,

whether it's an opponent, a broken shoelace or the model of car driven. In the case of a defeat, he cannot help but simmer in anger, cursing a circumstance or trying to devise a method of circumventing it in the future. In the case of a victory, he becomes a fanatic, spending much of his time researching, observing or acclaiming an activity or factor that allowed him to succeed.

The Storyteller rules on how this derangement affects the mage's dice pools or behavior. It might cause him a –1 penalty on any task not related to his fixation, or he might refuse to engage in an activity if it doesn't somehow tie into his obsession.

In addition, the mage's inability to let go interferes with his ability to envision an Imago that is not directly concerned with the object of his fixation. He suffers a –1 penalty on any spellcasting that does not involve the fixation.

**Obsessive Compulsion (severe):** The trauma, guilt or inner conflict that causes this derangement forces the character to focus nearly all of his attention and energy on a single repetitive behavior or action. Obsession relates to an individual's desire to control his environment — keeping clean, keeping an area quiet and peaceful, or keeping undesirable individuals out. A compulsion is an action or set of actions that an individual is driven to perform to soothe his anxieties — placing objects in an exact order, constantly checking to make sure a weapon is loaded, praying every few hours to give thanks for surviving that long.

Determine a set of specific actions or behaviors that the mage follows to the exclusion of all else (even if doing so interferes with his current agenda or endangers his life or others'). If your character is forcibly prevented from adhering to his derangement, he may lose control among enemies or allies and attack either (or both) indiscriminately.

In addition, he suffers a –2 penalty on any spellcasting roll that does not involve the obsessive behavior.

**Suspicion (mild):** The mage is extremely suspicious of everyone's motives toward him — everyone is a suspect plotting to do him wrong. The mage questions everyone's sincerity and doubts that anyone tries to help him, even if someone saves his life. He suffers a –1 penalty on all Social rolls. Note that, even though he is suspicious, he can still be taken in by con men and hucksters. He gets no special bonus to resist their attempts to sway him even though he suspects them of being as bad as everyone else.

Ironically, the character's suspicions only make him *more* susceptible than usual to Mind magic, as he expects to be taken advantage of. He suffers a –1 dice penalty when contesting or countering such spells. He suffers –1 dot to his Resistance Attribute when resisting Mind magic (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Paranoia (severe):** The mage believes that her misery and insecurity stem from external persecution and hostility. Paranoids obsess over their persecution complexes, often creating vast and intricate conspiracy theories to explain who torments them and why. Anyone or anything perceived to be "one of them" might be subjected to violence.

The mage suffers a –2 penalty on Social rolls. She is distrustful and wary of everyone, even close friends and family. The slightest hint of suspicious behavior is enough to provoke the mage to flee or attack an offender.

Her paranoia practically guarantees that her worst fears about others come true. She suffers a –2 dice penalty when contesting or countering Mind spells. She suffers –2 dots to her Resistance Attribute when resisting Mind magic (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Inferiority Complex (mild):** The mage is overcome with self-doubt. The weight of momentous choice is too much for her and she is flustered, doubting her ability to choose correctly or to perform adequately. Any rolls made for the remainder of the scene suffer a –1 penalty. In addition, a Willpower point cannot be spent on any roll (although it can be spent to boost Defense).

The mage's fixation on her ability to make decisions makes her especially susceptible to Fate magic; she suffers a –1 dice penalty when contesting or countering such spells. She suffers –1 dot to her Resistance Attribute when resisting Fate magic (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Anxiety (severe):** As Inferiority Complex, but the mage's general anxiety plagues things so badly that she suffers a –2 penalty on all rolls for the remainder of the scene, and Willpower points cannot be spent to bolster any rolls in that period. She suffers a –2 dice penalty when contesting or countering Fate spells, and –2 dots to her Resistance Attribute when resisting Fate magic (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Vocalization (mild):** Whenever the mage must make a decision about a course of action or is under extreme stress, he talks to himself without realizing it. He vocalizes his internal monologue, but realizes it only if it's pointed out by others, at which point he can stop for one turn per dot of Wits that he has. After that period, he forgets himself and starts doing it all over again. This behavior persists for the remainder of the Bedlam's duration.

He vocalizes even if opponents or rivals can hear. It's hard to keep his thoughts and feelings secret when he speaks them aloud. For example, a rival might demand that he reveal the location of a hidden Artifact. He smirks and thinks to himself (and unwittingly speaks aloud), "You'll never find it in my hidden wall safe."

In addition, the mage's speaking to thin air draws the attention of spirits, making him more susceptible to Spirit magic. He suffers a –1 dice penalty when contesting or countering such spells or the powers of spirits. He suffers –1 dot to his Resistance Attribute when resisting Spirit magic (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Schizophrenia (severe; extreme):** The mage develops schizophrenia for the duration of the Paradox, which manifests as a withdrawal from reality, violent changes in behavior and hallucinations. This derangement is the classic sort, causing the victim to talk to walls, imagine himself to be the King of Siam, or to receive murderous instructions from pets.

Roleplaying this derangement requires careful thought. The Storyteller must determine a general set of behaviors relevant to the trauma that causes the condition. Hallucinations, bizarre behavior and disembodied voices stem from a terrible inner conflict that the individual cannot resolve. Establish a firm idea of what that conflict is and then rationalize what kind of behavior it causes.

The mage is unpredictable and dangerous. He automatically suffers a –2 penalty on all Social rolls and may be aggressive or violent toward people who confront him with trauma such as accusations, disturbing truths or heated arguments.

The mage's predicament attracts spirits to him so that even allies might be unsure whether his rants are hallucinatory or caused by real spirits. He suffers –2 dots to his Resistance Attribute when resisting Spirit magic or the powers of spirit (see the spell description for the specific Attribute used).

**Irrationality (mild):** The mage feels threatened and reacts without logic or reason. Her only way to comfortably deal with confrontation is to act crazy or over the top, in wild hopes that she will scare away her oppressor or at least mitigate her own fears. This behavior persists for the remainder of the Bedlam's duration. Ironically, she takes dangerous risks that might harm her worse than the actual threat posed. If a bouncer demands to know what she is doing in an off-limits part of a club, she might overreact and get in his face. The truly ironic part about this behavior is that during such a bout, the mage cannot initiate violence, only respond to it if it occurs. She can threaten or cajole challengers, but can't take the first swing. (That, in fact, is what her crazed behavior tries to avoid.)

In addition, her illogical mindset makes her covert spells Improbable to Sleeper witnesses.

**Multiple Personality (severe; extreme):** The mage's personality is fractured into one or more additional personas, allowing her to deny her trauma or any actions the trauma causes by placing the blame on "someone else." Each personality is created to respond to certain emotional stimuli. An abused person might develop a tough-as-nails survivor personality, create a "protector" or even become a murderer to deny the abuse she suffers. In most cases, none of these personalities is aware of the others, and they come and go through the mage's mind in response to specific situations or conditions.

The mage can manifest different Skills or perhaps increased or diminished Social Attributes for each identity (the number of dots allocated to the character's Social Attributes are rearranged by anywhere from one to three).

In addition, her illogical mindset makes her covert spells Improbable to Sleeper witnesses.

**Avoidance (mild):** The mage cannot face something about the current situation (it might be his enemy, his friends or an innocent bystander) and will do everything he can to avoid it, short of harming himself or others. He might escape the scene or disguise himself as a bystander to sidle away. If he must confront (or can't escape) the situation, any rolls made suffer a –1 penalty. He cannot target the situation, object or person he tries to avoid with magic.

**Fugue (severe; extreme):** The stress of the current situation is too great for the mage and he experiences a "blackout" and loss of memory. He performs a specific, rigid set of behaviors to remove the stressful symptoms. This syndrome differs from multiple personalities in that an individual in the grip of a fugue has no separate personality. Instead, he is on a form of "autopilot" similar to sleepwalking.

The player should roleplay the mage's trance-like state by performing a sequence of behaviors that he performs almost robotically. He might repetitively untie and tie his shoes, walk to the corner of the room and refuse to come out, or curl into the fetal position. If the Storyteller is not satisfied by the character's reaction, he might take control of the character for the duration of the bout. The fugue lasts for the remainder of the Bedlam's duration. At the end of the fugue, the character "regains consciousness" with no memory of his actions. If outsiders (including friends and enemies) interfere with or try to prevent his mechanical activities, he may attack them in order to carry on. He might even attempt to cast magic while in his fugue.

### Anomaly

Reality cracks open and something impossible takes place. The area affected is usually a radius around the caster of 20 yards per dot of the highest Arcanum used in the spell that invokes the Paradox. Anomalies are not affected by Sleeper Disbelief.

The important thing about Anomalies is that they're unpredictable. The Storyteller chooses their effects and defines the rules on how they affect the area and/or characters. Examples are provided below based on the invoker's Path realm, but they're just that — examples. Storytellers should get creative and strive to confound the caster's expectations, even using different criteria than Path realms.

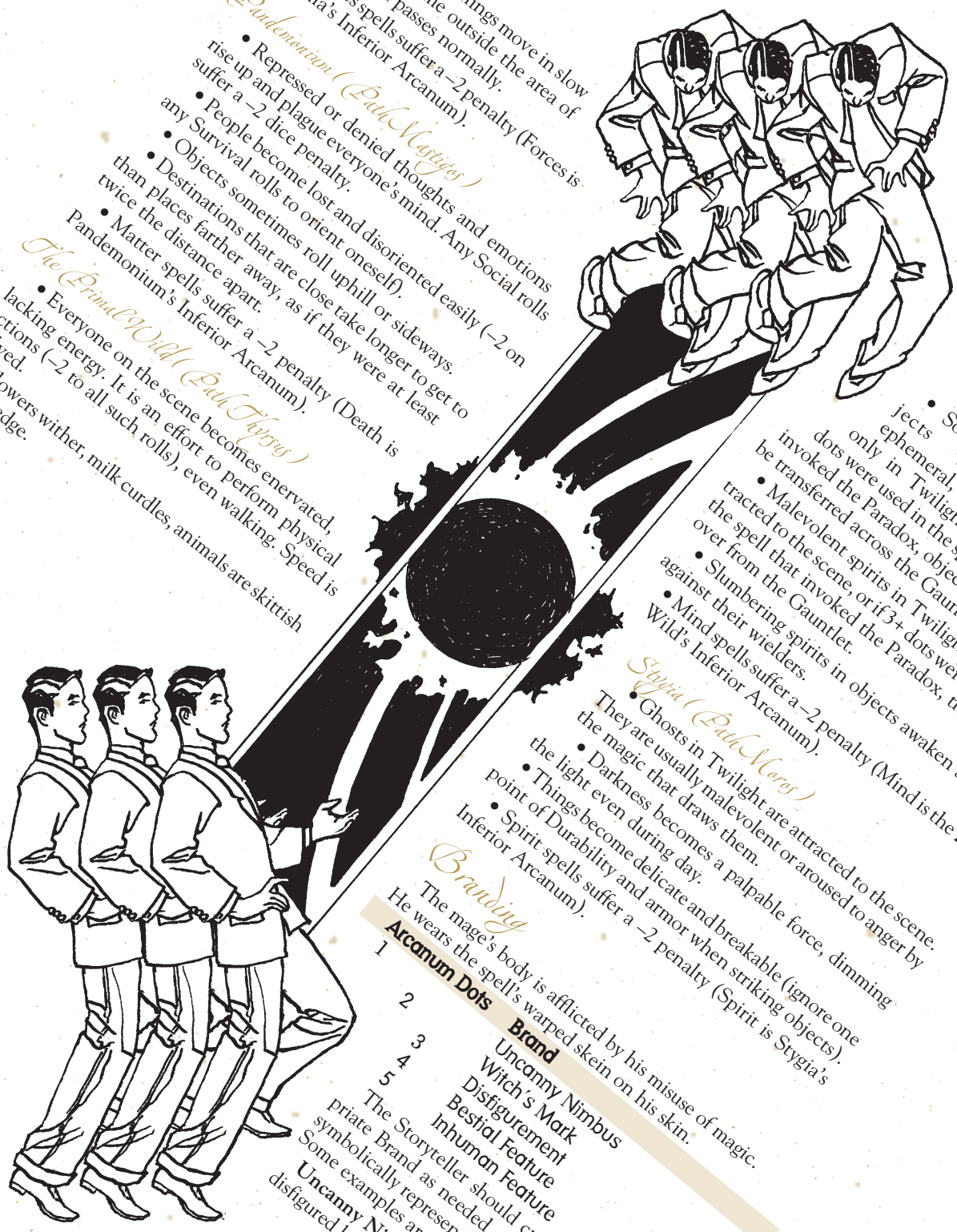
Note that if two or more Paradox Anomalies from different Path realms are caused in the same area during the same scene, their effects combine. If the same Path realm causes more than one Anomaly in the same area in the same scene, its effects are worsened.

#### The Aether (Path Obrimos)

- A storm brews or the weather acts crazy, raining hail in clear skies.
- The electrical system goes haywire, shorting out anything plugged into the local grid.
- Mana cannot be drawn from any Hallow in the area of the Anomaly for the duration of the Paradox.
- Tass cannot be converted to Mana in the area of the Anomaly for the duration of the Paradox.
- Mana cannot be solidified into tass in the area of the Anomaly for the duration of the Paradox.
- Resonance becomes negatively aspected. This is a lasting effect.
- Death spells suffer a –2 penalty (Death is the Aether's Inferior Arcanum).

#### Arcadia (Path Acanthus)

- Ill-luck taints the scene, causing everyone there to suffer a reverse of a rote action effect (see pp. 134-135 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) on their rolls: re-roll successes once, not to add new successes to the total but to replace rolled successes if the second roll results in failures. For example, a roll results in three successes and two failures. The successes are re-rolled, and this time the dice yield only two successes.
- People get a powerful sense of déjà vu over and over again. They repeat tasks they just accomplished unless they succeed in a Wits + Composure roll.



• People and/or things move in slow motion while time outside the area of the Intrusion passes normally.
• Forces spells suffer a –2 penalty (Forces is Arcadia's Inferior Arcanum).

*Pandemonium (Path: Mastigos)*

• Repressed or denied thoughts and emotions rise up and plague everyone's mind. Any Social rolls suffer a –2 dice penalty.
• People become lost and disoriented easily (–2 on any Survival rolls to orient oneself).
• Objects sometimes roll uphill or sideways.
• Destinations that are close take longer to get to than places farther away, as if they were at least twice the distance apart.
• Matter spells suffer a –2 penalty (Death is Pandemonium's Inferior Arcanum).

*The Primal Wild (Path: Thyrsus)*

• Everyone on the scene becomes enervated, lacking energy. It is an effort to perform physical actions (–2 to all such rolls), even walking. Speed is halved.
• Flowers wither, milk curdles, animals are skittish and on edge.
• Some objects become ephemeral, existing only in Twilight. If 3+ dots were used in the spell that invoked the Paradox, objects might be transferred across the Gauntlet.
• Malevolent spirits in Twilight are attracted to the scene, or if 3+ dots were used in the spell that invoked the Paradox, they cross over from the Gauntlet.
• Slumbering spirits in objects awaken and turn against their wielders.
• Mind spells suffer a –2 penalty (Mind is the Primal Wild's Inferior Arcanum).

*Stygia (Path: Moros)*

• Ghosts in Twilight are attracted to the scene. They are usually malevolent or aroused to anger by the magic that draws them.
• Darkness becomes a palpable force, dimming the light even during day.
• Things become delicate and breakable (ignore one point of Durability and armor when striking objects).
• Spirit spells suffer a –2 penalty (Spirit is Stygia's Inferior Arcanum).

## Branding

The mage's body is afflicted by his misuse of magic. He wears the spell's warped skein on his skin.

| Arcanum Dots | Brand |
|---|---|
| 1 | Uncanny Nimbus |
| 2 | Witch's Mark |
| 3 | Disfigurement |
| 4 | Bestial Feature |
| 5 | Inhuman Feature |

The Storyteller should create an appropriate Brand as needed, one that seems to symbolically represent the character's Vice. Some examples are provided below.

**Uncanny Nimbus:** The mage's nimbus is disfigured by his Vice. Anyone with super-

natural perception can see it. An Envious or Prideful mage's nimbus might be weaker when affecting others and seem stronger when affecting the mage himself. A Greedy mage's nimbus might not affect others at all, although its presence is still obvious. A Wrathful mage's nimbus might seem threatening to others, although it cannot harm them directly.

**Witch's Mark:** The mage bears a weird but non-prominent blemish that is visible to Sleepers. He might have luminous motes in his eyes (Lust or Greed), his body radiates heat (Wrath) or cold (Envy), or there is a grayish pallor to his skin (Sloth). In addition, he has an uncanny nimbus, as above.

**Disfigurement:** The mage bears a prominent blemish that is visible to Sleepers, such as a metallic sheen to his skin (Pride), the pupils of an animal (Wrath or Gluttony), a bizarre tenor to his voice (Lust, Envy, Greed). In addition, he has an uncanny nimbus, as above. He suffers a –1 dice penalty to Social rolls with Sleepers (except Intimidation Skill uses).

**Bestial Feature:** The mage gains an animal trait, such as claws (Wrath; +1 dice, lethal damage), fangs (Envy or Gluttony; +1 dice, lethal damage), horns (Pride; +2 dice, lethal damage), a tail (Greed or Lust; it has half the mage's Strength, rounding up), fur or scales (Sloth or Pride; one armor point). None of these features can be concealed easily. He suffers a –3 dice penalty to all Social rolls (except Intimidation Skill uses).

**Inhuman Feature:** The mage gains an inhuman trait, such as a bestial feature that is clearly demonic or supernatural. Maybe his tail is forked or his eyes glow. Or he might be surrounded by a cloud of flies (Gluttony or Greed), a miasma that causes plants to wither (Sloth or Envy), a herd of crawling vermin (Pride or Lust), or a pall of smoke (Wrath). He suffers a –5 dice penalty to all Social rolls (except Intimidation Skill uses).

## Manifestation

An entity from the Abyss enters into the Fallen World. It manifests somewhere within the area around the mage who invoked it, usually no farther away than 10 yards per dot of the caster's Gnosis. It does not necessarily appear within sight. It might manifest below the mage, in the sewers, or in an unseen room beyond the nearest wall.

| Arcanum Dots | Entity |
|---|---|
| 1 | The manifestation is a gremlin or imp, a minor spirit with a dark sense of humor that troubles the mage for a short time. It is of Rank 1 (with 5-8 Attribute dots) or 2 (9-14 Attribute dots). This entity exists in Twilight and cannot cause direct harm, but it can cause any number of minor problems. It has some influence over the material world, like a poltergeist. It can open and close doors, tip things over, and send small objects flying across a room. |
| 2 | A more powerful and menacing entity (Rank 3, with 15-25 Attribute dots) manifests in the material realm. It is malicious and rarely humorous. It has a keen sense of timing, causes various hassles and has powers like those of gremlins, above. |
| 3 | Entities of this intensity are more complex and capable (Rank 3 or 4, with 26-35 Attribute dots), driven less by pure instinct and emotion and more by thought and planning. They are also powerful enough to manifest a physical form and interact with the material world. They are cunning enough to pretend to have the mage's interests at heart, while leading him astray. The promises of such creatures are not to be trusted. |
| 4 | The entity's power is equal to that of the mage in every respect. Such entities range from murderous monsters that stalk and kill the mage's loved ones (or enemies, pinning the blame on the mage) to seductive manifestations of the mage's darkest desires. Some entities this powerful, called *doppelgangers*, appear exactly like the mage who spawned them. Doppelgangers never appear in the same place as their double. They are always elsewhere, causing mischief. The only means of banishing a doppelganger is for the mage to confront it directly (whereupon is vanishes). Doppelgangers must be restrained in order to do this. They can sense the approach of their double and flee if at all possible. |
| 5 | The mage draws the attention of a truly powerful entity (Rank 4 or 5, with 36-45 Attribute dots). The entity may try to destroy the mage or possess his body. Alternately, it may attempt to seduce the mage with promises of power, knowledge and the fulfillment of his desires. The entity remains in the world until either banished by the mage who summoned it or until the mage's death. In the past, the orders have sanctioned the execution of mages responsible for calling such entities into reality. |

### The Secret Soul

The heart of a mage's very power, what makes him what he is, resides in secrecy, on something with no substance and which cannot be seen or proven — the soul. Magic itself — occult, arcane lore — has always been shrouded in mystery, the provenance of secret societies and elite orders, meant only for the eyes and ears of initiates. "Things man was not meant to know." But what if initiation itself only promoted more secrecy, in a never-ending feedback loop of secrets within secrets, conspiracies writ larger and larger until they encompassed the entire cosmos?

Some mages profess a radical theory: What if the Paradoxes that plague willworkers are not an outside force, but a mage's own soul — his own secrecy — turned against him? Magic is a thing of secrets, and so *must remain secret*. And yet, the soul must express itself, and magic is that means of expression. These two needs — expression and secrecy — are at odds. No matter the desire of the ego for magic to "come into consciousness" by vulgar displays, the soul — the very source of magic — requires and demands secrecy. The soul seeks power, and yet must remain unknown. A paradox.

By this schema, a Paradox is the mage himself punishing his own transgressions against the code of silence, the pact made with his secret soul. His own power driving him mad under the strain of keeping silent. If there's one thing we all know about secrets: we must share

them. That's their true allure, the source of their power. Secrets that are not shared disappear. And yet, the soul cannot speak — cast spells — for fear of revealing the *secret*, that which must be kept hidden. This torturous game of revealing and unrevealing is enough to drive any person mad.

Mages who hold to this theory believe that the height of wisdom — perhaps even ascension as an Oracle — is achieving perfect balance between expression and secrecy. The Oracles are said to express the will of their souls in the very nature of the Tapestry — some say in the very existence of the Arcana. And yet, the Oracles are unknown and unseen. Mages believe they exist, but have no proof or evidence except intuition. The Oracles' great generosity comes from this incognito expression of their very selves in the powers of the universe. They claim no greatness for themselves, and so allow others to be great.

## Disbelief

When a Sleeper encounters magic or the supernatural, he cannot usually cope with what he sees. Supernatural disturbances trouble Sleepers who witness them — until the embrace of *Disbelief* erases all evidence of the occurrence from their minds.

Mages debate endlessly about why this is so. Ancient records have no references to any such effect before the fall of Atlantis and the division of the worlds. It seems that human souls, cut off from the Supernal World and exiled to the Fallen World, cannot cope with the truth of magic. *Something* violently tries to keep their eyes shut.

When a Sleeper witnesses a vulgar act of magic, it always triggers Disbelief. The Sleeper's reaction depends on his Willpower. In many cases, the effects alter or amend the Sleeper's memory of the event, but humans have been known to react in unpredictable ways. If multiple humans witness the same vulgar act of magic, each interprets it differently according to his Willpower and the resources his unconscious mind uses to explain the event.

| Willpower | Memory |
|---|---|
| 1-4 | The Sleeper completely forgets that he ever saw anything unusual. |
| 5-7 | He forgets what he sees but has a feeling of unease. He might remember events later as if they were something he dreamed. Or he misinterprets what he sees; he might mistake a spell for a technological phenomenon or anything to explain it away in "normal" terms. |
| 8-10 | He remembers everything. |

Covert magic does not trigger Disbelief unless it strains credulity (see "Improbable Magic," p. 112). Also, the powers of supernatural creatures *do not* trigger Disbelief. Vampires, werewolves, spirits, ghosts and other strange beings can use their powers freely before the eyes of Sleepers. Mages theorize that Disbelief is a Sleeper's soul denying the truth of the Supernal World, as displayed by vulgar Awakened magic. The powers of other creatures, mages believe, originate in the Fallen World and do not stir the soul's memory of its fallen tragedy. In a sense, Disbelief is a near Awakening, but one that denies Awakening itself.

### Unraveling

A Sleeper who witnesses a vulgar spell might very well unravel that spell with the force of his Disbelief. The result is an extended action, accumulating successes over time. In the first turn in which the spell's effect is witnessed, roll the Sleeper's Resolve + Composure and compare the successes to the spell's Potency. If successes exceed Potency, the spell is dispelled. If they are equal to or less than the spell's Potency, the spell is unaffected.

Every 10 minutes thereafter for the rest of the scene, roll again and add successes to the running total. Once successes exceed the spell's Potency, it is dispelled. A mage might try to hide the effect from a Sleeper, but if the Sleeper sees it again any time during the scene, his new Disbelief successes are added to his previous successes. (Note: If the action has moved on to another location, but the spell remains, Storytellers can assume one success on this roll per Sleeper per 10 minutes that pass, until the spell is unraveled. For example, a Potency 3 spell in a room with two Sleepers is unraveled in 20 minutes.) If a Sleeper leaves the scene of the spell, rolls are no longer made for him.

***Example:*** *Angrboda transforms a rat into an imp (a tiny human-like demon creature) with his Life 5 "Fantasia" spell (p. 192). The spell has a Potency of 5. He then uses a covert Mind spell to command the imp to enter an office building at night to fetch some files.*

*The night janitor (a Sleeper) sees the bizarre thing scuttle through a window and into the office. He literally cannot believe his eyes. On the first turn the janitor witnesses the imp, the Storyteller rolls his Resolve + Composure (an average dice pool of four dice). He gets one success. This is not enough to affect the spell that transformed the rat into the imp.*

*The janitor continues to watch with incredulity as the imp rifles through file cabinets. Ten minutes later, another roll is made: three successes, for a running total of four successes. This is not yet enough to exceed the spell's Potency.*

*The imp continues its search. Another 10 minutes later, another roll is made: two successes, for a total of six successes. This total exceeds the Fantasia spell's Potency, so the spell is dispelled. The imp transforms back into a rat. The janitor, already beginning to forget what he saw (his Willpower is 4), goes looking for a rat trap.*

## Spellcasting Example of Play

Fred, Mike and Lisa each play mage characters in Philippe's chronicle.

Fred plays Crow, an angry young Adamantine Arrow mage who walks the Obrimos Path. His Arcana are Forces 3, Life 2 and Prime 1, and his Gnosis is 2.

Mike plays Devon, a sly Acanthus mage from the Free Council order. His Arcana are Fate 3, Time 2 and Spirit 1, and his Gnosis is 2.

Lisa plays Sapphire, a cunning Mastigos mage from the Silver Ladder order. Her Arcana are Mind 3, Space 2 and Death 1, and her Gnosis is 3.

The three mages investigate an abandoned house that is said to be haunted. Devon, however, discovered through research that the place used to be a mage's sanctum, although just who the previous owner might have been is still unknown.

Before entering the house, the players each declare that their characters cast Mage Sight spells upon themselves. Crow uses the Prime "Supernal Vision" spell (p. 221), perhaps the best spell for seeing the remnants of Awakened magic that might still exist in the house. Devon uses the Spirit "Second Sight" spell (p. 246), which is good for perceiving any weak areas of the Gauntlet. Sapphire uses the Death "Grim Sight" spell (p. 134), which will help if there are actually any ghosts in the house.

Each character also casts a protection spell. For Crow, it's the Forces "Unseen Shield" spell (p. 167), giving him three points of armor (one per Arcanum dot). Devon uses the Fate "Fortune's Protection" spell (p. 152) for three points of armor, and Sapphire casts the Mind "Misperception" spell (p. 209) for three points of armor.

Philippe notes that each character now has two active spells. Their Stamina dots determine their Spell Tolerance (p. 128), or how many active spells they can have cast upon themselves before they begin suffering dice penalties due to magical interference. Devon's Stamina is 2, so if another spell is cast upon him, he'll begin suffering spellcasting difficulties: –1 die per spell in excess of his Stamina. Crow and Sapphire's Stamina scores are each 3, so they've got more leeway.

As the characters enter the dark house with flashlights, each of them tries to read the resonance there for any special clues. This is an extended-action task, but one roll can be made each turn. Philippe makes the rolls, so that he can conceal any dice modifiers without revealing their source to the players. For these rolls, he subtracts one die each due to the darkness in the house (the flashlights help, but they don't make things easy). On the first turn, Crow and Devon each get one success while Sapphire gets two successes. The Storyteller informs each that nothing has been gleaned; they need to keep trying.

On the second turn, they each try again. Crow gets no successes, Devon gets one, and Sapphire gets three successes. Since Sapphire has collected five successes, that's enough for her to discern the quality of the resonance (at least its most obvious quality, if there is more than one). Philippe informs Sapphire that she can detect the odd smell of mystical decay that sometimes accompanies a resonance quality of *resentment*.

Before the characters can continue scrutinizing the place, Philippe asks the players to give him their characters' Wits + Composure dice pools. He then makes secret contested and reflexive rolls for each, to see if any of them is surprised by the mage who is sneaking up on them from the next room. Philippe earlier determined that this stealthy mage gained two successes on a Dexterity + Stealth roll to move quietly. Each of the reflexive rolls Philippe makes for the characters must gain three or more successes to beat the stealthy mage's roll. None makes this benchmark, so all the characters are too busy scrutinizing resonance to notice the approaching stranger.

The mage is named Gravel, a lunatic apostate who has recently declared this former sanctum to be his own. He is an Obrimos mage, with Arcana of Forces 3, Spirit 2 and Prime 1, and a Gnosis of 2. He attacks the closest character — Devon — with an improvised Forces 3 "Telekinetic Strike" spell (p. 170). (Since Forces is one of his Path's Ruling Arcana, Gravel is not penalized any Mana points to cast the improvised spell.)

Since the spell is vulgar, Philippe checks for a Paradox before the spellcasting roll is made. He rolls one die for Gravel's Gnosis of 2 and gets no successes. He then rolls for the spell: Gravel's Gnosis 2 + Forces 3. The Telekinetic Strike is an aimed spell, which acts like a ranged-weapon attack. Devon's Fortune's Protection armor helps him here, subtracting three dice from the roll. The roll still garners one success — Devon suffers one bashing wound from the impact of the telekinetic force.

The characters are now all aware of Gravel's hostile presence. Their players roll Initiative. Crow's is the highest at 13, Sapphire is next at 7, while Devon acts at 3 in the Initiative roster. Gravel acts at 5.

Crow acts first. He decides to give Gravel a piece of his own medicine. (Since the Telekinetic Strike is a vulgar spell, Crow's Mage Sight identifies it right off.) The Storyteller checks for Paradox: one die for Crow's Gnosis of 2. Crow's Telekinetic Strike, however, is a rote (the Adamantine Arrow "Mind Arrows"). Thus, the Paradox dice pool is reduced by one die. In addition, Crow is waving his knife, his dedicated magical tool (see p. 89); the Paradox roll is further reduced by one die. The Storyteller rolls a chance die and gets no successes.

Crow's player then rolls Presence + Athletics + Forces for the rote and gets four successes — Gravel suffers four bashing wounds.

Sapphire acts next. She casts an improvised Mind 3 "Psychic Assault" spell (p. 212). The spell is covert, so there is no chance of Paradox. The dice pool is Gnosis 3 + Mind 3 – Gravel's Resolve of 4 = two dice. The player rolls and gets no successes.

Gravel then casts a Forces 2 "Influence Electricity" spell (p. 165) to arc the electricity from a nearby wall socket at the invading mages. Even though the house is dark, Gravel knows that the electricity is still coursing through the walls. This is an improvised spell.

Philippe checks for Paradox. Since this is the second Paradox roll that Gravel has caused in the same scene, one die is added to the dice pool, for a total of two dice. Philippe rolls two successes: a Bedlam Paradox. Gravel has three dots of Forces, so he suffers a mild derangement. The Storyteller rolls his Wisdom (4 dots) to see if the madness is contagious; the roll gets one success, so no one else is affected. He decides that Gravel's Bedlam derangement is Irrationality.

The dice pool for Gravel's spell is Gnosis 2 + Forces 3 – 2 for the Paradox successes = three dice. The roll yields three successes. This allows Gravel's burst of electricity to hit all three mages. A wall socket delivers four bashing points of electrical damage (according to the rules for electrocution on pp. 177-178 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The mages' armor spells reduce this to one point each.

Devon can now act. He casts a Fate 3 "Superlative Luck" spell (p. 156) on his holstered pistol. He has learned this as a rote (using a dice pool of Wits + Occult + Fate), but his player must still spend one Mana as the spell's cost. It is a vulgar spell, so Philippe checks for a Paradox. Devon's Gnosis of 2 means one die is rolled, minus one die for the rote, leaving him with a chance die. He rolls and gets no successes.

Devon's player rolls for the spell and gets three successes. It gives him the 8-again effect (re-roll 8s, 9s, and 10s) when Devon uses his gun. Three different rolls can be made with this benefit.

The turn is over and a new turn begins. Once again, Crow, with the highest Initiative, acts first. He persists with another Telekinetic Strike. Philippe checks for a Paradox, adding one die for Crow's second Paradox roll this scene, and gets no successes. Crow's spell gets three successes.

Gravel has now suffered a total of seven bashing wounds, and has only 7 Health. A Stamina roll must be made for him to remain conscious. It fails and he collapses to the floor.

The three mages breathe a sigh of relief and look about cautiously, in case there are more foes around. None present themselves, although Philippe informs them that a low rumbling noise can be heard from below (the basement, perhaps?), getting louder and louder with each passing moment….

## Matters of the Soul

The soul is an important ingredient in any consideration of the Awakened. It can be stolen to lend debased mages a mockery of life, and all willworkers can distill their souls into material form to act as the foundation for a Demesne, a place where magic flows more freely.

### Soul Loss

In rules terms, each week that a character's soul is gone, he loses a *dot* of Wisdom (Morality for mortals). He does gain derangements from this loss, but as with any Wisdom degeneration, it makes the character more capable of justifying poor behavior and increasingly bad deeds. In addition, he can still lose Wisdom normally for committing sinful deeds and failing the accompanying degeneration rolls. When the character's Wisdom is reduced to 1 dot, this process of erosion turns on the character's Willpower dots. Once his Willpower dots drop to zero, the soulless one becomes practically catatonic, shuffling through life by force of habit, if at all. He may wander the streets mumbling to himself, challenged to put together coherent sentences. The streets and lunatic asylums of the World of Darkness are full of insane, homeless beggars, and many of the Awakened are convinced that many of these unfortunates are the result of soul-theft by Tremere mages (see p. 363) and other supernatural entities. As a secondary danger, a living body that's lost its soul (even if it hasn't yet lost Wisdom dots due to the loss) is at a particularly high risk of being possessed by any spirit that wants a physical body for a while (the possessing spirit gains a +2 dice bonus).

Assuming an individual's soul may be recovered, it can be reconnected to the body with the Spirit 3 "Recover Lost Soul" spell, p. 250. Once a person regains her soul, the dots she lost from Wisdom and Willpower due to soul-loss return at a rate of one per day, beginning with Willpower. (She does not regain Wisdom lost to normal degeneration rolls for committing sinful acts.)

### Soul Handling

A mage with Death 3 ("Sever the Sleeping Soul," p. 141) can rip another's soul from its physical mooring (or Death 5 to sever an Awakened soul). Severing a person's soul from his body is among the worst acts imaginable, but like splitting an atom, it also frees a great deal of energy. While the Tremere (see p. 363) have a reputation for being soul-thieves, they're not the only ones guilty of that foul crime. Scelesti (see p. 361) also use threats of soul-theft against enemies (and enemies' families) as a means of extortion. Even highly moral and ethical individuals have been known to submit to the Nefandi after helplessly watching a loved one degenerate for a few weeks.

A severed soul can be attached to a soulless body using Death 4 ("Soul Binding," p. 144). This is a rite by which a mage completely appropriates a soul he steals, making it his own. Only Death or Fate 4 ("Destroy Bindings," p. 156) can detach a soul that has been claimed in such a manner.

An unmoored soul is an extremely subtle and vulnerable thing, visible to those with Mage Sight, but untouchable by any who do not have the proper Arcanum lore to affect it. If loosed from its body by magic or spirit powers while it is in the physical world, a soul hovers in Twilight as a ghostly presence. Any mage who is able to affect beings in Twilight (using the Death, Mind or Spirit Arcana) can affect an unmoored soul. The soul does not have a Corpus like most spirits; it is intangible even to them (unless they have Numina allowing them to affect souls). Its Speed is equal to its Willpower (it slows down as it loses Willpower over time). It has no powers or ability to affect the world or those around it, although it can communicate with Twilight beings through a form of telepathy (if it is in the Shadow Realm, it can communicate with beings there through the same process).

An unmoored soul acts in its own best interests, trying to escape back to its mortal housing if possible. It cannot, however, reunite what magic has severed. It needs a mage, spirit or deity to restore it to its body. Even a Sleeping soul can tell friend from foe with a wisdom beyond its mortal self's ken, so it cannot be fooled or tricked.

Souls can be tracked with Spirit 2 and a sympathetic connection (such as contact with the soul's mortal body). A soul that departs a body upon death cannot be affected or tracked at all. It immediately fades from all the planes known to any but the Oracles or Exarchs. Hence, soul-stealers need to harvest their crop from living bodies.

Those who routinely steal souls (such as the Tremere) usually create receptacles for holding them until a spell can be cast to attach the entities. A mage needs the Death 2 or Spirit 2 "Soul Jar" spell, p. 137, to enchant the receptacle so that a soul placed into it cannot escape. Doing so also protects a soul from harm; any attacks must first breach the receptacle.

## Soul Stones

A soul stone is a piece of a mage's soul, intentionally detached and distilled into material form by the sorcerer. Soul stones are used to create Demesnes (see p. 280), places where vulgar magic can be cast as if it were covert. This incredible benefit outweighs the perils of creating a soul stone.

Soul stones are not made carelessly. Although they provide a powerful asset, their creation diminishes the originator's potential. A dot (not a point but a *dot*) of Willpower is sacrificed, and one point of Mana is spent. (You may restore this lost Willpower dot by spending eight experience points.) The real drawback, however, is that your mage's transcendent potential is now limited. He cannot raise his Gnosis to 10 dots, its highest expression. Should he create another soul stone, his potential is diminished further. He cannot raise his Gnosis to nine dots, and so on down the scale with each new soul stone he creates. He trades spiritual potential for temporal power. Finally, creating a soul stone is an "act of hubris" and requires a Wisdom degeneration roll (two dice), unless the mage has Wisdom 3 or less. See "Wisdom," pp. 79-80.

A soul stone's appearance is unique to each individual, but its basic form is defined by its creator's Path. Not all soul stones are actual "stones." Acanthus soul stones take the form of plants or trees, while Thyrsus soul stones appear as animal tokens — a claw, tooth, bone or pelt of fur.

A soul stone can outlast the mage who created it, allowing a Demesne that incorporates it to exist into perpetuity. If the stone is destroyed, however, a mage does not regain his lost Gnosis potential and the Demesne loses that portion of the soul's contribution (if it was the Demesne's only soul stone, the Demesne ceases to be). As long as a soul stone has not been destroyed, its creator can elect to reintegrate it at anytime. He must first physically reclaim it (removing it from its Demesne if necessary) and then sacrifice a dot of Gnosis. He can regain this dot with experience points in the normal manner. Although such recovery is costly, the reintegration of a soul stone restores the mage's lost Gnosis potential by one dot. It does, however, remove that soul stone's contribution to the Demesne. Mages can integrate only their own soul stones; they can't integrate the stones of other mages.

Soul stones can be destroyed only by using magic that delivers aggravated damage, and the attacker must physically touch the stone (soul stones cannot be targeted by sympathetic magic). A soul stone's Durability is equal to its creator's current Gnosis dots (not necessarily the dots he had when he created the stone) and its Size is 1.

One mage can gain advantage over another mage by physically controlling his soul stone. It gives her an Intimate sympathetic connection to the creator and allows her to tap the creator's Mana. See the "Thrall" Merit, p. 89, for details. Characters can begin play owning another mage's soul stone by purchase of this Merit.

## Resonance (Auras)

It's possible to imagine the whole of Creation as a great Tapestry made of up countless threads of Mana woven in complex Patterns. Like the strings of a musical instrument, these primal threads resonate with a particular tone, the background hum of Creation, like the music of the spheres. This vibration gives each and every thing in Creation what mages call a unique *resonance*, a kind of mystic frequency or "tone." It is most often called an object's *aura*, since most mages perceive resonance visually in terms of auras of colored light surrounding things.

The strength of an object or creature's resonance varies in both a material and a metaphysical sense, depending on an aura's density. Mundane material objects are the densest, having only a faint background resonance and whatever traces they have picked up from contact with other, more intense, auras. The supernal Mana infused into Artifacts gives them a clearer resonance than mundane objects. Living beings have a stronger resonance still, with the auras of the Awakened being much bolder than those of Sleepers (unless disguised in some way; see below). Ephemeral objects have a very clear resonance, with no material element to dampen or conceal their auras. The same is true of ephemeral creatures like spirits. In general, it is much easier to perceive the resonance of an active spirit than that of, say, a mundane piece of rock.

Resonance is not just energy vibrating at certain frequencies. It carries information, *qualities* with certain concepts or emotions. Resonance subtly affects the world, infusing it with ideals and influencing the consciousness of humans and animals (and, some say, rocks, trees and streams). Qualities can be affected directly by magic only rarely (see the spell descriptions). Mages must usually change the behaviors that occur in a place to slowly alter the site's tenor.

The resonance of a place behaves somewhat like the Chinese theory of *feng shui*; the totality of local influences gives a place a certain "vibe." This vibe exemplifies a theme and/or mood, influencing people's feelings and possibly manner. Regional resonance is determined mainly by the accretion of strong behaviors over time, such as murder or caregiving. Spirits are attracted to certain qualities of resonance, such as misery, hope or envy. Their own behavior tends to reinforce such a resonance even more.

Resonance affects the unconscious minds of Sleepers, influencing their thoughts, desires and manner with its aspects. There are no game rules for this effect. The way in which resonance changes hearts and minds of Sleepers is left to the Storyteller. Resonance influences the world in indirect and subtle ways, and various people react differently to its music. Resonance with the quality of *perfection* might bring out the best in people, influencing them to change their lives, to join a health club, to go back to school or to even enter a monastery. Such an area might become a destination for all who seek to improve themselves. Shrines, colleges and health centers spring up there.

### Unveiling Resonance

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult

**Action:** Extended (1–5+ successes; one roll represents one turn of scrutiny)

Mages can scrutinize a person, place or thing's aura to find out more about that subject, even hidden or secret informa-

tion. An aura has layers; mages must dig through the strata to get at secret truths.

Mages can cast a simple spell using the first dot of any Arcanum to perceive resonance, what the Atlanteans called the Practice of Unveiling. Once the spell is active, a sorcerer can see the resonances of all objects, typically as faintly glowing auras, although some mages experience resonance differently, and some Arcana tend to color the experience. (Mind can pick up resonance as ideas and emotional impressions, Life as scents and flavors, and Forces sometimes shows resonance as sounds.)

Once a resonance-sensing spell is active, a mage can examine any resonance in her area. Successes reveal clues about various aspects of a resonance under investigation. (The Storyteller should make the rolls, since the player should not know when his roll is modified by various factors such as a target's Occultation Merit; see below.) Unlike many tasks, this isn't an all-or-nothing effort. If the mage has to abandon the scrutiny before she's finished, she may still come away with some useful information depending on the number of successes rolled. The Storyteller should share information each time a roll yields a success, as per the guidelines below. Generally, he should start with the most obvious facts and reveal increasingly obscure bits as scrutiny continues. At no time should the player know how many successes are needed to complete the analysis. She should always wonder whether her character should invest a little more time and dig deeper. Storytellers may choose to make these rolls for players in secret to add uncertainty and suspense. If any perception roll is failed, use the penalties listed for "Successive Attempts," p. 132 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

**Suggested Equipment:** Gazing through crystals and gems sharpens the appearance of resonance, bringing it more readily into focus: crystal +1, precious gem (emerald, ruby, sapphire) +1, diamond +3

**Possible Modifiers:** The density of the subject applies a modifier to your dice pool.

| Density | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Very dense (mundane stone, metal, concrete or similar materials) | –2 |
| Dense (a corpse or other dead organic material such as wood, ivory or bone) | –1 |
| Normal (a Sleeper or other mundane living creature, living plant, an Artifact or other magical object) | 0 |
| Refined (ephemeral objects and materials, and active spells) | +1 |
| Very refined (spirits and other ephemeral creatures) | +2 |

### Scrutinizing Beings and Objects

Resonance reveals information about an object or being's nature.

• *Identity:* (1 success) Each resonance or aura is as unique as a fingerprint. If a mage has seen or studied a resonance before and is familiar with it, one success allows him to recognize the subject. He can recognize the resonance of the subject regardless of any sort of physical disguise or transformation, allowing him to detect people in disguise or under the effects of a transformative spell. With five successes, he can recognize shapeshifters in any of their forms. There are some means of disguising a subject's resonance (see below).

Note that powerful mages have strong auras. Their Gnosis gives others a bonus to notice and scrutinize their resonance. See "Gnosis," pp. 75-76.

• *Nature:* (1 success) Resonance reveals a subject's true nature: human or inhuman, mortal or spirit, Sleeper or Awakened. One success is enough to alert the mage that the person is not what he seems to be, but the mage doesn't necessarily know what the subject really is. Five successes allow a mage to determine a subject's true nature. Among other things, this insight allows the Awakened to recognize each other through resonance, unless concealed in some way. Mages can also pick supernatural beings such as vampires or shapeshifters out of a group of ordinary mortals, although they might not be able to identify what they are, only that they aren't normal.

### Scrutinizing Spells

A mage's magic carries traces of caster's resonance. By examining the resonance of a mage's spells, one can learn the caster's identity, power (Gnosis) and degree of Arcanum mastery.

• *Composition:* (1 success per Arcanum involved for covert spells; no roll required for vulgar spells) Covert spells can be analyzed for their Arcanum components. One success per Arcanum used is needed to identify all the mystical traits involved. No roll is required to recognize the Arcana involved in a vulgar spell. This research cannot tell the mage what trait dots were involved (he needs to deduce that based on what he knows of the spell's effect and the capabilities of each degree of mastery), but he can tell which Arcana were used, such as whether a spell stinks of the grave (Death) or if it shimmers with fiery energy (Forces).

• *Potency:* (1 success per point of Potency) An improvised or rote spell can be examined to determine its Potency, usually toward the goal of dispelling it.

• *Targets:* (1 success per Target factor) An improvised or rote spell can be examined to determine the number of Targets it *could* have affected, but not the exact number it *does* affect. In other words, its maximum number of allowed targets can be learned, but not how many targets were actually affected by its casting.

• *Duration:* (1 success per Duration factor) An improvised or rote spell can be examined to determine its Duration.

• *Identification:* (1 success for improvised spells, 5 successes for rotes) Spells carry the resonance of their casters. Examining a spell may reveal the caster's identity. Doing so requires one success for improvised spells or five successes for rote spells. If an investigator is already familiar with the caster's resonance, it is recognized with the required number of successes. If there is no existing familiarity, that connection is now established and the investigator recognizes the caster's resonance when he perceives it again. Additionally, a familiar mage's magical tools can be examined to determine their owner's identity; only one success is required to establish or achieve that recognition.

• *Power:* (1 success per dot of Gnosis) An improvised spell's resonance shows a measure of its caster's enlightened

will (Gnosis). By scrutinizing it, an investigator can learn the general level of the caster's Gnosis: low (1 or 2), medium (3 or 4), high (5 or 6), or masterful (7+). Perceiving a caster's Gnosis requires one investigation success per dot of the caster's Gnosis. Rote spells cannot be scrutinized to determine their caster's power.

• *Mastery:* (1 success for improvised spells, 5 successes for rotes) A spell's resonance also shows its caster's degree of Arcanum mastery: initiate (1 or 2), adept (3 or 4) or master (5+). One success is needed for an improvised spell, and five successes are required for a rote spell. If the spell involved more than one Arcanum to cast, the investigator learns the highest rated Arcanum and further examination rolls may be made to learn the others as well.

***Example:*** *Arctos suspects that a spell designed to draw ghosts to an abandoned house is the work of Bahazid. Arctos first casts a spell on himself that allows him to perceive resonance. He uses the Prime Arcanum, the best one for viewing magic. He then scrutinizes the ghost spell, searching for telltale signs of Bahazid's resonance.*

*He spends one turn examining the magical energies, and the player rolls Intelligence + Occult. He gets three successes. The Storyteller knows that the caster used a rote to cast the spell, and that requires five successes to analyze deeply enough to recognize its caster's personal stamp. Arctos learns very little about the spell. He persists, however, and the player rolls again the next turn, getting three more successes, for a total of six successes. Since five were needed, Arctos knows that Bahazid was indeed the culprit behind the haunting spell.*

## Scrutinizing Qualities

Resonance can also be examined to discover the inherent information or theme it carries. Some resonance is "pure" or without qualities, but that is rare and usually found only at Hallows.

• *Quality:* (5 successes per aspect) The information content of resonance can be gleaned with five successes. If the resonance has more than one quality, additional successes — five per quality — are needed to uncover them all. Not all resonance is equally obvious. The Storyteller might rule that certain instances are harder to study than others, requiring more successes to perceive certain aspects. While the wilderness compound of a radical rightwing terrorist group might have obvious anger resonance, its more subtle fear resonance might not be as readily apparent (–2 dice). The most obvious resonance is noticed first.

***Example:*** *Arctos knows that weird things keep occurring near a popular shopping mall. He checks the place out with Mage Sight. His player needs to roll five successes for Arctos to read the quality of each type of resonance around the mall. The Storyteller knows that the mall actually has three distinct resonance qualities: Greed (the most prevalent), self-pity, and — very subtle — cruelty (–2 dice to detect). Arctos needs 15 successes to discern the cruelty quality (five for greed, five more for self-pity and five more for cruelty). The first two are not necessarily surprising in a place that teenagers frequent, but the last is somewhat unusual. In fact, a spirit locus sits in the basement of the administration offices, and attracts spirits that feed on cruelty.*

## Sensing Scrutiny

Scrutinizing an aura involves a degree of active magic. Other mages can sometimes sense a fellow mage's scrutiny upon them (including sympathetic magic scrying). If someone examines a mage's aura, the Storyteller makes a reflexive Wits + Composure roll for the mage who is studied. A success means the mage senses the scrutiny, with a sensation exactly like the feeling of being watched or stared at. At the Storyteller's discretion, an exceptional success allows the studied mage to determine exactly who is looking. A failed roll means the scrutiny goes unnoticed. A dramatic failure means no roll can be made for the mage to notice any scrutiny of his aura for the rest of the scene.

Since the Storyteller makes this roll secretly, characters have no way of knowing for sure whether someone checks them out or not. Likewise, they don't know for sure if a mage they examine notices *them*.

## Disguising Resonance

The Occultation Merit (p. 86) masks personal resonance to a degree. Each dot in the Merit imposes a –1 penalty on rolls to examine a mage's aura or spells. The observer is not aware of this additional difficulty; a failed roll means the information on the mage's resonance is simply overlooked.

Mages can also use magic to conceal resonance. Various Arcana list different methods of obscuring, severing or dampening resonance. See the spell descriptions. Before a mage can perceive such concealed resonance, the Potency of his perception spell must exceed the Potency of the concealing spell. If it does, he can detect the concealing spell; in some cases, he can then see through its effect and scrutinize the true resonance normally. In other cases, he might need to first dispel the concealing spell. See the spell descriptions for each case.

Given enough time, a mage with a weak perception spell can detect even a powerful concealing spell. This requires an extended action Intelligence + Occult scrutiny (10 minutes per roll) with a target number equal to the concealing spell's Potency. The mage must first declare that he is searching for such a hidden spell; he cannot accidentally stumble upon it through a normal scrutiny.

## Using Resonance

Once a willworker has studied a resonance, what can she do with the knowledge gained? In addition to the information provided above, examining resonance has the following advantages:

• *Identification:* Once one has successfully examined a resonance (with one or more successes), she can recognize that aura if she perceives it again. It is often helpful for mages to become familiar with the resonance of their friends, associates and adversaries in order to recognize their presence (and their magical handiwork).

• *Connection:* Familiarity with a particular resonance simplifies locating the Pattern associated with it when using the Space Arcanum. If a mage has scrutinized a subject's aura (one or more successes is gained), the aura is considered Acquainted for the purposes of sympathetic spells (see pp.

114-115). If a mage has not directly examined a subject's aura, but picked up its resonance from a spell or something else connected to the subject, the investigator is considered Encountered with the subject for purposes of sympathetic spellcasting. Note: This assumes that the mage knows the target's real name. If not, the difficulty of connection is increased by two degrees (either from Acquainted to Described, or from Encountered to Unknown).

***Example:*** *Harbinger has scrutinized Nine Fox Thunder's aura. He also knows her real name (Amy Wu). Whenever he attempts to scry upon her from afar, he does so with an Acquainted connection. Nine Fox Thunder, however, has not had a chance to scrutinize Harbinger's aura, and has met him only once. Her sympathetic connection to him is merely Encountered. Since she does not know his real name, though, her connection to him is actually worse — Unknown (she can't use sympathetic magic on him at all).*

## Enchanted Items

Mages weave their magic into the things of the world. They wear magical amulets, clothes and tattoos, and wield magic tools and weapons — not so much the legendary swords of yesteryear, but the enchanted bullets of today. There are three classes of enchanted items in **Mage**: enhanced items, imbued items and Artifacts.

### Enhanced and Imbued Items

Enhanced items are items whose properties have been altered, such as a sword that is given higher Durability or Structure, or a steel wall that is made transparent like glass. Creating an enhanced item simply involves casting a long-Duration spell upon the subject, usually with the Matter Arcanum. See the "Enhanced Item" Merit, p. 82.

Imbued items have been given one or more magical powers. In effect, whoever wields an imbued item gains the benefits of its spells, even though he did not necessarily cast them. A mage must be able to cast the Prime 3 "Imbue Item" spell (p. 225) to make imbued items. See the "Imbued Item" Merit, p. 84.

Enhanced and imbued items that exhibit obvious magic are subject to Sleeper Disbelief (see p. 274).

### Artifacts

Artifacts are magical items of mysterious origin. They are said to originate from the Supernal Realms, although some might come from… elsewhere. See the "Artifact" Merit, p. 80.

## Demesnes

Mages can create zones of magical power that are free from the risk of a Paradox, places where vulgar magic passes as covert — unless witnessed by a Sleeper. These places cannot protect against the disbelief of Sleepers, so their mage owners strive to keep the unenlightened away. Toward this end, they usually center their Demesnes on sanctums.

Within the area covered by a Demesne (see below), vulgar magic is considered to be covert for the purposes of warding off a Paradox. In other words, a vulgar spell does not prompt a Paradox roll, unless a Sleeper has witnessed the spell and believes it to be unnatural. Note that vulgar spells do not change their appearance — flashy or dramatic effects such as lightning bolts shot from a person's fingers or levitating swords still appear as weird and abnormal. It is unlikely that a Sleeper witness considers such an event to be mere coincidence. For this reason, mages must still be wary of Sleepers walking their Demesnes premises.

Note that spell effects directed at targets outside the Demesne are not protected from Paradox. Only spells cast upon targets within the Demesne gain this benefit. Hence, Demesnes do not aid sympathetic magic cast at distant targets, unless those targets are themselves within a Demesne.

### That Eerie Feeling

The Path realm or realms used to create a Demesne (see below) colors the atmosphere, magic and resonance of the place. The following effects can be seen and felt even by those who do not have magical senses. Sleepers who live near such places describe them as "eerie" or "not quite right."

#### The Aether (Path Obrimos)

- Forces and Prime spells gain a +1 dice bonus.
- Static electricity is common, even in humid conditions that don't normally generate it, and fires spark easily.
- Things sometime seem limned with a dim glow or aura.

#### Arcadia (Path Acanthus)

- Fate and Time spells gain a +1 dice bonus.
- Slightly improbable events occur regularly, such as coin tosses always coming up "heads."
- People on the premises have an innate sense of time and can easily track how much time has passed without need of clocks or watches.

#### Pandemonium (Path Mastigos)

- Mind and Space spells gain a +1 dice bonus.
- Memory recall is sharper and quicker than usual.
- People on the premises have an innate sense of direction.

#### The Primal Wild (Path Thyrsus)

- Life and Spirit spells gain a +1 dice bonus.
- Mild aches and pains such as from arthritis are not felt as strongly within the Demesne's premises.
- The land — plants, stones and streams — communicates feelings based on its condition. If the land is mistreated, an aura of misery pervades (–1 dice on Socialize rolls to carouse). If it is well tended, an aura of tranquility pervades (+1 on Socialize rolls to carouse).

#### Stygia (Path Moros)

- Death and Matter spells gain a +1 dice bonus.
- Shadows are deeper and light dimmer.
- Things seem more solid, less breakable. Minor accidents such as dropping a plate or mug rarely result in those items breaking.

## Creating a Demesne

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 |

Note that the area of a Demesne is equivalent to that provided with the Sanctum Merit. If a Demesne is contiguous with a sanctum, the sanctum's security (see the Sanctum Merit, pp. 86-87) applies to the Demesne. Demesnes larger than a sanctum cannot easily be guarded in territories extending outside of the sanctum's premises.

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. Each stone's contributor must be present and must willingly participate in a spellcasting ritual. It requires mastery (five dots) of an Arcanum to cast the enchantment. See the "Create Demesne" sidebar.

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 (a five-stone sprawling estate becomes a four-stone mansion). 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 recast the spell. If he is unwilling or unable, another mage can provide a soul stone, but the Demesne spell must be recast.

### Create Demesne (Any Arcanum ●●●●●)

One or more mages gather to enchant their soul stones, imbuing them with the power to overcome the magical disparity between the Supernal and Fallen Worlds within a certain area.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended (1+ successes; time per roll based on primary caster's Gnosis)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana from each participant

All the mages who contributed soul stones must participate in a teamwork spell (see "Teamwork" on p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). One mage is the primary actor and all others are secondaries. The primary must have five dots in one of his Path's ruling Arcana, but the secondary actors need only one dot in their own Paths' ruling Arcana. The target number is one success per soul stone, so a four-stone Demesne requires four successes. The time per roll is based upon the Gnosis of the primary actor (see p. 121).

The Demesne exhibits the auras (see above) of the Paths associated with its soul stones. If a three-stone Demesne has one stone from a Moros mage, another stone from a Mastigos and its third stone from a Thyrsus, the Demesne exhibits the auras of Stygia, Pandemonium and the Primal Wild.

The effect lasts for one hour unless its Duration is extended. Most mages do not go to the trouble of making a Demesne unless they intend it to be of indefinite Duration. To help with the spell's life span, a Demesne is usually marked with Atlantean runes (see p. 119) marked at the periphery in each cardinal direction. If one or more of these runes is removed or erased, the spell goes inert until the lost rune is replaced.

**Rote**

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Arcanum

This rote has surprisingly few differences across the orders. Each order tends to prefer different grounds or types of buildings for Demesnes (Adamantine Arrow mages prefer easily defensible places, while Guardians prefer unremarkable or untrafficked places), but the means of the rote's casting are almost universal.

## The Realms Invisible

The world humans see is the world humans know. The world humans see is known as the *Lie*, a façade propped up on the threshold of eternity, a realm whose inhabitants are unaware of the spiritual side to their own world. Mages know of another realm outside the realm ordinary men and women perceive. Through magic they can even enter it.

The Lie is a relatively safe falsehood shared by billions of humans, a world where the supernatural does not exist and monsters are not real. The Lie is protected by Disbelief. Human science offers explanations for what people pretend to understand, and faith offers faint comfort for dealing with what baffles them. The truth is far more terrifying: Creatures exist on the other side of flesh, some of them inimical to humankind and the very cosmos. There are places even mages fear to tread.

On the rare occasions when humans peer behind the veil of reality, the results are both wondrous and terrifying. Poets in states of reverie, madmen unprotected by sanity, hedonists assaulted by psychedelic imagery, men and women lost in extreme sensations may think they have escaped from the world we know. They merely stand at the threshold of far stranger sensations.

Above, below and around us, if indeed such words can apply to places that don't exist for us, other states of existence offer alternatives to our own. Bound by Sleep, ordinary humans cannot normally experience such rarefied states of existence. Mages, as one would expect, can break the rules and go where few men have gone. Such journeys are perilous, however, for spirits and other supernatural creatures walk these same paths, often preying upon the unwary.

These places and states of existence (they are both at once) are called the Realms Invisible. They occur within the Fallen

World, within and beside the more prosaic and solid-seeming material realm. They include Twilight, the state of being for ghosts and spirits that haunt or hunt within the material realm; the Gauntlet, the barrier between the world of flesh and matter and that of pure spirit; and the Shadow Realm, where ephemera is solid and matter is a fiction from the other side of the Gauntlet. Finally, there is yet another place, although whether it is truly within the Fallen World or lies beneath it is a point of debate among mages: the Underworld, where the unshriven dead toll out the days of their eternal existence.

As a metaphor to promote understanding of what must forever remain a mystery, mages like to think of each realm as having a unique frequency. When you resonate on that frequency, that realm is "real" for you. If you're thinking along that wavelength — and more importantly, understand the proper Arcana — you can walk to that other realm. Otherwise, it might as well not exist, since you can't touch it or see it. Mortals naturally resonate on the same frequency as the material realm. Sleepers can't tune in to any other frequency, but mages with the proper Arcana lore can tune into many channels on the dial.

## Twilight

Sit in quiet solitude, meditate on nothingness, listen to the pain within your soul, and you may sense it: a chill down your spine, hackles raised on a frightened animal, someone walks across your grave.

Look at the world around you. Now imagine it fading to smoke and shadows. Our world is alive, hiding beauty and horror, and amidst them are beings unseen and untouchable. Their state of existence is called *Twilight*.

Humanity lives in the material world. Beings in Twilight also reside in the same locations, but they do so immaterially and invisibly, hovering unseen beside physical mortals and places. Ghosts haunt forlorn places, unable to touch the living except with occasional displays of power — poltergeist activity or vague, ectoplasmic shapes. Occasionally, spirits wander across the Gauntlet through a Verge and become trapped on this side. Those without the ability to materialize remain intangible, beings of Twilight.

Not just beings exist in Twilight. The *memory* of certain items that were important or which once held emotional significance are sometimes present in ephemeral form. The "ghosts" of buildings and heirlooms long gone in the material world might still haunt the Twilight, especially if they form part of a ghost's anchor.

A being or object in Twilight is made of ephemera, or "spirit stuff." It is the matter or substance of the Shadow World, and is uncommon in the material realm. Ephemera that somehow comes to exist in the material world is invisible and intangible to those without a supernatural power that allows them to see or touch it. Ephemeral beings can see and affect any other ephemeral beings, and ephemeral objects are likewise visible and solid to ephemeral beings. (The exception to this is a mental projection, which is a bodiless mind such as that created by the Mind 4 "Psychic Projection" spell, p. 215. A mental projection has no ephemeral body to see or touch. Some vampires also have the ability to project themselves into Twilight as bodiless minds.)

Apprentices of Death and Spirit magic can touch Twilight. More powerful mages can actually walk as Twilight beings, turning their bodies ephemeral and interacting with Twilight entities as if they were solid. Some mages attempt to use the Twilight state as means of passing from one location to another, entering a building through its walls, unseen by its mundane inhabitants. The danger here is that such mages might encounter a hostile ghost or spirit along the way.

Certain types of mage familiars, called "fetches," exist as ephemeral spirits in Twilight, hovering or scampering about a mage wherever he goes. See the Familiar Merit, pp. 82-83, for more details.

## The Gauntlet

Mages usually begin to explore the mysteries of the Realms Invisible by first interacting with beings in Twilight. Traveling beyond, into the Shadow, is a step only the most courageous or brazen take. A mystical barrier separates the material world from that other realm: a phenomenon known as the *Gauntlet*.

Disciples of Death and Spirit can pass this barrier by creating a "Ghost Gate" (p. 139) or a "Spirit Road" (p. 251). Death and Spirit adepts can step across without need of a gate, and Mind adepts can project their consciousness across, clinging to a silver cord.

The sensation of crossing through this Gauntlet is rarely the same twice. For some, it's like brushing aside the velvet curtain that conceals a theater's stage. For others, the sensation depends on the features of the landscape on the other side. It can be like leaping through a waterfall or a gust of wind, or falling for an eternal second before suddenly coming to rest on ground that was never really left.

In some places, the barrier between worlds is thick or thin. It might be weak in a graveyard known to be haunted, or on a mountaintop believed by indigenous people to be home to powerful spirits. Some rare places have no Gauntlet at all. These are called Verges, and they rarely last for long. They might appear at a certain time of the year, for only an hour, and then disappear until the day comes around again next year. Adepts of the Spirit Arcanum can create a Verge through magic.

The thickness of the Gauntlet — its Strength — levies dice modifiers on attempts to either peer across it or to part it so that a mage can cross over to the realm on the other side.

### Gauntlet Strength

The Strength of the Gauntlet varies from place to place. The Gauntlet's Strength levies dice modifiers on attempts to peer across or part the Gauntlet.

| Location | Strength | Dice Modifier |
|---|---|---|
| Dense urban areas | 5 | −3 |
| City suburbs & towns | 4 | −2 |
| Small towns, villages, built up countryside areas | 3 | +1 |
| Wilderness | 2 | 0 |
| Loci | 1 | +1 |
| Verge* | 0 | n/a |

* The Gauntlet is nonexistent; beings can pass in and out of the Shadow Realm freely.

Any material thing that crosses the Gauntlet is transformed instantly to ephemera, the spiritual counterpart of matter. Stepping back over the Gauntlet to the physical world restores material things to matter. Of course, if a traveler was never physical to begin with (as in the case of a spirit), it must remain ephemeral in Twilight. The only way to avoid this is by using a supernatural power that allows it to materialize on this side of the Gauntlet.

## The Shadow Realm

Everything native to the Shadow Realm is composed of ephemeral spirit, and all spirits there are alive. It is a place whispered about in human shamanic and animistic beliefs, where spirits thrive and breed. In continual evolution, these *naturae*, as mages sometimes call them to differentiate them from spirits native to other places, demonstrate to most mages' minds the principles of evolution and survival of the fittest. It is an untamed land, a wilderness of spirits.

When a mage passes through the Gauntlet to the Spirit Wilds, his physical body fades away, replaced by a body made of ephemera. As soon as this change occurs, the mage is caught in the same evolutionary conflict that all other spirits endure. As soon as his defenses lapse, hostile spirits may attack. If the mage is not versed in the Spirit Arcanum, nearly any spirit can be considered hostile, given the proper circumstances.

A mage with a familiar has at least one ally from this realm, but it is scant comfort. These helpmates can reveal the intentions of encountered spirits and help direct a mage through the wild landscape, but sorcerers must still fight for their lives. Werewolves also know this place well, for they are creatures of both flesh and spirit, able to walk between the two worlds at will. Such monsters often cross the paths of mages who wander where they're not welcome.

Outsiders contend that this realm is a spiritual "reflection" of the material realm. Spiritualists respond by saying that the material realm is the reflection, and that the name "the Shadow" is a misnomer, for this realm portrays things as they really are. It is the human world that is a lie.

When a mage arrives in the Shadow, he sees his former material surroundings represented, not quite as they were, but perhaps as they should be. Crafted from ephemera, his surroundings are revealed as a shaman might see them. Extremes of life and death are more apparent. Enter this realm from a public park and you might see the grass and trees as they may have been thousands of years ago. If you can find your way across through an office building or parking lot, you may end up in a sterile, hostile landscape, where plants trapped below the asphalt fight their way up toward the sun. Meditate at a crime scene, say, over the crawlspace where a killer stashed his victims, and you may see true forms of evil.

### Paradoxes in the Shadow

Magic is less alien to the Shadow than it is to the material world. When mages cast vulgar spells here, two dice are subtracted from Paradox rolls made for them. Needless to say, it is almost unheard of to encounter a Sleeper in the Shadow Realm, so there is little need to worry about them witnessing magic.

## The Underworld

It is said that within the Shadow Realm there are caves or holes in the ground that, were one to follow them far enough — usually beyond all hope of return — they would lead to a gray realm of eternal stillness. The Underworld.

Those entering the Underworld first come to a hallway that appears to be endless, with many doors along its walls. It resembles a mausoleum to some, a mansion to others, or even a rough cave to others. Traveling to the Underworld is the work of masters of Death. Lesser mages would be foolish to attempt it. It is said that the shades there can fool men into staying forever, even making them think they have escaped back into the living world, while their bodies starve to death in the dark pit.

Even Moros mages fear the Underworld. Their power comes from Stygia, the Supernal Realm where death is a lesson and balm for a weary soul, a place of waiting while the soul prepares for the next stage in its journey. The Underworld is a mistake, a casualty of the Abyss, where death no longer rises to the Supernal and instead draws things down, ever down, to lower worlds of non-being.

Nonetheless, there are reasons to go there, for it is said that the ghosts of even Atlantean mages of old can be found there, if one is lucky enough or has an Artifact that provides a sympathetic connection. It is also rumored that the ruins of Atlantis itself exist there, a shade of the city's former glory but still providing bold mages the opportunity for plunder unequaled in the living world.

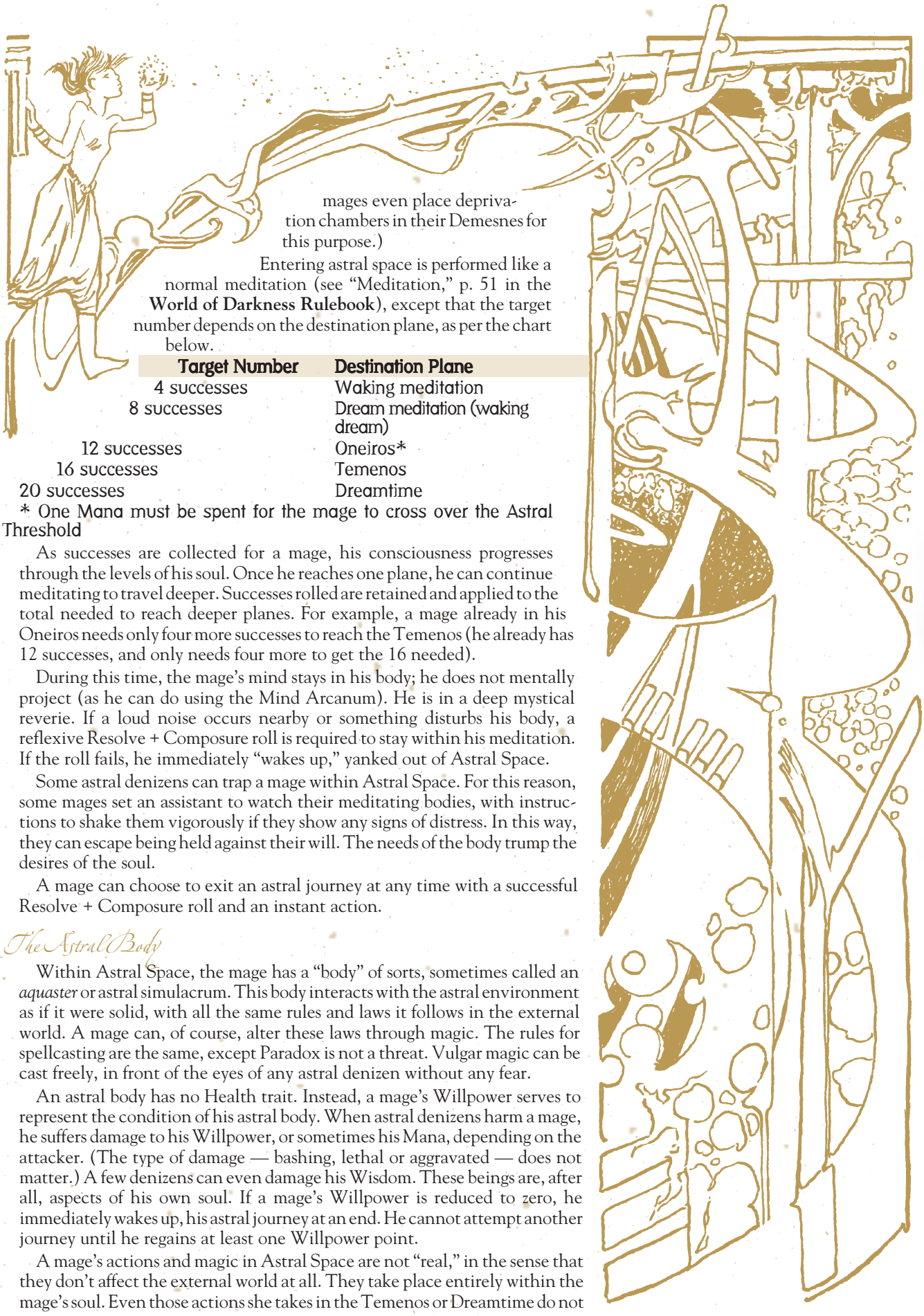
## The Astral Planes

The Realms Invisible are also called the "Outer Realms," for they exist external to a mage in the world around him. There is another dimension to existence, however, that exists *inside* a mage. Astral Space is the dimension of the soul, the "Inner Realms" that are accessed by going within, deep into dreams.

Astral Space is not a geographical space but a spectrum or continuum of soul consciousness. Each soul has many layers or *planes*. Waking consciousness is the baseline. Below it lies dream consciousness. Below that is the Astral Threshold, the barrier that must be crossed before the mind can enter Astral Space. Once across the barrier, the mind enters a personal dream level called an Oneiros. If the mage continues deeper, he reaches the plane of collective dreaming, which has also been called the "collective unconscious." Mages call it the Temenos. Deeper still is the primordial Dreamtime, the plane of the collective dreaming of the world, where mages can contact the souls of animals and plants. Mages also call this realm the Anima Mundi, the "soul of the world."

### Astral Journeys

A mage can enter Astral Space by meditating within the grounds of a Demesne or a powerful Hallow (rated 5). He goes deep within himself, shutting out the external world of sense perception to focus exclusively on the spaces within his own soul. Obviously, this is easiest to achieve in quiet, dark places where there are no distractions. Traditionally, mages retreat to Demesnes or Hallows within caves or with underground vaults, where they can meditate undisturbed. (Some



mages even place deprivation chambers in their Demesnes for this purpose.)

Entering astral space is performed like a normal meditation (see "Meditation," p. 51 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), except that the target number depends on the destination plane, as per the chart below.

| Target Number | Destination Plane |
|---|---|
| 4 successes | Waking meditation |
| 8 successes | Dream meditation (waking dream) |
| 12 successes | Oneiros* |
| 16 successes | Temenos |
| 20 successes | Dreamtime |

* One Mana must be spent for the mage to cross over the Astral Threshold

As successes are collected for a mage, his consciousness progresses through the levels of his soul. Once he reaches one plane, he can continue meditating to travel deeper. Successes rolled are retained and applied to the total needed to reach deeper planes. For example, a mage already in his Oneiros needs only four more successes to reach the Temenos (he already has 12 successes, and only needs four more to get the 16 needed).

During this time, the mage's mind stays in his body; he does not mentally project (as he can do using the Mind Arcanum). He is in a deep mystical reverie. If a loud noise occurs nearby or something disturbs his body, a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll is required to stay within his meditation. If the roll fails, he immediately "wakes up," yanked out of Astral Space.

Some astral denizens can trap a mage within Astral Space. For this reason, some mages set an assistant to watch their meditating bodies, with instructions to shake them vigorously if they show any signs of distress. In this way, they can escape being held against their will. The needs of the body trump the desires of the soul.

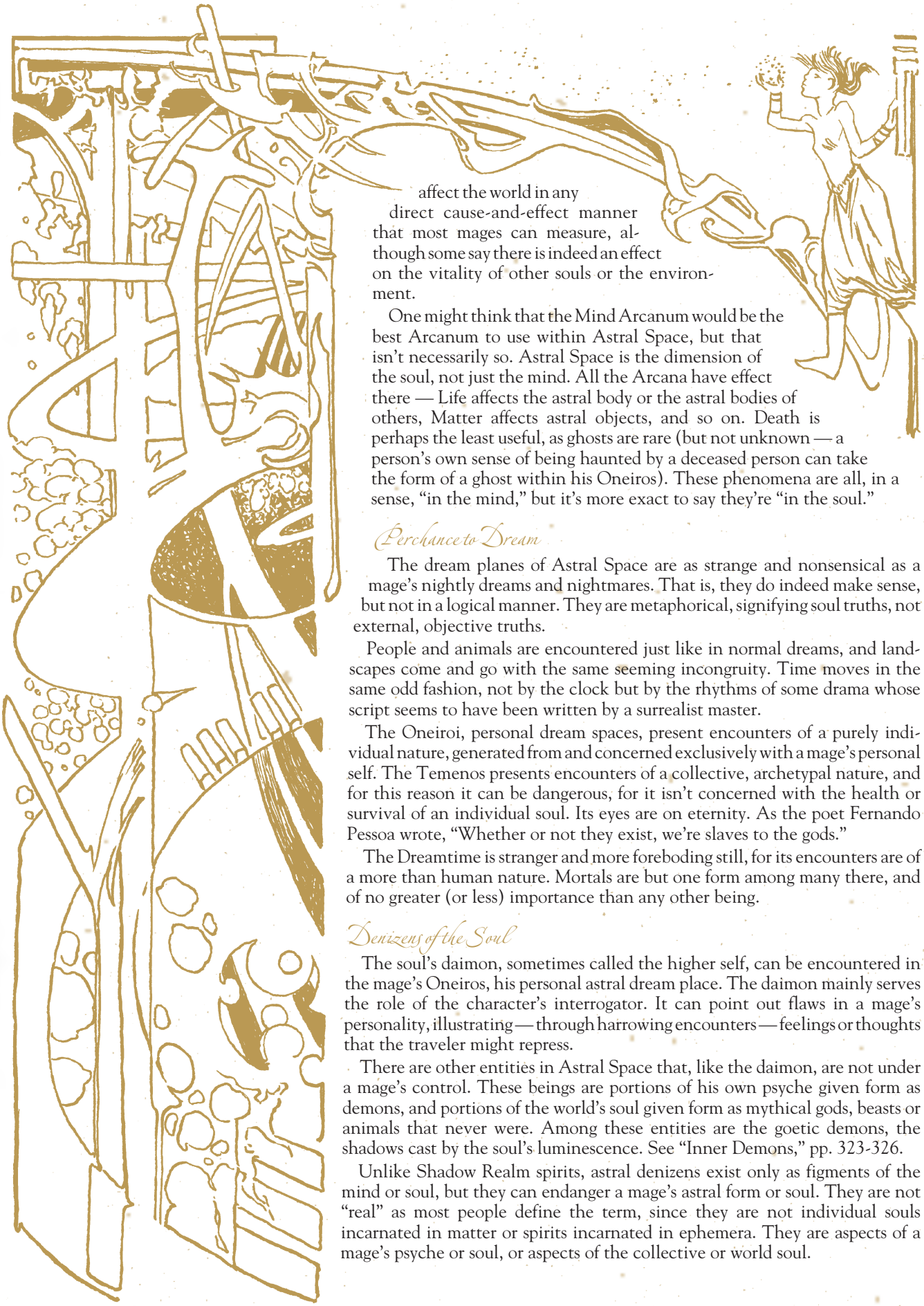
A mage can choose to exit an astral journey at any time with a successful Resolve + Composure roll and an instant action.

## The Astral Body

Within Astral Space, the mage has a "body" of sorts, sometimes called an *aquaster* or astral simulacrum. This body interacts with the astral environment as if it were solid, with all the same rules and laws it follows in the external world. A mage can, of course, alter these laws through magic. The rules for spellcasting are the same, except Paradox is not a threat. Vulgar magic can be cast freely, in front of the eyes of any astral denizen without any fear.

An astral body has no Health trait. Instead, a mage's Willpower serves to represent the condition of his astral body. When astral denizens harm a mage, he suffers damage to his Willpower, or sometimes his Mana, depending on the attacker. (The type of damage — bashing, lethal or aggravated — does not matter.) A few denizens can even damage his Wisdom. These beings are, after all, aspects of his own soul. If a mage's Willpower is reduced to zero, he immediately wakes up, his astral journey at an end. He cannot attempt another journey until he regains at least one Willpower point.

A mage's actions and magic in Astral Space are not "real," in the sense that they don't affect the external world at all. They take place entirely within the mage's soul. Even those actions she takes in the Temenos or Dreamtime do not



affect the world in any direct cause-and-effect manner that most mages can measure, although some say there is indeed an effect on the vitality of other souls or the environment.

One might think that the Mind Arcanum would be the best Arcanum to use within Astral Space, but that isn't necessarily so. Astral Space is the dimension of the soul, not just the mind. All the Arcana have effect there — Life affects the astral body or the astral bodies of others, Matter affects astral objects, and so on. Death is perhaps the least useful, as ghosts are rare (but not unknown — a person's own sense of being haunted by a deceased person can take the form of a ghost within his Oneiros). These phenomena are all, in a sense, "in the mind," but it's more exact to say they're "in the soul."

## Perchance to Dream

The dream planes of Astral Space are as strange and nonsensical as a mage's nightly dreams and nightmares. That is, they do indeed make sense, but not in a logical manner. They are metaphorical, signifying soul truths, not external, objective truths.

People and animals are encountered just like in normal dreams, and landscapes come and go with the same seeming incongruity. Time moves in the same odd fashion, not by the clock but by the rhythms of some drama whose script seems to have been written by a surrealist master.

The Oneiroi, personal dream spaces, present encounters of a purely individual nature, generated from and concerned exclusively with a mage's personal self. The Temenos presents encounters of a collective, archetypal nature, and for this reason it can be dangerous, for it isn't concerned with the health or survival of an individual soul. Its eyes are on eternity. As the poet Fernando Pessoa wrote, "Whether or not they exist, we're slaves to the gods."

The Dreamtime is stranger and more foreboding still, for its encounters are of a more than human nature. Mortals are but one form among many there, and of no greater (or less) importance than any other being.

## Denizens of the Soul

The soul's daimon, sometimes called the higher self, can be encountered in the mage's Oneiros, his personal astral dream place. The daimon mainly serves the role of the character's interrogator. It can point out flaws in a mage's personality, illustrating — through harrowing encounters — feelings or thoughts that the traveler might repress.

There are other entities in Astral Space that, like the daimon, are not under a mage's control. These beings are portions of his own psyche given form as demons, and portions of the world's soul given form as mythical gods, beasts or animals that never were. Among these entities are the goetic demons, the shadows cast by the soul's luminescence. See "Inner Demons," pp. 323-326.

Unlike Shadow Realm spirits, astral denizens exist only as figments of the mind or soul, but they can endanger a mage's astral form or soul. They are not "real" as most people define the term, since they are not individual souls incarnated in matter or spirits incarnated in ephemera. They are aspects of a mage's psyche or soul, or aspects of the collective or world soul.

## Lost Paths

All mages travel Astral Space at least once in their lives: during their Awakening. Their souls journey down unique paths to reach the Supernal Realms, where they gain sympathy with a Watchtower. No event in a mage's life is as metaphysically powerful as his Awakening. Although he returns from it wielding new powers of the soul, he can never again find his way down the route he took during the Awakening. It is closed to him and all others. That it even existed for the briefest of times is the true miracle, exhibiting the powers of the Oracles — the power to broach the Abyss and light the spark of a cold soul.

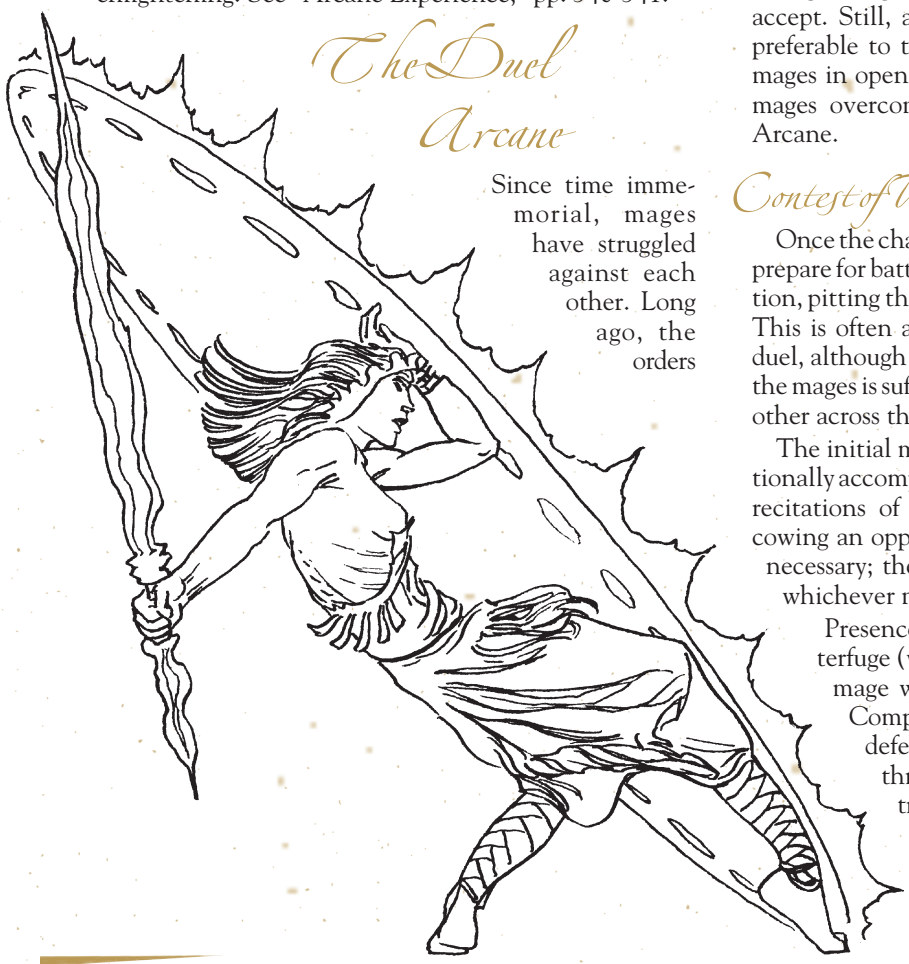
Some spend too much time in Astral Space, hoping to rediscover lost routes. None has yet succeeded, at least not to the knowledge of the orders.

## Soul Experiences

Mages journey to Astral Space mainly for knowledge. A mage's Oneiros can reveal interesting things about him, aspects of his character, behavior and beliefs that might otherwise have gone unexamined. The Temenos can reveal universal truths about human nature and destiny. The Dreamtime holds primordial secrets long forgotten by humankind.

A character cannot usually gain experience points from his astral journeys. His experiences there are just too divorced from normal experience to apply. He can, however, gain Arcane Experience, should his journey prove truly enlightening. See "Arcane Experience," pp. 340-341.

# The Duel Arcane



Since time immemorial, mages have struggled against each other. Long ago, the orders codified and formalized their conflicts to allow the Awakened to settle their differences. Their system is known in common parlance as the Duel Arcane or wizard's duel, a magical battle between mages.

The practice of the Duel Arcane dates back to the time of Atlantis, and remains largely unchanged since then. All the orders, even the Seers of the Throne, recognize the validity of a challenge from a fellow mage (although the non-Atlantean orders are more likely to cheat or ignore the results of a lost duel). The ultimate purpose of the Duel Arcane is to allow sorcerers to test their powers against each other without immediately fatal results.

## The Challenge

The duel begins with a formal challenge or declaration of hostilities. The challenger informs the challenged of the nature of the dispute and the demands involved. It might be a formal apology over a point of honor, a dispute over possession of a Hallow or Artifact, or rights to a particular territory. The challenged mage must either cede the point (thus ending the conflict peaceably) or take up the challenge.

The challenge must be a one-on-one duel, one mage versus another. It's possible and known for a group of mages to challenge another of equal number to simultaneous one-on-one duels, but the vast majority of the time the Duel Arcane is fought one on one. Should a group of mages have the audacity to challenge a lesser number of opponents (or even a single mage), the challenged is under no obligation to accept. Still, accepting such a lopsided duel may still be preferable to the alternative of facing a larger number of mages in open combat. There are also legends of powerful mages overcoming multiple opponents in a single Duel Arcane.

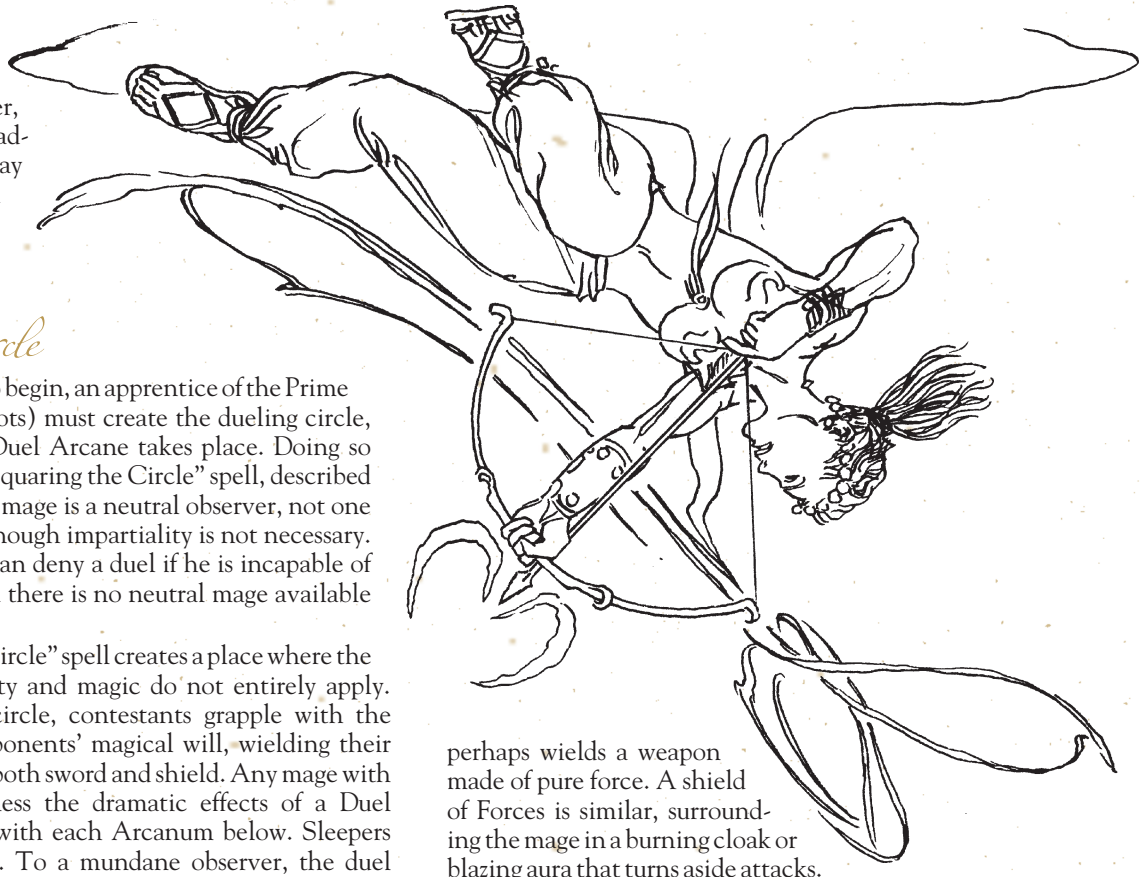
## Contest of Wills

Once the challenge is offered and accepted, the opponents prepare for battle. They join their wills in a mystical connection, pitting their magical might directly against each other. This is often accompanied by a formal declaration of the duel, although none is actually needed. The silent intent of the mages is sufficient, and some duelists simply glare at each other across the length of a dueling field.

The initial moments when the duelists lock wills is traditionally accompanied by a series of taunts, boasts, threats and recitations of lineage or accomplishments, all aimed at cowing an opponent. Again, these displays are not strictly necessary; the contest of wills is what really matters. It's whichever mage actually blinks first.

Presence + Intimidation or his Manipulation + Subterfuge (whichever tactic is preferred) is rolled for the mage with the highest Initiative. The opponent's Composure is subtracted from the roll. Then the defender does the same, making his taunts or threats, with the other mage's Composure subtracted from his roll. Whoever gets the most successes unnerves his foe, and a +1 die bonus is gained on all further rolls in the duel. If neither mage rolls any successes, or they

have the same number, neither side gains an advantage. Either mage may choose to break off and cede the duel at any point. Otherwise, the contest continues.



## Squaring the Circle

For the actual duel to begin, an apprentice of the Prime Arcanum (with two dots) must create the dueling circle, the space where the Duel Arcane takes place. Doing so involves casting the "Squaring the Circle" spell, described on p. 223. Ideally, this mage is a neutral observer, not one of the combatants, although impartiality is not necessary. A challenged person can deny a duel if he is incapable of creating the circle and there is no neutral mage available to do so.

The "Squaring the Circle" spell creates a place where the ordinary rules of reality and magic do not entirely apply. Within the dueling circle, contestants grapple with the manifest power of opponents' magical will, wielding their own magical power as both sword and shield. Any mage with Mage Sight can witness the dramatic effects of a Duel Arcane, as described with each Arcanum below. Sleepers cannot see the magic. To a mundane observer, the duel consists of the two mages staring intently at each other. One slumps in defeat and the two part ways.

## Sword and Shield

Each mage chooses two Arcana: one to serve as his "sword" and the other as his "shield." In some formal duels, the challenged chooses the sword Arcanum while the challenger chooses the shield Arcanum, but generally mages are free to choose whichever Arcana they prefer. A combatant cannot use the same Arcanum for both sword and shield in a Duel Arcane.

The sword and shield Arcana influence the appearance of the duel. There is no particular game benefit to choosing one Arcanum over another (except for the Arcanum's dots). The visual effects of the sword and shield are just that, purely visual. Common elements associated with each Arcanum are as follows:

• **Death:** As a sword, Death strikes with blades or bolts of darkness, a withering power that seems to age its target. A Death sword sometimes manifests as a weapon of bone or a dark scythe. A shield of Death causes attacks to decay into nothingness, or become so feeble as to be brushed aside. A Death shield may surround a mage in a darkling mantle or a cold and shadowy aura.

• **Fate:** The sword of Fate may turn back an attacker's own sword, or cause strange accidents to occur. Sometimes it appears like a net of threads, entangling the target further and further. As a shield, Fate turns attacks aside just enough for them to miss, or grants a stroke of good luck to protect a mage in the nick of time. A successful attack may prove less effective than it first appears when Fate is involved.

• **Forces:** Forces are quite dynamic as a sword. The mage lashes out with blasts of energy: fire, lightning or light, or perhaps wields a weapon made of pure force. A shield of Forces is similar, surrounding the mage in a burning cloak or blazing aura that turns aside attacks.

• **Life:** Life attacks in a duel may take the form of swarms of creatures (particularly insects, arachnids or birds), strangling vines, or savage beasts. They may also appear as transformations of a mage's body, into an animal, a mythic creature or a bizarre armored and clawed killing machine. A shield of Life is typically an armored carapace, a toughened hide or apparent "wounds" healing at a fantastic rate.

• **Matter:** A sword of Matter may be a literal one, a fine weapon of the mage's choice. It might also be flying shards or columns of rock, blasts of wind or water, or even fantastic things like streams of liquid metal or molten rock. A shield of Matter seems just as solid: walls or barriers rise up to protect a mage, or a shield may appear as a literal shield or suit of fine armor fortified by the power of Matter.

• **Mind:** Attacks of the Mind are subtle. They may be nightmare images, fears or desires brought to life, or traumatic memories sharpened into blades. For some, a sword of Mind is a shimmering weapon striking at the target's psyche. A Mind shield may be a comforting or happy thought, driving away fear and hate, or a visualized wall or barrier of protection.

• **Prime:** The sword and shield of Prime are most often formed of pure, burning light, either white or prismatic with the colors of the rainbow. For some mages they take on almost material form, but still surrounded by the pure glow of their source.

• **Space:** As a sword, Space strikes with strange twists and maddening bends in distance, rending open portals to strange and dangerous places, even twisting an opponent like taffy. As a shield, it causes attacks to veer wildly off target, or swallows them up in warps leading into an endless void.

• **Spirit:** Spirit attacks manifest in all forms, from spectral creatures to ghostly weapons in a mage's hands. Spirit shields range from phantom walls and guardians to spiritual armor. If a mage has particular totems, allies or familiar spirits, a sword or shield of Spirit can take their forms.

• **Time:** The sword of Time brings all things to dust. It is typically visible only by its effects, or as a shimmer or distortion in the air. For some it appears as a handful of glittering sand, water or quicksilver. A shield of Time is likewise mysterious. A mage may move with superhuman speed to avoid attacks, or attacks may slow to a snail's pace and are easily sidestepped.

## The Contest

Once the dueling circle is formed and the contestants have chosen their sword and shield Arcana, the Duel Arcane begins in earnest.

The mage who *lost* the contest of wills at the start of the duel strikes first (or he can choose to yield first strike to the other duelist, although there are no direct benefits for doing so). Once the first attack is made, the duelists alternate back and forth between offense and defense, with each attack requiring an instant action.

Gnosis + sword Arcanum is rolled for the attacker, after subtracting the defender's shield Arcana. If the attacker succeeds, the defender loses one Willpower point per success. The defender can choose to forego his attack to devote all his energy to defense against the opponent's attack, in which case the defender's shield Arcanum is doubled before subtracting it from the attacker's dice pool.

## Resolution

The Duel Arcane continues until one participant chooses to yield or is reduced to zero Willpower points, or the duration of the Squaring the Circle spell runs out. The winner — whomever loses the least amount of Willpower points — regains one point of Willpower, a surge of confidence from the victory.

The loser of a Duel Arcane is expected to yield the point of contention to the victor, who is in turn expected to gracefully accept and allow the loser to depart peaceably, not pressing the advantage. Traditionally, a Duel Arcane settles a particular dispute for good. The loser should not challenge the winner over the same matter again (although others may do so). Failure to observe these rules can result in a loss of face for the mage and possible censure or mistrust from peers.

A mage who has lost a Duel Arcane is weakened, usually with no Willpower points. Taking advantage of a vanquished foe in such a state is considered an extreme infraction against the Lex Magica (see p. 56), worthy of convening the Ruling Council to decide on punishment (usually reparation to the injured party or incarceration of the offender).

## Duels to the Death

Mages can fight a Duel Arcane past mere exhaustion of their Willpower points. If a mage chooses to fight on regardless, any additional damage from the duel is real (affecting Health), and the contest ends when one duelist yields or dies. Duels to the death are relatively rare, but they do happen, usually in cases in which a mage prefers death to surrendering to a bitter enemy. Still, many find their courage wanting, breaking off a duel and yielding before the final blow is struck.

## Example of the Duel Arcane

Maculda, a Thyrsus mage of the Mysterium, challenges Omega, an Acanthus Free Council mage, to a duel. Omega accepts. Maculda asks her friend, Glorianna, who is adept in Prime magic, to cast the "Squaring the Circle" spell for them. She agrees.

Maculda has a Gnosis of 2 and chooses the Life Arcanum (of which she has 2 dots) as her sword. Her Spirit Arcanum (2 dots) will be her shield. Her Willpower is 5.

Omega has a Gnosis of 2 and uses Time (3 dots) as his sword and Fate (2 dots) as his shield. His Willpower is 5.

Maculda and Omega's players each roll for Initiative. Maculda wins.

The two mages stare each other down, each trying to intimidate the other in a contest of wills. Maculda, with higher Initiative, goes first: Presence (3 dots) + Intimidation (0 dots). Since she has no Intimidation Skill dots, she suffers a –1 dice penalty for untrained use. Omega's Composure of 2 dots is subtracted from the dice pool. Maculda's player is left with a chance die. She rolls and gets a 10. One success. Re-rolling the 10, she gets a 3 — no further successes.

Omega's Presence (2 dots) + Intimidation (1 dot) is now rolled, minus Maculda's Composure (3 dots). His player is also reduced to a chance die, but he rolls a 7 — no success.

Maculda wins the contest of wills, and so gains a +1 dice bonus to her Duel Arcane rolls. The loser, however, gets to attack first, even though Omega has a lower Initiative. (Maculda's Initiative is adjusted to follow immediately after Omega's.)

Omega attacks with his Time sword. His player describes this as whirlwind of sand that renders whatever it touches to dust. The player rolls Gnosis (2 dots) + Time (3 dots) – Maculda's shield Arcanum of Spirit (2 dots). He gets one success — Maculda loses one Willpower point (she now has four points remaining) as the whirlwind of Time blows past her shield of spirits and causes her to feel as if she has aged a decade in a mere moment.

Maculda then attacks with her Life sword. Her player describes it as a flock of crows descending on her opponent, pecking out his eyes. The player rolls Gnosis (2 dots) + Life (2 dots) – Omega's shield Arcanum of Fate (2 dots). She adds one die for the bonus she gained in the contest of wills. She rolls two successes — Omega's Willpower is now at three points, and he appears to be bloody from the savage beaks of the swarm of crows.

On the next turn, Omega attacks again. He gets two successes, lowering Maculda's Willpower total to two. Maculda follows through with another attack of her own, gaining two successes and reducing Omega to one Willpower point. The next attack will surely decide things.

Omega attacks with two successes, reducing Maculda to zero Willpower. He wins.

Maculda, pissed off, could choose to fight on if she wishes, but any successes Omega gets on his attacks will inflict Health point damage to her. She sighs and yields, choosing the wise option to concede. Omega, a gracious victor, offers to buy her a cup of coffee.

## Cheating

Of course, mages can and do sometimes ignore the formal rules of the Duel Arcane. They attempt to cheat in order to gain an advantage in the struggle, or lure an enemy into a duel and then spring a trap.

Cheating in a Duel Arcane essentially involves doing anything other than using magic to attack or defend in the normal fashion. So a mage who casts a spell to harm, weaken or transform an opponent, or to alter the conditions of the battlefield in some way, or who does anything else directly or indirectly to influence the outcome of the struggle forfeits the honor and protection of the duel. The other mage is entitled to use whatever means to settle the matter from then on. Of course, *proving* that the other mage cheated can be a somewhat more difficult matter. If cheating can be proven or is evident to onlookers, the offender might be brought up on charges before the Consilium based on the body of law that has accrued around the Duel Arcane. Punishment varies from mild reprimands to incarceration for truly dishonorable acts.

Generally, cheating requires a mage to give up his attack for that turn of the duel in order to cast another spell or to take some other action, but some carefully planned cheats, especially involving prepared spells or allies, may be done more subtly.

### Other Mystic Duels

Although the Duel Arcane is the most common means of resolving conflict among mages, it is by no means the only one. Other contests of mystic power and capability exist. Note, however, that these combats do not involve the same magic as the Duel Arcane; they are more direct magical confrontations.

**Curse Contests:** This is perhaps the crudest of magical "duels," wherein mages simply hurl baneful spells at each other, testing their spellcasting and defenses. The winner is the mage whose spell disables the other contestant first and most thoroughly. Modern mages disdain curse contests as primitive and childish, the sort of battles early mages fought in antiquity. Still, they do happen from time to time.

**Mystic Contests:** The two sides choose a particular Arcanum and a particular extended action task, often with the challenger choosing the Arcanum and the challenged choosing the task. Then each side attempts to complete the task faster and better than the other. The range of possible tasks is virtually endless. It may include shaping a sculpture with Matter, navigating a maze using Space (blindfolded, of course), or contesting command of an elemental with Spirit. Essentially, each mage casts a series of spells. The first to attain the required number of successes wins. Particularly simple contests, amounting to "magical arm-wrestling," can be resolved with a single roll: whoever gets the most successes wins.

**Shapeshifting Duels:** Adepts of Life sometimes fight duels in which the participants shift shape, turning into all manner of beasts, birds and other creatures to fight each other tooth and claw. All other uses of magic are forbidden during the duel; the mages rely on physical prowess, knowledge of different shapes, animal cunning and mastery of Life.

**Spirit Battles:** These sorts of duels are fought largely by proxy. The mages conjure and command various spirits as their soldiers, pitting them against each other. It may be a simple contest of one spirit versus another or a more complex battle of spirit armies, a test of strategy and leadership as much as mastery of the Spirit Arcanum.

**Spatial Warps:** The mages contest each other using the Space Arcanum, each trying to score a "touch" on the other, as they teleport, warp space and otherwise try to evade each other. Similar contests are played out using mind reading (Mind) or even time warping (Time).

## Creative Thaumaturgy

A mage can make anything he imagines real with magic — given enough knowledge and power. Mages are not limited to the spells described for the 10 Arcana; a mage can invent his own. The act of creating new magic is called thaumaturgy (from the Greek, *thauma-tourgos*, or "one who works wonders").

Creative thaumaturgy is really no different than any improvised magic. It simply covers spells that aren't described in the Arcana descriptions (pp. 133-267). A mage has the capability of performing a vast variety of effects with each dot of Arcanum lore. Just because a particular effect has never occurred to him before doesn't mean he can invent it on the spot.

The Storyteller must sometimes make his own call about whether a proposed spell is possible for a mage at his current level of development. Accordingly, Storytellers might want their players to wait until everyone in the game is familiar with the system before creating new spells. Unfamiliarity can cause the game to get bogged down in niggling details as players argue over what characters should and should not be allowed to do with magic. It's best to put off these questions until everyone has mastered the spellcasting basics.

Use the following steps when creating new spells.

### Step One: Describe the Spell's Effect

In as plain and simple terms as possible, describe just what it is the mage tries to achieve through magic. Examples: "I want to lift my friends off the ground, and onto the top of the van." "I want to make the thug's cigarette lighter blow up in his face." "I want to send a telepathic message to Joe: 'Beware of Stacy!'"

### Step Two: Determine the Arcanum (or Arcana)

Each Arcanum description includes the Arcanum's purview, and the listed spells provide examples for creating similar spells. For example, a mage might want to create a

spell that gives him the "proportional strength of a spider." This is a Life spell, since it affects the target's physical body.

There are multiple paths to the same destination. The range of Arcana spells is quite broad, particularly as mages advance in understanding (and dots). Sometimes a mage can achieve a desired effect using any of several different Arcana in various ways. For example, a mage wanting to put out a fire might use a Forces spell to draw off the fire's heat. A mage could also use a Matter spell to remove the oxygen around the fire, a Death spell to suddenly exhaust the fire's energy and fuel, or a Time spell to speed up the fire's combustion to the point where it burns itself out. Clever players will no doubt think of any number of ways to use different Arcana to accomplish a particular task.

It is perfectly valid to use different Arcana toward the same end. In fact, Storytellers should encourage players to be creative and play to their characters' strengths, since different ways of accomplishing similar goals helps differentiate characters. Of course, the Storyteller has final say whether a particular Arcanum rating can accomplish a particular feat. Taking the above example, the Storyteller may decide that Space alone isn't sufficient to transport a fire's fuel source elsewhere, saying it is a conjunctional Space/Matter spell. As always, the Golden Rule applies: If it's fun and works for your game, go with it.

### Conjunctional Spells

The Arcanum descriptions concentrate on what can be done with each Arcanum, but the most effective use of magic comes from mixing Arcana. Some spells require knowledge in more than one Arcanum. For example, Angrboda wants to turn a puppet into a living creature with the cunning ability to kill whoever plays with it. He needs Life 5 to transform the lifeless wooden object into a living being, but he also needs Mind 5 to give it sentience.

You will have a better idea of when and how to use conjunctional Arcana once you read all the spell descriptions, especially the sample conjunctional spells provided at various dot ranks. In general, a mage needs dots in a particular Arcanum to affect the sort of thing governed by the Arcanum. For example, he needs Forces to manipulate energy and Matter to transmute objects. He does not need Matter if he wants to conjure a fire using Forces to burn or melt an object. The magic works to conjure the fire, not to directly affect the object.

## Step Three: Determine the Dot Rating

See "Magical Proficiency," p. 131, for a list of what mages can accomplish with each dot. The Atlanteans gave names to these magical practices. For example, if a spell allows its target to perceive magic, then its practice is available with the 1st dot in an Arcanum, what Atlanteans called the Practice of Unveiling.

Some spells begin with limited conditions, such as requiring that a mage touch a target. For example, many Life and Matter spells have this requirement. At the next higher dot rating, the mage can cast the spell at sensory range.

### Archmastery

Some magic is simply too powerful for even the 5th dot of an Arcanum. The Storyteller might deem that higher dots are required — in other words, the caster must be an archmage to perform such a superlative effect.

Examples of these spells include creating nuclear power. Forces 5 allows a mage to create radiation, but not a nuclear blast. For that, he'd need a higher dot level — how high is really up to the Storyteller. Another example is creating a mythical life form such as a griffin or dragon. Life 5 allows a mage to create such a creature, but he cannot borrow its traits and incorporate them into himself or another, as he can with the traits of base, median and sentient life forms. Such manipulation of an advanced effect requires at least six dots, one dot higher than that required to create the mythical creature. The Storyteller is free to declare that a certain effect is *superlative* and thus requires more than five dots of the Arcanum involved.

Generally, if a power is more impressive than any listed for the 5th dot of an Arcanum, the Storyteller can assume that it is reserved for higher levels. These levels are outside the scope of this rulebook; their effects are left to Storytellers to discover should characters in his chronicle seek to learn such lore. (A character cannot learn more than five dots in an Arcanum unless his Gnosis dots exceed five.)

It is said by some that Arcana knowledge beyond archmastery cannot be practiced within the Fallen World. Only the Ascended Masters can cast such high magics. Others, however, hint that the Ascended Masters are manifest in the Fallen World, although only those with truly enlightened eyes (Gnosis 7 or higher) can know them.

## Step Four: Determine the Casting Action

Instant or extended. Spells that can be achieved within a single turn of casting are instant. Those that are best achieved with a ceremony or ritual are extended. There are no firm guidelines for choosing; it's best to call upon the traditional legends and lore of wizardry. We've all heard tales in which witches spend hours or days "brewing up a storm." To capture that feel, spells that conjure thunderstorms should be extended actions. It's also a well-known trait of wizards to fling lightning bolts from their staves, so such spells would be instant actions.

Instant-action spells can be performed as extended castings, but not vice-versa.

## Step Five: Determine the Spell Aspect

Covert or vulgar. If the spell is possible within the normal laws of physics and isn't wildly improbable, then it is covert. It does not risk invoking Paradox. If its effect is literally "out of this world" — impossible by normal physics — or if it is wildly improbable, then it is vulgar. The caster must contend with the risk of Paradox.

## Step Six: Determine the Basic Spell Factor

If the spell is an instant-action spell, determine its primary spell factor: either Potency, Target or Duration.

The basic Duration factors are: lasting (the effects of the spell are permanent, such as a healed wound), concentration (the effects last only for as long as the caster maintains concentration), transitory (one turn) and prolonged (one scene). There are no hard guidelines for deciding a spell's basic Duration, but game balance is a major consideration. If the spell's continuing effect would greatly hinder its target from being able to defend himself and/or fight back against the mage, the effect should be of minimal Duration (concentration or transitory). An excep-

tion can be made in the case of Sleeper targets. Extreme magic might be longer lasting against them (prolonged, perhaps), because their souls refuse to accept the existence of magic and thus refuse to even accept that they're affected by it.

Some spells apply to an area or radius rather than to one or more discrete targets. For example, spells that create light or darkness or that transform the properties of the air or ground are usually area-affecting spells. If the sole aim of a spell is to affect a lot of people or a large object, the caster should have to contend with multiple targets and/or increased target Size. The *effect* should determine whether the spell is area affecting, regardless of the caster's intent.

## Step Seven: Resistance

Spells that affect a target directly should always allow the target some degree of resistance. If the spell's effect is incremental — measured by degrees, such as damage points inflicted — then the target's relevant Resistance Attribute should be subtracted from the caster's dice pool. If the effects are all or nothing, a contested roll is made for the target, usually with a relevant Resistance Attribute plus his Gnosis (or other supernatural potency trait). Such a roll is usually reflexive.

If the spell is aimed (like a ranged-weapon attack, directed as a physical object or bolt of energy from the caster through intervening space to the target), the target receives no innate resistance. Instead, he gains whatever protection is relevant to a ranged attack, such as cover, going prone, or even his Defense if the casting is at point-blank range.

## Step Eight: Determine the Mana Cost

Most spells do not require Mana, but the following conditions should levy a cost:

- The spell inflicts aggravated damage
- The spell uses sympathetic range (requires Space 2)
- If the Storyteller feels that casting a spell multiple times within the same scene might provide undue advantage, or if it risks derailing the story in an inappropriate way, he can levy a cost as a means of discouraging multiple castings.

## Step Nine: Determine the Rote Dice Pool (Optional)

If a mage were to formalize a spell into a rote, what combination of Attribute and Skill would he use to cast it? The Skill used is inherent to the rote and does not vary by order, but each order might have an alternate means of casting that involves a different Attribute.

### Designing Rotes

A mage must meet the following requirements and perform the following steps to create a rote:

- Only masters can formularize an improvised spell into a rote. If the mage has less than five dots in an Arcanum, he cannot make a rote that uses that Arcanum as its primary Arcanum. If the rote is a conjunctional spell, he also needs dots in the other Arcana equal to or higher than those used by the spell. For example, if a mage wants to make a rote from a spell that requires Space 3 + Mind 2, he needs Space 5 (mastery of the primary Arcanum) and at least Mind 2.
- As explained in "Rote Mudras," p. 125, rotes involve a variety of mnemonics the caster uses to unlock a fixed Imago from his imagination to manifest it in the world. Among these are specific hand formations (*mudras*) used by the rote creator's order. Most of these signs are of ancient lineage, and all of them are considered to be "trade secrets." It is forbidden to teach them to other orders, for they are one of the keys to providing an order's Rote Specialties. Apostates lack this store of ancient knowledge, so cannot easily create rotes. It is said that new mudras can be created by archmasters, but few attain that rank without the aid of an order.

In addition to the proprietary order mudras, the rote creator adds a few flairs of his own to the spell based on his unique interpretation of the Imago. Thus, each rote is a product of its creator and his order.

While most rotes are assumed to involve hand mudras, a rote could be created that uses facial expressions in a variety of combinations. Many covert spells use such mudras, employing facial ticks or raised eyebrows, but it's rare for vulgar spells to involve them outside of those Awakened communities that work within traditional indigenous cultures. Western mages are used to keeping a "poker face" when casting magic.

- In addition to order-specific mudras, the rote creator can encode his rote with his order's Rote Specialties. This allows members of his order to gain the advantage of their Rote Specialties when casting rotes that use their specialties' Skills (see "Rote Specialties," p. 75). Mages from other orders who learn the rote do not gain the Rote Specialty benefits; only a mage who knows that order's secrets can exploit them when casting the rote.
- The other requirements for creating a rote are that the mage must cast the improvised spell at least 10 times and reach a deep understanding of it. Achieving that understanding means he must succeed in an extended action whereby he studies and contemplates the spell. Gnosis + the primary Arcanum is rolled. The target number is equal to the combined dots of all the Arcana used in the spell, and one roll can be made per hour of study. If the mage has a dot in the Library Merit (p. 85) dedicated to the primary Arcanum of the rote, +1 die is added to the roll. If the rote is a combined spell (see p. 128), the mage must follow the above steps for each separate spell to be combined into the rote.
- Finally, to create a rote a mage must sacrifice a *dot* of Willpower — not a point, but a dot. A piece of his enlightened will must go into weaving the rote to give it metaphysical weight. He can later restore this lost dot with the expenditure of eight experience points.

Once all the above steps are completed, the mage has created his rote and can teach it to other mages.

Sorcerers can *learn* a rote from another mage without necessarily needing mastery of its primary Arcanum. The orders teach rotes to their members, the spells having been created by masters of an order. Such is the way of the Awakened for the master to hand his works to new generations — in return for the disciples' loyalty and aid, of course.



# CHAPTER FOUR: STORYTELLING AND ANTAGONISTS

*The Five-Venoms Giant writhed in pain at the touch of the talisman, the burning image of Shih ho, "Biting Through," fire over thunder. The I-Ching hexagram represented nature righting wrongs and the criminal punishment of wrongdoers. The noxious spirit could not bear the judgment of heaven.*

*Nine Fox Thunder took advantage of the being's shock and pain to deliver a swift flying kick to its centipede body, while her fox familiar pummeled its head. Nine Fox had no idea whether the head was part of the spirit's toad or lizard body — it might even be its scorpion body.*

*Her other burning talismans, one for destroying evil influences and the other for warding spirits through female power, kept the spirit from using its true metamorphosis powers, buying Nine Fox time to gauge its weaknesses before it could unleash its poisons. The Chinese symbols resonated with the Supernal World, helping to empower her spells. Her teacher in Mao Shan magic used them to good effect in service to the Guardians of the Veil, and now so did she. Her Second Sight had already revealed the creature's rank — a minor bureaucrat of the lower hells. She was sure it did not have the power to re-manifest once she destroyed its ephemeral corpus.*

*Nine Fox flipped onto the roof of the Temple of Vortices, and balanced on its jutting posts, flinging her knife at the spirit's belly. Green blood and acid exploded in all directions. She barely had time to snatch her familiar away and roll back over the roof to the garden on the other side. She could hear the thing wailing as it slapped the courtyard in pain and frustration, trying to stand. She'd give it another minute to die, and then begin the time-consuming cleansing spell.*

**Every mystical tradition posits the existence of spirits or deities that seek to compel the attention and belief of human beings. [...] The Gnostic term for such entities is "Archons." The Gnostics believe that the Archons feed on the human soul, "the dew from above," and they try to keep human beings imprisoned in the fallen world of physical reality and ignorance.**
**— Daniel Pinchbeck, Breaking Open the Head**

Every game set in the World of Darkness has its own themes, but don't be afraid to apply to **Mage** the lessons that you've learned running other games. Storytelling any game with flair gives you the skills to run **Mage**, but the devil is in the details. **Mage** puts its own twist on familiar themes and gives you new ways to tell old stories. From this base, you can go on to entertain players with distinctively weird, horrific and ultimately memorable tales.

This chapter assumes that the reader is going to be Storytelling the game. When the text talks about "you," it refers to a potential Storyteller. If you plan to only play the game for now, don't be put off. If you know what a Storyteller needs to do to run a successful game, you'll be better equipped to play along and help the whole group enjoy itself. Besides, it's entirely likely that you'll want to try Storytelling. Now is a good time to read Chapter 8: Storytelling in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 188-219, to familiarize yourself with the fundamentals and general advice. The material in this chapter expands upon and supplements that section.

### We're All in This Together

**Mage** doesn't assume that players will abuse loopholes in the system, that a player and the Storyteller are enemies, or that a game is a competition between the interests of its participants. Get those ideas out of your head right now.

One of the most important things to understand is that the game doesn't let Storytellers direct the plot completely. The magic system is extremely flexible and part of the game's fun comes from learning to use it well. If you arbitrarily limit it, things will ring false for the players. **Mage**'s Awakened characters have the ability to derail any linear story. Even one dot in an Arcanum can give a character a staggering array of investigative tools.

At the same time, players have to remember to harness these tools within the limits of characters' Virtue, Vice, interests and biases. Furthermore, they are just as responsible for creating a good chronicle as you are. Just because we call you the Storyteller doesn't mean the players are just "Story-listeners."

## The Cost of Power

What's **Mage** about? Many things, actually. It's a game founded in a world of occult horror, but it's possible to explore its themes to many different ends. There are, however, some basic themes that predominate. **Mage** is designed to give you a firm center; you can explore variations as much as you wish, but whenever you need to get back to a consistent tone, the following ideas are ideal.

### Power Corrupts

Mages are paragons of human potential — and all too often, human frailty. They don't accept the conditions of their metaphysical prison. When mages take the first steps into freedom, they have an opportunity to answer every injustice they've suffered and fix the mistakes they made in their Sleeping years. Mundane fulfillment, once thought to be impossible, is now a matter of will and technique. A mage who fully realizes her freedom can radically change whatever she touches and demonstrate what human beings are capable of.

Freedom is a double-edged sword, complicated by the new drives and dangers with which mages contend. The mundane challenges of living are easier, but a distant metaphysical prize beckons. If a mage ignores the chance to ascend, she is a victim again: of rampant Paradoxes, rival occultists and horrors that want her empowered soul. If she embraces the quest wholeheartedly, she turns away from humanity to fulfill a numinous, mystical promise. It seems that the Oracles' ascension — the legendary state where mortal wisdom tempers raw power — conforms to the old adage from Eastern mystics: Enlightenment is best found when it's unlooked for.

Of course, there is a more obvious and seductive solution to the dichotomy. Use magic to acquire earthly might, and retain ties to the world. This time, the mage is the reality prison's master, not its inmate, and she exploits her advantage to accumulate the finer things in life. Paradoxes punish flagrant violations of the Fallen World's laws, but that does little to protect Sleepers. Paradoxes are just features of the reality-prison. Without limitations, freedom can easily sour into sheer exploitation. A mage caters to offensive tastes and follows passions that would have been unthinkable before she Awakened. If you can execute the perfect murder, why not just kill someone you hate? If you need love, why not just compel it, rather than suffer the uncertainty of romance?

In game terms, mages use the Arcana to satisfy their Virtues and Vices. Channeling magic through the self this way magnifies the effect of the mage's personality on the world. In this sense, magic is a worldly crucible of the human soul. Is a character moral only because she fears being punished? Magic gives her the opportunity to realize her desires without mundane consequences. Make no mistake, though: There are *always* consequences.

### Liberators or Jailers?

Humanity has power — power that it has been conditioned to forget. People are essentially free and simmer with

limitless potential, but this in itself is not moral. Through effort and inspiration, mages have claimed humanity's long-forgotten birthright, but in a fallen age, how can they use it and remain truly human?

In Sleeper society, part of maturity comes from realizing one's limitations. For mages, the process is inverted. Study and enlightenment give sorcerers the power to exceed old limits and to fulfill desires that Sleepers may never dream of. As a result, some mages have nothing but contempt for common people. They're a canvas to repaint with a mage's desires. Ironically, inflicting such abuse thins the ranks of mages. It creates submissive subjects who respond and obey, but never grasp their own power and Awaken. That suits some orders perfectly (the Seers of the Throne regard Sleepers as their natural servants), but others wither on the vine of history.

In a **Mage** game, the modern sorcery setting can be used to exhibit the panoply of human power. Conspiracies undermine the legitimate authority of powerful institutions, which compensate for them (or serve them?) with callous displays of force. On the streets, agitators rise up to protest and riot. In the margins of society, criminals exploit all sides of the struggle and war for territory. Mages ride the wave of human conflict. In a way, they exemplify it. They weave the Supernal Realms — the utopias, heavens and hells of human dreams — into the fabric of the Fallen World and build the frame through which we view the course of history. When they cynically exploit human strength, they ultimately add to the World of Darkness' decay. When they exemplify it, their talents amplify the potency of hope to wondrous and terrifying levels.

Some mages try to improve Sleepers' lives and educate them about the nature of their prison. The Quiescence constantly interferes, forcing many mages to limit themselves to protecting Sleepers. These Awakened fend off supernatural threats and sometimes even work to improve mundane affairs by working in the community. But a mage naturally tends to assert his will and conspire for influence, so good deeds can quickly transform into a self-serving grip on Sleepers' institutions.

On the other side of the issue, there are mages who want to overturn society's mores along with its natural laws. Some of them (including the Free Council) believe that the old hierarchies need to be leveled so that Sleepers can be free to pursue Awakened power. This doesn't mean they're actually willing to help humanity progress any further. The worthy will Awaken; the unworthy will fend for themselves. Other mages espouse an ethos of non-interference except where conditions keep mages from following their destinies. If mages bring occult lore into the light, Sleepers will follow — or so they preach.

The problems of irresponsible freedom against stifling control apply among mages just as much as they do to the relationship between Awakened and Sleeping humanity. Mages feel moral outrage too, and *realpolitik* demands that their society function according to a coherent set of rules, even if they are as simple as avoiding gratuitous killing and punishing treachery. If mages did not have at least some rough consensus about proper conduct, the Seers of the Throne and Banishers would have destroyed or assimilated them long ago. But who watches the watchmen? In such a scattered culture, it's inevitable that some mages will not consent to be judged. There's no way to ensure that selfishness, favor trading or corruption won't turn moral authority into tyranny.

## Cabals

Mages are driven people. They defy the very laws of nature to pursue their agendas. They need a potent reason to band together and compromise. Otherwise, a cabal falls to infighting and indecision — problems that can kill it.

You should help players design characters who can work together effectively. Compromise with them about character backgrounds and weed out destructive conflicts. You probably don't want to let someone play someone who wants to eradicate other orders in a game where each player picks a character from a different order. And yet, don't shy away from every source of conflict. A cabal's members don't see eye to eye about everything. Some may downright *hate* each other, but can still cooperate effectively. When players create characters who are rivals, discuss the situation openly and remind players to separate their player and character sentiments. If you have two *players* who don't like each other, it's time to change your group's membership. Everyone who plays **Mage** should either be friends or willing to make friends, or the game isn't going to be enjoyable.

### Using the Cabal

The Storyteller benefits from characters who have a strong connection to one another. Now you have a whole array of relationships to manipulate. Let's look at some of these bonds and how to use them in a story.

- **Family:** Characters with family ties (siblings, cousins, parents and children) can spark stories through their common relatives. What if their father is killed by Banishers? Joins the Seers of the Throne? Kidnapping, betrayal and plain bad parenting can drive many stories. When family ties affect two or more characters, the rest of the cabal is bound to follow.

- **Friends and Lovers:** Romance and camaraderie are easy to turn into story hooks. Decide how the characters met. What did they actually do to form a relationship? Jealousy can draw an enemy from the past or inflame the heart of a rival. Antagonists try to turn the characters' emotional bond against them by planting evidence of betrayal, or by tempting one character to abuse her trust. Enemies might kidnap one member of the cabal to force the rest to obey.

- **Common Arts:** Mages gather to promote a common order or to explore the arcane methods of a Legacy or Path. Mages who belong to a common order are usually politically oriented, even if it's just so other cabals will leave them alone. Cabals of Awakened martial artists or Death specialists might study a common occult approach. Despite this academic orientation, such alliances are not without political consequence. If a given cabal consists of the greatest warriors or assassins in a region, they naturally accrue authority, prestige and perhaps even fear.

- **Orders from On High:** Few orders are democracies. Most give a mentor some power over her student. The

characters' elders can simply order them to form a cabal. Determine the reason why, and you have a story. Maybe a mentor pays a debt with the body of her apprentice? What if masters sense a disaster or opportunity, and create the cabal to serve their will? What if the cabal doesn't know how it's being used? What are the teachers' ultimate goals?

• **Common Agendas:** Mages band together to accomplish something that each of them can't do alone. A cabal can be dedicated to driving the Seers of the Throne (or any order) out of a city, studying an occult enigma, or acquiring a collection of rare grimoires. If a goal is serious enough to warrant the creation of a cabal, it's undoubtedly dangerous and complex, so these stories will virtually write themselves. For a twist, ask what the unexpected repercussions of victory are. Will it create new enemies or let loose a strange new supernatural force?

• **Multiple Bonds:** Cabals can form thanks to a synergy of elements. Two sisters might share a vision that a third mage believes will lead them to a cache of Atlantean artifacts, while a fourth joins to find enchanted items that will let him crush an enemy. What happens when these goals conflict? Smart enemies try to divide the cabal and play interests against each another.

## The Consilium

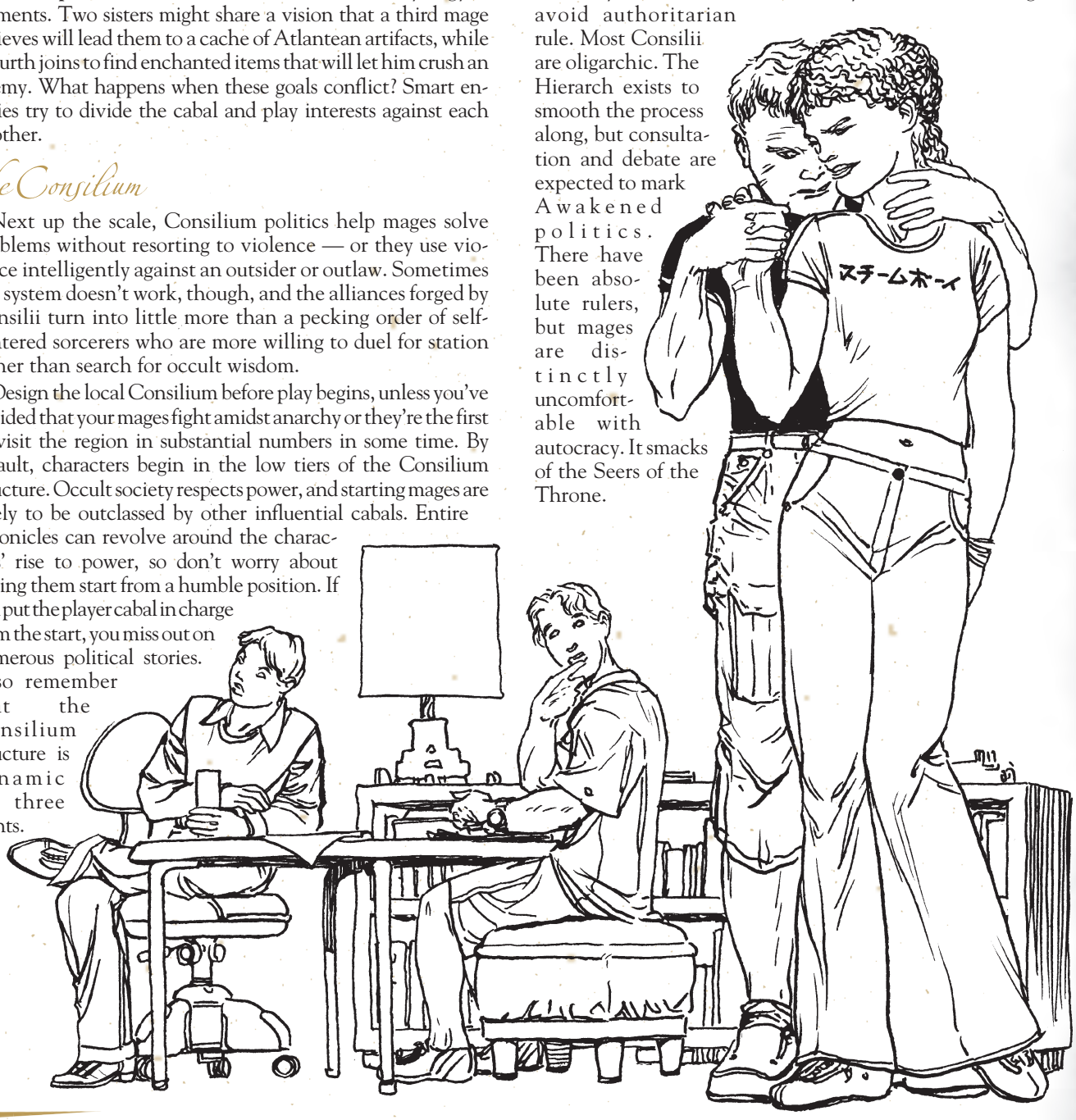
Next up the scale, Consilium politics help mages solve problems without resorting to violence — or they use violence intelligently against an outsider or outlaw. Sometimes the system doesn't work, though, and the alliances forged by Consilii turn into little more than a pecking order of self-centered sorcerers who are more willing to duel for station rather than search for occult wisdom.

Design the local Consilium before play begins, unless you've decided that your mages fight amidst anarchy or they're the first to visit the region in substantial numbers in some time. By default, characters begin in the low tiers of the Consilium structure. Occult society respects power, and starting mages are likely to be outclassed by other influential cabals. Entire chronicles can revolve around the characters' rise to power, so don't worry about letting them start from a humble position. If you put the player cabal in charge from the start, you miss out on numerous political stories. Also remember that the Consilium structure is dynamic on three fronts.

First of all, mages are mercurial. Hermitages, fits of madness and errant spells regularly take mages out of the political structure, leaving vacuums for characters to exploit. Mages are mortal, too; old sorcerers retire or die. Old wizards usually leave instructions regarding succession, but willful mages contest them regularly.

Secondly, mages adapt the Consilium to meet their needs. Though aspects of sorcerous government were practiced in Atlantis, most regional customs are recent inventions. A Consilium in Mogadishu doesn't use the same customs as counterparts in Phnom Penh or Tallahassee. The titles in **Mage: The Awakening** apply primarily to mages in North America and Western Europe (though local variations exist even there), explaining the profusion of Greek and Latin, the Western tradition's languages of learning.

Finally, Consilium structure is dynamic because mages avoid authoritarian rule. Most Consilii are oligarchic. The Hierarch exists to smooth the process along, but consultation and debate are expected to mark Awakened politics. There have been absolute rulers, but mages are distinctly uncomfortable with autocracy. It smacks of the Seers of the Throne.



## Chain of Command

Let's review Consilium positions with an eye to where they can help you build stories.

• **Hierarch:** The Hierarch is rarely an absolute ruler. Traditionally, she negotiates compromises between various Awakened interests, ensuring that factional strife is limited to dueling and debate. Mages are naturally suspicious of their local Hierarch, and rightly so. The position requires magical skill and political acumen, making anyone truly fit for the office a dangerous enemy to have.

Of course, there are Hierarchs who aren't *quite* so puissant. These mages are usually put into power to either serve the interests of someone behind the scenes or because Consilium members don't really want to deal with leadership.

A Hierarch's character and competence ultimately determines how you can use her to develop your stories. A totalitarian Hierarch is a fitting enemy for rebellious mages. A weak one is a potent pawn in inter-cabal political struggles. Finally, if you *really* need to get the characters to do something, the Hierarch can speak with the force of the Consilium behind her, persuading characters to perform missions and study relevant clues.

• **Councilor:** A Councilor is ostensibly a representative of his Path, although he is also a representative of his order and cabal. The general attitudes of the faction he serves determine a Councilor's policies, but these are not as important as his personal ambitions. Councilors are well aware that they hold the most powerful — and therefore monitored — positions on the Consilium and watch fellow members for signs of dissatisfaction. A Councilor may use his position to send rivals on troublesome quests or to levy false accusations.

In modern times, the grip of orthodox orders is not what it was, and young cabals represent diverse interests and might hold more loyalty to each other than to an order's agenda. Some Consilii choose Councilors from influential cabals regardless of the balance of order affiliation. Nevertheless, orders loom large in Awakened affairs. A Councilor can create tension in a diverse cabal by demanding that the order comes before friendship.

• **Provost:** The functionaries and viziers to the Councilors, Provosts do the hard work of the Consilium, making sure that, once the Council has ruled, its will is heeded. To this end, they direct Heralds and Sentinels and lesser staff. To get anything done through the Consilium or to be given an audience with a Councilor, it's a good idea to be in the good graces of a Provost. In fact, going over the head of a Provost to deal with his Councilor or the Hierarch directly is a serious breach of etiquette, because it implies that the Provost is unwilling or unable to deal with a problem.

• **Herald:** A combination of gossip, historian and ambassador, a Herald represents the Consilium in foreign territory and records events. Traditionally, Heralds see themselves as being above Consilium politics, and the political wrangling around appointees often ensures this. Consilii need to present a united front before other supernatural factions. Betraying division or weakness isn't in anyone's interest.

On the other hand, Heralds are the people who are best suited to act as spies and double agents. They habitually collect news about local affairs and have the ear of the ruling council. A treacherous Herald can inflict a great deal of damage as a prelude to attack.

In addition, Heralds transmit news and rumors. This allows you to hint at upcoming events, introduce new plots and toss in the odd red herring to test the cabal's commitment to a quest.

• **Sentinel:** Sentinels are naturally feared; they are usually the preeminent military sorcerers in their region and are selected for their ability to command respect. The worst Sentinels are thugs who intimidate mages into obeying. The best live by a strict code of honor, mindful of their duties.

You can use a Sentinel as a looming threat that falls whenever the characters show their hand against an oppressive Consilium, or he can be the "cavalry" that comes once the cabal fulfills a story objective. Some players think this sort of rescue cheapens their accomplishments, though, so be careful. It's possible to run through a satisfying story without grinding through every antagonist, and the Sentinel serves as a way to tie up such loose ends. In all cases, remember that Sentinels rarely work alone. They can draft other mages as scouts, foot soldiers and seconds in duels. The characters' cabal may find itself under his command. Are members on a suicide mission? A morally dubious one? Answering these questions adds intriguing complications to your story.

## Alternate Forms and Agitators

Consilii aren't perfect. When Awakened government breaks down, it's a dangerous time for all. Scores are settled. Enemies capitalize on this weak moment. When mages can't act together, Banishers and the Seers of the Throne have a chance to wipe out organized Awakened activity.

Still, some Consilii deserve to fall. Subversion from the Exarchs and Abyssal intelligences can turn a Consilium into a potent destructive force. Tyrannical Hierarchs, selfish Provosts and brutal Sentinels all create just cause to sweep the old order away. Mages in the Free Council believe that these problems are endemic to Atlantean heritage itself and advocate a new, democratic regime.

The Free Council advocates Assemblies (and in times of war, Columns) to counter what it believes to be the destructive influence of the traditional Consilium. Assemblies are usually alternative social networks for mages, but some of them challenge local Consilii for supremacy. Many Assemblies are too disorganized to make any headway, but when the need arises, it's possible for these mages to achieve a frightening level of organization. They understand new, decentralized communication technologies better than most. Mages who are used to meetings in secret halls may be outmoded by text messaging and e-mail.

Then again, mages don't always live up to their stated ideals. The lure of power pervades a willworker's life. Free from the Quiescence, mages have little patience for restraint. Petty politics and social responsibility were things every sorcerer dealt with before Awakening. Now that they're free, many feel no need to justify their decisions or obey an ethical standard. To these mages, revolution provides opportunity to cast aside barriers to personal power. While revolutionaries sharpen their knives for the cause, these mages cast covetous eyes on libraries and Demesnes.

## Unseen Senses

Magic is more than a talent; it's a new way of seeing the world. Storytellers need to help players immerse themselves in the perspective of mages. You'll be called on to do this when a player asks what his character sees when she uses a divination spell or enchants herself with Mage Sight.

You can use a number of techniques to portray the hidden world that mages perceive. Try to be consistent from character to character. That way, you can work with players to develop their own unique ways of seeing the reality. This is an important part of the game; successful Storytelling engages the senses, giving participants something specific on which to fix their imaginations. Do not be *too* specific, though. Respect a player's point of view. Arcane senses depend on the sorcerer as much as the spell. Also, give players the benefit of their characters' occult knowledge. Just foisting off a description of what a character feels without interpreting it should only be done when it comes to genuine mysteries or inherently uncertain magic like precognition.

### Synesthesia

A small proportion of the population experiences synesthesia: the interpretation of one sense as another. Synesthetics might *see* music or associate certain colors with tastes. It's possible to simulate synesthesia through various meditative and imaginative techniques as well. When we feel the wind on our faces, we can, with some effort, visually imagine the air currents' shape and motion.

This is an excellent way to portray magical senses, but don't overemphasize sight. It's easy to come up with visual ideas for auras, for example, but what about taste? Anger might taste bitter. Lingering Forces magic could smell of ozone. The touch of the Abyss could sound like a grating chord or feel clammy and scaly.

### Metaphors

Metaphors require a bit more imagination, but can have a great impact on play. Use a metaphor to describe an event through symbols, actions and words. A mage sees puppet strings ascend to the sky from a Seer of the Throne. Mirrors break in the presence of a hidden (but magically detected) vampire.

You can apply metaphors to a character's mind's eye, or apply them as actual events that tip off the mage to the results of her occult perceptions. Be careful with this second option, though. Don't let players abuse it by trying to get the event to give them some further advantage, and don't allow outsiders to be able to tell what the mage is doing without using the appropriate power or trait. Just apply it as a special effect, a matter of style. Signs and portents are a staple of occult Storytelling, but it is the occultist himself, rather than an uninitiated third party, who sees their true significance.

### Occult Symbols

Colors, animals and events have occult significance, but it's possible to go further and add specific occult symbols to a character's experience of magic. You need to do research here, mining history and myth for secret signs. Ciphers, runes and occult diagrams are there for the taking. In **Mage**, the panoply of real-world occult symbols hints at the truths of the Supernal Realms, and these secret signs suffuse the Fallen World. Sleepers employ fragments of the ancient lore in their own customs.

Give Awakened characters a vision of a pentagram, a series of runes or the sound of an occult language. As with other symbols, assume that characters would know what these signify unless a puzzle would help the story.

## Horror and Mystery

**Mage: The Awakening** is a very flexible game. As you run a chronicle you'll probably move back and forth through fast-paced action, comedy and drama. Storytelling games don't have the same narrative structure as novels, plays or films. First of all, the essence of the game is collaboration. You and your players work together to make the story come alive, so you won't be able to rely on rigid plot arcs or time moments of levity and depth with a writer's precision. Also, Storytelling games are episodic. Your group will return to each session refreshed and changed by the hiatus. This will affect play. Novice Storytellers often make the mistake of treating episodes as a liability, when in fact they're the very things that make games distinct. You have to improvise and accept these changes. Moments of outstanding play come from relaxation and cooperation.

Build a game upon a sound framework. Theme, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, gives you the direction of your plots. Setting provides the hooks your players can use to find and follow plots. Mood, the last, vital part of this triad, shows you what kind of plots to use. It's a guide for the experience of play, meant to supplement the practical elements of getting characters moving.

**Mage** has a baseline mood, but it isn't a straitjacket. Use it as an example of how to construct the mood of your own chronicle, or aim to use it yourself. The latter is actually more challenging than the former. While a player strives to be true to her character, you, the Storyteller, should strive to be true to your preferred setting.

## Desire and Secrets Hidden

Monsters lair in the World of Darkness, but they're not the only sources of terror available. In a **Mage** game, human evil takes center stage. It is not a predator in the fold or a covetous simulacrum of the living, it's human, and in some ways that makes it much, much worse than any monster.

Mages are gatekeepers of what makes *humanity* frightening. They lay claim to ancestors who would swallow the universe with their will. The Exarchs may have transcended mortality, but their legacy — the Quiescence — is an expression of all-too-human hubris. Like mages today, they refused to accept their weaknesses. Even so, they knew the flaws in their own hearts, the fear of the unknown that can chill us to the bone. Like mages today, and like ordinary Sleeping humans, they helped to lock away the unknown behind the Quiescence. The Awakened are the fortunate few who can still see secrets alive in the world and even use them to test the walls of the Fallen prison.

But even though modern sorcerers claim to oppose the Exarchs, they are prone to the same hubris and the same fear.

Knowledge is power; secrets are decisive weapons in the Awakened struggle for supremacy. These secrets take the form of new rotes, grimoires and Artifacts. Mages may themselves be a powerful secret asset. The fate of a cabal may turn on the wisdom of a hidden mentor or the obscure powers of a secretive enemy.

### Grand Secrets

At its highest level, the battle rages for the Imperium Mysteriorum: mastery of the cosmos. This is a subtle conflict. No grand council of mages self-consciously fights it, and in most games it appears only through subtext. Instead, mages duel and plan for personal reasons. Mages buy revenge and love with the currency of occult secrets. But across the Abyss, the Supernal World *also* moves, as every spell driven by mortal want tugs on subtle connecting threads.

Who is watching that weave? Who pulls the strings in response? Exarchs? Oracles? Heaven? Hell? Earthbound mages ponder these secrets, but are more concerned with daily survival and self-empowerment in the cutthroat Awakened underworld. The Seers of the Throne believe that they belong to a hierarchy that goes all the way to the Exarchs. They want to be dutiful pawns and rising players in Supernal power games. And the Banishers want to cut the higher world away altogether.

What is the truth? The cosmic mysteries of the game are your concern. Decide them and plots will follow. Remember that the Exarchs and Oracles were once human. They might be capable of Olympian rivalries that can drive your stories. A conflict between these powers can trickle down into signs, portents, uncovered artifacts and rivalries between these forces' chosen proxies.

Be careful here. These kinds of plots annoy and discourage some players. They want to drive the action instead of reacting to the plans of a potent Storyteller-controlled figure. Remember that the classic stories of humans and gods feature rebellion as well as obedience — and that mortals sometimes get the better of greater powers.

### Awakening to Strife

An Awakened will can wreak terrible destruction, but the real horror of it is that it is centered on conscious choice. The Seer of the Throne *knows* that humanity could be uplifted to a nearly divine state, but chooses to conspire against it. An ardent Free Council mage destroys traditional peace because she believes strife — and death — is worth the better world to come.

Mages have little tolerance for those who would thwart their ambitions. They have put bondage aside, so why compromise their might for the common good? Mages fight for dominion in a world where the mind is the ultimate weapon; power comes from having other wills in thrall. The Awakened mediate their intrigue with secret customs, but these are honored in breach as much as in observance.

Finally, Awakening is, in itself, dangerous. Mages live in a cosmos that has been designed to thwart them. Sleeper Disbelief and Paradoxes dog occultists who practice magic too openly. If a mage grows powerful without being discreet, she courts madness and death. To circumvent this fate, some mages set themselves against the universe and mean to bring down the very pillars of Creation. Others investigate their limits and draw the ire of potent beings that enforce them.

### The Dark Path

Mages are always tempted to use raw power to prevail, to force the world to submit to their will. To them, the world is will made flesh, and its cultures, symbols and even laws were first forged in Atlantis. To the most jaded masters, the universe is a puppet. Sleepers might as well be automata, blindly accepting their lot and jerking whenever magic pulls their strings. These mages' Wisdom degrades to the point at which they become narcissists. Paradoxes push them ever further away from humanity. Moral degradation accelerates in a vicious cycle.

Of course, the more a mage uses power, the more she wants it. Provided she doesn't suffer for her hubris, she wants to impose her will on the world, create Demesnes and gather followers. In such a system, less talented mages are either victims or subordinates. Mages indulge in the tools of conspiracy and shadow statecraft: propaganda, assassination and treachery. There is only so much territory to go around and the reward — Imperium — is worth any sacrifice.

### The Irrevocable Choice

Awakening is a liberating experience. Mages can misuse this freedom as they desire, even to the point of sacrificing it. The Seers of the Throne use their hard-won knowledge to become willing slaves. Banishers hunt the very mages who could teach them to accept their power. Once a mage realizes she's traded ultimate freedom for inescapable bondage, she may resort to desperate measures to escape or alleviate the pain of slavery.

Mages can make Faustian pacts for power, but magic itself can bring its own disasters. A strong Paradox should be a source of terror; vulgar magic invites the Abyss. Cursed Artifacts and unwholesome pacts have permanent consequences. The worst part is that a mage damns herself by choice. She suffers from knowing *that* almost as much as (and sometimes even more than) the effects of her choice.

### Dangerous Lore

Despite a mage's ability to alter it, reality isn't a passive medium. It responds to magical meddling by inflicting Paradoxes. Magic twists auras and populates the Shadow Realm with nightmares. In **Mage**, power comes from understanding why the universe behaves this way. A mage undertakes quests to wrest enlightenment from a universe determined to conceal its secrets. As she progresses, the challenges become more and more intense. The aspirant senses a dark intelligence that challenges her will. Is this the touch of an Exarch or the mage's own insecurities taking form?

The answers are hard to find and dangerous to know, coded in strange grimoires and concealed temples. All mages actively seek out occult knowledge. Some hide it from rivals. Generally, the more important the lore, the more paranoia that surrounds it as mages clash to win it. When occultists look inward, the battlefield is the soul itself. Mages who rise too quickly find that their will outstrips their discretion, but the alternative — slow, balanced cultivation of Wisdom and

Gnosis — puts them at a disadvantage compared to those who grab for raw magical strength.

## Conflicts

All mages know that the secrets of immortality and godlike dominion could be theirs, but despite their divine potential, willworkers are all too human. They have little patience for enemies and obstacles. They would rather risk their souls than take the slow, safe, quiet path to power. There are exceptions — perhaps the legendary Oracles cultivated themselves through a subtle Awakening — but players' mages and their enemies are unlikely to be among them. Behind it all, sorcerers have a much larger, more pervasive enemy, a universe designed to imprison them, punish them and lure them to Sleep and death.

### Mage versus Seer

The Seers of the Throne administer cities and allegedly nations as their own occult fiefs. That does not make them a united front, though. They play for political power amongst themselves almost as brutally as they suppress the Atlantean orders. It's possible for a smart cabal to play Seer factions against each other, but this never dampens their enemy's thirst to put the Awakened under the Exarchs' heel. Most mages maintain sanctums in the shadow of Seer territories, emerging to confront them in the quieter battlefield of human influence. For their part, the Seers of the Throne embrace political hierarchies and destroy clues that reveal the truth to Sleepers. The unenlightened are servants and unwitting shields.

What can mages do? When willworkers recover occult truths, it's harder for the Seers of the Throne to enforce the Lie. Occult knowledge is like water against a dam: enough pressure and the barrier falls. The Exarchs' servants can't be everywhere. As mages rediscover Altantean truths, they create the foundation for more Awakenings. Even if mages die trying, the records they leave behind can inspire and train their avengers.

If mages push too far, the Seers of the Throne aren't above using their considerable resources to kill enemies. They are reluctant to use their full power, fearful of compromising the Lie with blatant magic, although they like to goad mages into such breaches, relying on Paradoxes to act as their weapons. Also, a Seer who exhausts his influence on an enemy is an easy target for rivals who covet his place in the hierarchy.

The Seers are not the only servants of the Exarchs. Sleepers unwittingly form secret societies to worship the lords in numerous guises. Some of these cults hoard Artifacts and deliberately destroy evidence of humanity's old power. The Exarchs rarely do any favors for their would-be followers. Indeed, few of these human covens know the true nature of their masters. They form from dreams, myths, memories and the scarce traces the Exarchs left in the world. Nevertheless, mages (and Storytellers) shouldn't assume that the Exarchs are totally disinterested in Sleepers. They may subtly influence events to give a cult supernatural allies and resources.

### Mage versus the Abyss

Mages sometimes use the human body as a metaphor for reality. In this scheme, the Abyss is a polluted wasteland. The Fallen World's "skin" protects it from infection, but like the body it must reach through the miasma to nourish itself, eating and drinking the spiritual power of the Supernal World. If mages are the vital organs of the Fallen World, every time the Abyss infects one, the cosmic body weakens and starves. If the Fallen World is frail enough, the Abyss' strange intelligences will finally tear aside reality's last, sickly defenses and take it for themselves.

In many cases, mages are the only ones who can defend reality against the Abyss. Only they know the dread names of the forces that want to rule reality, and the spells that could lock them away again. This "immune system" of the Awakened is the enemy's chief target, but to win souls over they need patience and charisma. The most effective vectors for Abyssal infection are willing servants, because they recommend their corruption to other targets and even warp their own sanctums as they come under thrall. Fittingly, knowledgeable mages avoid tainted ones like the plague. The corrupt must hide their allegiances until their converts have stepped past the point of no return.

Unfortunately, mages also *cause* Abyssal corruption. Magic reaches across the rift to merge the Supernal and Fallen Worlds. When it goes astray, a bit of an occultist's soul strays into its reaches. *Something* reacts with it, sending (or perhaps creating) malevolent creatures and tainted energies. The psychic shock of touching unnatural chaos also erodes a mage's Wisdom. She hardens her soul to the Abyss and tolerates more and more of its taint, while her psyche justifies it with selfish rationales. This phenomenon is a natural part of a mage's existence, though entities like the acamoth (see p. 322) accelerate the process.

### Mage versus Mage

While the orders have some common interests and customs, their clashing ideologies combine with personal enmity and coveted resources to set mages at each other's throats. A powerful Hallow can power Artifacts, complex magic and mighty Demesnes, prompting mages to swindle and kill cabals that have a prior claim. Tension over a newly discovered Mana source or a rare grimoire claims casualties as well, but political maneuvering, espionage and scrying are the most common reactions.

Even though cabals compete for power, they are well aware that they're in a precarious position. If they tolerate too much conflict, they'll be easy pickings for common enemies. The Awakened subculture is ruled by powerful wills. Ambitions that can change the universe are unlikely to give way to political necessity.

### Mage versus the Supernatural

Vampires, werewolves, spirits — the entities that cross paths with mages usually don't notice Awakened humans, but when they do, the encounter is dangerous and memorable. For their part, mages study other supernatural beings to expand their occult knowledge. Self-serving mages versed in the Prime Arcanum realize that these creatures contain rich

Mana with unique properties, power that can be tapped only by killing or stealing from the subject.

Other beings react to mages with a mix of fear, awe and distrust, but alliances do occur. Mages' spells can supplement undead power plays and werewolf quests. Yet, many of these creatures have little love or respect for humanity. Despite their power, mages are ultimately human. Creatures of the night may see this as a weakness or a blessing, but it's ultimately this difference that sets the Awakened apart from the rest of the supernatural world.

### Mage versus Sleepers

Of course, humanity isn't so easily discounted. Sleepers are in an ironic position, enslaved by the very thing that demonstrates their mastery of reality. The power of the Quiescence keeps most people from recognizing magic and suffocates evidence in a cloud of Disbelief. Plus, ignorant Sleepers (*especially* friends, lovers and relatives) show up in the most unlikely places at the most inconvenient times. Unless mages want to risk their equilibrium (i.e., Wisdom) by killing or blatantly controlling Sleepers, they have to work around mundanes with hidden spells and quiet strategies.

Of course, there's even greater danger from societies that know about the supernatural. During the medieval witch-craze, a few genuine mages were captured, either at the behest of a knowledgeable conspiracy within the Church or because wizardly eccentricity and arrogance made them fitting targets. Modern witch hunters, occult researchers and the elite agents of governments and corporations might know enough about mages to interfere. Mages who underestimate their power either die or are run into exile. Their smarter counterparts know when to avoid such groups and even when to turn them to their advantage.

### Mage versus Self and the Universe

Mages contend with hardships that are imposed by nature and by the stirring of their own souls. For the Awakened, these obstacles are not so far apart. The Awakening itself is the most obvious manifestation of this. There are times when doubts shake Awakened confidence, human passions subvert a mage's self-mastery and the fruits of revenge erode her soul.

Mages attract weird events and strange luck, so the external world brims with mystery. Hallows, Artifacts and sacred sites can be guarded by as little as their exotic location. Mages may need to drag Atlantean relics from arctic ice or the roots of the rainforest. Combine these two situations, and mages contend with natural forces that shape themselves into omens, and with quests that mirror the soul's secret journey.

## Stories

The players have made their characters. You have a theme, mood and setting. It's time to run the game, which means that you need to combine all of these elements into something everyone will enjoy. Remember that a satisfying game isn't always comfortable. Challenge your players if you think you can, but respect their limits and avoid using controversial elements gratuitously.

World of Darkness games have a distinctive basic style. Characters join the life of a city or region, explore it and interact with allies and enemies. They become familiar with their territory, make their own bids for power and watch their actions make a difference. You can use other traditional play styles where you go on a globetrotting quest or clear out an enemy stronghold, but consider the rewards of a city- or region-based chronicle. It allows players to trigger plots and make a lasting contribution to the setting without tossing out all of the game's core assumptions. If, for example, the characters' sanctum dominates the city, there are always other cities whose inhabitants can bedevil them or at least demonstrate what's happening outside of their enclave.

Here are some ideas to get you started.

### A Precious Thing

Artifacts hold powerful, reliable spells, reveal the secrets of magic and are bound to history, prophecy and conspiracy theories. Mages collect them with vigor — and kill for them.

The cabal needs to acquire one or more enchanted items to ensure members' safety. If the enemy finds the Artifact, the cabal is finished. If the cabal finds the grimoire, it learns an effective spell to bind a rampaging spirit. In some variations of this story, the item is actually divided into several parts, or the lore needed to use it is scattered and hidden. Perhaps the Artifact is an enemy itself; it calls forth Abyssal demons or it gives the owner a power too terrible to trust.

Searching for the item can put mages on a quest or it can result in intense local exploration and warfare. Remember to make the artifact meaningful in and of itself, rather than a "MacGuffin," an object that only affects the plot by existing, rather than by what it can do.

### Unwilling Pawns

Scattered cabals tend to their own territory, but sometimes they sit in the shadows of giants: high-degree masters who manipulate events on a scale barely comprehensible to the mage on the street. These men and woman are far too powerful to confront one another without causing destruction on a massive scale, so less powerful occultists end up being their proxy soldiers.

The signature pawn-and-master plot involves Seers of the Throne, who cleave to a hierarchy of domination, submission and secret agendas. And yet, every order has ambitious elders. Mystics say, "Heaven and earth are ruthless, and treat the myriad of creatures as straw dogs; the sage is ruthless and treats the people as straw dogs." While some of these plans serve the greater goals of a given order, others are straightforward attempts to seize power.

In this story, the cabal is thrown against adversity by a plotter who is initially too powerful for them to confront. Story elements leave clues as to the ultimate nature of the plot and who is behind it, but the characters can't exploit these hints with brute force. The mastermind is just too powerful. The characters have to decide whether or not to defy the plan or to follow it to its conclusion.

Variations involve ancient vampires, gods and even prophecies and curses.

## One Destiny's Price

One popular device is the idea of a "chosen one," destined to usher in a new spiritual epoch, herald the end of the world, or both. Despite its familiarity, it's hard to run in a **Mage** game, because as Storytellers we want every character to be an essential, interesting part of the chronicle.

You can make the chosen one a Storyteller-controlled character and give the cabal the job of being disciples or enemies, but there's a more challenging option. Let a single character take the part. Just remember to make every other character count. If there's a key prophecy, work in everyone. Make sure that the chosen one still needs the rest of the cabal, and make sure that her challenges are equal to the benefits of her destiny.

Finally, what if the chosen one is destined to be evil? What if the prophecy is a lie, or what if the anointed savior or destroyer is really a decoy, and the real chosen one is in her shadow? What if the cabal *doesn't want* the predestined goal? Since this story is one of the central legends of our global culture, there are obviously many sources with which to work.

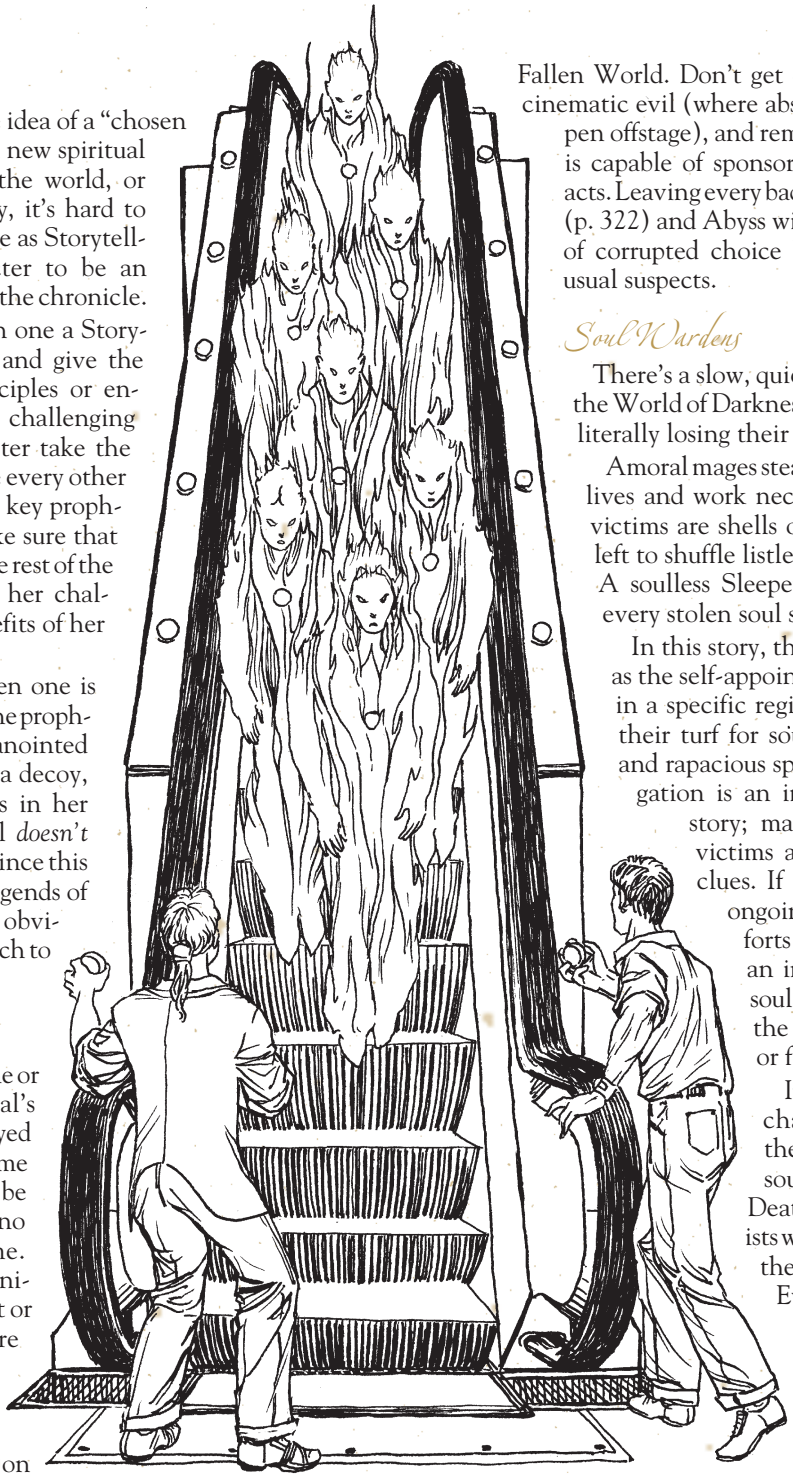
## Revenge

Make it personal. Someone or something killed the cabal's friends or loved ones, betrayed them, stole, or committed some other crime that can never be forgiven. Perhaps there's no single individual to blame. What if the enemy is an organization, such as a government or corporation, and the mages are just casualties of policy?

In any event, it's time to make them pay.

This story puts the cabal on the offensive. Members have to plan and execute their revenge while you play out the enemy's precautions and reactions to each step. Put the cabal's Wisdom on the line. These stories are usually violent, and violence erodes a mage's moral strength. You can also question the purity of their motives. What if there's a better way? What distinguishes righteous vengeance from self-indulgence? Who do you punish for the atrocities of an organization?

That said, there are times when you should probably let up and let a revenge tale stand tall. For instance, there's little uncertainty when the Abyss threatens to bleed into the Fallen World. Don't get caught in the trap of cinematic evil (where abstract bad things happen offstage), and remember that any order is capable of sponsoring unforgivably vile acts. Leaving every bad thing to the acamoth (p. 322) and Abyss will cheapen the theme of corrupted choice by limiting it to the usual suspects.



## Soul Wardens

There's a slow, quiet war being fought in the World of Darkness' streets. Sleepers are literally losing their souls.

Amoral mages steal souls to extend their lives and work necromantic rites. Their victims are shells of their former selves, left to shuffle listlessly to an early death. A soulless Sleeper never Awakens, so every stolen soul strengthens the Lie.

In this story, the cabal decides to act as the self-appointed guardians of souls in a specific region. They watch over their turf for soul thieves like mages and rapacious spirits. Magical investigation is an important part of the story; mages examine soulless victims and magical auras for clues. If it's only a part of an ongoing chronicle, these efforts are directed against an individual or group of soul-stealers, ending when the cabal has triumphed or fallen.

In a dark variation, the characters could treat their turf's souls as a resource. Maybe they're all Death Arcanum specialists who don't want to share the "harvest" with rivals. Even if this approach isn't to your taste, you can use this setup for a group of antagonists.

## Star-Crossed

Romance is hard to portray, but the Star-Crossed plot can exploit friendship as well. The cabal's personal ties could be its undoing, as they unite members of rival groups — and those groups won't tolerate the bond. You can tie this tension to the cabal's makeup. What if two members' orders are deadly rivals?

The most challenging version of this story crosses over different types of supernatural beings. An alliance between a vampire and a mage brings fear and suspicion on them both. The vampires' Prince wants his vassal to learn everything she can about the mages' intentions. The mage's order wants him to uncover the occult secrets of vampirism. If you base this

bond on love, remember that inhuman supernatural creatures have their own strange passions. How can a mage accept his companion's blood-hunger? For mages, the parallel is the thirst for occult wisdom and world-changing power. A vampire or werewolf has strongly conflicting emotions about her lost humanity. How do she feel about a mage who thinks normal humans are too weak to respect?

This story intensifies the conflict between the rival factions, but the bond that they fight over could be the very thing that allows them to make peace. Typically, the relationship has tragic consequences for the friends or lovers, but if they avoid danger, their union can start a new supernatural dynasty. In fact, the combined power of both factions may twist into a greater threat than ever.

### Best Behavior

Some mages may be the pawns of invisible masters, but others deal with the threat of more visible — and temperamental — figures. In this story, the cabal needs to entertain an influential mage. As hosts or diplomats, they need to cater to his needs. Of course, as mages age, their needs grow rather strange, so this isn't an easy task. The cabal's charge can also be morally reprehensible (and may even be a diplomat from a known enemy like the Seers of the Throne, there under a bond of truce), the target of assassination attempts, or might have a secret agenda that involves the cabal.

In all of these cases, the players' mages need to exercise restraint and follow requisite decorum. Failure creates enemies, angers the guest or put the mages deeply in debt to a Storyteller character who cleans up after them. If the cabal succeeds with aplomb, they may acquire more influence in the occult underworld or find their charge ready to help them when they need it most.

### Framed

Sometimes mage society needs scapegoats. Looking at the scenario above, what happens if assassins kill the VIP and pin the blame on the cabal? What if characters are framed for stealing an Artifact or angering a powerful spirit? Interested parties lay their sanction upon the mages, who then have to prove their innocence and thwart unjust punishment. To complicate matters, they might earn new friends *because* of their supposed crime. The cabal has to weigh its notoriety against the value of these allies.

In more formal surroundings, the mages could stand trial for the allegations; allies and enemies affect the outcome accordingly. Magic can hinder or help proceedings equally. Based on the locale, the trial could be an utterly unfair, Kafkaesque nightmare, or the mages could face judgment by a fair body that doesn't have the necessary facts.

Otherwise, the mages are fugitives to be killed or captured by any cabal with the strength and wherewithal to try. If the players' mages defend themselves with lethal force, they compound their guilt.

### Dread Invaders

Paradoxes, cursed items and mad rituals can all summon creatures from the Abyss. It isn't clear what they want with conventional reality, but when they arrive, the effects are horrifying. Insanity and distorted time and space leave behind weird, widespread devastation. If the invader takes root, its alien cosmology can infect the universe. Magical constants change, cause and effect unravel and the taint of the Abyss eventually dooms humanity if left unanswered.

These stories have a simple structure. Mages either fight off an already established invader or prevent an event that could call one to earth. These aliens have cults that work to increase their power and influence. Sometimes a cult believes it will be granted dominion over the universe in its final hours, but others are exposed to the entity (or its soul-warping lore) and then broken and remade into insane extensions of its will.

Concentrate on the mood of these stories. Increase fear as the characters get closer to their goal and uncover cunning plans linked to incomprehensible motives. Information comes from cursed grimoires and spells that call upon rival entities. Using these dreaded sources could banish one of the Outer Things, but bring other beings closer to their goals.

### The Scrying Game

In **Mage**, knowledge is power, so espionage is practically mandatory. Potent occult secrets lie hidden in a few rare grimoires, in the minds of gifted (or lucky) mages, in riddles, ciphers and symbols, and in all manner of hidden objects. Given enough time and effort, a cabal can root out many of these mysteries, but that assumes no rivals are involved. In truth, so many mages are willing to steal occult secrets and use them against their keepers that when most hidden knowledge is discovered, it's hidden again, warded, coded and sealed with unpleasant spells. Cabals have to fight for their secrets, hoarding them against their enemies. Espionage stories like this easily lend themselves to episodic pacing; they lull or intensify as each side executes its move.

Other than occult lore, spies also track mages' plans, studying them for weaknesses to exploit. If a sanctum isn't warded against scrying, an enterprising cabal can seize or ransack it while the owners are away.

Mages can send agents into other cabals' ranks, but in a society where telepathy, clairvoyance and prophecy are workable tools, this is a risky proposition. The right counterspells and a plausible story can make up for mages' tremendous perceptive powers. Most espionage stories end with some sort of masterstroke. If the right elements combine, one side or the other devastates the rival with a surprise attack.

### Prophecy

We've already talked about the "chosen one" plot, but there are other stories that you can drive forward with prophecy. **Mage** is interesting in this regard, because a character with sufficient command of Time magic can actually produce prophecies on demand. Don't be intimidated by this capacity. It's a great way to trigger stories. If you like, you can introduce a new plot completely unrelated to the events the character investigates. Aside from this, there are always hoary old prophecies to be gained from ancient libraries, raving oracles and weird omens.

One of the easiest stories of this nature uses the prophecy to warn characters that a disaster is coming. Resist the temptation to make every such event world-shaking; show-

ing a character's death in a vision can be shocking enough. Remember to cloak specific details in metaphors drawn from the character's Path. That leaves you some flexibility in case the situation changes. The cabal has to interpret the vision correctly, racing against the clock to keep disaster from striking.

### Rescue

Antagonists capture an ally. The characters need to find her before they lose her permanently. The victim may be on her way to being brainwashed or killed, but she could also be programmed to act as double agent through the use of Mind magic, mundane bribery or blackmail.

If they can, the kidnappers use their powers to shield themselves from magical detection. If they don't plan to just kill or corrupt the victim, she might be blackmail leverage. The cabal must decide whether to go along with the scheme or resist it, and you have to decide whether or not the kidnappers double-cross them. If the hostage is a player's character you have to decide whether to run a split scene that alternates between the individual's plight and the cabal, or to let the single player use a substitute character while her primary one is out of action. This is also a handy story to run if one of the players can't make it to a game.

### Harden the Target

Instead of rescuing a kidnapped ally, mages may catch wind of a plot before it's carried out. A member or ally of the cabal is targeted for assassination, or the mages themselves are marked for death — and enemies are on the way.

There are two basic versions of this story: the chase and the siege. In the former, the characters decide that there's safety in mobility and flee with the enemy at their heels. Their flight requires stealth, cleverness and even diplomacy, since they might stumble over a rival supernatural being's turf. In the story's resolution, characters either double back on their enemies to pick them off, or find a battleground on which to make a final stand.

In a siege, mages defend their sanctum or neighborhood from the assailants. The cabal gets a chance to try out powerful wards and magical traps, but members have a limited amount of time (certainly less than they need to cover every eventuality) before their antagonists strike. If they are chased to their holdout spot, the mages have to make do with odd or troublesome local conditions, such as weird spirits or ghosts in Twilight.

Heighten the tension throughout the story. You can go with a hidden, subtle antagonist or waves of foot soldiers led by a distinctive enemy. Remember to make your response fit the tone of the chronicle and the limits of plausibility. No matter who's behind them, people *notice* military combat operations.

### Heralds

Mages jealously protect their own enclaves, but that doesn't mean they don't communicate across city limits and national boundaries. Rare artifacts and occult lore don't always lend themselves to parcel post and e-mail, so mages needs messengers, diplomats and wandering scholars.

This can easily become the focus of a traveling chronicle, but you can make the cabal a temporary emissary in almost any game. It's a welcome change of pace for city-based games and lets you introduce new Storyteller characters and information about your version of the World of Darkness.

The characters need strong etiquette and a quick wit to visit other sanctums unscathed. Mages are cliquish and suspicious, so recommendations from recognized masters always help smooth the way. Seers of the Throne don't like new mages visiting their territory and Banishers are always looking for "fresh meat," so not every meeting is pleasant.

### Enigma

The cabal must unravel a mystery to prevail. This condition is either necessary by nature (as you would expect when it comes to magical knowledge) or it's a condition imposed by a Storyteller character. A spirit challenges the cabal to a riddling contest, or the formula for a potent spell is written in code. Answering the riddle usually brings a reward or averts a disaster, but there are exceptions. Some secrets, once comprehended, can drive a mage insane. Others are *moral* riddles; these are often encountered in Shadow Realm quests or astral journeys. They tell the questioning mage more about herself than she really wants to know.

Enigmas are intellectual puzzles. Players need to figure one out for themselves or you need to hand out clues based on each character's Investigation Skill and actions. Most Storytellers opt for a mix. They provide just enough information to encourage the group, but leave enough room for player cleverness.

### The Tempter

In one of the classic plots of occult horror, the cabal resists the lure of dark powers and fights off those who have already succumbed. This is one of the hardest stories to run, because a player may resist having her character do things that *she* knows are bad, even though her *character* might not necessarily know that at the time. If you use classic demonic imagery, most players know right away that making a deal is likely to go badly. This is why you have to cloak the allegiances of the tempter or otherwise gather trust.

Use a character's Virtue and Vice as a guide for the kind of lure that might be effective. Make sure the player uses those character traits and gives you leverage to make the offer genuinely appealing. Acamoth (p. 322) offer magical power, while Seers of the Throne use wealth and political might. Other factions can dangle Artifacts, Hallows or valuable alliances in front of subjects. There are even enchanted items that can only be activated with heinous acts, withering a mage's Wisdom in exchange for potent magic.

### Apprenticeship

Most starting cabals look like a combination of hobby club and street gang, but you can easily put the characters in the more rarefied atmosphere of a college sanctum. You can stipulate that these characters are weaker than most starting ones (with fewer Arcana) and that they study to be full-fledged occultists. You can even allow young characters, but be warned that **Mage**'s default setting is about power, ruth-

lessness and dangerous secrets, so players expecting whimsy and sports on broomsticks will be in for a brutal surprise.

Every apprentice is a mixed blessing. Properly indoctrinated, one swells the ranks of her order, but if her mentor misjudges her or offends her too much, he could create a potential spy or traitor. Indeed, just as masters can use lesser mages as proxies, mentors may use their young students to settle rivalries with contests of skill, or for more clandestine and dangerous pursuits.

You can set these stories at the beginning of your chronicle or make them an interlude. The mages may recuperate and train between other story lines, or train to confront larger problems.

### High Rollers

Forget magic. Money's where it's at. Actually, greed makes magic important all over again, because it's an excellent way to get rich. Win at gambling. Teleport valuables into your hands. Predict the stock market. *Control* the stock market.

Guardians of the Veil create safeguards to keep the Awakened from doing too much damage to the economy, but there's still profit to be made. If mages get too greedy, it raises a red flag somewhere, even if it's just from tax collectors and police who notice a lot of undeclared income. If the mages are outright thieves and hoodlums, then the opposition gets more personal. Naturally, there are cabals who run organized crime rings. Anger them and expect to trigger a spell-twisted gang war.

### Blood and Thunder

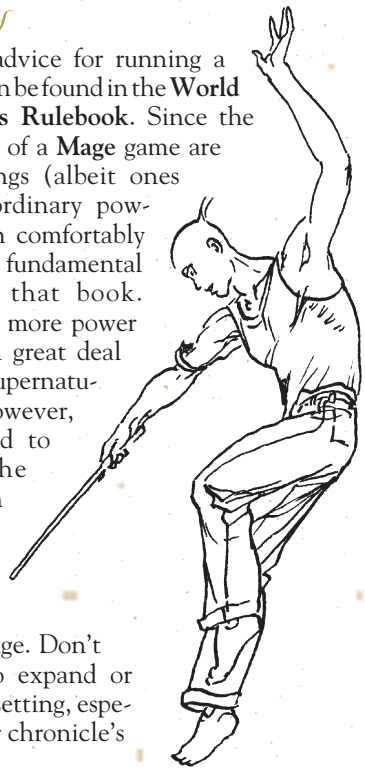
Finally, there's always violence. Individuals or groups can't resolve their differences peacefully, so resolve to kill their rivals. The cabal is usually equal to or slightly outmatched by the opposition (characters with too much of a winning edge usually don't spur very interesting stories).

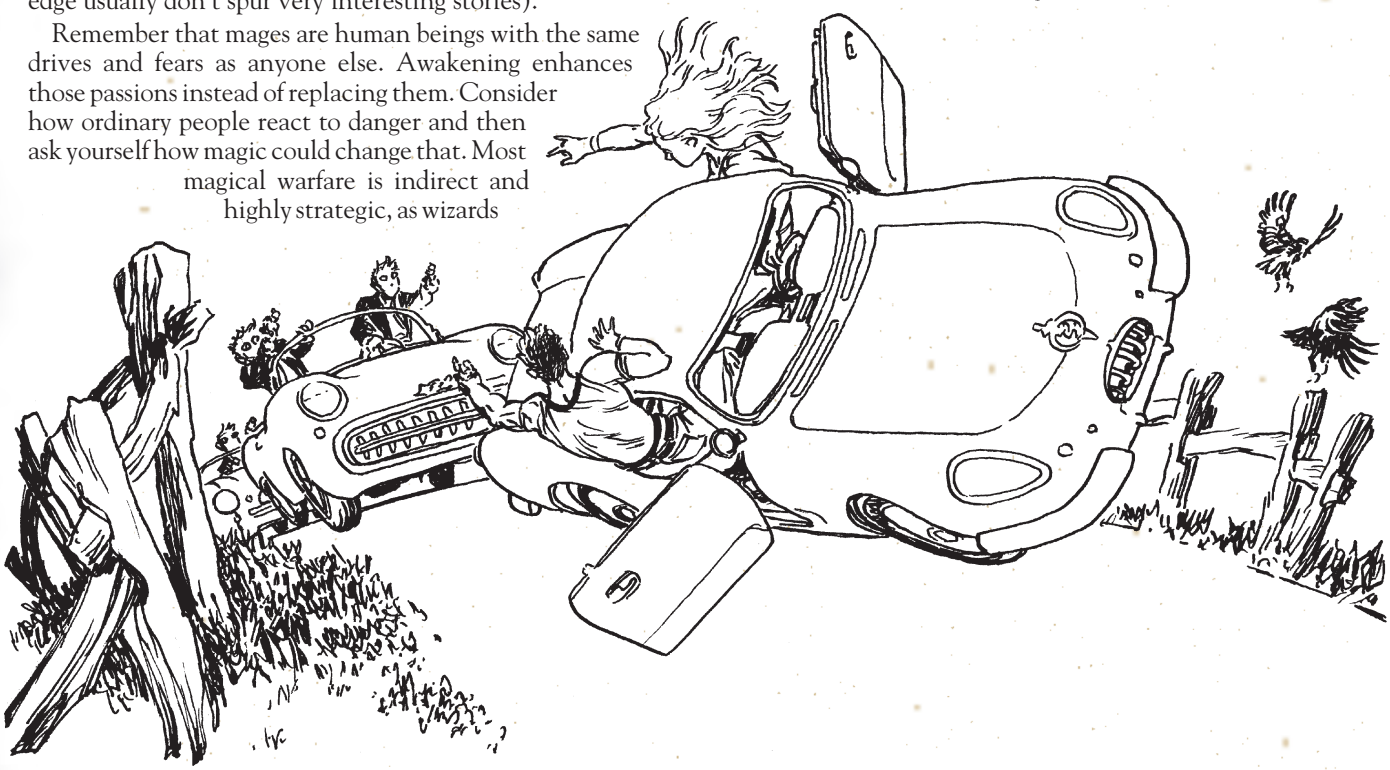
Remember that mages are human beings with the same drives and fears as anyone else. Awakening enhances those passions instead of replacing them. Consider how ordinary people react to danger and then ask yourself how magic could change that. Most magical warfare is indirect and highly strategic, as wizards probe each other's defenses, ward against probes, levy curses and generally try to win a battle before it's even started.

To make a violent story more than a series of combats, emphasize the importance of planning and preparation. Design the antagonists to elicit jealousy and hatred, or pathos and pity. Even if the antagonist is a lone mage who challenges a character to a lethal duel, make her come to life with specific motivations and signature tactics.

### Chronicles

General advice for running a chronicle can be found in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Since the protagonists of a **Mage** game are human beings (albeit ones with extraordinary powers), we can comfortably embrace the fundamental themes in that book. Mages have more power and know a great deal about the supernatural world, however, so you need to increase the risks, deepen the mystery and provide a more robust challenge. Don't be afraid to expand or change the setting, especially if your chronicle's





objective is to uncover the truth about beings like the Exarchs or the nature of the Quiescence.

Mages have raw power, so don't be afraid to challenge them. Clever spells can solve many problems, but antagonists' magic can counter them. Magic turns into something of a chess game. Does the cabal or the enemy leave a critical gap in its defenses? Is anyone clever enough to exploit the oversight? Furthermore, despite the power and challenge of magic, mages are all too human when it comes to temptation and moral fortitude. Exploit this weakness by adding a moral element to stories that would otherwise be fairly straightforward.

### Structure

Most chronicles involve two kinds of episodes. When you run stories that contribute to the chronicle's larger plot arc (what experienced roleplayers sometimes call a "metaplot"), be careful not to reveal too much at once in these episodes, or it gives the chronicle a faster pace than you might want. For example, if a series of horrific sacrifices is actually the work of a powerful Guardian of the Veil mage, revealing that fact too soon pulls the players away from the details of each session. They want to skip to the final confrontation.

Other stories are self-contained, like most episodes of an ongoing TV series. Each injects some variety into the chronicle and lets you explore ideas that you might not want to add to an ongoing plot. You can also experiment with mood here, injecting a little comedy into the mix. You can even play with clichés that you would normally never let "taint" the tone of your ongoing chronicle. This way, if your players buckle under a grim storyline, a diversion episode refreshes them and is plenty of fun in its own right.

### Types of Chronicles

Use the following chronicles to structure your own, either by adopting the suggestions below, mixing and matching, or asking yourself how you might do things differently. This is by no means a complete list of all the ongoing plots that drive a **Mage** game.

### Occult Revolution

This is an epic chronicle that follows the cabal while it fights the Exarchs' hegemony. Look at the composition of your players' group and ask what would compel the characters to start such an ambitious project.

Seers of the Throne are typical targets, but mages could just as easily forge a united front to deal with other antagonists. On a darker note, several orders could participate in a conspiracy to eliminate a rival. What, for example, would Guardians of the Veil and the Adamantine Arrow have to gain if they wiped out the Free Council?

Like most mage chronicles, most revolutions are local, a matter of overthrowing a resident enemy. If the characters (and Storyteller) are ready for it, they can try to expand their revolution to new regions. The mages might be wandering diplomats and firebrands trying to unite others to their cause. Do they need to inspire unity with some sort of desperate adventure or awful sacrifice? And what if spies or rivals exploit the first stirrings of unity?

### Small Victories

The revolution chronicle embraces an epic style of play. Characters can transform the entire world. If that's what players want, don't be afraid to give it to them, but remember that you don't always need a global threat to intrude. You can explore a smaller scale of play, focusing on characters' personalities and local affairs.

If you want a more modest chronicle, restrict its scope to the characters' home turf. When the revolution strikes a city, all of the same dynamics apply here as they do to a game in which revolt sweeps nations. The scale makes it more personal — even vicious. The cabal probably gets to know the names of every single ally and antagonist. Characters measure gains in city blocks and the promises of local politicians. Whether they genuinely liberate their community or mercilessly clutch power (the difference between the two may become hazy), the narrow focus lets you illustrate the results in concrete images such as local people and neighborhood streets.

### Noble Houses, All Alike in Dignity

This is the political chronicle. While revolutionary and defensive storylines use straightforward conflicts (even if things are more complicated than they seem), a political chronicle begins with complex allegiances and rivalries. This web usually breaks down into a simpler state by chronicle's end, because of its inherent instability or because the cabal shakes up the status quo. Begin this plot by mapping out key relationships. Cause and effect determine the overall shape of these ties.

To maintain a political chronicle, there needs to be motivation to keep order. Mages may be frightened of breaking the balance of power, or an overwhelming force can restrain participants. Masters have awesome powers at their command. Perhaps open conflict is too risky because one of these sages might settle the score with overwhelming force.

## Making Magic

Magic is an Art. Your Storytelling goals could be as lofty as any occultist's. No matter what you believe about the supernatural, magic rituals are always a kind of drama, a play whose script relies on the power of a vivid imagined world. Don't aim so high that you shoot right past what your players enjoy, and keep your feet firmly planted on earth. There are practical considerations to think of. High occult ritual includes sewing (Where do you think the robes come from?), drawing, memorization and a host of other preparations. No matter how mighty you are, somebody needs to sweep the floor and light the braziers.

As a Storyteller, you also have to take care of the mundane details. This means that you have to be familiar with the rules and keep the story moving. Sometimes, **Mage**'s systems can be intimidating. Mages can do nearly anything. How do you challenge them? How do you keep magic from solving every problem? How do you guide players who are new to the game and aren't sure where to begin?

Let's look at a few techniques that you can use to keep magic interesting without letting it wreck the flow of your story.

## Guidance

Some groups leave it to players to best exploit their characters' abilities. The reasoning is that this kind of rules mastery is a part of the game and it would be unfair to help players get more out of their characters' powers.

**Mage: The Awakening** is not that kind of game. It's your responsibility to help your group play mages: occult initiates who earn their powers through study and insight. Don't undermine this premise by making effective spellcasting a guessing game. Help new players come up with novel ways to use their Arcana. Don't be overbearing and dictate what your players should do, but don't leave them hanging, either. If a cool Forces/Space spell suggests itself, let the players in on the idea.

As your chronicle progresses, you can wean players off your advice. Tailor your assistance to the individual. Some players don't need your help. Others may need extra time to feel completely comfortable with the rules. Better yet, invite the group to share ideas for spells and coach each other. Once everyone feels comfortable trading thoughts, you'll need to intervene only to prod the game forward or to clarify how a system works.

## Style

Ease your group into the look and feel of magic. The Paths provide a character's basic magical style. Tools enhance the feel of spellcasting by providing sensory cues, things characters can hold. Even though it's possible to rattle off an Arcanum and a dice pool, it's desirable to make spellcasting dramatic in its own right. Again, intervene to offer suggestions and to fill in the narrative gaps left by inexperienced players.

The other half of vivid spellcasting lies with a spell itself. An interesting incantation should have its own theme, look and feel, even if the spell can only be sensed with magic (see "Unseen Senses," p. 110, for more advice here). An interesting spell also reflects a mage's personality. After they roll the dice, help players invent engaging descriptions of how magic works.

Again, the idea here is to develop quality play over time, not to set an intimidating standard. Encourage players to develop a list of stock images and descriptions to inspire them. These can be anything from quick notes to actual illustrations and passages from fantasy and horror media, mythology and history. Whatever you do, keep the advice constructive. Lay down clear guidelines for atmosphere (You're within your rights to ban pop-culture references or comic images!), and encourage players to express themselves.

Of course, sometimes you need to keep a player from hogging table time with long elaborate descriptions of what her character does. Interrupt with a positive comment that lets her know that she's doing well, but that's all she *needs* to do right now, and quickly shift focus to another player.

## Scope

Naturally, you want dramatic spellcasting to go hand in hand with spells that don't unbalance the game. The open-ended nature of the magic system can be daunting. If you're new to these systems, take them in small steps. The rules have been designed so that you can explore them over time. The basic properties of the Arcana work on their own; introduce creative thaumaturgy at your own pace.

Still, who wants to ignore such a fascinating part of the game? Once players are comfortable with the basic system, they can put their creativity to work designing new, powerful spells to overcome nearly any problem. This intimidates many Storytellers and tempts them to handicap the system. Never arbitrarily refuse to allow a spell. If you restrict magic, you have to justify it in the framework of the existing rules and setting.

Instead, put a potentially troublesome spell under a microscope. When a mage shields himself against fire, what exactly does that mean? Let the basic description of the spell guide you. The fire shield is not necessarily effective against other temperature-based hazards, because the mage has not created an Imago to suit a broader spell. In essence, take your players at their word. The spell does what it's *supposed* to do — nothing less and nothing more. For that reason, a spell rarely makes use of the full potential of a given Arcanum.

Consider what this interpretation of magic adds to the game. Magic is not just the repeated use of a fixed set of powers. Mages have to be clever. If their spells do not deal with a particular hazard, enemies may sense and exploit the resultant weakness. Occultists have every reason to be paranoid, subtle and desirous of allies to cover their weak spots and backs.

## Play Balance

Even so, magic challenges you to find ways to preserve mystery and create obstacles that can't be countered with a clever spell. Resist the temptation to make a given spell arbitrarily difficult, but make it difficult nonetheless. How? This book has the best set of tools you can use to control rampant magic: the magic system itself.

The most important piece of advice to follow when you want to challenge spellcasters is to make full use of Awakened antagonists and their own considerable capabilities. Some players revel in the power of the Arcana. Isn't it cool to see into the past and future? Or to kill an enemy a thousand miles away with a curse and a lock of hair?

It is — and the enemy can do it, too. If you want to preserve a mystery or protect a key Storyteller character, make use of an antagonist's warding magic. If you want to put the characters on the defensive, let an antagonist use scrying and distant attacks. Mages can't devote a spell to every hazard without hindering other magics. This encourages players to make use of mundane strategies to prevail and highlights the subtle sorcerous chess games that add tension to **Mage: The Awakening** stories.

## Antagonists

There are a number of people, entities, things and even places that can thwart a mage's plans for power. The section below includes sample antagonists (although some of them

could potentially be allies) that you can use as the *dramatis personae* of your chronicle.

## Mages

Perhaps the most problematic foe a mage can face is another mage. From initiates to masters, the Awakened are clever, resourceful, and most of all, powerful. The endless uses to which their magic can be put makes it hard to predict and plan a defensive strategy against even a well-known foe.

## Seers of the Throne

From the heavens, the Exarchs rule all. Humans are blind to the power of their magic, save for the few Awakened souls who glimpse the truth behind the facade. Now those disparate mages attempt to recreate the world in their own image, fighting for a reality that accepts the lost magic of the past, the secret ways nearly annihilated during the Fall of Atlantis.



If any of these modern orders could gather enough power, they could attempt to dethrone the gods themselves, but would the world be better off if they succeeded? Instead of a world where magic was hidden, would humanity fear open demonstrations of their power? Or would young mages merely take the place of their elders, changing one set of secret masters for another? With so many unknowns, the Seers of the Throne often prefer the status quo to all alternatives. Many believe that if other magical orders grow in strength, those rivals will seize the heavens and soon become corrupt with power. Chaos and madness are the risks of revolution.

The Seers interpret the will of the Exarchs, the overlords of the Fallen World. In nearly every city, in every country, Seers organize in secret societies and occult orders. Each society believes that its interpretation of the masters' will is correct. In hidden gatherings, cabals scry for guidance and marching orders from the heavens, seeking any confirmation that their One True Way will guide them to the Throne, where they will sit at the right hand of kings. Most believe they work for a world in which the Exarchs' rule will be absolute and all rival orders will be destroyed. Working to dethrone the gods is futile. By working *for* them, the Seers prove they are worthy enough to ascend and join them. All evidence they find of failed magic, the corruption of power, and magical catastrophes proves that they are more worthy of enlightenment than their rivals.

Seers, like all mages, Awaken by means of a Watchtower in one of the five known Supernal Realms. It is theorized that the Exarchs initially wanted to banish all lesser mages from the Fallen World, but since they could not break the Watchtowers, they decided to suborn them to their own purposes. In this way, they set an example of turning their rivals' work to their own ends. Each cabal of Seers firmly believes it has found the one true path to ascension, united with others in a larger society called a "pylon" (a word that not only refers to a quasi-religious order, but also to a metaphorical marker along a spiritual journey). Every Seer is certain that his path is correct, believing his pylon has interpreted the omens correctly.

The Exarchs do not always speak directly to their servants, of course, but Seers sometimes experience visions or inklings in dreams that they attribute to the Exarchs. These are often cryptic or highly metaphorical, no doubt as a test of servants' wisdom. Through varied means of divination — casting tarot cards, creating mandalas of sand, and reading the entrails of sacrifices — Seers gain insights into where to act and what to do to further the Exarchs' power. Guidance inevitably leads them to rival orders of mages, enemies who must be suborned or destroyed on the path to power. Just as the Exarchs are believed to direct Seers' actions from afar, Seers direct minions of their own in campaigns of surveillance, investigation and intervention.

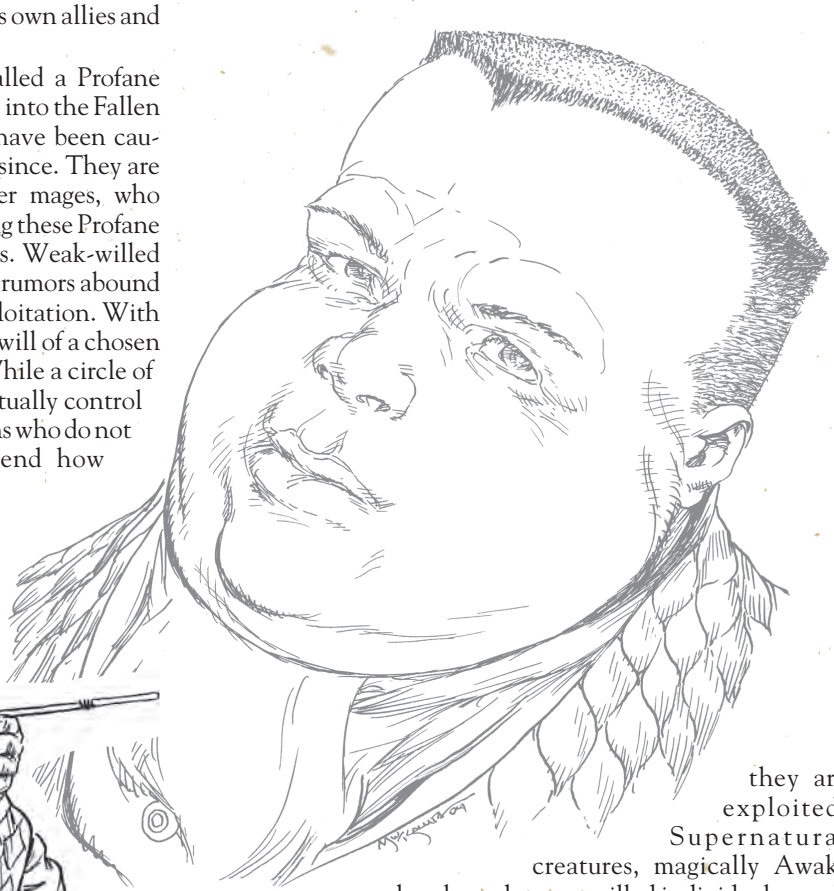
Legend says that the Seers formed after the Fall of Atlantis, led by Atlantean order mages who had sided with the Exarchs. They had not been exiled from the Awakened City, but the shattering of the Ladder and the sinking of the isle forced them into a diaspora like the rest of their kind. Formed by members from the four Atlantean orders, the Seers claim the strengths of each order (and, some say, their weaknesses). They have the fighting prowess of the Adamantine Arrow, the spycraft of the Guardians of the Veil, the lore of the Mysterium, and the ruthless will to power of the Silver Ladder. They have grown into their own over the millennia, at times fragmenting into many parts, and at others reuniting to form a unique new whole.

Seers can come from all walks of life, as long as their ways lead to the secret ceremonies that unite their order. In carefully guided sanctums, visionaries perform divinations. Using the Time Arcanum, they read portents to interpret what the gods would have them do. Using the Space Arcanum, they search for those who would defy the deities. Before a cabal of Seers moves openly against its rivals, members use scrying, shadowing and surveillance to learn all they can. Initiates lay the groundwork for these crusades — spying on suspected rivals, shadowing them, and breaking into their homes and sanctums. Initiates steal objects that have sympathetic significance to enemies — objects that are seemingly innocuous or rarely missed — so that others can use them in scrying rituals. Watchful opponents often become paranoid when this harassment begins. A beleaguered mage may even sever ties to people and places he knows (using magic to cut

sympathetic threads) if he thinks Seers use his own allies and resources against him.

Many Seers possess a unique Artifact called a Profane Urim. The Exarchs allegedly sent these items into the Fallen World for use by loyal followers, and they have been cautiously handed down from Seer to Seer ever since. They are rarely found outside the possession of Seer mages, who zealously hunt down any rumor of them. Using these Profane Urim, Seers learn to control human servants. Weak-willed individuals are the easiest to control. In fact, rumors abound of humans who have a weakness to such exploitation. With the Profane Urim, a Seer can overpower the will of a chosen slave, taking control of her body and soul. While a circle of Seers sits in meditation, participants may actually control otherwise ordinary people far away — minions who do not fully comprehend how they are exploited. Supernatural creatures, magically Awakened souls, and strong-willed individuals are all highly resistant to magical domination, which is one reason why the Exarchs must be subtle in deceiving them through enthralled minions. Not every pylon relies on Profane Urim slavery. In fact, some are strongly opposed to such "deviant" practices and crusade against them.





## Profane Urim

The Profane Urim is an Artifact, a seven-dot Merit (see p. 80), which puts it out of the price range of beginning characters (who must spend two dots for the fifth dot and per each higher dot). It is a cloth breastplate studded with jewels and a strange ideogrammic sigil whose meaning is unknown, although some Seers of the Throne posit that it is an image of one of the Exarchs.

The Profane Urim gives its user the powers of "Telepathy" (Mind 3, p. 212) and "Telepathic Control" (Mind 4, p. 216). The former is limited to sensing through the target's own senses, seeing what he sees, hearing what he hears. Both powers are contingent. The trigger for Telepathy is a short declaration of intent, such as "I am the ruler; yield your senses to me." For Telepathic Control, the trigger is meditation and concentration. See "Meditation," p. 51 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Once the mage has succeeded at a meditation task, she can activate

the trigger. The Duration for both powers is concentration — the user must focus on sensing the target's senses and/or giving her commands (which are interpreted as originating from the subject's own self).

The Seers of the Throne use Profane Urim to "remotely control" Sleeper slaves, using them to spy on other mages and sometimes hinder them. A more powerful version of the Profane Urim — the Profane Thummim — allegedly exists that gives the user the Mind 5 "Psychic Domination" power.

Occult means (and the "Occultation" Merit, p. 86) make circles of Seers difficult to trace, but a determined cabal can track down their rivals' sanctums — hopefully before their own are revealed. Once a circle of Seers has decided to move openly against a rival cabal, they do not risk exposure by hesitating. The group moves swiftly, exploiting every advantage it has gained and every secret it has learned. If a rival cabal is forced to openly and blatantly use magic to defend itself, the Seers can justify their actions to their own masters. Preferred tactics often involve goading rivals into casting vulgar magic. If Paradoxes result, many Seers believe the Abyss will expand and future mages will find it even harder to Awaken. Foolish rivals then reveal their true power in the presence of Sleepers, sacrificing their secrecy and security even further.

If these secret societies are not stopped, the servants of the Exarchs can insinuate themselves into nearly any mortal establishment, warping minds and chaining wills to serve their quest for power. Traditional pylons offer false religions, create fraternal brotherhoods or establish radical political parties. (Unlike the Guardians of the Veil, who would mislead the unworthy from the truth, traditional Seers are willing to make a place for lesser creatures in their hierarchy as slaves in the lowest levels of their order.) Powerful Seers do not merely let Disbelief conceal their activities. They do all they can to actively suppress knowledge of the existence of magic. Paranoid mages tell rumors of Seers who have infiltrated governments, mass media and other institutions to further this goal. Not every circle shares this lust for power, however. Many are content to control "ordinaries," average people who become soulless puppets and spies. Seers have common names and wear everyday faces, acting secretly and silently through proxies.

Fanatic Seers actually believe that the heavens call to them, that as they grow in power, they are destined to ascend to greater positions of power and authority in defense of the world. In fact, some of their organizations are so powerful that they watch over cities, countries or huge areas of wilderness. These Ministries work to keep the innocent ignorant and to destroy rivals. Each Ministry demonstrates a different style, method or philosophy of magic. As an example, the Panoptic Ministry is ruled by the order's greatest masters of surveillance. It is often at odds with rival Ministries that favor magical warfare, widespread psychic conditioning, or rule through political puppets and Sleeper governments. Each Ministry petitions the gods by demonstrating that its methods are ruthlessly efficient and that their ministers are worthy of ascension. In hidden chambers and within refuges outside the world we know, ministers sit on precious thrones, watching over their self-proclaimed domains. More fatalistic Seers accept that they may never rise to such power, that the best they can hope for is a stable world where magical orders no longer fight over what magic should or shouldn't be.

The Seers have a host of reasons for serving the will of the Exarchs. For many, it is a simple question of power. Seers typically believe that by fathoming what their secret masters want, they will be rewarded for service. They claim there's a reason the Exarchs ascended to watch over reality, while all rival orders have nearly been extinguished. Their world is safer and more stable than one that any other god could have created. Reinforcing the Exarch's vision of reality can seem like a more reasonable response to a world of darkness than letting the petty conflicts of magical orders unleash pain and suffering. The irony here is that despite their idealism, societies of Seers often fight among themselves.

As one would expect, different pylons in the same city can contest each other for magical dominance as viciously as they sabotage other orders. Some of the same means and methods are used to prop up thrones throughout the world, but the variety of societies they create and the many masks they wear make them unpredictable and dangerous. A pylon that acts through masterful blackmail of city officials might compete with a cult in the same city that uses sex to enslave its minions. Each tries to prove it is more worthy of advancement than the other. If the Exarchs' servants are defeated in one city, an entirely different society could be triumphant in another. Fanatics believe this is because rival orders have misinterpreted the will of the gods, or that they were not worthy of direct orders from the heavens.

Each cabal believes it follows the one true path to heaven, but many have been lead astray. Some even suspect that the Exarchs merely set rival orders of mages against each other, weakening lesser creatures who would challenge their might. Yet, the faithful still interpret omens and portents to confirm their own ascension. They do not merely quest to join the Exarchs, they are drawn to the Throne, called to do the overlords' will. By vigilantly searching for and ruthlessly opposing any who would resurrect false magical orders, they expect to secure their own rise to power. Ascension demands nothing less.

## Seers Rote Specialties

The Seers of the Throne teach members the following Rote Specialties: Investigation, Occult, Persuasion.

*Janet Evans*

*Seer Puppeteer*

**Quote:** *She's putting on her lipstick. She's adjusting her skirt. And now she's putting her knife in her purse….*

**Background:** Until the age of 39, Janet's life had been torn in different directions. She never quite found the time to finish her MBA, and her career in marketing never quite

managed to pay off her debts. Her last marriage was an acrimonious failure, but she somehow managed to keep up payments on her house, her car and her retirement fund. Her friends are amazed that she's avoided a nervous breakdown for so long, oblivious to the fact that's she's already had one. During her last "hiatus" of unemployment, Janet managed to refinance her house and purchase a few months of introspection. She completed her Awakening without ever appearing to leave her home. Her career and bills mean little to her now, since she's found a higher purpose.

Twice a week, Janet attends a study group, presumably for the discussion of whatever fiction is hot on the best-seller list. Secretly, this group of friends discusses the dreams and visions they have — terrifying insights into another world that renders this one a lie. All of them are would-be professionals in the throes of mid-life crises, people with a little bit of money and a lot of time on their hands. They have found themselves drawn to the same house in the same neighborhood, where the slightly eccentric group secretly practices its own form of magic. Janet's Sleeper career has come to an end, but she now realizes how futile it was. Now that she knows magic is real, she advances on a very different career path.

Janet still dreams of the iron Watchtower. Her visions show her a mighty fortress on the edge of infinity, where she looks down on all of Creation. Standing at the right hand of older and more powerful Seers, she dreams of a world where eternal youth, power and wisdom can be hers. Upon her initiation, her master gifted her with the order's greatest boon: the Profane Urim, giving her the ability to act directly through others, soulless people who have wasted their potential. Yet, for every dream there are nightmares. Janet is obsessed with a young man whose power rivals her own. In her dreams, he's young and handsome, an athletic weekend warrior who studies magic and martial arts in equal measure. They come into conflict repeatedly in dreams, and the outcome is either sex or death. Every kindred spirit in her circle has a similar dream about a different person, and they all interpret them the same way. The only way to find power is to destroy their appointed rivals.

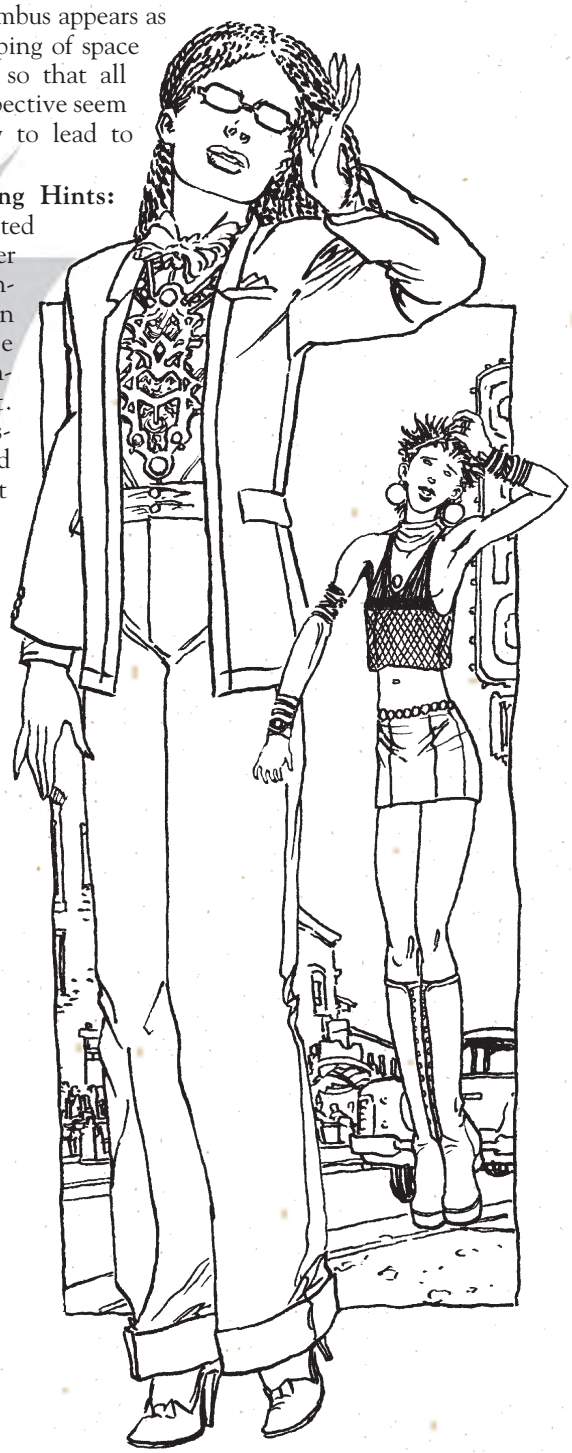
Through magical scrying, Janet has observed a younger, more attractive woman whose life is headed nowhere, a tragically beautiful girl distracted by a blur of alcohol and drugs. Using the Profane Urim, Janet learns to see through her doll's eyes. In meditation, she can take over the girl's body and suborn her will. Her circle of Seers trains to destroy rivals on the path to power. When Janet introduces her living doll to the mage she dreams about, she knows what the outcome will be: sex and death.

**Description:** Janet has just ended a career as an upwardly mobile professional, rising as far as she can without outright acts of betrayal. Her clothes have been chosen to show how responsible and professional she is. Anyone who's browsed the same mail order catalogs can name the brands, and possibly the pages they're on. Over the last few months, she's let her mousy brown hair grow out long. Jogging has kept her trim, and she dresses to flatter her long legs. Too much reading has given her eyestrain, so she watches the world coldly through black-frame glasses. Her life has consisted of responsibility and sacrifice, and her appearance shows it.

Janet's "doll," Raven, is another story. She usually dresses in sweats and a T-shirt, and her hair is short and spiky. Impossibly thin, she exploits her hyper metabolism by drinking frequently. Sometimes, when Raven is too drunk to control herself, Janet takes over. Raven really has everything going for her, but appears like she's throwing it away. When Janet takes over, her doll can be seductive or austere, depending on the Seer's mood. The next morning, Raven wakes up with different clothes, a hangover and vague recollections of the things she's done. (For Raven's traits, use those provided for the "Club-goer," pp. 203-204 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

Janet's Nimbus appears as a visual warping of space around her, so that all lines of perspective seem momentarily to lead to her.

**Storytelling Hints:** Anyone hunted by Janet or her cabal encounters Raven long before they encounter Janet. Raven is disposable and forgettable, at least to the woman who controls her.



She is attracted to athletic men. Once she finds her target, Raven is obsessed with the newfound object of her desire. Even when drunk, Raven is capable of sobering up very quickly and acting ruthlessly. She lashes out verbally and physically at anyone who gets in her way. In these episodes, the doll should have a few mannerisms that are wildly different from her otherwise irresponsible persona — quirks that suggest her secret connection to Janet.

If the cabal hunted by Raven manages to track the puppet to the master, Janet is quite capable of presenting herself as responsible and knowledgeable. After all, anyone who doesn't know about magic would see her as an ordinary, unemployed woman looking for her next chance to advance in life. Janet knows her ascension really depends on studying rival mages and taking what she can. Through Raven, she tries to get close to a rival mage, and then seize anything she can for her own advantage: knowledge, the location of a sanctum or information about a mage's cabal. If her quarry tracks the scheme back to Janet, she hides behind her respectable façade, all the while seeking out another puppet to direct against her enemies.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Leather sap
**Path:** Mastigos
**Order:** Seers of the Throne
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2
**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4
**Mental Skills:** Computer 1, Investigation 3, Occult 2, Science 1
**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Firearms 1, Stealth 1
**Social Skills:** Expression (Mimicking) 1, Intimidation (Humiliating) 2, Persuasion (Chiding) 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3
**Merits:** Allies (study group) 2, Artifact (Profane Urim) 7, Destiny 2, High Speech
**Willpower:** 6
**Wisdom:** 6
**Virtue:** Fortitude
**Vice:** Envy
**Initiative:** 6
**Defense:** 2
**Speed:** 9
**Health:** 7
**Gnosis:** 3
**Arcana:** Space 2, Mind 3, Fate 1
**Rotes:** *Mind*—Third Eye (•), Emotional Urging (••), Mental Shield (••), Augment the Mind (•••); *Space* — Scrying (••)
**Mana/per turn:** 12/3
**Armor:** 3 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

## Banishers

Banishers do not see their Awakening as a blessing. Instead of a revelation or liberation, their new state of being is considered a curse. A mage suddenly sees that the world is darker and more dangerous than he ever imagined. Magic torments him with insights into the supernatural world. He may become a ruthless hunter of the supernatural — a fearful mage who would use his curse to destroy greater evils — but inevitably, he learns that the most dangerous creatures in the shadows are other mages. Banishers do not favor any one means of magic over others. Instead, they would destroy all magic. Only then, many believe, can the nightmares and visions end.

Most Banishers believe they have Awakened to magic so that they may destroy others who practice it. Hopefully, when their prey is destroyed, their torment will stop and their lives will be normal again. Others accept that as they kill, they become more powerful, until they face the same temptations that create monstrous and amoral mages. One would hope that if a Banisher is corrupted, another would arise to take his place and destroy him — at which point, the hunter becomes the hunted, and the cycle continues. Although the temptation to pursue the study of magic to its limits is certainly there, each Banisher suspects that the path to power ultimately leads to destruction.

A Banisher's most notable spells include rituals that snatch magical knowledge from the minds of practitioners, or that simply slay those who would traffic in it. Unlike a Seer or Guardian, a Banisher is not driven to keep the existence of magic secret. He would gladly use open force to destroy what he considers evil. If his retribution is violent or dangerous, then the destruction of evil justifies it. Sometimes magical Paradoxes and Sleeper casualties are acceptable, especially if the hunter believes a greater cause is at stake. The only magic a Banisher prefers to keep secret is his own. In fact, extremists are reluctant to admit or disclose (even to themselves) that they depend on magic at all. Many profess that they will wipe all knowledge of the occult from their own minds when they are done, but their pursuits often lead them to greater evils as they succeed. The temptation is to grow more powerful so that a Banisher can destroy greater evils, but with each step, the hunter finds turning back more difficult.

The most unpredictable Banishers are loners, broken souls who often have trouble interpreting the events of their Awakening. Desperately trying to understand, the solitary Banisher invents a rationale for why he has been cursed. Some turn to religion, driven by gods and demons, while others appoint themselves all-too-human defenders of humanity. The search for redemption torments the lone hunter. While slowly severing mortal ties and draining what savings he has, the lone hunter gains supernatural insights into practitioners of magic. Make no mistake — some actually do find insane, amoral or monstrous mages, but most lash out at wise and organized cabals. A Banisher's perceptions may be wildly skewed, filtered through his shattered mind to reinforce his own delusions. A common belief is that by destroying greater monsters, a crusader's soul will be redeemed. Death is the inevitable outcome, for predator and prey.

More insightful Banishers find others of their kind — in fact, it is possible for a single supernatural event to launch several Awakenings at the same time. Magic can draw many together across vast distances. Since a Banisher's soul cries out for some kind of explanation or meaning, charismatic occult leaders call entire cabals to their side, like faithful hounds ready to hunt. Within each generation, a few actually fathom some scraps of Atlantean lore, including legends of a lost order called the Timori or "fearful." Others adapt modern religions to their cults. It is hardly surprising that many powerful exorcists and spiritual healers can be found at the center of such cults. Religious Banishers must accept that

they risk their own souls to destroy the powers that tempt them.

Conspiracy theorists speculate that powerful agencies in the mortal world are already aware of the existence of the occult. It is within the realm of possibility that somewhere in the bureaucracy of the NSA or a long-forgotten splinter group of the Catholic Church, a forgotten society recruits Banishers and other lost souls to cleanse the world of magic. A Banisher who could resist the call to power could coordinate an entire team of witch hunters. It is far more likely, however, that anyone with so much authority and power would inevitably break from the strain. Fearful stories among mages tell of mysterious agents conducting modern witch-hunts, abducting mages and holding them under heavy security. Rumors hint of methods of conversion, whereby a mage atones for his crimes by hunting down those who once taught him. Stranger tales tell of souls ground and processed into magical energy, further fueling the magical weapons of inquisitors. Disbelief and Paradox obscure the actions of these secret societies, but when confronted by evil, they attack without restraint.

Whether solitary or organized, driven by ancient lore or exploited by some modern agency, the Banisher does not always need to use crude violence to further his ends. For every form of magic there is countermagic. Just as there are shamans who call spirits across the Gauntlet, there are exorcists who drive powerful spirits from the world. Enchanters fighting for the Adamantine Arrow encounter Banishers who would rob their weapons of strength. Necromancers who call on forces beyond death face self-styled "holy men" who would lay those souls to rest. Banishers can erase spells and rituals from the minds of their enemies, cut off the flow of Mana to sanctums, and eradicate ancient knowledge. Perhaps a mage is wise if he hides his most powerful spells within magical tomes and spiritual places, just in case Banishers would erase such knowledge from his mind. Or perhaps he is foolish, merely empowering his enemies to study his methods.

Scholars of Atlantean lore repeatedly insist that the original Banishers, the Timori, took a pledge to destroy their own magic once all other orders of magic were eliminated. They feared the limitless possibility that magic held, and hunted those who followed what they considered dangerous paths. Now, with each generation, a few charismatic leaders awaken with this philosophy, just as other ancient orders are revived. Resurrected knowledge and flashes of insight give hints of how Timori Banishers can take down their enemies using ancient methods. Many Timori orders disband after destroying their chosen targets, but it is far more common for them to destroy themselves in final assaults. Others fall into madness, apostasy or corruption once their goals are achieved.

Scientists profess that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. The Banishers may be nothing more than a way for the supernatural world to limit the amount of magic in the Fallen World. Or hunters may be the agents of much greater powers, tools that balance the scales in some unfathomable eternal conflict. Banishers are as diverse as their rivals, and just as dangerous. Violence begets violence, revenge demands retribution, and power corrupts as the Banishers wage their war.

### *Hideki Onu*

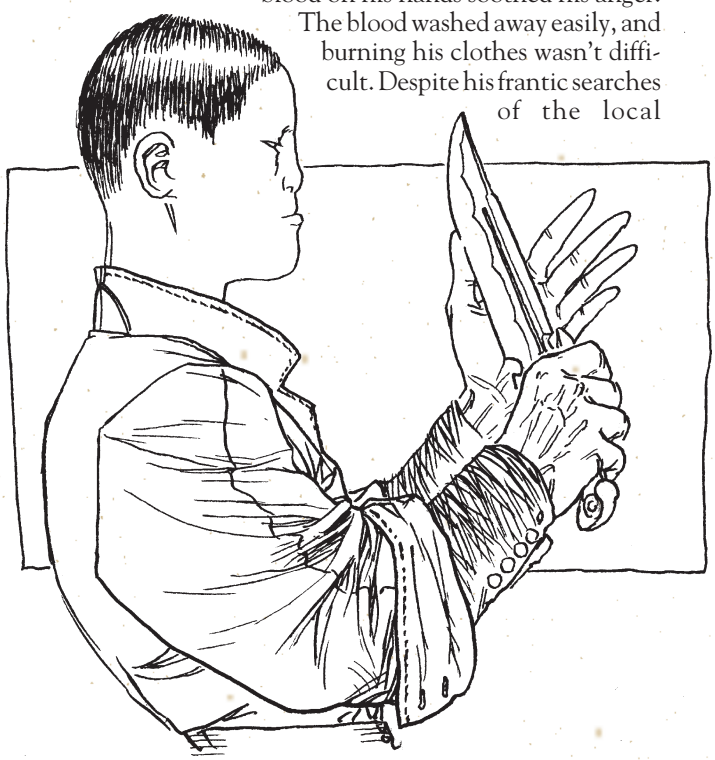
*Banisher Stalker*

**Quote:** *You've had blood on your hands. I can smell it. My hands are bloody, too.*

**Background:** Each time Hideki moves to a new apartment, his former neighbors usually describe him the same way. "He was a loner, and he kept to himself." For the last five years, he's drifted from one low-paying job to another, focused on raising enough money for rent and food… and his hobbies. His dad taught him to fire a gun when he was 12, mostly as a lesson in self-reliance. A year later, his father left him. The day Hideki found out, he bought his first knife, the start of a small collection. Hideki now keeps an arsenal of weapons in a footlocker next to his bed. He spends what little free time he has watching television, playing first-person shooters, and training on the firing range. Recently, his otherwise dismal routine has taken on new meaning.

In the midst of a weekend-long drinking binge, Hideki started noticing the people around him, but in a very different way. Some appeared more suspicious than others… and some didn't appear human at all. His Awakening was equally intoxicating and sickening, involving a four-hour walkabout through the bad part of town. He can now see these same visions when he's sober, insights into monsters all around him. Aware of the power of magic, he has since been hanging around outside places they frequent: the bars where they drink, the places they sleep, and the neighborhoods where they walk.

Hideki is gradually becoming aware that hidden from humanity, a secret caste of people practices magic. His obsession has gotten him into trouble a few times. In fact, he's been in a few brawls with people he suspected of being "inhuman." A month ago, one of those brawls resulted in him knifing someone in an alleyway. The feel of blood on his hands soothed his anger. The blood washed away easily, and burning his clothes wasn't difficult. Despite his frantic searches of the local



newspaper, he can find no notice that the body was ever found. Perhaps it's for the best that he doesn't understand how his own Matter magic disintegrated all the evidence.

He soon received strange fliers, placed within books he'd pick up or in the door to his apartment. At first, he feared the monsters had found him. These fliers were long rants in a tiny typeface describing how the world was secretly full of monsters and that only a small, chosen elect could possibly stop them. Hideki knew he wasn't alone.

Although he's loath to admit it, Hideki has begun to believe, based on sermons from the flier manifestoes, that the blood of the monsters has "poisoned" him. He's even begun to suspect that he commands magic as well — a talent he rationalizes as "fighting fire with fire." He's become freakishly proficient with both firearms and blades, and his insights into the unknown border on the supernatural. Although he knows he should lock his arsenal and hide it away, he's tormented by the idea that he could become as inhuman as the sorcerers he stalks. Only by mastering his skills and by proving that he's stronger than they are can he resist the corruption that poisons his very soul.

**Description:** Running and weightlifting has kept Hideki in shape. Training has built up whipcord muscle around his lean frame. He keeps his hair closely shorn with an electric razor, just as he is fanatic about every other aspect of personal hygiene. His fear of giving into his own weakness has made him a control freak. Although his thick boots are fairly expensive, the shoddy shirts and jeans he bought at the local Wal-Mart three years ago are not. The trench coat he wears makes him look even more severe than he already appears, hiding his weapons well.

His Nimbus looks like a sheath of white fire around his body.

**Storytelling Hints:** Hideki Onu is overpowered by curiosity and driven by fear. Once he suspects that someone practices magic, he begins stalking them. Frustrated by a lack of understanding, he shadows the individual over a course of several days until his curiosity turns to hatred, and then outright rage. If confronted directly, he can usually fabricate a meager excuse for why he's in the neighborhood. If it's not possible to stalk one potential victim, he chooses another, and then returns after a day or two. His hatred is entirely irrational. He cannot be reasoned with, since he does not trust anyone else who knows about magic.

Hideki Onu is not reckless. Nor does he risk exposure needlessly. Instead, he spends his time carefully trying to figure out why his prey is different, who she is, who her allies are, where they conduct their secret business, and why they are a threat to the human race. No matter how much trivia he learns, he is frustrated by never knowing the final piece of the puzzle: what magic really is. The only way to soothe his mounting rage is to feel the blood of his prey on his hands. Then the madness subsides for a little while… until he becomes obsessed with his next target.

As a Banisher (although he doesn't know it, Banisher mages produce the mysterious fliers that teach him about his condition), Hideki is pretty straightforward and dedicated in his tactics. He's far less powerful than a cabal of religious fanatics or a cult of Timori. Moral mages need to find a way to discourage him without killing him outright (since that would reflect poorly on their own Wisdom). If a cabal can't resolve this conflict, Hideki stalks members until he's ready to seriously injure or kill one of them.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Knife
**Path:** Obrimos
**Order:** Banishers
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2
**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3
**Mental Skills:** Computer 1, Investigation 2, Occult 1,
**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Running) 3, Brawl 3, Firearms 4, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Knife) 3
**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Sermonizing) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2
**Merits:** Fast Reflexes, Fighting Style: Kung Fu 3
**Willpower:** 7
**Wisdom:** 5 (Suspicion)
**Virtue:** Justice
**Vice:** Wrath
**Initiative:** 6
**Defense:** 3
**Speed:** 11
**Health:** 7
**Gnosis:** 3
**Arcana:** Forces 1, Life 1, Matter 2, Prime 2
**Rotes:** None
**Mana/per turn:** 12/3
**Armor:** 2 ("Unseen Aegis," Matter ••)

## The Mad

Becoming aware of the existence of magic frees mortal minds from the restraints they once knew. It should hardly be surprising, then, that such an experience can drive a mage's mind to the brink of sanity and beyond. Insane mages are not easily predicted, categorized or organized. The Mad defy such careful taxonomy. Raving lunatics and dysfunctional psychopaths do not survive their transformations for long. They act with such openness and fury that even mortal authorities can hunt them down swiftly, and if they don't, old and strong supernatural creatures will. Truly dangerous madmen hide their dementia, along with the magical power it grants. They wait, patient and potent, slowly unraveling schemes that increase their magical power… and insanity.

Lacking wisdom or morality (as well as either of those two game traits), they are capable of epic sacrifices and destruction, rarely fearing the retribution of magical Paradoxes. Their beliefs are antithetical to the teaching and discipline that mystical orders depend on. Moral mages search for ways to cure or "fix" or these lost sorcerers, but all too often outbursts of insanity strain the Veil so badly that an entire cabal must set out to destroy a revealed madman. If he's not dealt with, freak supernatural events can create terrors far more dangerous than the Mad themselves.

As the saying goes, there is often a "method to the madness," a pattern tied to the affliction that deforms a wayward mage. It may be possible to hunt one of the Mad down based on these patterns, or to figure out his abnormal psychology, but most have a survival instinct that encourages them to be extremely cautious. A mad mage's actions

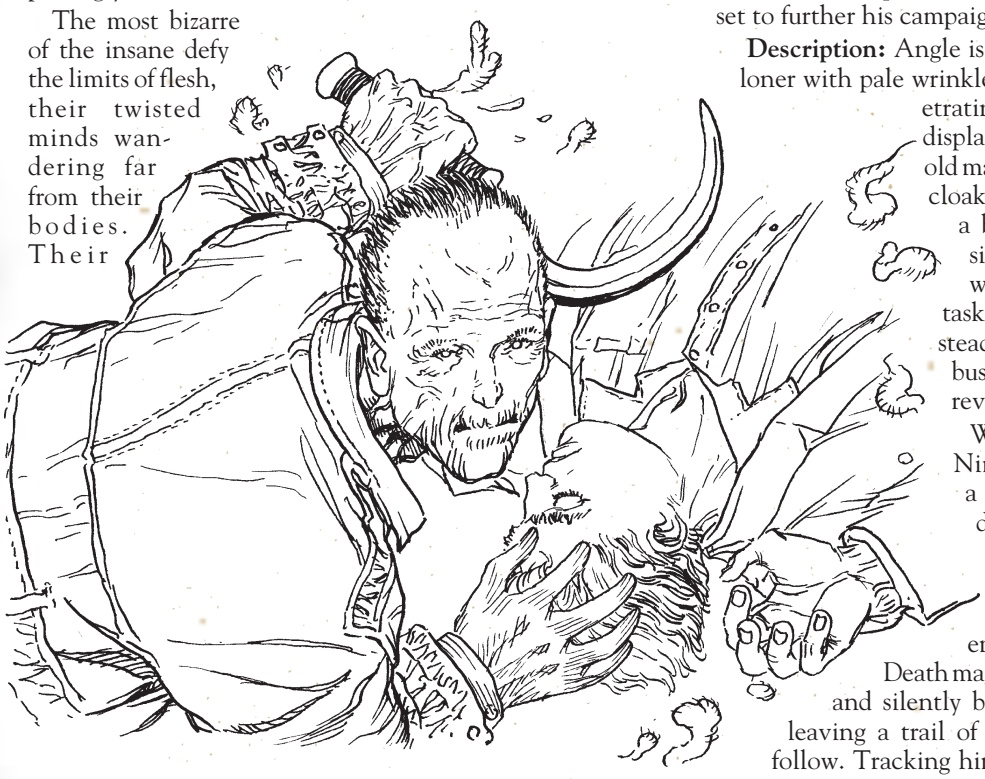
may be part of a larger supernatural sequence of events, as he reacts to dangers and revelations others cannot easily sense. He lurks about with subtle magic for years until he unleashes his twisted vision on the world, or until other mages uncover his schemes and attempt to stop him.

Mad mages make for elusive rivals, even when their pursuers can guess at their motives. When dogged, a mad mage does not stop at drastic acts that others would hesitate to perform, since he can easily rationalize what he does. Open displays of magic create Paradoxes, a consequence more careful mages must endure if they follow the trail. Left unchecked, a mad mage can shepherd innocent victims into his plots.

The insane are often otherwise ordinary people who were forever changed by their Awakening. Some are supremely gifted in a few specialized forms of magic, and oblivious to all others. Consider an idiot savant or autistic genius, elevated to supernatural strength by flashes of magical insight. His activities do not need to be random or whimsical. He slowly and softly erodes all order that is at odds with his dementia, his alternate vision for the world.

In other instances, the Mad are emotionally and spiritual broken, freed from conscience or humanity. Wisdom is a quality they do not possess (or in game terms, a trait they have utterly degraded). Completely amoral, they sate appetites chained to their deepest Vices and desires. They are civilized monsters, capable of using their magic to disguise themselves as harmless and ordinary citizens. Some ruses are so elaborate (and surrounded by so much Occultation) that even other mages cannot easily find them. The files of law-enforcement authorities contain countless cases of serial killers who were never caught, missing persons who cannot be traced, and acts of sick ingenuity the common populace should never discover. The Mad perform masterworks of atrocity, finding new horizons of inhumanity with each passing year.

The most bizarre of the insane defy the limits of flesh, their twisted minds wandering far from their bodies. Their flesh "broke" during their Awakening, allowing their minds to roam freely. Tales are told of comatose mages whose minds wander the Twilight hallways of hospitals, the neighborhoods of loved ones, or the periphery surrounding their broken bodies. Legends speak of mages shattered by madness whose Twilight minds openly work magic as they reshape ephemera to conform to their darkest dreams. Stranger things are possible. A mad mage could be transformed into a force of nature, a supernatural phenomenon, or into an incorporeal spirit, lashing out at creation with a few magical talents as developed and dynamic as those of ordinary mages. Mad mages defy reality as easily as they defy sanity. Each instance of a lost willworker confirms why mystical orders exist, and there are some paths best left unexplored.



### *William Angle - Grim Reaper*

**Background:** The Awakening of William Angle was nothing short of death and resurrection. At the moment he found enlightenment, William's heart stopped and consciousness ceased. For a full hour, William was dead — until he returned to this world with power over life and death. Corrupted by overwhelming power, he no longer considered the people around him to be meaningful, as they were entirely transient. Humanity was enslaved by the power of death, but at long last, he was free of it.

William firmly believes he is immortal, and all evidence of his actions fully supports this. In order to ensure his survival, he is convinced he must find others to die in his place. His magic extends beyond simple necromancy. Each time he kills, he finds it easier to extend his own life and grant himself strength. He has the patience and determination of a serial killer, fading into anonymity after each atrocity performed. Multiple murder is a ritual to him, steps in an elaborate casting that prolongs his own life. Even the vengeance of the dead cannot stop him, as the very spirits of those he slays are set to further his campaign of slaughter.

**Description:** Angle is a brooding old man, a tormented loner with pale wrinkled skin, jet-black hair, and a penetrating stare. When he is not openly displaying magical power, he is a pitiful old man who wraps himself in a long gray cloak. The tools of his trade are kept in a battered satchel he carries at his side. His hands shake with palsy, but whenever he must perform a critical task, they become unusually calm and steady. When he kills, it is a swift ambush, a rush of magical power that reveals him as a supernatural monster.

When he casts vulgar magic, Angle's Nimbus makes him appear to take on a deathly pallor, as if he has been dead for a few hours.

**Storytelling Hints:** William Angle is fairly strong for an old man, but even stronger when he empowers the weapon he wields with Death magic. His actions should occur swiftly and silently behind the events of a chronicle, leaving a trail of evidence for the enlightened to follow. Tracking him should be exceedingly difficult,

since he possesses powerful Occultation. He isn't strong enough to stand and fight against a determined cabal, so he prefers evasion to outright conflict. With Life magic, he can temporarily alter his appearance or heal himself. With Death magic, he can summon up servants to cover his retreat. William does not resort to extremes with Death magic unless he is cornered, but he has no fear of Paradoxes. He has deluded himself into thinking they do not affect him, and he acts as though he cannot die. A vigilant cabal could prove him wrong, before he kills again and again.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Lead coin
**Path:** Moros
**Order:** Apostate
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1
**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 4
**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Investigation 1, Medicine (Forensics) 1, Occult 1
**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Camouflage) 4, Weaponry (Sickle) 4
**Social Skills:** Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge (Poker-face) 3
**Merits:** Danger Sense, Occultation 5
**Willpower:** 7
**Wisdom:** 5 (Phobia: Corpses)
**Virtue:** Faith
**Vice:** Wrath
**Initiative:** 7
**Defense:** 3
**Speed:** 10
**Health:** 6
**Gnosis:** 3
**Arcana:** Death 3, Life 3, Matter 1
**Rotes:** None
**Mana/per turn:** 12/3

## Animal Familiars

A mage's embodied familiar takes the form of an animal. Although its traits can exceed those for the animal type it mimics (it's really a spirit in materialized animal form), there are some abilities that need rules, like natural-weapon attacks and special senses. Traits for a cat, dog and a raven can be found in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 203. Below are three more common familiar types.

### Owl

**Description:** Owls come in many different breeds; the traits here are for a screech owl. They are nocturnal hunters of mice and voles, with amazing sight and hearing.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 3
**Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3
**Willpower:** 6
**Initiative:** 6
**Defense:** 3
**Speed:** 14 (flight; species factor 10)
**Size:** 2
**Weapons/Attacks:**

| *Type* | *Damage* | *Dice Pool* |
|---|---|---|
| Beak | 1 (L) | 4 |
| Talons | 1 (L) | 4 |

**Health:** 4
**Special:** +2 on sight and sound perception rolls

### Snake

**Description:** These traits are for a common black snake (also called a black rat snake). Snake familiars make excellent spies. Although a mage can certainly have a venomous snake for a familiar, they tend to cause distrust and fear.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1, Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 4
**Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Intimidation 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3
**Willpower:** 7
**Initiative:** 7
**Defense:** 3
**Speed:** 6 (species factor 2)
**Size:** 2
**Weapons/Attacks:**

| *Type* | *Damage* | *Dice Pool* |
|---|---|---|
| Bite | 1 (L) | 3 |

**Health:** 3

### Weasel or Ferret

**Description:** These lithe mammals are very good at squeezing into small spaces and can even untie or gnaw at rope bonds.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2
**Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Intimidation 1, Stealth 4, Survival 3
**Willpower:** 4
**Initiative:** 5
**Defense:** 3
**Speed:** 11 (species factor 7)
**Size:** 2
**Weapons/Attacks:**

| *Type* | *Damage* | *Dice Pool* |
|---|---|---|
| Bite | 1 (L) | 3 |

**Health:** 4



## Spirits

Living creatures of flesh and blood inhabit our world — beasts and animals, predators and prey, masters and servants. Yet the majority of people remain blissfully unaware of the unseen realms surrounding them. Existing outside human ken, spirits are at work in the world. Some are benevolent inhabitants of our plane of existence. Others interact with our world as visitors, invaders, guardians or even predators.

Spirits may take the forms of angels and demons, faeries and monsters, cars and trucks, swords and kitchen utensils, or creatures so fantastic that they bring madness to any who behold them. Mages are capable of making alliances with them. Through strength of will, mages versed in the Spirit Arcanum can summon, bind and even control these otherworldly entities.

Spirits can be capricious, motivated by what seem to their own whims and desires, but which a shaman knows are aspects of their nature. Unlike a human, spirits cannot act outside their natures — they *are* their natures.

Stories about mages who deal with spirits tell of promises made, pacts forged and friendships broken. Boons, deeds and even acts of sacrifice forge bonds between living mages and ephemeral spirits. A mage walking in the Shadow can encounter entire pantheons of these entities. Some gather together in kinship "courts" or "kingdoms," presenting entire societies based on the same powerful myth, theme or legend.

### Spirit Rules

The rules for spirits are similar to those for ghosts. See "Ghosts," pp. 208-216 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. There are some differences, however. Most spirits come to their state naturally. They're born that way, whereas ghosts are the ephemeral remains of dead mortals.

**Traits**

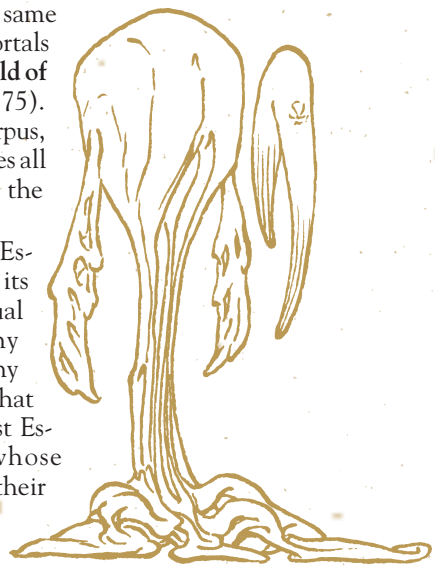
Instead of the nine Attributes used to define creatures in the physical world, spirits have just three: Power, Finesse and Resistance.

Power represents a spirit's raw impact on the spirit world, through force of will or its form. Power is used for all rolls that would normally involve Intelligence, Strength or Presence.

Finesse represents how well a spirit can manipulate other spirits, people and its environment. Finesse is used for all rolls that would normally involve Wits, Dexterity or Manipulation.

Resistance measures the strength of the idea behind a spirit and how easily the being is damaged and influenced by others. The spirit's Resistance is used for all rolls that world normally involve Resolve, Stamina and Composure.

Rather than Health, a spirit has Corpus dots that represent the resiliency of its ephemeral form. Corpus dots equal a spirit's Resistance + Size. Spirits regenerate Corpus in the same amount of time that mortals heal damage (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 175). If a spirit loses all of its Corpus, it is discorporated. If it loses all its Essence and Corpus, the spirit is destroyed.



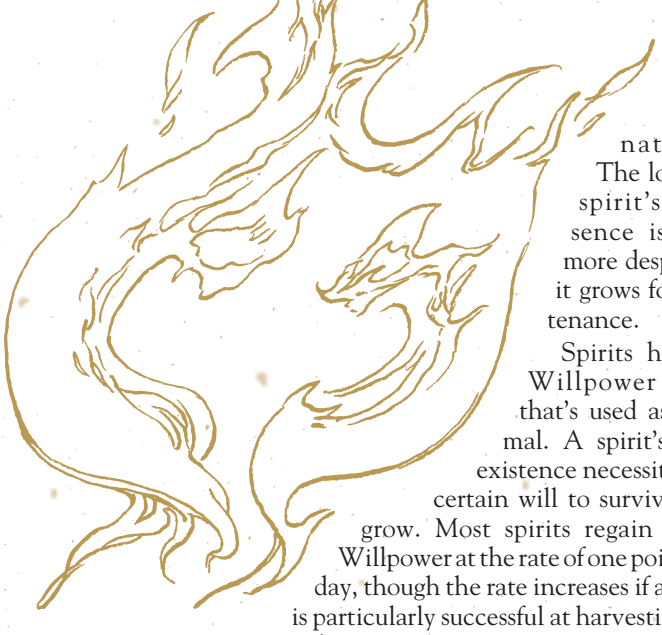
A spirit's maximum Essence is determined by its Rank (see "The Spiritual Hierarchy," below); any given spirit may have any amount of Essence up to that limit. Spirits must harvest Essence from sources whose resonance is related to their

### The Spiritual Hierarchy

Spirits are classified into rankings based on their type and power. A low-level spirit (rank 1) might be simple, perhaps the guardian of a mushroom field or the spirit of a hearth, while a minor god (rank 5) might have vast powers over his purview, whether he is a god of fire, love or writing. Atlantean mages devised a ranking system, allegedly based on the rough hierarchy the spirits themselves seemed to recognize. Modern mages use this system, but with titles developed during the 19th century.

| Rank† | Class of Spirit | Trait Limits* | Attribute Dots | Maximum Essence |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Squire or page | 5 dots | 5-8 | 10 |
| 2 | Knight | 7 dots | 9-14 | 15 |
| 3 | Baron/Baroness | 9 dots | 15-25 | 20 |
| 4 | Count/Countess | 12 dots | 26-35 | 25 |
| 5 | Marquess/Marchioness (minor god) | 15 dots | 36—45 | 50 |
| 6 | Prince/Princess (lesser god) | — | ** | ** |
| 7 | Duke/Duchess (greater god) | — | ** | ** |
| 8 | King/Queen (the planets) | — | ** | ** |
| 9 | Emperor/Empress (the Platonic forms) | — | ** | ** |
| 10 | Beyond manifest conception (the Unmoved Mover, Ain Soph) | | | |

† Each dot levies a —1 modifier on attempts to forcibly bind that spirit.
* These represent permanent dots, not temporarily boosted traits.
** Spirits above rank 5 don't need traits. They are, for all intents and purposes, godlike beings.



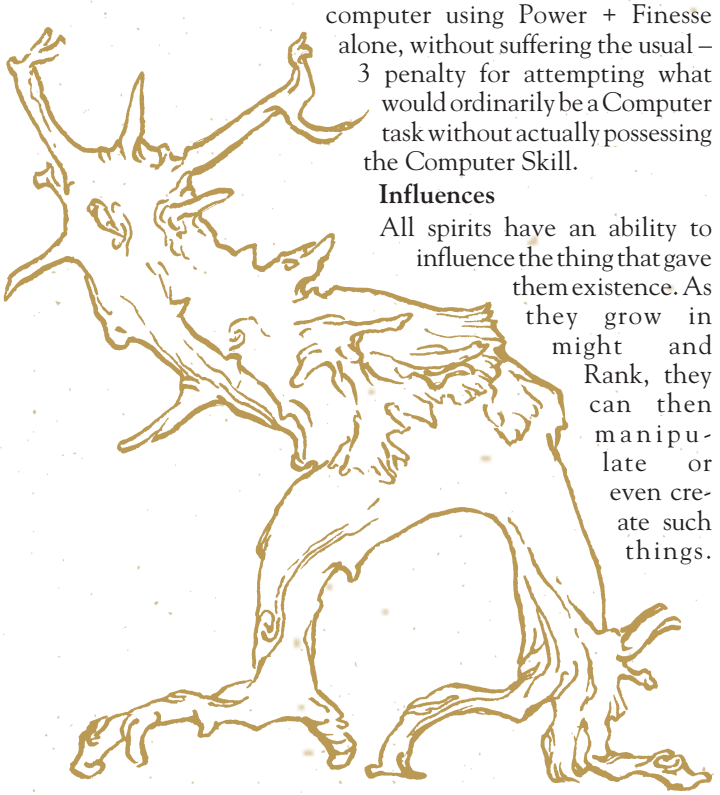
natures. The lower a spirit's Essence is, the more desperate it grows for sustenance.

Spirits have a Willpower trait that's used as normal. A spirit's very existence necessitates a certain will to survive and grow. Most spirits regain spent Willpower at the rate of one point per day, though the rate increases if a spirit is particularly successful at harvesting Essence with an appropriate resonance.

Spirits possess Initiative, Defense, Speed and Size as other entities do. Initiative is equal to Finesse + Resistance. A spirit's Defense is equal to its Power or Finesse, whichever is higher. Speed is equal to Power + Finesse + a "species factor." Spirits that take human or animal form have a species factor equal to their earthly counterparts. Spirits of inanimate objects usually have a species factor equal to zero (save for spirits of cars and other objects designed to move quickly), while spirits of more abstract form generally have a species factor of 10.

A spirit can generally be of any Size, depending on what it represents and how powerful it is. Exceptionally strong spirits are often larger than their weaker kin.

Note that spirits do not possess either Skills or Merits. A spirit suffers no penalty for untrained Skill use, however, as long as the task is appropriate to the spirit's area of influence. A spirit of information can rifle the database of a computer using Power + Finesse alone, without suffering the usual –3 penalty for attempting what would ordinarily be a Computer task without actually possessing the Computer Skill.



**Influences**

All spirits have an ability to influence the thing that gave them existence. As they grow in might and Rank, they can then manipulate or even create such things.

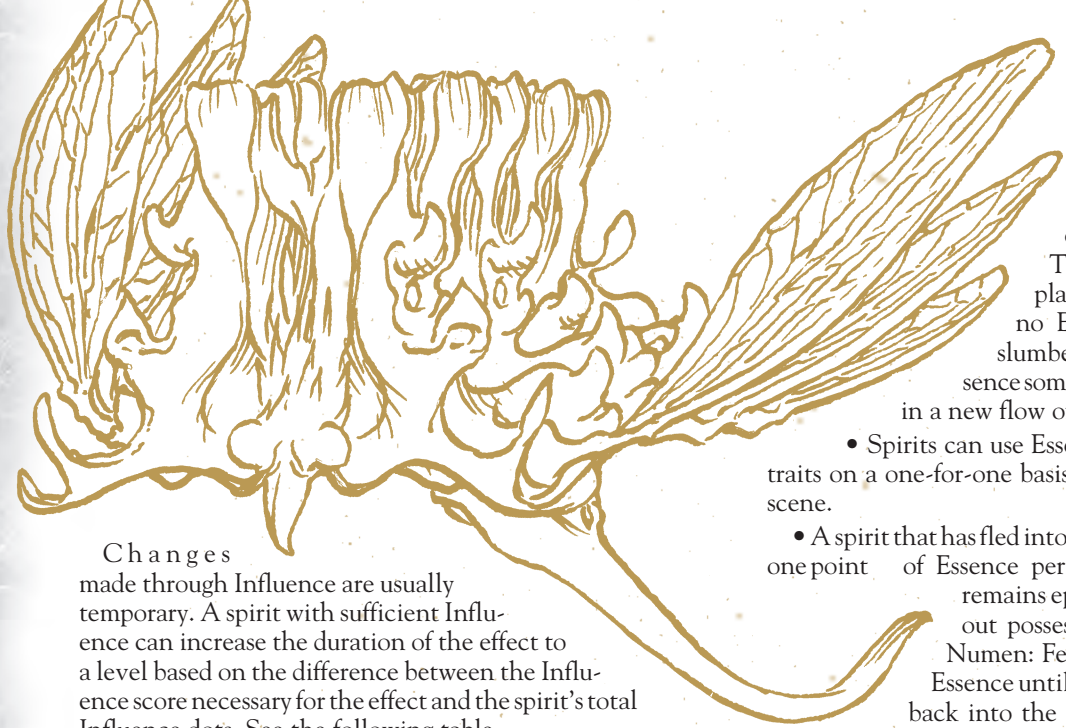
Most spirits have only the Influence that most directly corresponds to their own nature. A dog-spirit likely has the Influence: Dogs, and a spirit of wrath has the Influence: Anger. As a spirit merges with other spirits to grow in Rank, it gains other influences.

Influence can be used across the Gauntlet, if the spirit is in the area of effect of a locus of compatible resonance. Otherwise, the spirit must use the Reaching Numen to influence the physical world while it remains in the Shadow.

Each use of an Influence requires a Power + Finesse roll and the expenditure of one (or more) Essence. When a spirit attempts to use an Influence to affect the emotions or thoughts of a sentient being (Sleeper, mage, werewolf, vampire or the like), the roll is contested. Resolve or Composure is rolled for mortals, whichever is higher, to resist. Supernatural beings, which are harder to affect with simple Influences, may resist with Resolve or Composure + the appropriate supernatural trait (Gnosis for mages, Primal Urge for werewolves and Blood Potency for vampires).

The following are powers that derive from the levels of Influences.

| Level | Effect |
|---|---|
| • | Strengthen: The spirit can enhance its sphere of influence: make an emotion stronger, an animal or plant healthier, or an object more robust (gaining an extra point of Health or Structure per Rank of the spirit, for example). These changes last for one minute per success. The cost is one Essence. |
| •• | Manipulate: The spirit can make minor changes within its sphere of influence: slightly change the nature or target of an emotion, or make minor changes to an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's function. These changes last for up to 10 minutes per success. The cost is two Essence. |
| ••• | Control: The spirit can make dramatic changes within its sphere of influence: twisting emotions or dictating an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's function. The changes last for up to 10 minutes per success. The cost is three Essence. |
| •••• | Create: The spirit can create a new example of its sphere of influence: create an emotion, create a new sapling or young plant, or create a young animal or brand new object. The creation lasts for up to one minute per success. The cost is four Essence. |
| ••••• | Mass Create: The spirit can create multiple examples of its sphere of influence: it can trigger its emotion in multiple people, create new copses of trees, small groups of animals or multiple identical items. The cost is five Essence. A number of subjects equal to the spirit's Rank come into existence. The creations last for up to one minute per success. Alternatively, the spirit may create one instance of its sphere of influence permanently (although a spirit cannot permanently alter the mindset of a sentient being). |



Changes made through Influence are usually temporary. A spirit with sufficient Influence can increase the duration of the effect to a level based on the difference between the Influence score necessary for the effect and the spirit's total Influence dots. See the following table.

The level of the effect and the level of potential duration are added together to determine the Influence required. For instance, a fear-spirit with Influence 3 could use a Strengthen effect lasting for one hour per success (at the cost of two Essence), a Manipulate effect lasting for 10 minutes per success, or a Control effect that lasts only one minute per success. The spirit need not use the Influence power to its utmost ability. The fear-spirit with Influence 3 could use the Strengthen effect with a lower duration, such as one minute per success.

| Level | Duration |
|---|---|
| 0 | One minute per success. No additional Essence cost. |
| • | Ten minutes per success. No additional Essence cost. |
| •• | One hour per success. The cost is one additional Essence. |
| ••• | One day per success. The cost is two additional Essence. |
| •••• | Permanent. The cost is two additional Essence. |

Spirits of Marquess Rank and above probably possess abilities beyond these. Those beings are so rarely seen near the physical world, however, that their opponents have far more to worry about than the spirits' abilities to set whole towns ablaze, drive armies away in fear or create a forest from nothing.

### Essence

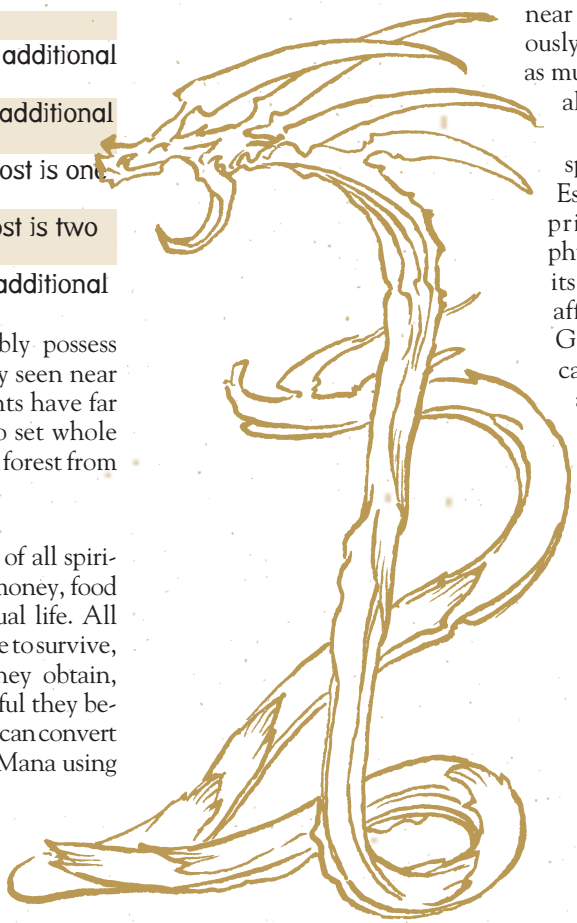
Essence is the heart of all spiritual activity. It's the money, food and drink of spiritual life. All spirits need Essence to survive, and the more they obtain, the more powerful they become. A mage can convert Essence to Mana using Prime 4.

Spirits use Essence in a number of ways.

- A spirit must spend a point of Essence per day to survive. This expenditure usually takes place at moonrise. If the spirit has no Essence to spend, it falls into slumber until it manages to gain Essence somehow, such as by being immersed in a new flow of Essence.
- Spirits can use Essence to temporarily boost their traits on a one-for-one basis. Each such boost lasts for one scene.
- A spirit that has fled into the physical world must expend one point of Essence per Rank per hour as long as it remains ephemeral (which is to say, without possessing a host body or using the Numen: Fetter). It cannot regain this lost Essence until it either gains a fetter or crosses back into the Shadow. If a spirit loses all its Essence while in the physical world, it passes into slumber and is drawn back across the Gauntlet into the spirit world, losing a point of Corpus from the rough transition.
- As long as a spirit still has some Essence, it isn't destroyed when reduced to zero Corpus, but is discorporated (see p. "Discorporation and Healing," p. 320).

Spirits regain Essence in a number of ways.

- They gain one point per day by being in proximity to the thing they reflect. For example, a tree spirit gains a single point per day when it stays near a physical tree. Obviously, a spirit can earn only as much as it needs to stay alive in this fashion.
- Once per day the spirit may try to draw Essence from an appropriate source in the physical world by rolling its Power + Finesse, as affected by the local Gauntlet Strength. (It can sense such a source automatically up to







one mile away.) The number of successes indicates the number of points of Essence gained.

An appropriate source for a murder spirit might be the site of a killing, while a fire spirit might seek an industrial furnace. The object or place is not affected by the spirit's drawing of sustenance. For example, the flame upon which a fire spirit feeds is not dampened when the being gains spiritual nourishment.

- The spirit may barter for additional Essence from other spirits (and werewolves).
- The spirit may attempt to steal Essence from another spirit by making a contested roll of its Power + Finesse against the target's Power + Resistance. If the attacker wins, the number of successes indicates the number of points of the target's Essence that are siphoned by the attacker. If all the target's Essence is stolen, the victim spirit falls into slumber. If the target wins, it gains a number of points from the attacker's Essence equal to the successes scored for it.

Spirits can consume Essence with any resonance quality they like, but the resonance they accumulate affects them. For example, a tree spirit that absorbs Essence with an urban resonance starts to look well pruned and slightly dusted by pollution. If it absorbs several points of such Essence, carvings might appear on its trunk, or notices might appear pinned to it. Resonance can also affect the mood or behavior of a spirit.

In game terms, spirits can feed on Essence that bears resonance that isn't compatible with their own, but it makes for poor eating. In general, Essence bearing an incompatible resonance gives only half the nutrition. Essence that's directly detrimental or opposed to the spirit's own nature, such as a war-spirit attempting to feed on Essence touched by resonance of contentment, might provide even less "nutrition" and even affect the spirit's own nature. A starved spirit that has no Essence to feed on but that is affected by disease resonance eventually becomes a diseased spirit in its own right, and perhaps even metamorphoses into a true disease-spirit over time.

**Spirit Combat**

Combat between spirits works much like combat between ghosts, as described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 208. Spirits' attacks usually inflict lethal damage. Spirits with no claws, jagged spines or other lethal weaponry might deliver bashing instead.

**Discorporation and Healing**

When spirits "die" in combat (when they have no more Corpus points), they don't actually cease to exist. Instead they discorporate in spectacular fashion, shattering or exploding into a cloud of particles that are appropriate for that spirit. An oak-spirit would explode in a shower of autumn leaves, while a mouse-spirit would discorporate in a burst of fur and bone. A murder-spirit would splatter everyone around with ephemeral blood, while a car-spirit leaves behind a pile of random pieces of machinery and a spinning hubcap. These ephemeral remains fade away over the next hour.

The spirit then starts to re-form, either slumbering in the object it represents or, for spirits no longer tied to objects, in a nearby area appropriate to its nature. Car-spirits might re-form in a parking garage, while tree spirits re-form in a forest. A spirit regains a point of Essence per day, and it doesn't become aware and active again until its Essence equals its Corpus dots. It then regenerates Corpus in the same amount of time that mortals heal damage.

The only way to completely destroy a spirit is to drain it of Essence before destroying its Corpus.

**Spirit Bans**

All spirits have bans — specific weaknesses that can affect their behavior or rob them of a portion of their might. A ban is directly tied to the relative vigor and intelligence of the spirit in question. Squires or Knights tend to have simple bans that are easily triggered, while Marquesses and Princes frequently have strange or obscure bans that could greatly weaken them if rivals discovered the flaws. A ban might prohibit a code of behavior, temporarily keep a spirit from using its Numina, or even make it vulnerable to attack.

In some cases, discovering and exploiting a spirit's ban allows mages to accomplish things they could not manage by spell alone. Bans are usually assigned by the Storyteller, especially in the case of powerful and unique spirits. Learning a spirit's ban can be the focus of one arc of

a story, involving research, interrogating other spirits, questioning other mages or even making educated guesses. If the Storyteller feels that a particular ban is sufficiently well known that a character who has studied the Spirit Arcanum might have heard of it, she should roll the character's Intelligence + Occult at a penalty equal to two dice for every Rank of the spirit. Success indicates that the character remembers some tidbit related to the ban. Exceptional success indicates that the character knows the exact nature of the ban. A dramatic failure means the character believes an incorrect ban to be true, which gives the spirit a dangerous edge in their next encounter.

### *Numina*

Spirits have access to powers above and beyond their Influences. These powers are called Numina (singular is "Numen"). A few sample Numina are listed here.

• **Blast:** The spirit is able to strike opponents at a distance. An electricity-spirit might hurl small thunderbolts at foes, while a pain-spirit might conjure spiritual knives. The range is equal to 10 yards per point of Power, and the spirit suffers no penalties for range. Power + Finesse is rolled to hit and two dice may be added to the roll for every point of Essence spent to fuel this power. The damage is lethal.

• **Claim:** This Numen is a more powerful version of Possession. If successful, the possession is permanent. Spend three Essence points and roll Power + Finesse in an extended and contested roll versus the victim's Resolve + Composure. Each roll represents one hour. If the spirit gains 50 successes between dusk and dawn, it gains permanent control of the victim's body. Use the victim's available traits (except Willpower points, which are equal to the spirit's current Willpower points) and dice pools for any action the spirit wishes to take. If the spirit fails to accumulate 50 successes within the required period of time, the attempt fails. If a possessed body is killed, the spirit is forced out and must possess another victim if it still wishes to act.

• **Discorporation:** This Numen allows a spirit to discorporate voluntarily, surrendering its Corpus to the Shadow Realm, and allowing itself to reform elsewhere as normal. Many spirits choose this route rather than face a greater spirit in combat with the risk of permanent destruction that such conflict poses. Roll the spirit's Power + Resistance for this Gift to succeed.

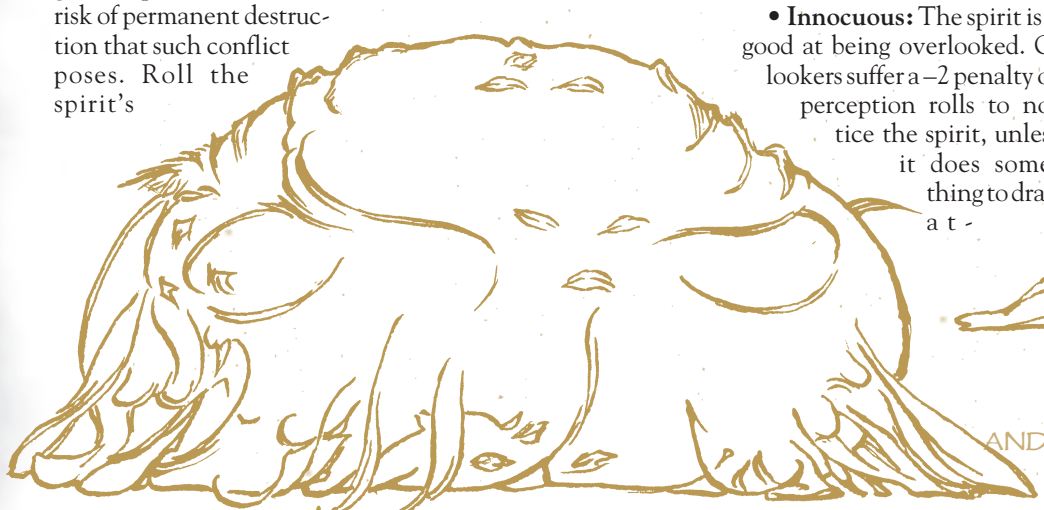
• **Fetter:** This Numen secures a spirit inside an object once it has crossed the Gauntlet into the material realm. Rather than materializing, the spirit remains its ephemeral self in Twilight. Normally, it would be sucked back through the Gauntlet within a few hours, but once fettered, it can remain in Twilight almost indefinitely. Once through the Gauntlet, the spirit activates this Numen by spending a point of Essence. It must choose an object within five meters of its current position and an additional Essence must be spent to fetter itself to the object (for a total of two Essence spent). The spirit can stay fettered in Twilight for as long as it likes, unless the fetter is destroyed, in which case the spirit immediately discorporates and starts to reform back in the Shadow Realm. This Numen cannot be used across the Gauntlet without use of the Reaching Numen.

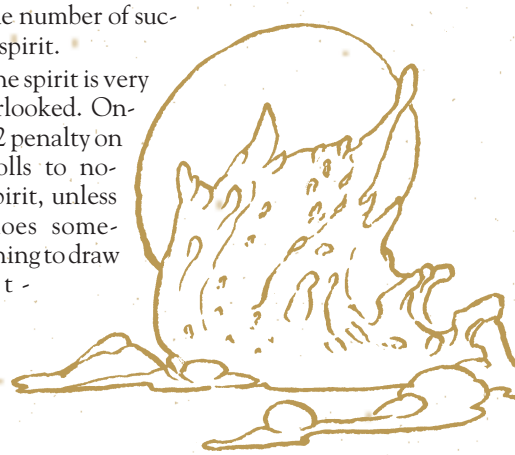
The spirit may never move more than five meters from its fetter, lest the link be lost, forcing the spirit back through the Gauntlet. A fettered spirit may materialize if it has that Numen. While in material form, it may move more than five meters from its fetter, but it must be back within that radius when its materialization ends. (The "Living Fetter" Numen, below, allows the spirit to secure itself to a living fetter.)

• **Gauntlet Breach:** This Numen allows a spirit to push itself through the Gauntlet. This isn't a natural or easy thing for a fleshless entity, but it's the most reliable way to enter Twilight. Indeed, unless the spirit fetters itself (using that Numen), it can remain in Twilight for only a matter of hours. Spend three Essence and roll Power + Finesse to force the spirit through the Gauntlet. Every hour that the spirit spends unfettered or in Twilight costs it one Essence per Rank, as its ephemera is sucked back through the Gauntlet. When the spirit runs out of Essence, it discorporates, re-forming in the Shadow as normal. It can, however, choose to return through the Gauntlet freely at any time.

• **Harrow:** This Numen is typically associated with spirits of negative emotions, such as fear or wrath. The spirit can focus its negative resonance to create a crippling attack of its associated emotional state in an enemy. Spend a point of Essence and roll the spirit's Power + Finesse, minus the victim's Composure. The target is overwhelmed by the relevant emotional state for a number of turns equal to the number of successes won for the spirit.

• **Innocuous:** The spirit is very good at being overlooked. Onlookers suffer a –2 penalty on perception rolls to notice the spirit, unless it does something to draw at-





tention to itself. This Numen is possessed by all embodied familiars (see "Familiar," p. 82). (Note: Bonded mages do not suffer this penalty with their familiars.)

• **Living Fetter:** This variation on Fetter allows the spirit to fetter itself in a living being rather than an inanimate object. The same rules and restrictions as Fetter apply, save that the spirit must first succeed at a Power + Finesse roll contested by the target's Resolve + Composure. The spirit essentially uses the living being as a fetter and its Influence to impel its "host."

• **Materialize:** This Numen allows a spirit to change its form from ephemera to matter, dropping it abruptly through the Gauntlet into the material realm. The spirit's physical form appears in the material realm just as it did in the Shadow, and all its Numina and Influences function as normal. All rules for spirit traits in the spirit realm apply equally to a materialized spirit. Spend three Essence and roll the spirit's Power + Finesse to allow it to reshape itself into matter. The number of successes indicates the number of hours that it can remain in the material realm before reverting to ephemera. The spirit must then choose between remaining in Twilight (and either anchoring itself or losing a point of Essence every hour) or slipping immediately back through the Gauntlet.

• **Material Vision:** A spirit with this Numen can briefly look through the Gauntlet into the material realm. Roll the spirit's Power + Finesse. The number of successes indicates the number of minutes the spirit can spend watching through the Gauntlet.

• **Reaching:** This Numen allows a spirit to use its other Numina through the Gauntlet. Roll Power + Finesse (subject to Gauntlet Strength) to successfully create a resonant conduit through the Gauntlet for the spirit to use its next Numen. Reaching lasts for the duration of the scene.

• **Soul Snatch:** This is a rare but terrifying Numen, allowing the spirit to steal the soul of a mortal. This acts just like the Claim Numen except that success on the spirit's part means it grasps the victim's soul instead of riding its body. It can then do with the soul what it will. Most spirits who have this Numen slowly devour the soul, gaining Essence equal to two-times the victim's Willpower dots. (See "Soul Handling," p. 276.) Certain high-ranking spirits have been known to have a version of this Numen that allows them to snatch an Awakened soul.



• **Wilds Sense:** Spirits can automatically sense where other spirits and locations are in their immediate vicinity. If they want to find loci or track down spirits miles distant, however, they must use this Numen, which allows them to sense the small resonant traces left by a spirit's passage or emitted by a far-distant locus. Roll the spirit's Finesse + Resistance, with increasing successes giving more accurate information. One success suggests a vague sense of direction, while five give accurate directions, an idea of travel time and warnings of hazards en route.

**Spells as Numina**

Many of the spells described in **Chapter Three: Magic** can serve a double role as Numina. To use a spell in this fashion, simply convert the spell's rote dice pool to an appropriate trait roll for the spirit. For example, to use the Life 4 "Enfeeblement" spell (p. 189) as a Numen, roll Power + Finesse instead of Strength + Intimidation + Life. (Note: There is no Arcana equivalent for a spirit, so its dice pool consists simply of one trait added to another trait.)

## The Acamoth

When the Atlantean Ladder to heaven shattered, the boundaries between worlds gave way and the Abyss yawned wide. Spirits from the depth of the void found their way into the Fallen World. Since then, many have remained asleep and waiting, gathering power until a time when they can return to the depths that spawned them. The most insidious are known as the acamoth, demonic spirits that scheme to open the gates to the Abyss. Lacking enough power to do so on their own, they make pacts with curious — or infernal — mages. They bargain to act as guardians and guides, offering substantial knowledge of lost secrets and raw power. In exchange, the acamoth use the astral dreams of Awakened souls to contact the void that rejected them — the Abyss for which they continually yearn. Those who pact with the acamoth pave their own roads to oblivion.

The first Awakening a mage experiences reveals the existence of magic all around him. Acamoth offer further "awakenings," granting revelations of power through astral dreams and nightmares. See "The Astral Planes," p. 283. A mage is promised knowledge and power unattainable elsewhere, but in order to get it, he must grant the acamoth control of his Awakened soul during an astral journey. If the sorcerer accepts, he experiences the astral journey as a lucid nightmare, bound to the acamoth's will. He cannot voluntarily end the experience until at least one hour has passed, and then a successful Resolve + Composure roll must be made. If it fails, he must wait another hour before trying again. If his body is shaken, a roll can also be made for him to wake up and end the journey, and the acamoth's control over him. (Some mages try to cheat by getting a cabal mate to shake them soon after the journey begins. Most acamoth refuse to grant the promised Investment in such cases.)

The pact gives an acamoth access to the mage's Oneiros, where it conjures nightmares so that it might again experience the caress of the Abyss. Only through an Awakened soul's Oneiros (and the Temenos) can an acamoth reach out to its home. Acamoth nightmares are full of damnation and revelation, resembling the visions had by Dante, Goya and Bosch, and play off a mage's Vice: apocalyptic plains for the prideful, slaughterhouses for the wrathful and murderous, writhing orgies of flesh and blood for the lustful, and far more sinister variations.

The journey slowly overwhelms a mage's will, weakening her resolve with temptation. As the nightmare unfolds, her Wisdom may degenerate. When she surrenders control, she must accept (and a roll must be made for) acts of degeneration

committed by the acamoth that the sorcerer would normally never attempt. Each time the dreamer's soul degrades (and her Wisdom decreases), the acamoth gains three Essence. With each derangement that results, the acamoth gains two more Willpower. By the time the mage escapes, she may be changed forever, but she gets something in return for the violation of her soul. The acamoth must grant one or more of its agreed-upon Investment powers. The acamoth's Investments are varied; see the sidebar for examples. The reward determines the risk of the journey. The more temptation and degeneration a mage must endure, the greater the reward. Each degeneration roll the acamoth causes the mage to suffer, whether successful or failed, grants a single Investment.

### Acamoth Investments

An acamoth can grant a mage the following powers, but only in return for being allowed to enter and control his astral journey. A pact might involve multiple Investments; in the case of the same Investment gained more than once, increase the duration during which the mage can use the power. It costs the acamoth one Essence to impart an Investment.

**Regeneration:** For the following month, the mage automatically regenerates bashing and lethal damage as an instant action at a rate of one Health point per turn. He can spend one Mana to do so reflexively.

**Respite from Aging:** The mage does not age for the following year.

**Break an Addiction:** The mage can free himself from an addictive substance or behavior, such that it has no appeal for him thereafter. (This effect is permanent, unless the mage chooses to engage in the addiction again).

**Attribute Enhancement:** The mage gains a +1 dot bonus to a single Attribute for the following month.

**Skill Lore:** The mage gains a +3 dot bonus to a single Skill, even one for which he has no previous training, for the following month.

**Mana:** The mage gains his maximum amount of allowable Mana. For example, a mage with Gnosis 3 and the ability to hold 12 Mana gains as many Mana points as are needed to fill his 12-point capacity.

**Uncanny Knowledge:** The mage gains knowledge of something that is well beyond his ability to know, or is permitted to witness a distant scene that currently takes place, has taken place (anytime within history) or that will take place (within the next day). (The acamoth grants this power thanks to its connection to the Temenos or Dreamtime by way of the mage's own soul.)

One pact may lead to another… and another. The stakes increase, and deals become more complex. Proud mages believe they can convince or trick an acamoth into doing their own bidding. As the deals continue, cunning practitioners rely on trades, pacts or even sacrifices to bend an acamoth to their will. Yet, when such negotiations go awry, a mage is overwhelmed by his own dark desires, succumbing to temptation and sin. In exchange for magical power, a foolish mage sells off his identity or even his very soul as part of the bargain. Given too much of a foothold, acamoth have been known to drive their hosts mad.

Because acamoth were spawned from the Abyss, few records exist of their true names, preferences, treachery or weaknesses. Scheming in restless sleep, they writhe in pockets of the Shadow Realm. When their offers of power and aid to the magically inclined are accepted, their appearance slowly changes to represent the Vice or perversion the demons represent. As the acamoth's astral dream unfolds, it slowly reveals its true motivations in its very appearance, becoming more demonic, infernal and hideous in its strength.

Any mage who traffics with the acamoth lives on borrowed time. The spirits have all the time in the world and then some. If souls are the currency of the damned, then a powerful Awakened soul is priceless. Mages who become more powerful through Abyssal "gifts" merely increase their own value, as the acamoth wait for a return on their sinister investments.

**Rank:** 4
**Attributes:** Power 10, Finesse 10, Resistance 10
**Willpower:** 20
**Essence:** 25 (25 max)
**Initiative:** 20
**Defense:** 10
**Speed:** 25
**Size:** 5
**Corpus:** 15

**Influence:** Abyssal Nightmares 5

**Numina:** Grant Investment (each acamoth has one or more Invesment powers it can grant to a mage with whom it makes a pact; see "Acamoth Investments," above)

**Ban:** The acamoth must deliver on its part of a pact, providing one Investment power per degeneration roll it causes during its astral sojourn in the mage's Oneiros.

## Goetia: Inner Demons

Introspective mages don't need to call across vast dimensions to summon infernal allies. More dangerous "inner demons" torture willworkers from within, lurking within a mage's psyche. "Goetic" mages gain insights into horror by contemplating the dark corners of their own identities. They become more powerful by overcoming their own weaknesses, gaining insights into evil by contemplating the flaws within themselves (or strengths, from another point of view). Some human students of magic have found variations on this practice, but none quite resemble those of a goetic sorcerer.

Mages lacking formal training in this occult art can still remember incidents from their own past in which baser instincts were revealed — moments that elicited feelings of shame, helplessness or misery. By meditating on the failures of his past, the goetic mage hopes to gain power over forces within

that led to breakdowns or incidents of outright abuse. This introspection is not an easy or pleasant practice, and is not without risks. When a goetic mage fails to conquer his own weakness, he may unleash his inner demons on the world. His darkest dreams become empowered by his magical acumen, carrying out the impulses he has repressed for so long.

Experts in the occult sciences insist that inner demons exist either in the Temenos (the collective unconscious) or in a mage's Oneiros (his personal dream space). They represent aspects of the occultist's own identity, not just sin, but failings or denied emotions. The simplest ones to understand represent the self-destructive or vainglorious side of a mage's personality, a doppelganger to his civilized self. An inner demon can be empowered by the depression that seizes a mage in the middle of the night, by the jealousy that consumes him when he doubts those who love him, or by the shame that surfaces after he fulfills his desires. Before inner demons are given form and power, they are merely repressed thoughts and emotions. When they escape, they resemble the likeness of the mage, twisted by his self-loathing and hatred.

By summoning demons into consciousness through magic, a mage learns how to subdue dark aspects of his psyche, whether they be Vices, character Flaws or derangements. If he succeeds, he asserts his own identity and becomes more powerful, gaining Willpower. By confronting the dark corners of his soul, he gains strength.

### Goetic Struggle (Mind •••)

Most treatises on goetic magic begin by teaching an initiate to master his own Vice.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (one hour)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

This spell "summons" an inner demon into a mage's consciousness and binds it to his will. Then, whenever the mage's Vice might come into play during the spell's duration, he can mentally wrestle the demon (a contested roll between his Gnosis + Mind and his own Resolve + Composure). If he wins, he gains Willpower as if his action had reflected the Vice (even though he didn't actually act upon it). The demon is put down and banished (this spell must be cast again to gain the same effect). If the demon wins the contest, however, the mage *must* act out the Vice — and he doesn't get Willpower for it.

***Example:*** *A mage whose Vice is Gluttony is offered expensive champagne and all the drinks he wants. He knows his enemies are near, so he wants to keep his head clear and not indulge. The alcohol is tempting, however (he could sure use a Willpower point!). He had cast the "Goetic Struggle" spell earlier that hour, so decides to wrestle with the Goetic demon bound to him in hopes of reaping the benefit of his Vice without having to actually indulge it (and risking the consequences of becoming drunk).*

*His player rolls Gnosis 3 + Mind 3 in a contested roll against his character's own Resolve 2 and Composure 3. His Gnosis + Mind roll yields two successes, while the Resolve + Composure roll gets one. He wins the contest, so the mage gains one Willpower as if he had indulged his Gluttony, and he doesn't have to touch a drink. If the Resolve + Composure (representing the demon) roll had won, he would have been forced to drink the alcohol offered and would not have recovered Willpower for it.*

Casting this spell is an act of hubris, requiring a mage with a Wisdom higher than 4 dots to make a degeneration roll.

At higher levels of power, the goetic mage can manifest these inner demons into ephemeral form. They are not spirits, as such. The mage gives physical shape and form to aspects of his psyche. Once given ephemeral form, the demon can bend others to the mage's will, preying on the same weaknesses the goetic mage has mastered. The goetic mage can inflame others to act on their darkest impulses (indulging in the Vice or weakness they both share). By this art, goetic mages gain power, influence the weak, and control the soulless. Like many paths to power, this practice involves sacrifice… and considerable risk.

When manifested, an inner demon only vaguely represents the mage who summons it, perhaps in a form that the mage would assume if he abandoned all morality. The demon might look like a mockery of a loved one — a lover or friend as seen through a mirror darkly — or simply appear as someone the mage would envy or lust after. Imagine a lustful sorcerer summoning a supernaturally beautiful succubus (or incubus) to enact his dark desires. In its ephemeral form, the inner demon is ready to perform the bidding of the mage who summoned it. From Twilight, it can actively escape the notice of ordinary people, clouding their minds and judgment with the dark emotions the summoner has conquered. When it chooses to reveal itself, it is an avatar of sin made flesh.

### Goetic Evocation (Spirit •••• + Mind ••••)

The mage manifests a denizen of his own psyche, his repressed or unsavory urges given form as an ephemeral entity in Twilight.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended (target number = the mage's own Wisdom)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one hour)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The ephemeral demon has the following traits: Rank 1; Attributes: Power 2, Finesse 2, Resistance 2; Essence: 10 (10 max); Influence: Sin 2 (choose one Vice, derangement or Flaw); Numina: Materialize, Possession

Each additional success added to the target number provides *one* of the following benefits (choose which it is as the target number is determined, before casting commences):

• +1 Rank (maximum 4)

• +1 dot to a single Attribute

• +1 Influence

Every two additional successes can give the demon one extra Numina.

The demon can use its Influence to seduce someone into acting out the demon's Vice (which is not necessarily the victim's own), succumbing to its derangement, or falling prey to its psychological Flaw (depending on the type of demon summoned). If the demon's Vice is the same as the victim's, the victim is not rewarded the usual Willpower point for acting out the Vice — the demon gets this point instead, although he doesn't have to act out the Vice himself (and hence, doesn't get the blame).

The demon follows the mage's orders, although if the mage himself engages his personal Vice, derangement or Flaw while this spell is in effect, the demon is freed from control and turns its attentions to corrupting the mage.

Casting this spell is an act of hubris, requiring a mage with a Wisdom higher than 4 dots to make a degeneration roll.

The demon's ephemeral form remains for one hour.

A master of inner demons bends Sleepers to his will by manipulating them with the same dark emotions he knows intimately. A person possessed by a goetic mage's demon often displays the Vice and derangements of the mage who controls the entity. Scientific mages claim that modern techniques of psychotherapy can permanently cure a person who is possessed by a mage's inner demons. Religious ones rely on old-fashioned exorcisms. Physically gifted mages swiftly subdue and restrain the goetic mage's manifested minions. Since goetic magic is an ancient practice, some mages have also discovered Atlantean seals that bind and contain inner demons. Once a goetic's creations have been destroyed or bound, his rivals must find a way to prevent any further summoning from taking place. Only an insightful cabal can trace the inner demon back to the goetic mage who conjured it.

When mages finally hunt down a corrupt goetic mage, they should be careful to make sure his creations are destroyed as well. Killing a goetic mage while his inner demon is at large releases that evil into the world. If the mage who controls the puppet is destroyed, the inner demon only needs to answer to its own desires. It roams freely, looking to corrupt whomever it encounters. Mages who have researched the goetic mage who created it have a greater chance in finding it, especially if they can sympathize with its hideous desires (for example, they share its emblematic Vice). Mages can then use their magic to sense the inner demon's failings, faults, emotions and motivations.

### *The Wrath of Aaron Magnus*

*Goetic Sorcerer*

**Quote:** *Power can be yours, if you seize it. Did you know your master was plotting to kill you? You should seize his weapon and kill him first. Your survival demands it.*

**Background:** Magister Magnus spent a lifetime organizing an occult lodge that served the Guardians of the Veil. Through his skillful management, a minor cult of crackpots and eccentrics developed into a formidable secret society. His power attracted a cabal of like-minded individuals. Unfortunately, his judgment of character wasn't as sound as his magical insight. Within a year, his former allies turned his own followers against him and ousted him from the order.

Exiled from the society he started, he chose another path to power: a forbidden tome that promised the secrets of goetic magic. Through dark arts, he attempted to subdue his anger so that he could turn the cultists who once obeyed him against each other. His inner demon knows that after the cultists slaughter each other in petty struggles for power, the survivors will turn against their secret masters: the mages who forced Aaron from the cabal.

**Description:** Aaron Magnus is an old man, but the archetype that embodies his Wrath appears to be a much younger and more vital sorcerer, with short-cropped dark hair and cold blue eyes. The Wrath of Aaron Magnus paces nervously whenever it is not taking action, walking very quickly as it mutters under its breath. It embodies all the anger Aaron has repressed during decades of scholarly study. Mages who examine this avatar closely notice it is a heartbeat away from a violent outburst. Aaron's representative barely conceals never-ending rage, and occasionally instills it in its chosen victims. By its instruction, petty grievances and simmering discontent can flare up into acts of violent retribution. Each time it succeeds, Aaron Magnus gains Willpower, and revenge against the cabal that rejected him.

**Storytelling Hints:** Aaron watches his summoned inner demon from afar. No records exist identifying this demon's persona of a young mage, but he does display an obsession with a secret society called the Golden Flame. The characters' cabal should hear of a series of mysterious murders, as the avatar of Wrath visits several followers of the cult in rapid succession. Any Guardians in the same city then hear of a violent falling out within one of their secret societies. The only explanation is that each of them in turn was visited by

the same anonymous mage. Unless the cabal can intervene, the cultists plot to kill each other until five remain. Those survivors then attack five prominent Guardians in the city, the five traitors who rejected Aaron Magnus. Once this campaign of revenge has run its course, the avatar of Wrath will seek other victims, beginning with anyone who investigated its diabolical plot.

The Wrath demon was summoned forth with indefinite Duration, but the spell that called it can be dispelled (by overcoming Potency 8), discorporating the demon back into Magnus' psyche.

**Rank:** 2
**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 4, Resistance 3
**Willpower:** 6
**Essence:** 15 (max 15)
**Initiative:** 7
**Defense:** 4
**Speed:** 12
**Size:** 5
**Corpus:** 8

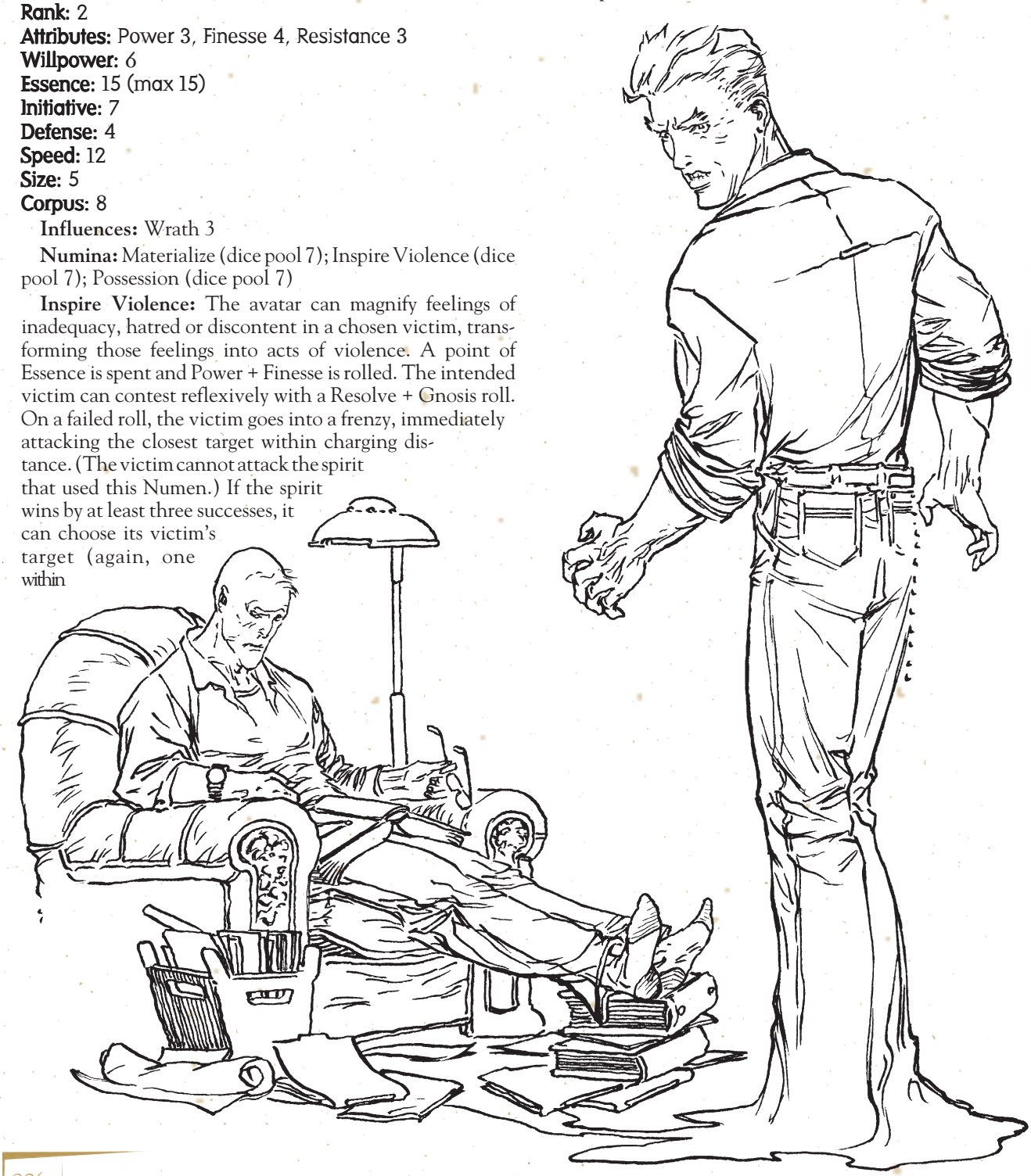
**Influences:** Wrath 3

**Numina:** Materialize (dice pool 7); Inspire Violence (dice pool 7); Possession (dice pool 7)

**Inspire Violence:** The avatar can magnify feelings of inadequacy, hatred or discontent in a chosen victim, transforming those feelings into acts of violence. A point of Essence is spent and Power + Finesse is rolled. The intended victim can contest reflexively with a Resolve + Gnosis roll. On a failed roll, the victim goes into a frenzy, immediately attacking the closest target within charging distance. (The victim cannot attack the spirit that used this Numen.) If the spirit wins by at least three successes, it can choose its victim's target (again, one within charging distance). The frenzy ends prematurely if the victim or target is reduced to zero Health.

The frenzy lasts for a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled. Anyone with the Vice of Wrath is affected for five additional turns. (If the victim is a player's character, the Storyteller may choose to take control of the character for that period.) The spirit cannot use this power more than once per day on the same person.

**Ban:** Aaron's feelings of insecurity can be traced to the days of his youth. Anyone between the age of 14 and 18 gets an extra two dice when physically attacking or intimidating the spirit.



## Ghost Mages

Within the realm of the supernatural, all things are possible and all boundaries are shattered, even the boundary between life and death. Necromancers insist that when the soul dies, it loses that vibrant spark that makes Awakened magic possible, unless a mage finds a way to circumvent that boundary as well. Ghosts are driven by passions that sustain them beyond death. Some mages believe that a passion tied to a handful of spells, or even an Arcanum of magical influence, is strong enough to defy that very limitation. A living mage possess the strength of will to pursue nearly any form of magic. A ghost capable of performing magic is limited to a handful of rotes and spells, clinging to them like the earthly place it haunts.

Unlike living mages, spectral mages have little or no free will. Instead, they demonstrate a ruthless tendency to protect or oversee the people or places that were important to them in life. These objects or people — the ghost's anchors — are critical to the spectral mage. Normally, the ghost uses the same powers that other restless dead possess (as defined in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 208-216). When its anchors are threatened, however, its instinct is to protect them with outright magic. This protection seems like a blessing, but it's ultimately a curse.

A ghostly mage cannot affect its own anchors with magic. It can't transform, alter, destroy or affect them in any way, and it cannot free itself by destroying of these connections. It can, however, use its magic against anyone who tries to affect the things it protects. With Matter, it can manifest and recreate what has been destroyed. With Mind, it can weaken wills, recreate what victims once felt, or bring on episodes of insanity. If a ghost has command over Space, its influence can reach much further than a living occultist might suspect. Legends tell of modern ghosts exploiting advanced technology — televisions, cell phones, cursed videotapes and even the Web — to reach enemies who threaten them, no matter how far away targets flee.

A ghostly mage's anchors are well watched and carefully attended, but its presence has a corrupting influence. When the ghost uses magic to defend what it considers to be a threat to an anchor, any Paradoxes it suffers affect that anchor before it affects the ghost mage. The very people and places it protects risk the same fate as the deceased mage. If the ghostly mage died a violent death, those he protects may suffer a similar demise. When a mage dies through suicide, he might convince others to join him in death. Conflict with the outside world ironically leads the ghostly mage to destroy what it once loved. An undiscovered ghostly mage can work this process more slowly. For all its good intentions, a darker shadow of the ghost's psyche compels it to destroy the very bonds that sustain and anchor it. The people and places that anchor the mage degrade into dust and madness.

The corrupting influence of a ghostly mage is far easier for a living mage to notice than it is for an unenlightened seeker of the supernatural. The same methods that can destroy a ghost work on a ghostly mage. Spectral mages possess all the qualities (and the same basic traits) that ghosts have, but their magic is detectable by all means that reveal mortal mages. Anyone possessing the same occult knowledge (or Arcanum) as the ghostly mage can recognize its magic for what it is (instead of mistaking it for a ghost's powers). Necromancers can see (using the Death Arcanum) the ghost's influence on the world, including the people and places to which it is anchored. Mages not only have the insight to detect ghostly mages, but the countermagic to oppose them. The existence of such horrors is merely a sign that true magic, like true evil, is not limited by the reality we know. Death itself cannot necessarily limit the power — or the danger — of magic.



### Elton Owens (Deceased)

**Quote:** *You can't have her. Nobody can have her.*

**Background:** Mages live in two worlds. Awakened to magic, they contest with unseen forces and supernatural dangers. They must still live in the mundane world, however, and occasionally encounter people from their former lives. Elton Owens was torn between these two worlds. He discovered magic not long after he fell in love with a young psychic named Melissa, a Proximus (see "The Proximi: Magical Inheritors," p. 334). She was intensely curious about the life

he led, even though he did his best to shelter her from the horrible truths he uncovered about the world.

Elton's investigation into the supernatural attracted the attention of a cabal of Seers. The rivals attempted to strike at him through the woman he loved — and succeeded. Her body was possessed for one night and used to spy on him, steal from him and attack him. Elton defended himself from the assault, wounding the woman he loved. When he realized that she had been magically dominated, he was filled with such fury that he hunted down his enemies' sanctum and set it ablaze. Both Elton and the cabal perished in the firestorm. Elton still watches over the woman he loved, making sure that no supernatural force will ever harm her again. It's a pity that Melissa, as a Proximus, is still drawn to the supernatural….

**Description:** Elton Owens is fettered to three anchors: the shabby house he shared with Melissa 50 years ago, the sanctum where he studied, and Melissa. She's now almost 70 years old and has rejected her birthright as a magical heir. Elton appears as the same man he was 50 years ago, enslaved by the same overwhelming passions he felt when he was young and deeply in love. The same rage he felt toward the Seers who violated her is now directed at any mage who approaches her. Viewing the real world as though a mirror darkly, Elton trusts no one.

**Storytelling Hints:** Melissa can enter a story the same way that any Proximus might. With her limited insight, she can not only uncover supernatural phenomena, but find a mage who can explain it. Her life itself is part of a much larger mystery. She rarely leaves the house, but her abilities as a psychic sometimes compel her to investigate what she cannot understand, even though she has foresworn their use. When she escapes back to her home, she doesn't realize that it's protected against supernatural intrusion. In fact, any mage who approaches her house is in danger. If a mage decides to help Melissa investigate the supernatural, he finds himself haunted by Elton Owens. The ghost's love — like his destructive jealousy — will not die. If Melissa knew that her lover's "ghost" was causing pain and suffering, she would seek to put him to rest.

**Rank:** 2
**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 4, Resistance 5
**Willpower:** 8
**Essence:** 15 (max 15)
**Initiative:** 7
**Defense:** 4
**Speed:** 12
**Size:** 5
**Corpus:** 10

**Influences:** Forces 2, Mind 4, Space 2

**Numina:** Forces, Mind and Space Arcana. As with other ghost mages, this spirit's Influence resembles spells from the Arcanum of the same name. One Essence is spent and Power + Finesse is rolled to "cast a spell." When using one of these abilities, the ghostly mage risks a Paradox as a human mage would.

Elton's common tactics include instilling depression in victims (forcing penalties to Mental dice pools) and tricking minds with hallucinations (re-enacting scenes that led to the mage's violent demise). It is particularly adept with illusions of fire.

**Ban:** The ghost cannot directly affect its own anchors, although any Paradox that would normally affect him, affect his anchors.

## Temple Guardians

The secrets of the past have endured millennia, shielded by magical wards and more mundane obstacles. Hidden from humanity, Atlantean ruins contain long-lost knowledge and power. Remote temples are inaccessible to all but the most skilled explorers, isolated deep under the waves, inside hidden caves, or atop the highest mountain peaks. Atlantean temples remain undisturbed for a variety of reasons, not the least of which are the temple guardians bound to the secret and sacred places of the earth.

Atlantean princes, it is believed, created guardians to watch over their greatest treasures. These protectors were made with immunities to many forms of magic, especially Atlantean. (In game terms, temple guardians have formidable countermagic.) Foolish grave robbers and scholars alike face annihilation — or worse — for approaching Atlantean temples incorrectly. Guardians are capable of altering the minds and souls of intruders, erasing all memory of what is seen, crippling a tomb robber's magical power, and eroding sanity.

Temple guardians can assume whatever forms their masters command of them, but most descriptions are surprisingly similar. Classically trained mages sometimes refer to Atlantean legends told by Plato, describing protectors in terms that correspond to Greek legend. Tomb raiders tell of perfect marble statues materializing in the shadows around them, animating and advancing. Spiritual explorers disagree, describing guardians as elemental forces, storms of wind and water. Temple guardians often assume shapes relating to their environment, whether it's a shambling mummy in an Egyptian tomb or a monstrous beast in the mountains of Tibet. Those whose minds have been shattered by such confrontations babble of blasphemous forms that defy all reason — Cthonian horrors that are not limited by earthly laws of form or physiology.

It is said that certain mystical sigils and gestures allow explorers to approach Atlantean ruins safely, but few know these secret signs. Revelations are hidden in lost tomes, disclosed by Atlantean spirits that have escaped the limitations of time (such as the ananke, described below), or are found when a mage's Awakening takes him past the boundaries of earthly reality. The keys to temples are often as difficult to master as esoteric rotes, requiring patience and sacrifice from would-be tomb robbers.

All temple guardians have both a physical and a magical aspect. They must be destroyed both physically and magically if they cannot be tricked. If a temple is overseen by a thundering stone statue, the titan must be reduced to rubble. In time, however, the spirit can reform its material self, so a powerful mage must also have a means of countering this Matter or Spirit magic. Displaying raw magical power is not the only way to defeat a guardian. Entering a temple is a challenge that involves wits as much as Gnosis. A clever mage can trick a guardian into accepting him as an Atlantean

emissary, if he knows the right symbols, signs, wards and behaviors. A guardian's countermagic may be strong enough to test an archmage, but an Odyssean mind can succeed with guile where vulgar magic would fail.

Mages exploit captured signs and sigils to trick or delay temple guardians, but once a temple has been plundered, the spirits have powers for chasing thieves outside their domains. Guardians watch over stolen tomes and artifacts as they curse those who possess them. Nearly all temple guardians are capable of invoking some form of curse (similar to Fate magic). A tomb raider seeking a fountain of youth, for example, could be condemned to watch as his flesh slowly rots and putrefies over centuries. (The Atlanteans were not without a cruel sense of justice.) Legends speak of many such cursed items (also hinted at below), but Atlantean artifacts are particularly dangerous, since temple spirits continue to watch over them long after they are taken. Knowledge in all forms is not without its price.

Since temple guardians have endured for millennia, many believe they cannot fully be destroyed. If one generation finds a way of overcoming guardians, the protectors may return a year later, or 10, or a lifetime later. A seeker of knowledge who believes he has destroyed a guardian can encounter it again when it reforms, particularly if he still possesses the artifact or knowledge he has claimed. And yet, in some cases, the knowledge of the ancients is so valuable that mages are willing to take this risk. Corrupt mages on the path to power rush so swiftly that the gods themselves may not destroy them, but all too often the guardians of violated temples race just as quickly behind.

### Marmorean Myrmidon

**Quote:** *The knowledge of the ancients is entombed here. Now you shall join it in eternal slumber.*

**Background:** In the time before history, an Atlantean craftsman applied his knowledge of magic to the art of sculpture. By combining an artist's touch with a sorcerer's rituals, he created five masterpieces resembling creatures of myth. The greatest of these was a marble sculpture, a giant cyclops armed with a trident and shield. Atlantean sorcerers were so impressed by this occult construct that they concealed it within one of their temples, where it would survive the passing of ages. An Atlantean archmage then dedicated it as a guardian of the temple, where it stands watch over an arsenal of magical weaponry.

**Description:** This eight-foot statue is a muscular cyclops in white robes. It stands watch over an ancient temple. Should anyone enter its domain, it is tasked to slay intruders swiftly. Its skill with shield and trident is easily equal to the world's greatest martial artist.

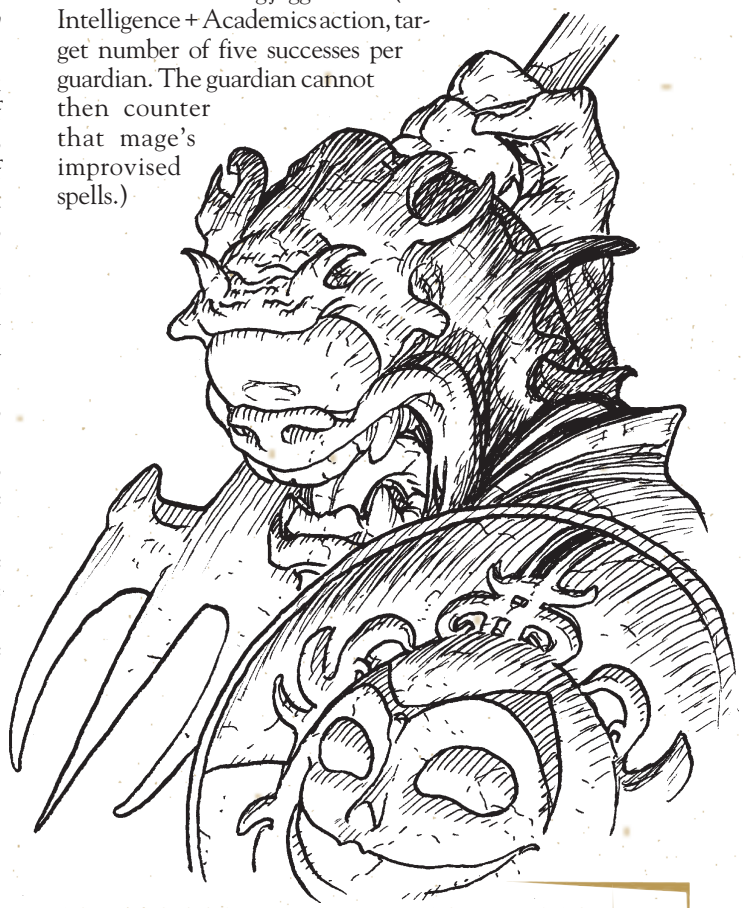
**Storytelling Hints:** The archmage who dedicated this temple did not want the weapons within to fall into the hands of mere soldiers. Only a scholar understands when such force is necessary, so only a mage can learn the rituals that pacify the guardian. As with other temple guardians, this protector is difficult to destroy with martial skill and magical might. Within the temple, reason succeeds where violence fails.

**Rank:** 2
**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 5, Resistance 5
**Willpower:** 10
**Essence:** 15 (max 15)
**Initiative:** 10
**Defense:** 5
**Speed:** 18
**Size:** 8
**Corpus:** 13

**Influences:** Stone 4. The Myrmydon can shape the marble statues surrounding it into fortifications. When anyone enters the temple, the marble statue animates. It can seal all the exits from the temple in moments and create an effect similar to the Forces 5 "Earthquake" spell (p. 176), causing damage from falling debris equal to successes rolled (and against everyone and everything in a defined area based on successes, as per the spell description).

**Numina:** Countermagic (dice pool 10). The guardian can use this Numen as reflexive countermagic against any form of magic, including covert spells. One Essence is spent and Power + Finesse is rolled. If successes rolled for the guardian equal or exceed those for the spell, the spell is countered.

**Ban:** The Myrmydon was sculpted by an Atlantean archmage whose masterworks have become legendary. A powerful Mysterium mage catalogued his five greatest works of artifice, along with the methods he used to find and approach them. Portions of this ancient lore have survived in an obscure 15th century tome on alchemy. *On Fyve Base Metals and Theyr Sygnificance* mentions in passing five mythological animals — which are, in truth, the forms of the five guardians crafted by the Atlantean. The alchemical lore is marginally useful, but a mage scholar would realize that some of the rituals can be adapted to pacify the five marble guardians. By studying the tome, a mage can learn the sacred gestures and rituals used to oppose the Atlantean's towering juggernauts. (An extended Intelligence + Academics action, target number of five successes per guardian. The guardian cannot then counter that mage's improvised spells.)



## Ananke

Space and time cannot limit masters of magic. In the time before history, Atlanteans tasked powerful spirits to enact their will in the world, ensuring their beliefs would endure. Before the Fall of Atlantis, elaborate rituals created avatars that would return long after the passing of their masters. When prophecies were fulfilled and dangers realized, the fated avatars would emerge. (In game terms, archmaster-level Time or Fate magic set up the "triggers" for these apparitions to appear.) Fearing what might happen in the future, Atlantean prophets created spiritual servants that would rest until they were needed, warning Atlantis' descendants when magical catastrophes were imminent. Not all prophets were so altruistic, however. Some created these same spirits to ensure that their visions for reality would become true, vainly attempting to shape the future long after death.



The mages of Ancient Greece often interpreted these avatars as the servants of Ananke, goddess and mother of the fates. Because such avatars have been seen and known before, modern incarnations share the same name. As agents of prophecy and destiny, ananke seek out people who have the capacity to change reality; mages who can fulfill oaths long forgotten and visions long obscured. After one of these avatars finds a mage who fulfills its carefully defined criteria (possibly one blessed or cursed with the Destiny Merit), the ananke's very presence alters fate around that willworker. Prophecies are fulfilled and catastrophes are made imminent.

Like the gods of Greek myth, the ananke can assume human form, often with manifestations of supernatural beauty. Their clothes and demeanor allow them to walk among mortals, but their Twilight state prevents all but the magically enlightened from either sensing their presence or seeing them as they truly are. When ananke speak to a mage they have chosen, their speech can seem anachronistic, prophetic or modern and cynical, depending on their whims. The ananke delivers its warning, reciting the cryptic details of an ancient divination to prepare the listener. If the mage is truly fortunate, the avatar works beside the mage, granting him temporary powers or abilities to avert the catastrophe. An ananke's message could warn of the return of ancient dangers, such as a cult of Timori Banishers, acamoth or the Bound. No matter how benevolent the ananke might appear, however, its very presence forces destined events to occur. The best a mage can hope to do is minimize the damage and try to survive it.

Ananke cannot help what they are or what they do. By their very nature, they reshape reality around themselves. (Mages versed in Spirit know that a spirit's Influence can affect the world in a similar manner.) An ananke appears to its chosen mage to announce that an event will happen, paying little heed to whether the mage wants it to or not. As heralds and guardians of prophecy, everything and everyone around the mage is caught up in the drama. The mage must serve as a witness so that an enlightened soul can see that the prophecy was fulfilled. Strangers can suddenly become lovers, cowards become warriors, and bystanders forget their day-to-day tedium to play a part in the scene. Sleepers are oblivious to the workings of this magic, but mages have the awareness and opportunity to react. The ananke's influence (and Influence) reworks people and places to resolve this course of events. A mage must then struggle to deal with the consequences.

Avatars of destiny are difficult to affect directly, as one would expect. All ananke have an innate resistance to Fate and Spirit magic that would alter their true natures or the manner in which destiny bends around them. Atlantean archmastery has set them to their ways. Despite this, ruthless mages sometimes attempt to "kill the messenger" — a foolish act that can substitute the mage for another victim in this drama. A vengeful ananke does not need to attack a mage who threatens it with mere violence. Fate, coincidence and destiny itself are far more cruel.

Visions of an ananke's wrath have been known to inspire dreamers and prophets, appearing in art, literature and poetry. The most drastic visions are woven into the text of ancient tomes, the lore of sacred societies, and the rituals of cults. A mage who openly uses magic to avert catastrophe finds it easier to do so in the presence of an ananke. An ill-fated mage finds himself at the center of a whirlwind, or crushed by that same force if he rejects his role. For all anyone knows, this might be the price a mage pays for reworking the skein of reality. A mage who has spent a lifetime shifting the warp and weave of the world to his personal desires can get caught in those same threads.

### The Lover's Bequest

**Quote:** *This one has been chosen. This one will live. Others must die so that this one lives. Sacrifice is the true meaning of love.*

**Background:** Before the Atlantean Ladder shattered, an ancient magus realized his world was in danger. Because he loved his seven children so much, he wanted to ensure that his descendants would inherit his magical lore… a bequest he wanted fulfilled no matter how terrible the price. While the prophecies of other sorcerers announced that the end of an era approached, this Atlantean correctly foretold that a descendant bearing his likeness would inherit his magic. In his dying days, he used the last of his power to summon an ananke, an avatar of destiny that would pass fulfill his wish. The Fall of Atlantis forced this spirit into slumber. Now it has

awakened in the modern world to fulfill the Atlantean's prophecy.

**Description:** In the time before history, the Atlantean sired seven children with seven wives. The ananke he summoned can take the appearance of all seven women. It does not know which line of descent has survived to the modern day, but it can assume all seven guises while searching for the sorcerer's descendants. All of the guises are incredibly beautiful, since they represent idealized views of the women the magus loved. As part of the bequest, the ananke must choose a mage that possesses unearthly beauty and charm (Presence 5). The ananke and the heir resemble each other as mother and daughter or son. The patriarch of this lineage had enough command over Mind to seduce seven of the most attractive women in Atlantis. This same mastery over Mind is passed on to his descendant.

**Storytelling Hints:** The ananke's master had an eye for beauty and a complete lack of compassion for others. With Mind, he used and discarded people as easily as he could manipulate their emotions. This ananke should approach any mage who has a Destiny somehow related to the Atlantean's prophecy (whether that's a destiny involving romance, love, beauty or an attractive woman). The exact circumstances don't have to be the same, as long as the chosen mage deals with similar themes in his life. When this mage is found, the ananke speaks of its search for the heir to an ancient lineage, who resembles a woman the Atlantean loved. She cannot rest until the heir is found.

Once this magical heir is discovered, events take a dark turn. The ananke must help its chosen mage to "inherit" its ancestor's magical lore, which it interprets as aiding the heir to attain a position of power and success in the Awakened community. As the avatar shifts between guises while advancing its mission, the cabal should realize how easily its master used and discarded his paramours. Since it was misplaced love that created the ananke, the mage it has found is tempted to use and discard would-be suitors on her path to power. Ordinary bystanders fall in love with her, and they destroy themselves to help her in any way she sees fit.

**Rank:** 3
**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 5, Resistance 5
**Willpower:** 11
**Essence:** 20 (max 20)
**Initiative:** 11
**Defense:** 5
**Speed:** 16
**Size:** 5
**Corpus:** 10

**Influences:** Love 3

**Numina:** Fate 5. As an avatar of Fate, this spirit's Numina resemble spells from the Fate Arcanum. One Essence is spent and Power + Finesse is rolled to "cast a spell." When using one of these abilities, the ananke does not risk Paradox.

Countermagic (dice pool 11). The ananke can use this Numen as reflexive countermagic against Fate and Spirit magic (including covert spells) targeted on it or used to interfere with its mission. One Essence is spent and Power + Finesse is rolled. If successes equal or exceed the spell's, the spell is countered.

**Ban:** The Atlantean magus had a twisted notion of what love was, believing that it could be expressed only through selfless sacrifice. The ananke he created cannot affect anyone who is truly in love with another person, since that emotion reveals the ananke's motivation as a shadow of true love.

## Genius Territorialis

A physical place is more than mere matter, at least to a spirit mage or shaman. Enlightened souls can sense the resonance of a place, influenced by the events that transpired there, the people who lived there, or powerful emotions that took place at that spot. Whether it's a single site where an atrocity occurred or a vast city with a dramatic history, any physical location can have an aura or spiritual reflection that reveals its true nature and past. Some have been inhabited for so long or defined by such extremes that they slowly rouse into consciousness. "Genius territorialis" is the name for a spirit or consciousness of a place: a house, a neighborhood or even an entire city. It's a gestalt (or collective spirit) that represents the souls of the countless people who lived and died there. The spirit of a place exists on in a genius territorialis (sometimes called a genius loci, not to be confused with a spirit locus, a place that generates Essence).

The spirit's sense of identity is so strong that it resists any attempt to redefine it by altering its location. When a cabal attempts to change reality in a large area near a genius territorialis — such as when mages dedicate a Demesne or use Prime magic to create a Hallow — the genius territorialis resists. Its most immediate response is by enacting retribution, recreating past events, summoning spirits, sabotaging structures or rewriting memories. Willworkers aren't the only ones in danger from a genius territorialis. Mysterious events can plague anyone who attempts to drastically change such a place. Accidents damage machinery. Buildings fall apart. The very earth can open up. Animals lash out at unwanted intruders.

Offending a genius territorialis or attempting to change its true nature forces it to use its Numina to recreate its former identity. A haunted house is a classical example, recreating horrible events and human suffering long after its inhabitants have gone. Naïve investigators are often convinced that ghosts roam the corridors of a genius territorialis, but instead the sentient location uses Numina to summon up fears, create illusions and well up blood on its walls. Opposing this evil is more than a classic confrontation with a single ghost. A mage who wants to end the evil doesn't just change the spirits inhabiting the house, or the house itself. He must change the very nature of reality around the house, a feat not taken lightly.

Any place with a powerful zeitgeist, an era where it was in its prime and alive with the spirit of an age, has the potential to become a genius territorialis. A holy site or sacred ground can create miraculous events that convince mages that the deities or powers it represents are true, because petitioners and worshippers once reaffirmed that belief in countless ceremonies. A historical site where an important event took place could recreate aspects of that event. Genius territorialis with the proper Numina can convince those who threaten it that they actually are in another time, when its zeitgeist was strong.

Some historical sites are even capable of manifesting avatars that embody their bygone eras. While Sleepers might not notice these spirits as anachronisms, mages are more likely to realize that a person to whom they speak represents, say, a type of tourist who visited that place thousands of times, a fanatic who protected it, a deviant who committed an atrocity there, or a victim who died there. A supernatural investigator can dispatch these phantoms thinking he's purged some ghostly presence, but the avatar is merely a puppet controlled for the benefit of the genius behind it. It is said that entire cities can contain slumbering genius territorialis, which awaken when titanic threats to reality emerge. In such cases, an avatar may appear as humble as a minor mage, but empowered by the belief and strength of the millions of souls that lived and died there.

In game terms, a genius territorialis does not really need physical statistics to represent its structure. It behaves more like a spirit bound to a geographical location. Its most vital statistics are the Numina it can work, along with the tactics it commonly employs when threatened. The location cannot truly be "killed," only redefined so that it's sympathetic to a different atmosphere, feel or style of magic. When this happens, the location loses its consciousness and the phenomena stop. Moralists argue that this transition is akin to murder, since they believe the genius possesses a soul (from their point of view). Others rationalize the dedication of a genius territorialis as survival, self-defense or merely part of their larger campaign for reality.

### *The Abandoned Cabin by the Lake*

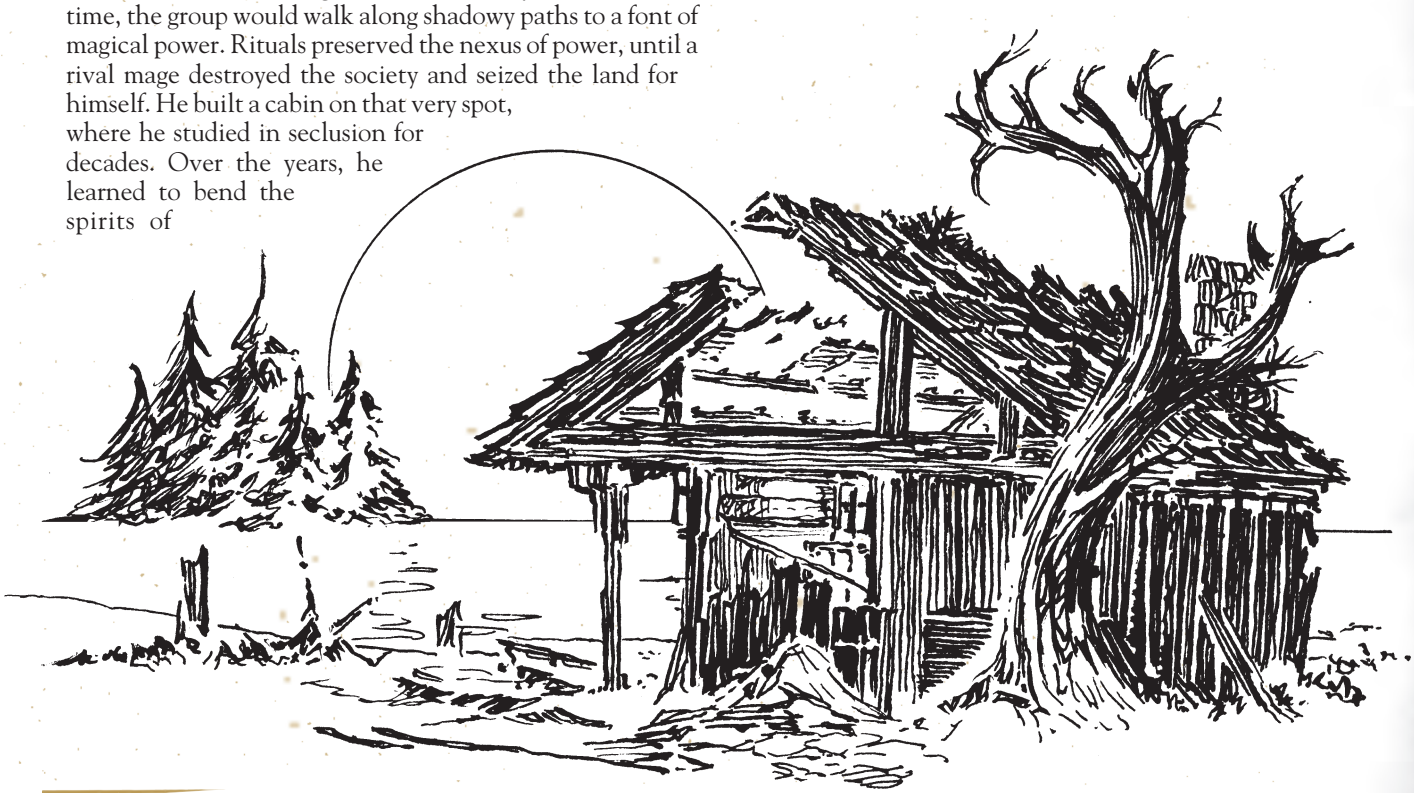
**Quote:** (Sounds of stirring in the basement. Footsteps running up stairs. A scream that pierces the night. A body falling down the stairs.)

**Background:** Beside a tranquil lake, a shamanic cult enacted secret rites for generations. Each year at the same time, the group would walk along shadowy paths to a font of magical power. Rituals preserved the nexus of power, until a rival mage destroyed the society and seized the land for himself. He built a cabin on that very spot, where he studied in seclusion for decades. Over the years, he learned to bend the spirits of the land to his will, poisoning their Essence. Instead of continuing the shamanic rites that sanctified the land, he lured victims to his home, where he tortured their bodies and destroyed their souls. His lifetime of evil ended with a spectacular magical backlash, a Paradox that manifested a terrible Abyssal entity. Yet, the land remembers the man's perfidy.

**Description:** By day, this woodland clearing appears serene, as calm as the pellucid waters of the nearby lake. By night, the clearing appears more sinister. Tricks of moonlight cast shadowy apparitions, and the sounds of chanting can be heard faintly on the wind. Seven shamanic masters are buried here, along with over a dozen innocent victims the invader killed. The clearing still has a weak Hallow (level one), but the genius territorialis surrounding it has been tainted.

There's a cabin in the center of the clearing, but it has long since been abandoned. It should have collapsed into ruin, but acts of atrocity have awakened… something… inside the house. Several people have attempted to restore it, or at least live inside it, but no one has managed to survive for more than a week. The authorities have investigated during the day. Strangely, no bodies have ever been found.

**Storytelling Hints:** Several missing-persons cases lead to the cabin. Local legends speak of a reclusive eccentric who built the house over a century ago, but no records exist to describe the secret society that preserved the land before that. Anyone with Mage Sight can sense there's a Hallow nearby, but its resonance has been tainted by suffering and sacrifice. Any mage who spends the night in the cabin is tormented by visions, including scenes of torture, fragments of shamanic rituals, and glimpses of how others have died. A cabal of mages could reclaim the land, but they would have to overcome the genius territorialis to do so.



**Rank:** 4
**Attributes:** Power 10, Finesse 7, Resistance 7
**Willpower:** 17
**Essence:** 25 (max 25)
**Initiative:** 7
**Defense:** 7
**Speed:** None
**Size:** 30 (cabin)
**Corpus:** 37

**Influences:** Cabin 5. The genius territorialis can use its influence to reform itself exactly as it was when it first gained sentience. The cabin can be destroyed, but unless someone dedicates or exorcises the land, the cabin is rebuilt.

**Numina:** Compulsion, Phantasm, Possession, Terrify, Telekinesis

**Ban:** Add two dice to any casting roll for Spirit magic within the clearing.

## Mortals

Although some mages view humans as sheep or cattle, lowing in their pens (which the sheep call "cubicles"), more than a few of them can surprise even the most cynical of mages. Mortals are all around. Most of them are Sleepers, but some are Sleepwalkers capable of witnessing and even remembering magic.

### Mortal Thralls

Supernatural creatures, Awakened mages and strong-willed people all have an impact on the world. They have a strong resistance to those would use supernatural powers to manipulate or control them. A rare few mortals have other defenses against magic and the supernatural, as well, such as a medium's insight, a ghost-hunter's instincts, or the gifts of a magical inheritance (as well as the Unseen Sense and Danger Sense Merits).

Just as there are mortals who are naturally resistant to magic, others have a weakness to it. Legends and theories struggle to explain why these weaker souls exist. Perhaps it's because their lives are empty and desperately need meaning. Maybe it's because long ago their ancestors were a servant class obeying a debased Atlantean order. Cynics state that the "modern world" has sapped these victims of their will, reducing them to corporate drones and mindless consumers oblivious to spiritual matters. Or possibly, as some fear, there are soulless ones among humanity who masquerade as human beings. Whatever the reason, some people have a weakness to magic and are easily enthralled by Mind and Fate spells. They become particularly useful pawns in conflicts between mystical orders, as long as mages have no moral quandaries with exploiting them.

Supernatural evils that require human hosts are drawn to thralls, or possess powers for finding them. Acamoth, goetic mages and even ananke have use for them. The Seers of the Throne are particularly adept at controlling thralls. When the Exarchs must directly intervene in our world, it is said, they begin by exploiting the suggestible and weak-willed. Radical mages rationalize such control by claiming that some humans do not possess full souls, or that only a person who has Awakened has a complete soul. Thus, a thrall's safety or survival is less important than the schemes of the worthy. Circles of Seers and supernatural forces can coordinate large groups of thralls, revealing themselves only once their complex preparations are complete.

If a mage is paranoid, she may suspect any person passed on the street to secretly work for unseen powers. The lonely man across the street from her downtown sanctum has been noting the times she enters and leaves. A group of local businessmen in the neighborhood have formed a fraternal order, not realizing their psuedo-occult trappings have summoned spirits that would inhabit them. A religious group gathering at the university has twisted visions about the nature of reality, and considers the mage's cabal a threat to the cause. Fearful of conspiracies, sorcerers look for patterns in unusual human behavior, hopeful that they can unravel a potential network of thralls before enemies strike.

No one thrall is a threat to a vigilant cabal, but schemes involving humans typically coordinate many. They act as the eyes and ears of secret masters, searching for suspicious activity as they go through their daily lives. Sometimes several of them work together to move something physical — an object, an Artifact, a weapon — from one side of a city to the other, handing it from one conspirator to the next. They may enact minor acts of sacrifice, mark buildings with arcane symbols, arranging the sacrifice needed for a spirit's incursion, or simply observing the activities of rivals so they may find a weakness. Powerful supernatural beings can work through teams of thralls, setting up the minor parts of a plan that is ultimately carried out by other beings. Tracking the actions of one thrall is enough to elicit caution, but a cult's cryptic actions can really make sense only if the greater pattern of the collective is revealed.

A team of thralls coordinates actions in ways that are not immediately obvious. Seemingly disparate events fulfill a carefully planned deception. A random stranger could puncture the tires on a mage's car one minute, and another could approach offering help in the next minute. While the mage is distracted, a third thrall opens the car door and steals the leather-bound tome on the front seat, or leaves a threatening message on a flier under the windshield wiper. When confronted, thralls never really understand why they do the things they do, often returning to their normal consciousness when mages confront them or scrutinize them. Physical assault or intimidation can detain them, but also make a mage's sanity appear suspect in the eyes of ordinary people.

Thralls are dangerous weapons, since they are manipulated by magic, but are never truly aware of how it works. In fact, like any Sleeper, they can interfere with magic merely by witnessing it. When the Exarchs or their minions suspect that magic is at work, moving one or two thralls into position as witnesses can interfere with a mage's spells. If the supernatural forces inhabiting a thrall are particularly powerful, they may lend supernatural strength or speed to the subject. This usually burns out the thrall, subjecting him to such a brutal display of magical control that his own Disbelief unravels the spells keeping him in bondage, but not before he's attempted something suicidal in pursuit of his master's agenda. It is whispered that the upper echelons of the Seers of the Throne use and discard thralls quickly, wiping minds and altering memories to cover their tracks.

Mages can actively search for signs that a person is being magically manipulated or controlled, but the more powerful a rival is, the more difficult his influence is to fathom. Truly

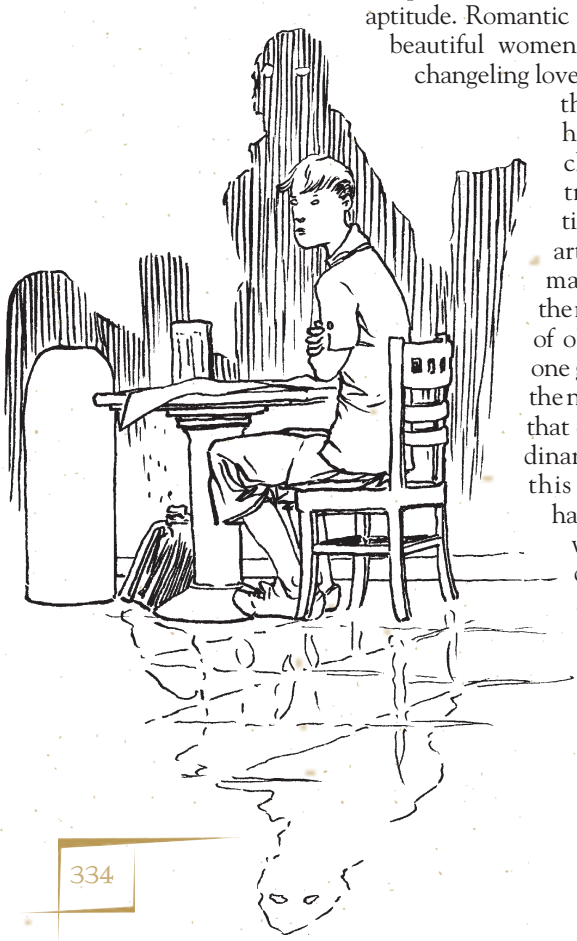
malevolent forces do not act secretly. They are so direct in their manipulation that a mage can spot a thrall merely by looking at him. Having succumbed completely to the lies of our world, the hopeless and soulless enact the will of unseen masters.

## The Proximi: Magical Inheritors

A few rare specimens of humanity have been manipulated by Life magic such that enchantment courses through their very DNA and is passed down to their descendants. Some rare few might even have a relatively undiluted lineage dating back to Atlantis. Millennia ago, their ancestors worked magic openly, and that same potential lies dormant in their blood. A host of terms describes people who have magical ancestry: slightly fey, witch-like, distracted by dreams, spiritually inclined, or just a little bit "spooky." Unable to fully cope with the modern world, these people are distracted by dreams they do not fully understand. Tormented dreamers whisper tales of an ancient civilization that did not exist, at least, not to those who are oblivious to magic. Given sufficient training, these heirs have the potential to see true magic for what it really is.

These gifted mortals, called Proximi (singular Proximus), are "Sleepwalkers." Humans who are dimly aware that magic is real, enough so to witness open acts of magic. Mages find them from time to time, recruiting them into plans and schemes. (Promixi can count as Allies or Contacts in game terms, or serve as Sleepwalker Retainers.) Not every guard or attendant in a sanctum is an Awakened mage. Recruited Proximi often work to maintain sanctums, hopeful for answers about their dreams, for protection from unseen forces, and for opportunities to learn about the supernatural.

Legends abound with explanations of the origins of magical inheritances. Tales endure about Guardians of the Veil eugenics attempts to "breed true" for magical aptitude. Romantic stories tell of beautiful women seduced by changeling lovers to carry on their magical heritage. Reclusive mystics train generations of martial artists. Necromancers trace the reincarnation of old souls from one generation to the next, knowing that otherwise ordinary people in this world may have consorted with angels, demons or sorcerers in ancient incarnations.



Even if Proximi aren't recruited and taught by mages, they are drawn to supernatural events, since they naturally want to understand the hidden world that has only marginally accepted them. Many insist on instruction or explanations from mages (when they can identify willsworkers), despite the fact that they do not possess the ability to work magic. Even an untrained Proximi may be able to recognize a mage as mystically significant — the type of attention that can make a sorcerer's life indiscrete. On rare occasions, a Proximus can actually Awaken, but magic is rarely able to predict if and when this might occur.

In all other respects, Proximi are ordinary people. They have seen enough or suspect enough to have insights into the world (perhaps along with the Occult Skill), and they can witness magic without increasing the chance of a Paradox. In all other respects, they are all too human. They are as much a resource as an obligation, often demanding help in exchange for what they find and the services they render. When discovered, Proximi are watched carefully by magical orders, just in case their gifts are passed on to another generation. Their heritage has blessed them with insight. Their future fates them to encounter magic again and again, for better or worse.

### New Merits

Sleepwalker (••••)

**Prerequisite:** Mortal (non-supernatural)

**Effects:** Your character is not completely asleep; the Quiescence does not affect him fully, and he is not susceptible to Disbelief. He can witness improbable or vulgar magic without increasing the chances of a Paradox.

Only mortal, mundane characters can possess this Merit. The pivotal moment of becoming or being changed into a being with supernatural capabilities eliminates it.

Proximus (•)

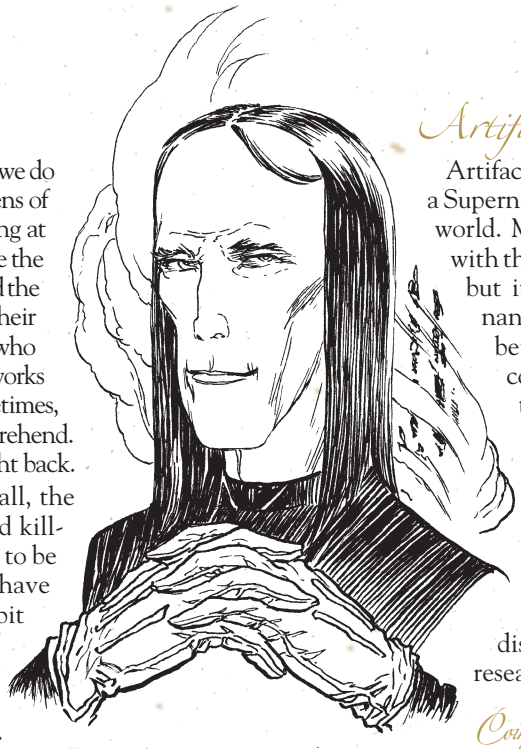
**Prerequisite:** Sleepwalker

**Effects:** Your character has a magical heritage. One of his ancestors might have been permanently enchanted with Life magic, or encountered a spirit or other supernatural entity that enchanted him such that his progeny have a tinge of magic about them. He might have come from a long line of Awakened mages, an inheritance that seems destined to breed true. Proximi are valued by some mages because they are believed to have a greater chance of Awakening than common Sleepers, but they are sometimes resented as hindrances and fifth wheels.

Only mortal, mundane characters can possess this Merit. The pivotal moment of becoming or being changed into a being with supernatural capabilities eliminates it.

## Witch Hunters

Human nature compels us to fear what we do not understand. In the Burning Times, tens of thousands died to answer those fears, dying at the stake for suspicions of witchcraft. Since the time of the Inquisition, mages have learned the consequence of indiscretion, keeping their true nature hidden from ordinary people who would not understand. Sleeper Disbelief works to obscure open acts of magic… but sometimes, fearful people see things they cannot comprehend. When that fear is strong enough, they fight back.



True witch hunters are rare. After all, the cold-blooded act of hunting down and killing a human being is not an enterprise to be taken lightly. A witch hunter doesn't have to kill his quarry, however. Most exhibit the same behavior one would expect of any bigoted, close-minded individual. Threats and intimidation are a lot easier to carry out than acts of violence. Sabotaging someone's car or home should suffice to drive away anyone who is "different." If that doesn't work, a confrontation can escalate to violence.

The very fact that a witch hunter watches a mage closely increases the chance that he'll witness an act of magic — or that a defensive mage is willing to use one. Those who are oblivious to the existence of magic find other reasons to hate people, including the usual stereotypes of race, gender, ethnicity, politics and origin. Religious fanatics may even claim evidence of a satanic Adversary in their midst, asking all like-minded folk to protect themselves. The most dangerous witch hunters get organized, finding others through religious groups, websites, study groups, classes or even minor militias. If one fanatic can convince other like-minded people to side with him, the threat of exposure can be almost as dangerous as the threat of violence.

When someone encounters the supernatural repeatedly, hatred can turn to obsession. Many people who appoint themselves witch hunters have the instincts to shadow and observe someone, but preparing for outright violence takes considerably more will. At first, a witch hunter finds simple weapons: a crowbar, baseball bat or other object that feels heavy in his hand. It suffices until he's ready to obtain more lethal weapons, practice on a firing range, or get into shape for a confrontation. Most witch hunters have basic training in combat, and only truly obsessive individuals manage to piece together enough occult knowledge to understand what they face. Over time, training and obsession make them progressively more dangerous.

## Other Threats

Danger doesn't just come in the form of beings of flesh or spirit. Things and places can also prove to be troublesome or even murderous. These are perhaps the least expected types of threat, although Mage Sight can alert a sorcerer to the looming danger of a place, but maybe not to that of a cursed item.

### Artifacts

Artifacts are unique items that originated in a Supernal Realm. They are literally not of this world. Mages can try to mimic their powers with the Prime 3 "Imbue Item" spell (p. 225), but it's never really the same. The resonance of an Artifact is always special, betokening the realm from which it comes. Mages believe, but cannot prove, that these items can reveal secrets about their home realms to the seeker who studies them long and hard enough.

Below are some sample Artifacts, each known to Awakened history, with its legendry and previous ownership recorded in certain libraries (and discoverable with enough ingenuity or research).

#### Coin of the Jester King (Artifact ●●●●)

Durability 6, Size 1, Structure 7

**Mana Capacity:** maximum 11

This silver coin is stamped with the face of a stately king. Instead of a crown, however, he wears a medieval jester's hat. On the flip side is the image of crossed wands with a flame between them. Many believe this coin originated in Arcadia, although none can say for sure whether it's merely its silver material that came from there or the actual, minted coin.

Whoever bears the coin on his person gains the benefits of the Fate 1 "Quantum Flux" spell (p. 148), allowing him to spend time "aiming" any action to offset any dice penalties (up to three dice worth, maximum).

#### Count Amaury's Spectacles (Artifact ●●●●)

Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 5

**Mana Capacity:** maximum 11

This pair of antique glasses has two lenses made from clear crystals that originated in the Supernal Realm of the Aether. They allow the spectacles' user to see quite far, for they hold a contingent power that simulates a Space 2 "Scrying" spell (p. 235). The user merely taps on the lenses to activate the power, and Gnosis + Space is rolled, modified by the mage's sympathetic connection to the person or place he wishes to view. Duration is concentration. Once the mage ceases concentration, the effect lasts for one more turn and then expires (unless additional Duration factors are added during activation).

#### The Mark of Qazalak (Artifact ●●●)

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3

**Mana Capacity:** maximum 11

The Mark of Qazalak is a tattoo, although not one that is painted onto the body in the usual manner. It is an actual object that can be peeled from one body and placed onto another, like a piece of cellophane. The current wearer must willingly give it up; it cannot be taken by force, although it can be harmed by attacking its Structure with lethal or

aggravated damage, which also causes the wearer to suffer an equal amount of Health points of damage. Attackers suffer a –4 target penalty, however, assuming they can see the tattoo (–5 penalty if it is hidden under clothing, but they have a rough idea of where it is). The Artifact continues to function until all its Structure points are destroyed.

The Mark is a strange, barbed spiral with a hint of a face about the size of a silver dollar, although attempts to pinpoint the exact features of the face always seem to fail. It is believed to come from the Supernal Realm of Pandemonium.

The wearer of the Mark can activate it (a successful Gnosis + Life roll) to gain a contingent power that mimics the Life 1 "Cleanse the Body" spell (p. 180), helping him to fend off drugs, poisons and toxins.

### The Opal of Styx (Artifact ●●●●●●●●)

Durability 6, Size 1, Structure 7

**Mana Capacity:** maximum 12

This Artifact is a large lead ring with a prominent black opal mounted in its ornately carved setting. Its details are so precise that one would almost think the crafter used some form of advanced laser and electron microscope to accomplish the work. The ring is believed to originate from the Supernal Realm of Stygia.

The ring's contingent power is triggered by pointing it at its intended target while speaking the word, "Kneel." This trigger activates the Artifact's power, which simulates a combined Death 4 "Enervation" spell (p. 143) and a Mind 4 "Befuddle" spell (p. 213). (Since this is cast at sensory range, it actually simulates the 5th dot versions of the spells.) Successes gained on the user's Gnosis + Death or Mind (whichever is higher) roll are allocated between the target's Strength and Resolve Attributes, however the user wishes. If the target is reduced to one dot in both traits, he must kneel before the ring's user, for he lacks the Strength and Resolve to resist the command (he can rise again next turn, although he still suffers the Attribute loss).

During activation, three Mana must be spent for the user, either from the Artifact's reserves or from his own pool. The effect lasts for one scene, but the user can increase its Duration by suffering dice penalties on the activation roll. See "Duration," pp. 118-119.

Note that this item's Merit cost is well beyond the affordability of beginning characters (12 dots); it is listed merely as an example.

### The Spotted Stone (Artifact ●●●)

Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 5

**Mana Capacity:** maximum 11

This stone talisman appears to be of ancient Olmec craftsmanship, for it bears the image of the "were-jaguar" known in many examples of Olmec art. The stone itself, however, originated in the Primal Wild, and it actually bears color and markings as if it were a jaguar's hide turned to stone. A leather thong allows it to be tied around a user's neck. The wearer can activate its power by touching the stone and offering a prayer to the jaguar spirit. Gnosis + Forces is rolled and a success activates a power that mimics the Forces 1 "Nightsight" spell (p. 163), with a Duration of one scene.

## Cursed Items

Just as a magical item can be enhanced by helpful spells, it can be damned by an undying curse. Cursed items are either inhabited by spirits or tainted by magical spells (usually cast with Fate and Time). They trigger dangerous or harmful events when they are used improperly — or used at all. An unusually keen blade demands a sacrifice of innocent blood to stay sharp. A sacred item from a place of healing infects anyone who steals it with a supernatural disease. A dress that makes a woman incredibly beautiful enslaves those whom she loves. A cursed item is powerful, but its power demands a price.

Ordinary people can possess and use cursed items. In fact, they're more likely to fall into such traps than mages are. The innocent discover the powers granted, the sinful are tempted to use them repeatedly, and the damned are oblivious to the magic that destroys them. Even Sleepers know the legend of the Monkey's Paw, a cursed item that could grant wishes, but that always twisted them around to make the person who possessed it suffer. Cursed items work best when their powers are not blatantly obvious. Those that work magic openly plague their bearers even more, subjecting them to Paradoxes (if they're wielded by mages) and the effects of Disbelief.

Mages are wise to avoid these traps, but many cursed items actually have one or two useful abilities that encourage a sorcerer to use them. In this way, the true agenda of their creators is fulfilled. Scholars of the Adamantine Arrow know of cursed weapons that make wielders deadlier, but that demand sacrifices. Necromancers caution that tombs and reliquaries hold magical items waiting for unscrupulous mages to steal them, while fulfilling the cruel plans of the evil sorcerers who made them. Mystagogues uncover ancient tomes that promise wisdom and power, but that cripple the unworthy with madness and dementia. In this way, items' knowledge and power cannot be used by any except the most powerful sorcerers. A cursed item looks and feels like any other magical object — until it is used for the first time.

In game terms, a "magically cursed" item is either an imbued item (see p. 84) or an Artifact (see p. 80). It usually has a trigger that the user inadvertently sets off, or which requires a terrible deed or sacrifice to set off on purpose. Curses are not limited to the Fate Arcanum. Cursed items can wound, infect or weaken with the Life Arcanum, cause complex chains of events to occur with Time, or affect the sanity of users with Mind. For each Arcanum, there are various methods of vengeance.

"A spiritually cursed" item is either a fetish inhabited by a malevolent spirit that can use its Numina whenever it wants, or it is the fetter for a Twilight spirit that harasses whomever uses the item. A mage can use Spirit magic to free, exorcise or weaken the entity, but when the item is presented to innocents who are unaware of the existence of the spirit world, the curse can do its work without fear of discovery.

Every cursed item has an origin. Mad mages create them to carry out plans should the willworkers depart this world. Demons and outsiders lure potential victims with powerful Artifacts so that they can gather the allies and strength they need to trap an unwilling mage. Spiritually cursed items are often possessed because they were at the scene of a tragic or violent event. Instead of fleeing back into Twilight, sum-

moned spirits bind themselves to physical objects in our realm. Malevolent mages from bygone eras can reach out across time itself if a willing victim can find one of the poisoned relics left behind. Evil takes many forms, and many evils slumber within cursed items.

### The Cartwright Emerald

**Quote**: (from the woman wearing it) *I can't give it back to you. It belongs to me now. I'm going to be extremely wealthy, and you're going to be quite, quite dead.*

**Background:** Emma Cartwright had everything in life. She was rescued from a tiresome job as a waitress by a wealthy industrialist, who fell in love with her at first sight. Their fairytale romance led to a lavish wedding, and her doting husband showered her with presents. The greatest of these was an emerald necklace she received on her anniversary. Emma had everything she wanted… but her husband apparently wanted more.

Five years later, Mr. Cartright had an affair with another woman. On the evening Emma discovered his infidelity, she walked into a bedroom where her younger sister was wearing nothing at all — save for the Cartright Emerald. Her husband and sister leapt to their feet, but never made it to the door. A fireplace poker sufficed for smashing in Mr. Cartright's skull, and the necklace made for an ideal garrote. Jealousy and rage guided Emma's hands.

The Cartwright Emerald has been owned by five different couples since then, but each couple that owns it ultimately faces tragedy. The stone is large and valuable enough that it is not content to rest in a safe or display case. Although it has been removed and reset several times, the necklace it is attached to is always destined to be stained in blood. It is now owned by a wealthy mage who intends to break its curse forever.

**Description:** This priceless emerald is attached to an elegant necklace. The stone has been reset several times, but strangely, the blood that eventually mars the necklace never seems to tarnish the emerald.

**Storytelling Hints:** It's only a matter of time before the mage who owns the stone dies. He won't be able to resist presenting it to an innocent victim. Arrange for your players' cabal to find the body. They may decide to present the item to someone else, hide it or destroy it. The gem chooses someone in the cabal as its next owner. The jewel is radiant enough to overwhelm anyone seeking love and devotion, but its beauty carries a price: it must be fueled by blood and souls.

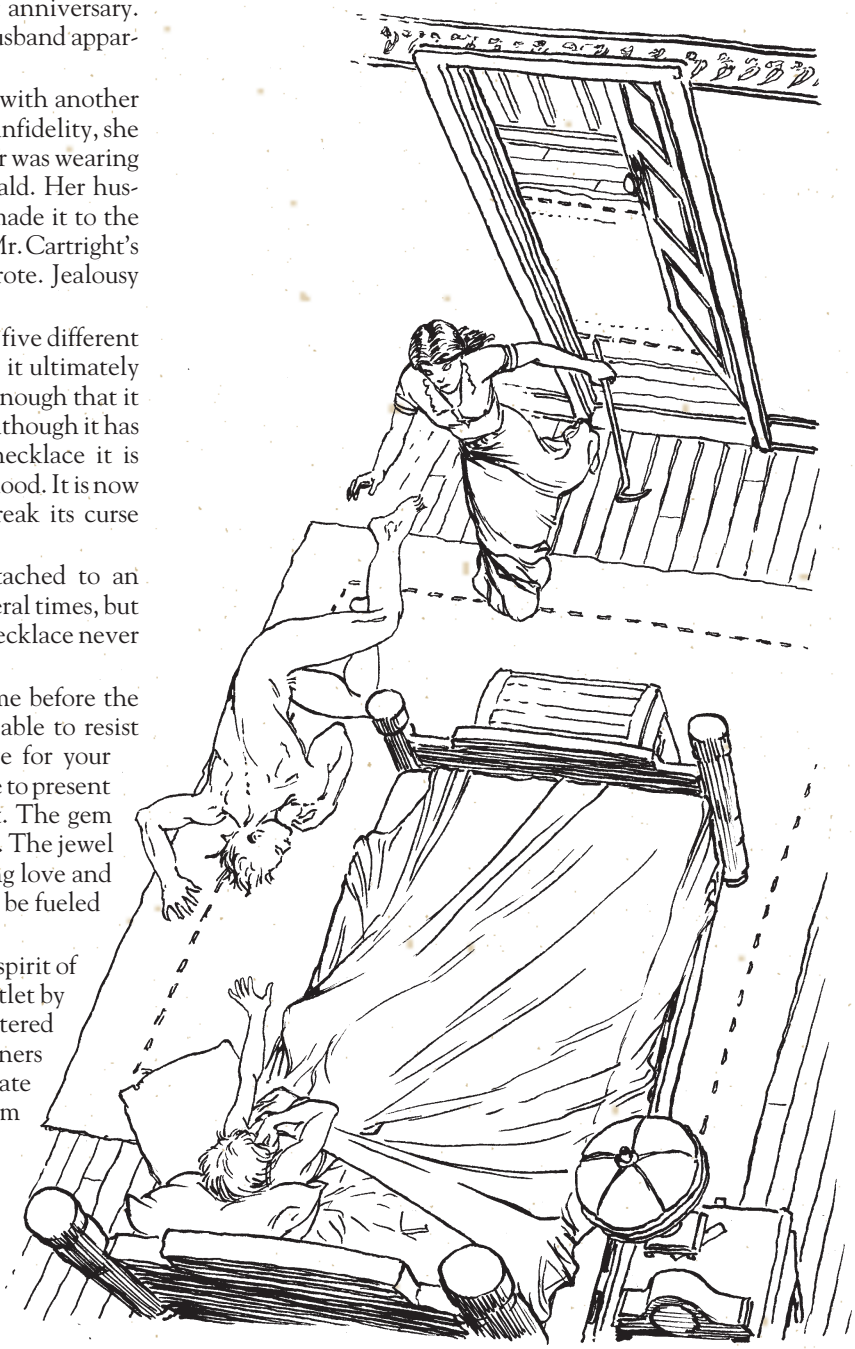
The item is actually the fetter for a Twilight spirit of jealousy. The spirit was drawn across the Gauntlet by Mrs. Cartright's act of double murder. It fettered itself to the jewel and now goads the jewel's owners into fits of jealousy and rage, which generate enough Essence to feed the spirit and keep it from discorporating across the Gauntlet.

**Rank:** 2
**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 2, Resistance 3
**Willpower:** 6
**Essence:** 15 (max 15)
**Initiative:** 5
**Defense:** 2
**Speed:** 8
**Size:** 3
**Corpus:** 6

**Influence:** Jealousy 3

**Numina:** Love and Hate (dice pool 4). With the expenditure of one Essence, the spirit can incite a mortal victim with passionate desire or murderous hatred. A reflexive, contested Resolve + Composure roll is made for the jewel's bearer. The results of a failed roll work like the Compulsion Numen, allowing the spirit to control the victim. The bearer's actions must appear to be motivated by love or hate. She can suddenly develop feelings of love or hatred for anyone within sight while the Numen is in effect.

**Ban:** The spirit cannot affect any necklace holder who has a Morality or Wisdom of 7 or higher.



## Verges

Far from the watchful eyes of humanity, there are places where the Gauntlet between worlds is thin or nonexistent. These places are on the "verge" of the Shadow. "Verges" are places where otherworldly spirits from the Shadow Realm can find their way into our world, if only for short periods of time.

Verges aren't always permanent or continuous. Their weakening of the Gauntlet might occur only for a short time at certain times of the year, under certain weather conditions, or at specific times of day. If a mortal stumbles across a Verge during this ill-fated period, he might well encounter a manifested spirit. The witness may not have a ready vocabulary for describing what he finds. In some Verges, spirits manifest in forms unique to that strange locale, rather than in their regular forms. Only one type of spirit might manifest, or the area may be ideal for a host of spirits to coexist.

People struggle to find explanations for what they find at a Verge. Those places that are not created by Awakened magic do not invoke Disbelief. Not all encounters, however, are horrific or hideous. In places of great beauty or tranquility, children speak of meeting faeries or sprites, using the only words they can find to describe supernatural beauty or capricious danger. Adults might think they encounter ghosts or the undead, even if apparitions are full of life. Urban legends search for terms from the modern pseudo-science of ufology, straining to find evidence of missing time or alien abductions. When a remote location is rumored to be the site of a supernatural event, obsessed individuals travel to the Verge, interpreting whatever they find to confirm their own beliefs.

Mage Sight reveals these manifestations for what they are, but that doesn't always mean they're easily explained. It might be obvious why a spirit is misinterpreted as an alien, faerie, angel or monster, but many possess unpredictable powers. Spiritual Numina can recreate any supernatural power of myth or legend, but are not limited by what humans have experienced. Spirit magic can temporarily "heal" the rift that exists within the Verge's Gauntlet, but unless mages are vigilant, the gateway between dimensions may open again, attracting unknown entities… and ordinary people obsessed with the unknown.

## Cryptids

Despite the best efforts of modern scientists, the natural world contains creatures that are not easily classified, categorized, defined or detected. For every modern legend of a yeti, sasquatch, lake serpent or pygmy primitive, many more teratological wonders hide in the shadows. Some possess powers that border on the supernatural, while others lurk at the fringes of perception, becoming the stuff of legend. Just as the world hides entire tribes and bloodlines of supernatural creatures, it also contains rare and unique species that are only barely explained by the pseudo-science of cryptozoology. A few mages encounter these beings, hunt them, stalk them and name them. Collectively, these monsters and beasties are known as cryptids.

Reasons for seeking cryptids are as varied as cryptids themselves. As magical anachronisms, certain intelligent creatures might know the secret names of entities, spirits, paths and gateways. Some are guardians, while others are merely survivors. Seekers of knowledge insist that each one encountered is no doubt part of a larger taxonomy or pattern, which will help explain the mysteries of magic. Alchemists and magical craftsmen seek the severed body parts of imaginary creatures for rare rituals. Mentors may even insist that initiates track and find an elusive cryptid as a test of dedication and resourcefulness, much like the hunt for the Questing Beast of Arthurian legend.

Cryptids are impossible creatures. Many of them are unusually stealthy, possessing supernatural abilities that cloak them from mortal eyes. Fortean events and strange phenomena can occur in areas claimed by cryptids, perhaps as the world's way to distract innocents or as warnings for them to stay away. Cryptids are drawn to places that are as impossible as they are, including Verges (see above) where certain spirits can manifest and act as they would in the spirit realm. A few are masters of their own realities, hiding in "pocket realms" that can be entered only by mages who have the right Arcana for crossing magical wards and barriers. Legendary creatures are either immortal or timeless, unaffected by the passage of time or the crude necessities of survival.

Some cryptids might be a fusion of animal and spirit, their physical forms resembling a physical creature (if only vaguely) or a hybrid of several creatures. Their physical traits are based on this form, but enhanced by Numina and other supernatural capabilities.

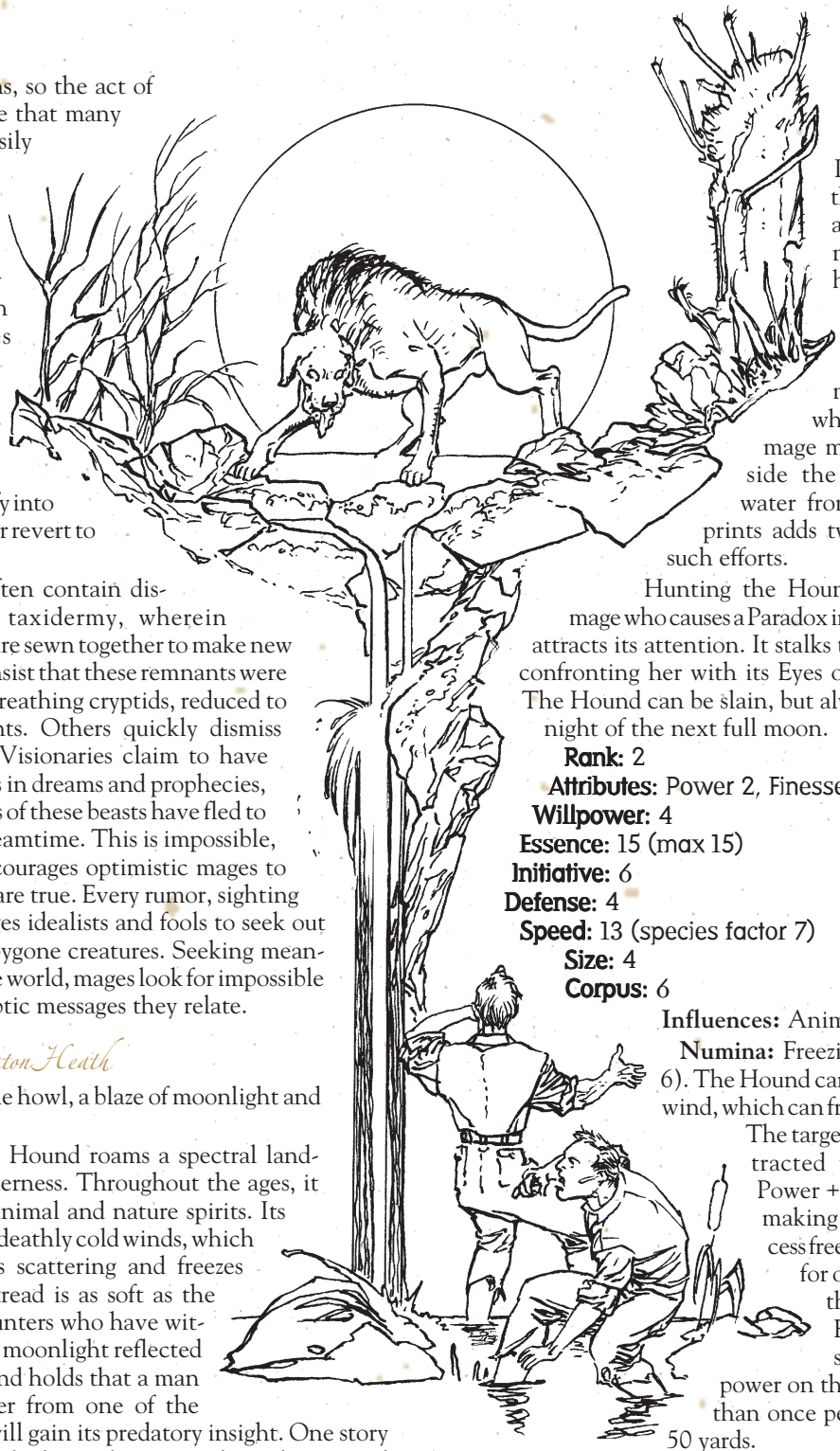
For all their supernatural aspects, cryptids are capable of fighting and dying just as mundane animals are. Many would only be as dangerous as animals in our world if they didn't also have supernatural powers. Although reclusive, they defend themselves if cornered, stalked or simply sighted. The area around them is unusually tolerant of magic (since it tolerates them), but that makes it easier for cryptids to protect themselves. A creature's environment treats any magic that resembles its own powers as covert. Nearly all would rather flee than fight to the death, but when mages use magic in their presence, cryptids are capable of using their own powers in response.

Wise mages prefer to approach beasts reverently, offering gifts and attempting to communicate (usually with the Spirit Arcanum). A legendary cryptid can have a weakness for a particular gift, as presented by a petitioner who is unusually talented, beautiful, virginal, glib or cunning, depending on the creature. Cryptids respond not with words, but by manipulating the world around them. A willworker could follow a cryptid to a clearing where a hundred dead bodies are piled around a funeral mound, to a field of flowers where impossibly beautiful faeries sing in sunlight, or to a moonlit plain where mists form into human shapes. By looking closely at these surroundings, a mage obtains insights into events in his own reality.

Crytpids cannot endure capture or confinement, since they are dedicated to the magical places that sustain them. (The word "thaumavore" describes a cryptid that actually subsists on magical energy, usually through tass. Take the beast out of its habitat and it starves.) Many are fragile

outside their domains, so the act of killing one is a crime that many sorcerers do not easily forgive. Predicting what will happen to a slain cryptid is not always easy. Some "softly and silently fade away," as though their death proves their impossible nature. When time catches up with a creature, its body could rapidly decompose, transmogrify into a magical substance or revert to a mundane form.

Curiosity shops often contain displays of masterful taxidermy, wherein disparate body parts are sewn together to make new forms. Some mages insist that these remnants were once part of living, breathing cryptids, reduced to mundane components. Others quickly dismiss such tales as fraud. Visionaries claim to have encountered cryptids in dreams and prophecies, as though rare species of these beasts have fled to the depths of the Dreamtime. This is impossible, of course, which encourages optimistic mages to insist such accounts are true. Every rumor, sighting and legend encourages idealists and fools to seek out fragile and fanciful bygone creatures. Seeking meaning and wonder in the world, mages look for impossible cryptids and the cryptic messages they relate.



### The Hound of Hampton Heath

**Quote:** (a lonesome howl, a blaze of moonlight and a blast of cold air)

**Background:** The Hound roams a spectral landscape of remote wilderness. Throughout the ages, it has culled herds of animal and nature spirits. Its arrival is heralded by deathly cold winds, which send mortal animals scattering and freezes spirits in place. Its tread is as soft as the wind, and the few hunters who have witnessed it claim to see moonlight reflected in its footsteps. Legend holds that a man who drinks rainwater from one of the Hound's footprints will gain its predatory insight. One story tells of a man who looked it in the eyes and was driven mad by the sight of a thousand stars where its face should have been.

**Description:** A massive mastiff shrouded in darkness hunts by moonlight. The few who see it remember only a shadowy outline. Rumors hold that those who see its true form never return to the civilized world.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Hound inhabits a Verge, pursuing spirits that find their way across the boundary between worlds. Mages can increase their chances of finding the Hound by using Spirit magic. Its tracks lead to its hunting grounds, where the outlines of slain spirits are dimly visible. Its footprints glow in the moonlight. With a Gnosis roll, the mage who finds its hunting grounds can gain insights into other predatory creatures and their motivations (usually whatever predator the mage may be hunting outside the Verge). Drinking water from one of the footprints adds two dice to rolls for such efforts.

Hunting the Hound is perilous. Any mage who causes a Paradox in its hunting grounds attracts its attention. It stalks the offending mage, confronting her with its Eyes of Madness Numen. The Hound can be slain, but always reforms on the night of the next full moon.

**Rank:** 2
**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 4, Resistance 2
**Willpower:** 4
**Essence:** 15 (max 15)
**Initiative:** 6
**Defense:** 4
**Speed:** 13 (species factor 7)
**Size:** 4
**Corpus:** 6

**Influences:** Animals 5, Fear 2

**Numina:** Freezing Blast (dice pool 6). The Hound can exhale a gust of icy wind, which can freeze a spirit in place. The target's Resistance is subtracted from the Hound's Power + Finesse pool before making this roll. Each success freezes the spirit in place for one turn. Each use of this ability costs one Essence, and the spirit cannot use this power on the same victim more than once per day. The range is 50 yards.

Eyes of Madness (dice pool 6). This ability forces temporary dementia, a form of paranoia in which the witness becomes prey to an imagined pursuer. A reflexive, contested Resolve + Composure roll is made for an intended victim. The madness lasts until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first. If the victim sees the Hound, she flees as though under the effects of the Terrify Numen. If the victim does not see the Hound, she flees from an imagined pursuer (as described by the Storyteller).

**Ban:** The Hound cannot affect anyone with a Morality or Wisdom of 8 or higher. It can use its Eyes of Madness Numen

only on someone who has caused a Paradox in its hunting grounds.

## The Bound

Legends tell of ancient mages who fought mythical monsters whose powers rivaled all reason. Sleepers have told their own variants of these stories. Hercules had his hydra to slay, Beowulf challenged Grendel, fomorians rose from the sea, and dragons lie sleeping deep underground. These are all interpretations of magical monsters, as clouded by Sleeper misunderstanding and embellished by dramatic storytelling. The greatest and most terrible of these beings were never really destroyed, only delayed until the time when they would rise again. They are timeless. They are legendary. They are the Bound.

When magic was openly used in the world, the Atlanteans banished evils they could not destroy. Yet, the Bound found ways to escape their mystical prisons. Even the most powerful wards and rituals cannot permanently ban these monsters. Records of their binding places are rare, and those spots are largely unknown. Some have inspired misperceived monsters detailed in ancient bestiaries — chimerae, basilisks and other teratological terrors. Others are the stuff of nightmares, creatures so hideous that the very sight of them can drive a man mad.

The Bound are not just magical; they must devour magic to survive. They can sense whenever Mana is near, driven by urges to destroy and consume. The Bound can detect the strength of a mage's soul instinctively, pausing only briefly to notice the magical energy flowing through the veins of other impossible creatures nearby. If one of the Bound can destroy a source of magic, it can then consume the Mana within. This is simply a matter of survival. Each dawn, one of the Bound weakens (losing one point of Mana). The beings are driven to hunt down magic and consume it. If they do not, they slowly fade away until their power (and their Mana) is gone, forcing them back into slumber.

The Bound are unusually resistant to physical, magical and spiritual damage. When a beast's body, mind or soul (or more precisely, Health, Willpower or Mana) is reduced to zero, it is lost again, returning to its supernatural prison to reform. In ages past, mighty mages knew rituals for binding these ancient evils, but that knowledge has since been lost. (Rumors hold that the solution may be found in Atlantean temples or tomes, but such lore is not found easily.) Once one of the Bound is forced back into slumber, wise guardians watch over its resting place, making sure the events that released it never pass again. Innocents may mistake the Bound for forces of nature or catastrophes. The monsters are the antithesis to all Awakened and magical people, places and creatures of the world. With the change of ages, they will rise again.

## Arcane Experience

Mage characters gain experience points for their trials and tribulations the same as any other character, with one notable exception. As they are tuned into a higher reality, the things mages encounter can promote a greater understanding of the Mysteries surrounding that reality. When uncovering, solving or realizing supernatural phenomena and secrets, mages can gain a special type of experience called Arcane Experience.

For the most part, mage characters gain regular experience points as described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 216-217. Points aren't spent for them to learn facts acquired through actual game play, but experience points do need to be spent for them to improve their traits or learn new ones.

In addition to regular experience points, the Storyteller might award a mage character with one or more Arcane Experience points at the end of a chapter or story. These are just like regular experience points, except that they can be used for one thing: raising a character's Gnosis trait. The Storyteller might at times allow a player to divert a few Arcane Experience points toward the improvement of an Arcanum, but only if that Arcanum was pivotal in earning the points. Otherwise, Arcane Experience can be applied only to knowledge and understanding of higher concepts. In other words, Gnosis, a mage's understanding of how experiences reveal the true Supernal World behind the false, Fallen World.

### Experience Point Costs

| Trait | Experience Point Cost |
|---|---|
| Attribute | New dots x5 |
| Skill | New dots x3 |
| Skill Specialty | 3 |
| Ruling Arcana* | New dots x6 |
| Common Arcana* | New dots x7 |
| Inferior Arcanum* | New dots x8 |
| Rote | 2 points per dot** |
| Merit | New dots x2 |
| Gnosis | New dots x8† |
| Wisdom | New dots x3 |
| Willpower | 8 experience points*** |

* The categories of Ruling, Common and Inferior are determined by a character's Path. See "The Laws of Higher Realities," p. 132.

** Rotes are rated by the highest Arcanum dot used, so a Forces 3 rote costs six experience points to learn.

*** Experience points can be spent on Willpower only to restore dots lost through sacrifice (such as when a mage creates a new rote, p. 291, or when he performs some other feat requiring such a sacrifice).

† Players can apply normal experience points and/or Arcane Experience toward raising Gnosis.

## Awarding Arcane Experience

There are a number of trials and tribulations that can be cause for awarding Arcane Experience.

• A character might gain one Arcane Experience point whenever he brushes up against an unknown supernatural phenomenon and sheds light on its mystery, or participates in shedding such light. Examples include discovering that an apostate mage has been the cause of the strange occurrences in a region, or that odd weather points to the existence of a nearby Verge. Other examples including the realization that a vampire stalks the neighborhood, or that a local biker gang is composed of werewolves. These encounters need to be new and different each time (Arcane Experience is not gained each time the mage runs into the werewolf biker gang).

• A character might gain one Arcane Experience point whenever he makes a substantial discovery about the supernatural. Examples include realizing that ghosts can harm the living (usually learned when the character takes a wound himself), that the Shadow Realm doesn't operate on the same rules as the material realm, that garlic and crosses don't turn vampires, or that werewolves can shapechange at times other than under a full moon. This sort of "discovery award" is usually given only once per class of phenomena. Once the character realizes that garlic doesn't repel the undead, he can pretty much discount other legends such as running water, too. He might, however, gain points when he later realizes that some legends are actually true, such as that sunlight and fire burn vampires worse than they do humans. Also, learning things about vampire society might be a novel enough experience to be worth new points.

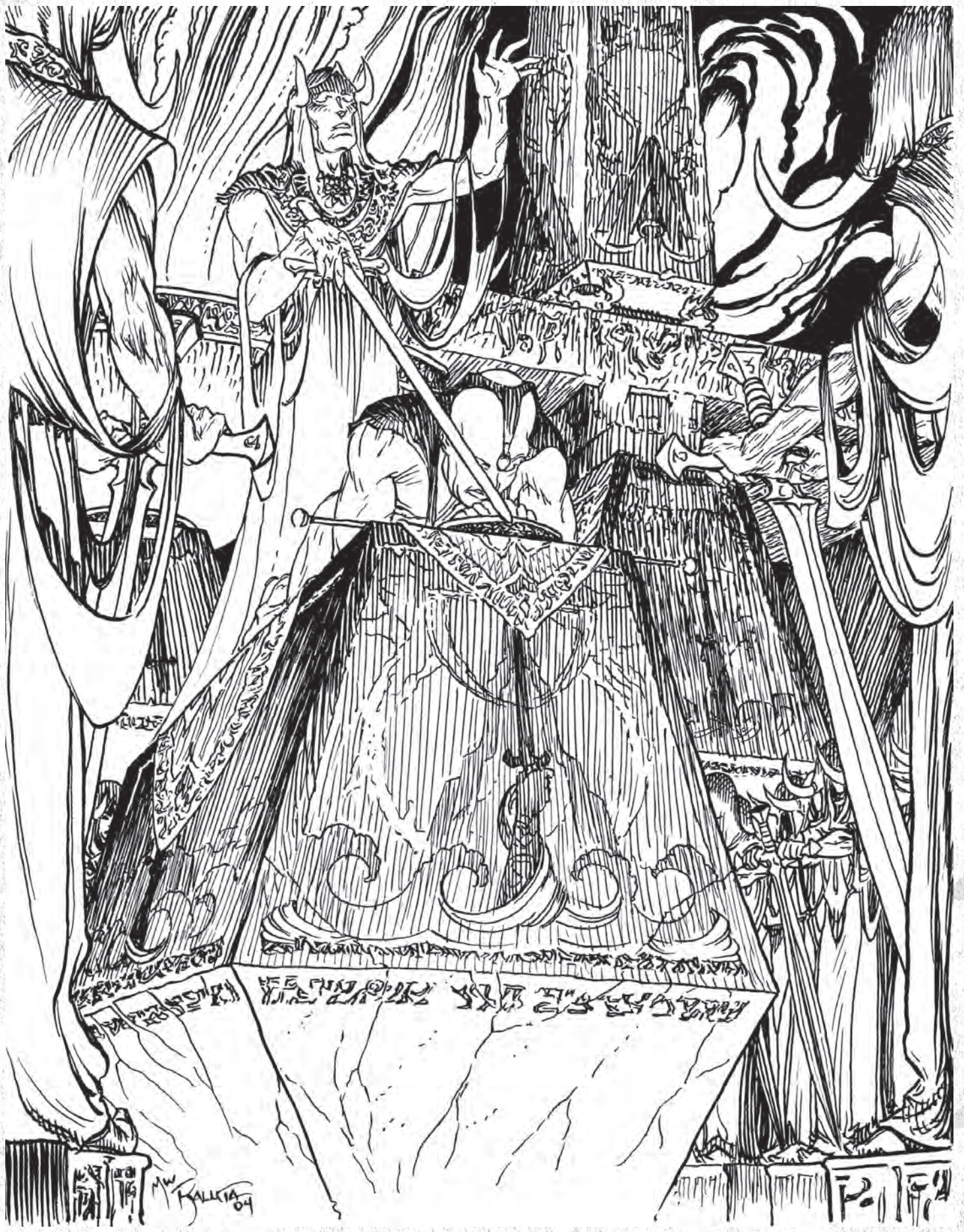
• A character gains one Arcane Experience point whenever he actually solves a supernatural enigma (presumably after shedding some light on it, as above), such as revealing that the cause of a "haunting" is really the disgruntled actions of a genius territorialis (see p. 331) rather than ghost as everyone else expected.

• A character might gain one Arcane Experience point by participating in the resolution of a supernatural dilemma, such as banishing a spirit, releasing a ghost or destroying a cursed item. If he was the instrumental leader in the resolution, he might gain two points.

• Any experiences in Astral Space normally award only Arcane Experience; the astral journey is too dreamlike to be applied to the real world. The Storyteller is free to bend this rule at his discretion, though.

Arcane Experience is awarded *in addition* to any normal experience points given for a chapter or story. The Storyteller should not skimp on normal experience because he feels he also has to hand out Arcane Experience. Arcane Experience is that little bit extra that characters have earned for going the extra mile. Since it can be applied to raising Gnosis alone, which is an expensive trait (new dots x8), it's doubtful that Arcane Experience will throw off the balance of your game, even one that mixes other World of Darkness supernatural types who don't earn such benefits. Mages, as mortals, sometimes need a little something extra to keep them going.

Players should never expect that their characters are owed Arcane Experience. It's the Storyteller's choice to award it. He shouldn't be too stingy, either. Arcane Experience is a tool for luring mages out of their sanctums to confront the strange goings on of the world. It represents an epiphany on a character's part, a moment of understanding about the occult and the Mysteries, and should be awarded at moments where a sorcerer would likely be changed or tempered by an experience. It also represents a mage's lust for occult knowledge, and the "fix" he gets from seeking it out. Don't deny a junky his fix, but don't give it to him for free, either. Arcane Experience must be earned. Armchair willworkers need not apply.



# APPENDIX ONE: LEGACIES



*"Does the supplicant come naked in mind and soul, ready to abase himself before his own daimon?"*

*"I do, master," Titus said. Naked in body, too, he thought. Why do these mystical initiations always seem like a frat pledge? And what's with the swords?*

*"Then rise, oh knight of the Internal Temple, Shrine of the Hidden Soul, and take your first step onto the path of Perfection." The master, gripping a long sword and draped in a robe with a ceremonial, horned headpiece, stepped back. He showed Titus the narrow path across the burning lake to the where his fellow initiates waited.*

*Titus stood and took a deep breath. He knew that as soon as he set foot onto the path, the others would begin pummeling him with rocks, trying to dislodge him. If he couldn't maintain his balance and withstand the pain, down he'd go into the fire. As cruel as it seemed, he couldn't wait to begin. Only the bravest could walk the path of the Perfected Adept, the Awakened one who honed his body as sharply as his soul.*

*He placed one foot forward. Before lifting the other, he waited for the first blow. He would have to time his steps so that none of the rocks could catch him with only one foot down. The first rock struck his right bicep, thrown with incredible force. He grunted and moved his will to ignore it, and stepped forward again, and then again, as the stones fell like rain.*

Stay together, friends.
Don't scatter and sleep.
Our friendship is made
of being awake.
— Jelaluddin Rumi, "The Waterwheel"

The tutor-apprentice relationship is a well-known wizardly archetype. A tutor can teach an apprentice to craft his soul. This teaching is called a Legacy.

Legacies are considered by many mages to be the next step in the evolution of their souls beyond Awakening. Learning a Legacy is a rite of passage into the "adulthood" of the mature soul, by which the mage chooses the mystical calling he will follow for the rest of his life. While he might be a master of many Arcana and an exemplar of his Path and order, others will come to identify him chiefly by his chosen Legacy.

At different degrees in his personal development as he follows his calling, the mage gains certain mystical attainments. These endowments move him beyond the need to cast spells — to actively draw down power from the Supernal World. They allow him to alter reality (within the specific parameters of his Legacy's attainment) as if he applied a mundane capability.

While most Legacies are private practices, a matter between a mage and his own soul (with the tutoring of the sorcerer who taught the Legacy), some are social, fostering connections between followers of the same Legacy. They can even take the form of secret societies — yet another layer of social organization beyond a mage's cabal, order and Consilium. The mage must decide which of these connections takes precedence in case they ever come into conflict.

At Gnosis 3, a mage can learn a Legacy and acquire its first attainment. At Gnosis 5 and again at 7, he can further develop that Legacy (there are three stages of attainment for each Legacy). At Gnosis 4, he can instead create his own Legacy, as long as he has not begun to learn another. He learns this unique Legacy's extra stages at Gnosis 6 and 8.

Legacies are learned by way of a mage's Path, although some orders can teach certain Path Legacies to members not of that Path. Once a mage learns a Legacy, he cannot learn another. He has chosen his soul's true road and must now walk it to its end.

## Tutory

A tutor is a mage who can teach his Legacy to another mage. He must have gained at least the second attainment of his Legacy before he can initiate an apprentice and teach him the first attainment (and later, the second attainment). The master must then gain the third attainment before he can teach that to his pupil.

Once a tutor begins inducting an apprentice into the methods of crafting his soul along the lines of a Legacy, there is a price to pay. One *dot* of Willpower is sacrificed by the teacher (which can be restored with the expenditure of eight experience points). One Willpower *point* is also spent by the apprentice's player. This price links the two souls into a mystical chain of inheritance, and they now have an Intimate sympathetic connection to one another. The tutor then teaches the apprentice how to craft his soul. This is a ongoing process. It's not simply over when an apprentice wants to learn a new dot in Gnosis to get an attainment.

The apprentice repays the tutor's investment with a stipend of power. As he learns to integrate his experiences into his tutor's Legacy, a portion of the apprentice's newly unlocked soul potential flows back up the line of inheritance. In game terms, one of the experience points he earns at the end of a story (not every game session, but only once a story is complete) is paid to the tutor. (This can be paid in either normal experience points or Arcane Experience, however the apprentice's player desires.) This stipend is paid after every story the pupil experiences, as long as he and the tutor maintain the link and until he gains the Legacy's third attainment (graduating from the tutor's hold).

In a sense, these points are used to purchase the Legacy's attainments, since the player doesn't otherwise spend experience points for them. They are granted as he achieves the required Gnosis, assuming he's had ongoing training and has the prerequisite Arcana and/or Skills (listed in the attainment descriptions). The tutor can spend these experience points however he wishes.

At Gnosis 5, a mage either learns his Legacy's second attainment or he diverges down his own unique path, developing a new approach to his Legacy. (This is not the same as creating a whole new Legacy; his newly developed attainment must still fit within his Legacy's theme.) At Gnosis 6, his studies yield results and he can create his own second attainment. At Gnosis 8 he can create his own third attainment. If he stayed the course and followed the normal path of development for his Legacy, he would have gained the third attainment at Gnosis 7.

If he diverges, he must first sever the link with his tutor. This can be done with or without the tutor's blessing. An apprentice can sever the line of inheritance to his master by sacrificing a *dot* of his own Willpower. Once severed, the apprentice no longer pays an experience-point stipend. He maintains his Intimate connection to his former teacher for only as long as the connection would naturally last through the course of mundane social relations (the further the former teacher and apprentice grow apart, the more distant their connection becomes).

If a mage is for some reason unable to continue studies with his master before he has completed his training in all three attainments, he can transfer ties to another teacher, as long as that instructor focuses on the same Legacy and the apprentice's link to his old teacher has been severed. The new guide and apprentice both spend one Willpower *point* to secure the soul link required for teaching. Since the hardest work — beginning on the path — is already complete, less commitment is required from either party to establish a new link. Such a transition most often occurs when a tutor dies,

but master and pupil occasionally part for other reasons, probably contentious ones. (Note that if a teacher dies, the link to him is severed, but the apprentice does not need to lose a Willpower dot as if he had voluntarily severed the link.)

Note that if a mage teaches an order-based Legacy to someone outside the order (unless it's also associated with his Path), he loses Order Status and trust, but there is nothing to otherwise prevent him from bequeathing a Legacy to a mage of another order.

***Example:*** *Sasha has learned her Legacy as a Subtle One (pp. 352-354) through her order, the Guardians of the Veil, rather than through her Path (she's an Acanthus, not a Mastigos). If she then tutors an apprentice to become a Subtle One, but that apprentice is not a Guardian of the Veil (or a Mastigos, for whom the Legacy is a natural calling), she almost surely loses Order Status for teaching what the Guardians consider to be their special inheritance, shared only with Mastigos mages (even Mastigos of other orders).*

## Legacy Oblations

Mages who practice a Legacy do not need to be near a Hallow when they perform an appropriate oblation to gain Mana points. (See "Regaining Mana," p. 77, for information on oblations.) They could be anywhere appropriate to their Legacy, such as the wilderness for the Orphans of Proteus (pp. 348-346) or the Walkers in Mist (pp. 358-360), or a monastery for the Perfected Adepts (pp. 349-351). Instead of performing a ritual or ceremony associated with her Path, a mage performs one meaningful to her Legacy. Suggestions are listed under the sample Legacies.

A Legacy oblation can be attempted only once per day (whether it succeeds or fails), and the Mana points gained are equal to successes rolled. The mage can still perform oblations at a Hallow on the same day (although the Hallow's rating limits the amount of Mana points she can garner per day from those oblations).

## Advantages of Attainments

Attainments simulate the effects of certain spells that are already achievable with improvised and/or rote castings. Why, then, would a mage bother to study for an attainment? There are a number of very good reasons.

• Attainments are not spells, but supernatural abilities. Mages do not need to check for Paradox when using a Legacy attainment, no matter how improbable its use, and attainments do not invoke Disbelief in Sleeper witnesses. Also, attainments do not count against the total spells a mage can have active, or against the mage's Spell Tolerance limit.

In fact, attainments do not read as magical under the gaze of Mage Sight. They appear to be mundane abilities. A Subtle One who uses his False Presence attainment (p. 354) in the absence of any spells displays no magical signature whatsoever. Any material effect caused by the attainment, however, is evident to anyone, including Sleepers. A Perfected Adept (pp. 349-351) who punches someone using Strength boosted with his Chi Force attainment (p. 351) certainly displays amazing Strength, but there is no sign that it is magical in nature.

• Most attainments do not require dice rolls to activate. Spending an instant action is usually enough. See the attainment descriptions for possible exceptions.

• Attainments do not cost Mana, even if they simulate a spell that normally requires Mana.

• Attainments cannot be dispelled or countered, although the Prime 2 "Magic Shield" spell (p. 222) is still effective against them, as it is against any supernatural power.

• Some Legacies have attainments that utilize a primary Arcanum other than the parent Path's Ruling Arcana. Mages who follow such Legacies are not limited by the normal restrictions for learning Common or Inferior Arcana for that Arcanum only. The Legacy's primary Arcanum can be learned as if it were a Ruling Arcanum for the character. He can learn it at the same experience-point cost as a Ruling Arcanum — new dots x5 — and learn it up to the fifth dot without needing a teacher from a different Path.

***Example:*** *The primary Arcanum for the Perfected Adept Legacy's attainments is Life, even though the Legacy is tied to the Obrimos Path, whose Ruling Arcana are Forces and Prime. An Obrimos mage who learns this Legacy can learn the Life Arcanum as a Ruling Arcanum.*

In addition, the required Mana point normally required for improvised casting is not spent when using that Arcanum.

• Attainments do not rely on a Watchtower or the drawing down of Supernal power. Even in a magical dead zone (such as that created using the Prime 5 "Dead Zone" spell, pp. 230-231), a mage can still practice his attainments.

Otherwise, all other factors (Potency, Target, Duration) apply as per normal spellcasting rules. Note that an attainment that simulates an instant-action spell cannot be performed as an extended action.

## The Fourth Attainment

It is said among mages that each Legacy also has a fourth attainment, gained once a willworker has reached nearly the peak of his soul's potential (Gnosis 9). Very few get this far, and those who do seem reluctant to speak of their lineage's ultimate attainment, for it is said to involve a highly personal expression of the mage's soul. Hence, it is dangerous to reveal to those a sorcerer cannot completely trust. A mage who travels this far is sure to eventually find out the truth of the matter for himself.

# ORPHANS of PROTEUS



They have been with us since before the beginning. Before Atlantis called. Before apes learned to walk upright and pile stones atop one another to make their caves. Before man chose to set himself apart from beasts and trees and rocks, they knew the truth: that the circle of life is broad enough to include all things "organic" and "inorganic," that this great wheel turns easily from one form to another, that man and beast and tree and rock are one.

It was they who first took to the grazing-fields, to follow the comings and goings of the herds. And when they had learned the steps of the herd-dance and could sing the words of the herd-song, they put on themselves the skins of the herd-dress and slept in the cold and rain until they became part of the herd itself. It was they who first ran with the wolves and learned the worth of honesty when the wolves pointed toward unseen prey in hopes of sharing the kill. And it was they who stalked against the great cats and learned the value of deception, letting other hunters pass by in hopes of keeping the "lion's share" of the kill for themselves. They it was who flew with the birds, crept with the vines and slept with the stones.

They went where others could not go and did what others could not do. They learned the lessons that life taught from every angle and brought their knowledge back to their tribes to teach the business of living. They sought wisdom to lead their tribes out of darkness and cold and hunger, and set mankind on a path that would eventually lead to civilization. But mankind mistook its new powers of stewardship over the land as mastery, and regarded the animals, plants and rocks only as resources to be plundered rather than as partners in the circle of life. In their hubris, they forgot the wisdom that they had taught and dismissed their utterances as backward superstition.

They who had sacrificed the semblance of their humanity for the greater good were now cast out. Ostracized and despised, they were relegated to the status of monsters and bogeymen used to frighten unruly children. The mighty warriors who had once donned hide and claw and fang in the service of their people were now cast in the role of bloodthirsty murderer. Those who lived by the old lore of leaf and stone were hunted down and torn to pieces or burned in public spectacle. The horns and hooves of the most sacred were denounced as emblems of evil.

All the oldest languages of the world once had a name for them, most now forgotten. In modern English, they are known as the Orphans of Proteus, for their metamorphosis ability. Some say they, not the Atlanteans, were the very first humans to Awaken, and some even go so far as to suggest that all other types of magic are derived from theirs. Whether that is true or not, many now consider them to be a dying breed. Marginalized by the encroachment of civilization, they are usually found only at the fringes of mage society. They engage in few formalities, and the kinship of spirit they share is something that is felt, unspoken, deep within their souls.

Inheritors of the Proteus Legacy can be unnerving, not only to other mages, but to those who know nothing of magic. Social customs and mores — at least, those of the modern civilized world — mean little to them, and they may at times break laws, cross boundaries or ignore table manners and dress codes without compunction. This is not to say that they are dumb brutes. Members may exhibit as much intelligence and compassion as any other sorcerer. They tend to be plainspoken, even rudely blunt, and act impulsively upon primal urges known only to them. For those who have experienced the non-human world directly, such phrases as "nature red in tooth and claw" or "the force that through the green fuse drives the flower" are no mere poetic conceits, but the very bedrock of reality.

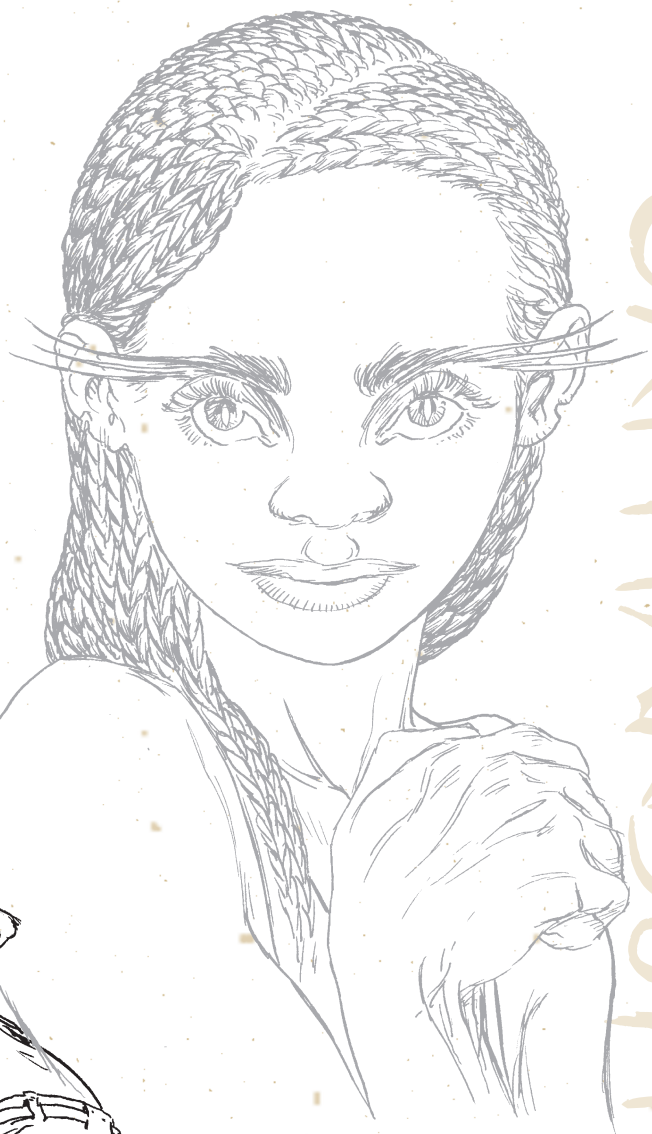
**Parent Path:** Thyrsus

**Nickname:** Shifters

**Appearance:** The more time an Orphan spends using her attainments — whether they provide animal, vegetable or mineral features — the more likely she is to physically resemble that form in some way. Common features include excessive hairiness, a forward-slumping posture, enlarged teeth and nails, overdeveloped ears or nose, iridescent eyes, dermatological conditions that cause the skin to resemble the bark of a tree, or an angular craggy profile like the face of a cliff. In general, all scratches, scars, rashes, infections and other outwardly visible ailments that might mark the mage while in animal form remain visible in an analogous place on his human form, (although these features tend to fade over time if the Orphan avoids frequent use of his attainments).

*Am I not both man and beast,*
*one and the same?*
*I say that this makes me more*
*than man*
*or beast alone.*

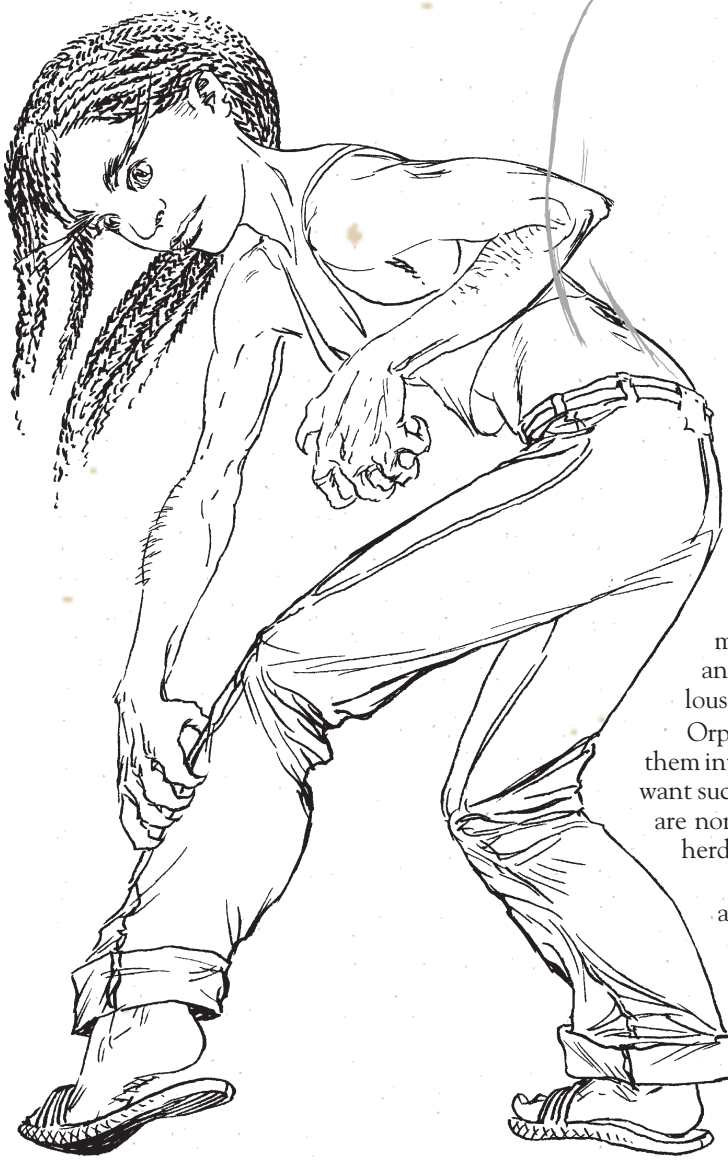
# Orphans of Proteus



**Background:** It is generally assumed that Orphans come almost exclusively from beyond the fringes of civilization — rural areas, remote wildernesses or underdeveloped nations — and this is often the case. As such places dwindle and disappear, however, more inheritors of the Proteus Legacy can be found in cities and suburbs, taking on the forms of domesticated animals, cultivated plants and manufactured objects. Of these, some may be descendants of tribal cultures that knew and respected the power of the Orphans, while others have rejected modern culture and attempt to reconstruct and/or reclaim earlier values that they consider to be safer, healthier and (so to speak) more humane.

**Organization:** All Orphans are Thyrsus, Awakened to the Watchtower of the Primal Wild. While they are often initiated into one order or another (although some are apostates), they tend to spurn the traditional politics and schemes of Awakened society, retreating to the wilderness as soon as they adopt this Legacy.

Most Orphans tend to be either solitary hermits or isolated, clannish groups, so they have little in the way of overall social organization. Affinity groups may spontaneously form along the lines of preferred habitats, species, phylum or kingdom. Regional groups tend to form around places like virgin wilderness, wildlife refuges or well-conceived parks as protection, or as a response against urban expansion, dumping sites and other ecological crime scenes. Communication is generally conducted through non-human media, with speech expressed in the languages of animals, and with "written" messages formed by anomalous plant growth or geological formations.



Orphans tend to claim certain territories, which brings them into conflict with other supernatural beings that might want such territories for their own purposes. Some Orphans are nomadic, following the migratory patterns of birds or herd animals, or the hunting habits of certain predators.

**Suggested Oblations:** A sacred hunt; the ritual acting out of an animal's behavior; the ceremonial offering of food to animals; the ritual arrangement of rocks and stones in a certain area; sacred gardening

**Concepts:** Ecologists and conservationists, animal wranglers, rural hermits, tribal or "primitive" folk

## Attainments

Most Orphans work to emulate a particular life form, such as a bear, cat, eagle or even a tree. Some eccentrics choose to delve into the mysteries of mineral "life."

### 1st: Snake Skin

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Life 2 (primary), Mind 1, Animal Ken 2 or Survival 2

The mage gains the ability to regenerate wounds to her body, similar to the Life 2 "Self-Healing" spell (p. 183), by sloughing off her damaged skin and replacing it with a freshly grown one. An instant action is required and Stamina + Athletics + Life is rolled. Each success heals one bashing or lethal point of damage. This action can be made reflexive in turn by spending one Willpower point.

The user can also communicate with animals in their own language of behaviors, growls, grunts, cues and/or markings. A Presence + Animal Ken roll and instant action is required to communicate simple concepts. She can communicate only the kind of information that another animal of that type could convey to one of its fellow species.

### 2nd: Beast Gift

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Life 3

The mage can transform a portion of her body with a single, specific animal or plant feature, such as bear claws, cat eyes or tree-bark skin, similar to the Life 3 "Transform Self" spell (p. 187). Doing so requires an instant action, during which she can move up to her Speed, but no roll is needed. She must choose her unique feature upon gaining this attainment, and cannot change it thereafter. The shift lasts for up to one hour per activation. Any natural weapon (claws, fangs) she gains adds two dice to attack rolls (and damage is lethal), while a protective feature (fur, tree bark) provides two armor points.

The character can also now heal aggravated wounds using Snake Skin (above), but it also requires the expenditure of one Mana.

**Optional Arcanum:** Matter 3

If the mage also knows Matter 3, her unique transformative feature could be mineral rather than organic. She might shift her fists or feet into stone, or cover her epidermis with a layer of thin, flexible shale "scales." Stone fists or feet add four dice to punches or kicks, but the damage is bashing instead of lethal. Stone skin provides three points of armor.

### 3rd: Beast Form

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Life 4

The mage can now reflexively shapeshift at will into a single, specific creature or plant, similar to the Life 4 "Shapechanging" spell (p. 190). The shift lasts for up to one hour per activation. She does not suffer the problems of losing herself in a form's mindset.

If she chooses a plant form instead of an animal, she is inanimate but can communicate with any nearby plant-based spirits without needing the Spirit Arcanum, or if she journeys through Astral Space while her body is in plant form, she can interact with the ancient plant spirits of the Dreamtime.

**Optional Arcanum:** Matter 4

If the mage also knows Matter 4, she could choose stone as her shapeshifting form, changing herself into a rock. She cannot move, although she can perceive her surroundings. The obvious use for this version of the attainment is camouflage, but it provides another unique benefit. The mage can communicate with any nearby mineral-based spirits without needing the Spirit Arcanum, or if she journeys through Astral Space while her body is in rock form, she can interact with the ancient mineral spirits of the Dreamtime.

## Other Thyrsus Legacies

**Dreamspeaker**

The mage learns to perceive and gain power from the Dreamtime while she is still in the waking world. The Dreamtime is the astral plane that is believed to represent the collective soul of the world itself and all its dreaming creatures. Those native to this place are called the Dreamborn, described in Atlantean lore as the oldest of beings. Some believe the Dreamtime is linked to the limbic system, or "lizard brain," the primordial seat of consciousness.

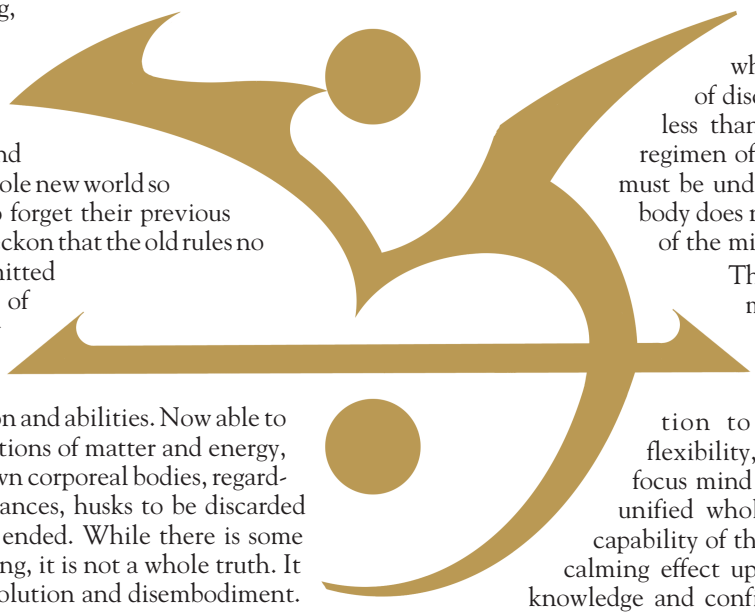
**Tamer of Rivers**

The mage masters the element of water in all its literal and symbolic manifestations. In Atlantean lore, water is the element of emotion and instinct, the urges that rule the lives of men and beasts.



# PERFECTED ADEPT

PERFECTED ADEPT



Often upon Awakening, fledgling mages turn dismissive of the mundane material world. Having penetrated the veil of lies and illusion, they stand upon the threshold of a whole new world so dazzling that they tend to forget their previous mode of existence. They reckon that the old rules no longer apply to them. Admitted into a new confraternity of like souls, they draw away from their families and friends, who cannot understand their new vision and abilities. Now able to transcend the gross limitations of matter and energy, some even neglect their own corporeal bodies, regarding them as a mere hindrances, husks to be discarded once their usefulness has ended. While there is some truth to this way of thinking, it is not a whole truth. It is a road that leads to dissolution and disembodiment.

The Perfected Adepts stand as a warning sign upon that road, reminding all mages where they came from and what their ultimate goal is, or should be. Their presence signifies a return to the source, a remembrance that all mages are still human beings — they are born, live their lives and die. If magic cannot be made to enrich and fulfill that process, then it is not magic but delusion. The Adepts teach that before one can truly transcend the limitations of being human, one must learn what the true limitations of humanity are. Furthermore, they teach that the wisdom gained through transcendence must be brought back to humanity, so as to enable others to follow the same road. A human being is a work in progress, they hold. Awakening is not the completion of that work, but the opportunity for completion, for perfection.

And yet, the task of perfecting oneself cannot be accomplished while still entangled in the web of lies and illusion. Though the Adepts do not disdain or reject the affairs the material world, they do require a substantial removal in order to pursue their goals. Renunciation of worldly attachments or wealth is the first necessary step for disentangling oneself from the world. Adepts tend to retreat into hermitages or cloistered communities, both magical and mundane, in order to disconnect from influences that distract from self-observation and cultivation. They simplify their lives, shunning extraneous noise and clutter so that they can hear the murmurs of their innermost selves.

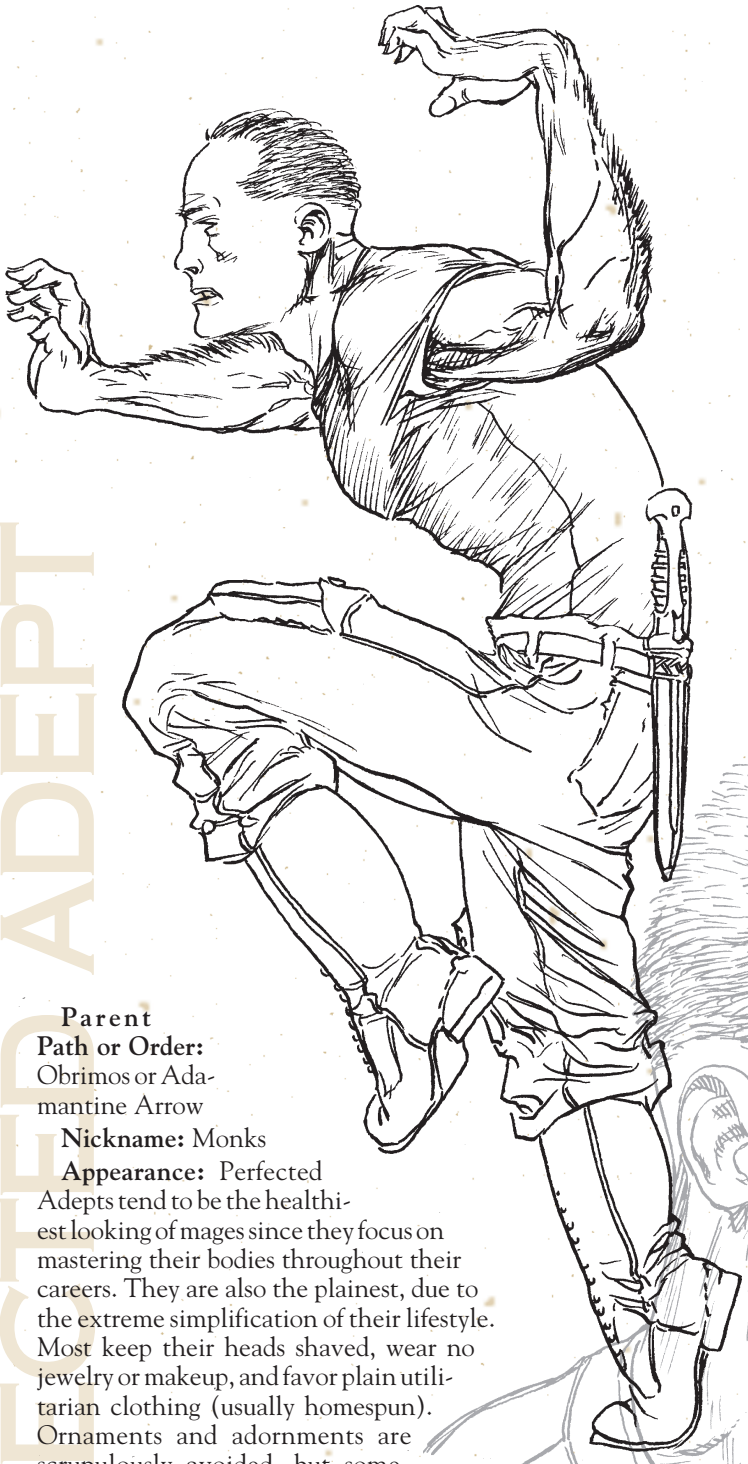
Once a suitable degree of quietude and simplification is attained, an Adept begins the process of perfection by concentrating upon the base from which his consciousness springs, his own physical body. With worldly concerns out of the way, the first thing that the Adept may notice are the noises and sensations that come from within his corporeal frame. True calm and peace of mind are not possible while the body exists in a state of discomfort or disease, or even less than optimal health. A strict regimen of adjusted diet and exercise must be undertaken to ensure that the body does not distract from the clarity of the mind.

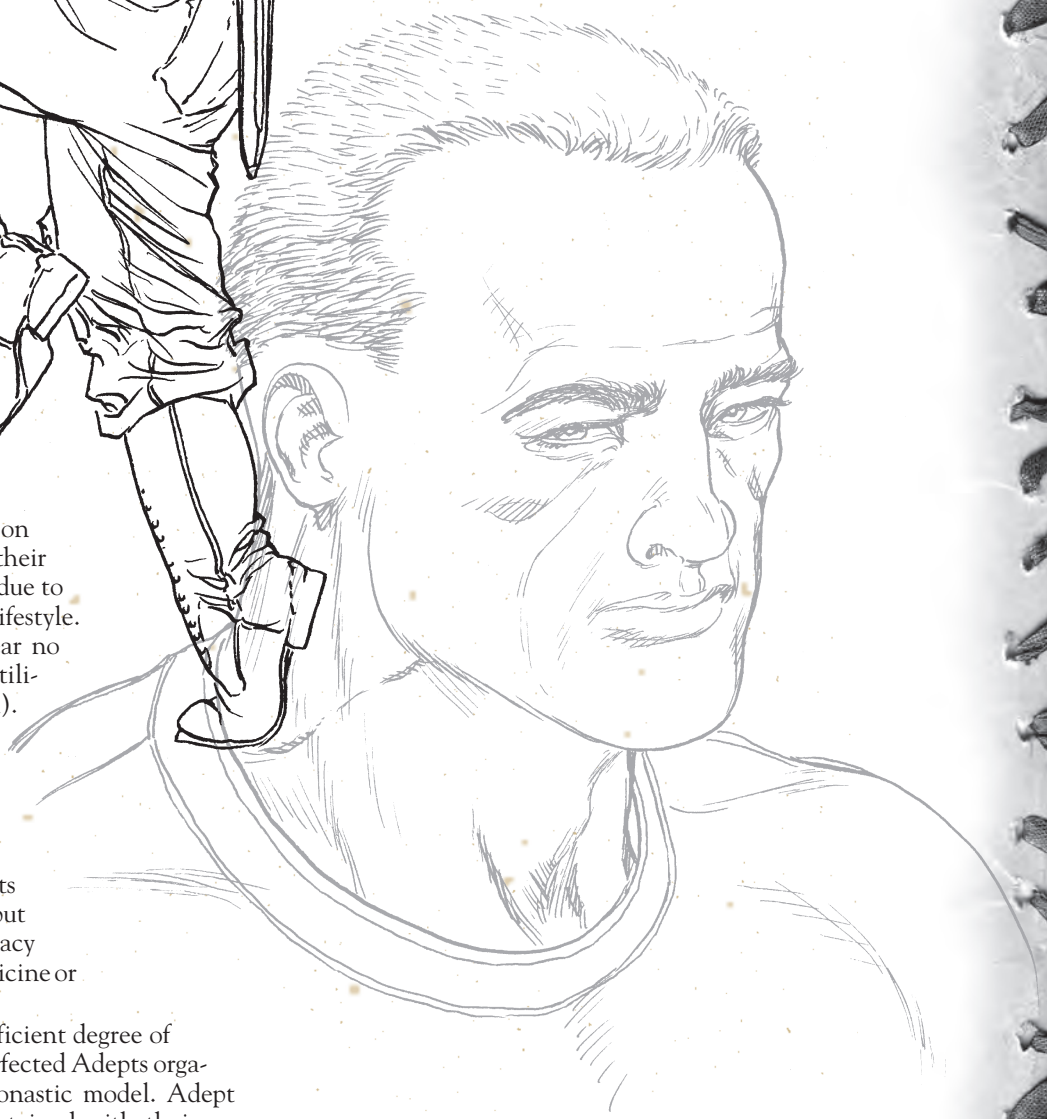
The Perfected Adepts consider martial training to be the most effective type of physical exercise for their purposes. In addition to building strength and flexibility, the student is taught to focus mind and body to function as a unified whole. Besides enhancing the capability of the body, martial arts have a calming effect upon the mind by instilling knowledge and confidence to deal with direct physical threats. Discipline and perseverance, also necessary in magical training, are encouraged and honed. (Asian martial arts in particular incorporate esoteric elements such as focused meditation and occult physiology that perfectly complement the study of magic.) Most systematized fighting styles around the world include some ethical principles whereby practitioners are exhorted to aid and protect those of lesser ability, an ideal that the Adepts proudly espouse.

As the mind works at perfecting the body, it also learns to operate upon itself, gaining mastery over thought and emotion rather than being ruled by them. Just as the distractions of the outer world can be dispelled, just as the wants and urgings of the body can be quelled, so can the chatter and babble of the lower mind be silenced, leaving the soul free hear what it most needs to tell itself. Only when everything has fallen away can the innermost self be free to seek perfection by uniting the highest reality with the lowest.

To some this union might seem to be the ultimate goal, the reason for a mage's existence. But for the Perfected Adepts, this is not the end of their work, but the beginning. Perfection is meaningless if it is static and removed from the world, so the Adept is obligated to return to the world and help others to find the way to inner peace. The Adept's martial prowess makes him a natural champion and protector, but perfection is not bound to any one role. The patience and discipline that mark an Adept's training make him suitable for a number of callings, from the most repetitive of mindless menial labor to the most arcane and convoluted of intellectual pursuits such as science or philosophy. In this way, the Perfected Adept brings perfection into an imperfect world, making himself an exemplar for others to follow and by which to measure themselves.

**Seek perfection within.**





**Parent Path or Order:** Obrimos or Adamantine Arrow

**Nickname:** Monks

**Appearance:** Perfected Adepts tend to be the healthiest looking of mages since they focus on mastering their bodies throughout their careers. They are also the plainest, due to the extreme simplification of their lifestyle. Most keep their heads shaved, wear no jewelry or makeup, and favor plain utilitarian clothing (usually homespun). Ornaments and adornments are scrupulously avoided, but some emblems may be worn or tattooed only if they hold a particular importance and significance.

**Background:** Prospective Adepts can come from any background, but usually find their way to this Legacy through the martial arts, sports, medicine or other body-oriented pursuits.

**Organization:** To maintain a sufficient degree of removal from the outside world, Perfected Adepts organize themselves according to a monastic model. Adept communities are generally self-contained with their own sources of food, water and energy to minimize distractions and pollutants from without. Everyone takes turns at maintenance and housekeeping duties. Older or more accomplished Adepts handle most transactions with the world at large. No Adept is allowed to remain cloistered for too long, however. At some point he must return to the outside world, where other Adepts, other mages and the rest of mankind may decide how to interact with him according to his own individual worth.

**Suggested Oblations:** Rigorous martial arts practice, including sparring with other Perfected Adepts; feats of endurance, such as long-distance running, holding weights for long periods and exposure to the elements; exhibiting humility, such as serving another person for an hour by seeing to all his needs

**Concepts:** Martial artists, athletes, doctors and therapists (both physical and psychiatric), dieticians

## Attainments

Perfected Adepts must devote themselves to study of the Life Arcanum, along with basic principles from the Prime Arcanum. In addition, their bodies must be physically fit (Athletics 3+). With the second attainment and higher, they must also have established competency with the martial arts (Brawl 3+).

### 1st: Body Temple

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Life 2 (primary), Prime 1, Athletics 3

The mage can consciously control his normally autonomous bodily functions, similar to the Life 2 "Body Control" spell (p. 182). This attainment is always active and of indefinite Duration. Use the Adept's Life dots as successes to determine exact effects; see the spell description.

He also gains a sense of his own subtle energy, what has been called *chi* or *prana*, and can see such energy in other life forms. Basically, he gains the Prime 1 "Supernal Vision" spell effect (p. 221) with an indefinite Duration, although it applies only to analyzing living creatures. In other words, he can take an extended action (one turn per roll) to view auras and scrutinize people to discern the strength of their chi (that is, how many Mana points they currently have in their pool), but can't analyze place-based Resonance. Use the rules for scrutinizing beings (p. 278), with a target number equal to the being's Mana points to be able to determine the target's total current points.

### 2nd: Chi Force

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Life 3, Brawl 3

The mage controls the flow of his chi, boosting one specific Physical Attribute, similar to the Life 3 "Honing the Form" spell (p. 186). When this attainment is gained, the mage must choose a single Attribute (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) that he wishes to concentrate upon in the perfection of his body. He cannot later choose a different Attribute.

To gain the boost thereafter, the mage performs an instant action to channel his chi, and his Mind dots are added to the chosen Attribute. The effect lasts for up to one hour per activation.

Since this is not a spell, the mage could use this attainment at the same time that he casts a Honing the Form spell to gain a truly phenomenal Attribute rating. The one limitation, however, is that the default Duration of any spell that boosts the same Physical Attribute becomes transitory (one turn), even if it is normally prolonged.

**Optional Arcanum:** Forces 3

If your character also has Forces 3, he can use his chi to strike at a distance, similar to the Forces 3 "Telekinetic Strike" spell (pp. 170-171). An instant action is performed and a Resolve + Brawl + Forces roll is made. Each success inflicts one bashing point of damage. As with the spell, this effect is aimed, so anything that would normally protect the target from a ranged attack applies against the mage's chi strike.

### 3rd: Perfect Body

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Life 4

As with Chi Force, above, but the mage can now choose a second Physical Attribute to boost. He can even use both of these attainments at the same time, as long as he spends separate instant actions to activate the powers.

**Optional Arcanum:** Forces 4

If he also has Forces 4, his Telekinetic Strike now delivers lethal damage. In addition, he can use his chi to turn aside bullets and other projectiles, similar to the Forces 4 "Control Velocity" spell (p. 172). An instant action is performed and a Dexterity + Brawl + Forces roll is made. The number of successes determines the degree to which he can turn the projectile (as per the spell description). He can take this action at any point in the initiative roster, even before he is normally allowed to act, as long as he has not yet acted the turn.

## Other Obrimos Legacies

**Thrice-Great**

The mage follows the way of Hermes-Thoth-Mercury by studying the correspondences between earthly things and their heavenly counterparts. The Silver Ladder also teaches this Legacy.

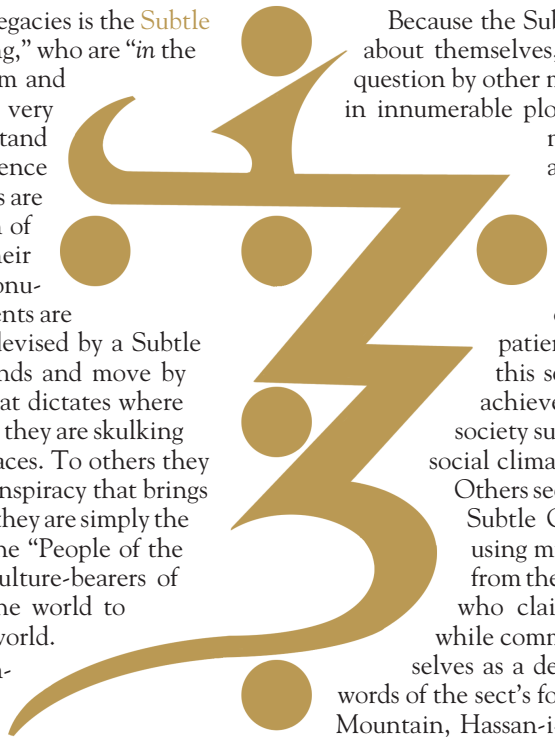
**Tamer of Fire**

The mage masters the element of fire in all its literal and symbolic manifestations. In Atlantean lore, fire is the element of will and intuition, knowing beyond reason.



# SUBTLE ONES





Among the most enigmatic of Legacies is the Subtle Ones, mages who "do without doing," who are "*in* the world but not *of* it." Look for them and they are gone. Many doubt their very existence, but those who understand their ways can detect their influence throughout the world. Their names are not recorded by history, but much of history was written by them. Their faces may not be found upon monumental statuary, but most monuments are carved according to proportions devised by a Subtle hand. Though they heed no bounds and move by routes unknown, it is their pen that dictates where roads and borders are laid. To some they are skulking villains who dare not show their faces. To others they are the secret chiefs of the great conspiracy that brings the world to order. To themselves, they are simply the Subtle Ones, or the *Ahl-i-Batin*, the "People of the Inner Truth" who serve as the culture-bearers of civilization — not by bringing the world to order, but by bringing order to the world.

Batini magic utilizes sacred geometry to open the mind to divine reality. By studying the complexities of spatial relationships and proportionality, the soul can compose itself to harmonize with the world, and so compose the world. Subtle lore traces itself back to the architects and city planners of Atlantis, for whom sociology was no mere science but a magical art. They believed that a harmonious society that both sustains and fulfills all its members could be achieved through proper patterning of the space it occupies, engendering proper patterns of behavior in occupants. This social engineering concerned itself with everything from broad geographical plans to the minutiae of detail in art, music and literature. Every aspect of culture could be made to reflect — and so teach and encourage — greater social harmony.

The Subtle Ones exerted substantial influence in all the great civilizations of the world up through the European Renaissance until their power, obtained largely through the work of agents placed within major political and religious institutions, waned as secular society waxed. At present, the Subtle Ones are too few and scattered to enact any of their plans on a large scale, but have learned to keep themselves insinuated into the ever-changing administrations of modern politics, mostly by seizing posts within the intelligence community. They also maintain a constant presence in the worlds of art, fashion, communication and education. From these positions they can control (or at least influence to some nominal degree) the excesses and vicissitudes of society at large.

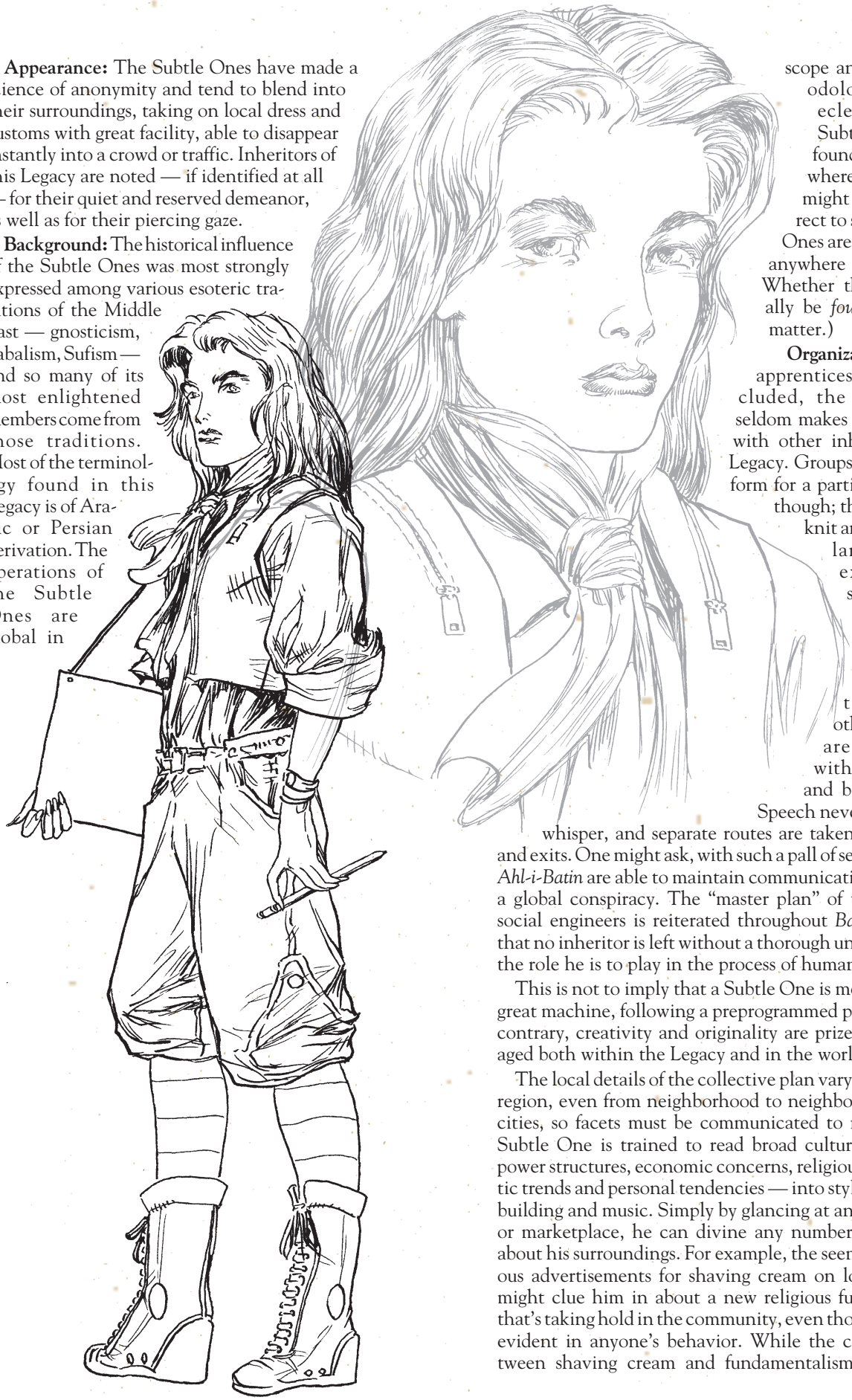
Because the Subtle Ones are so arcane and secretive about themselves, their motives are often called into question by other mages. Their hand has been discerned in innumerable plots and intrigues throughout history, most notably in the Order of Assassins, a deviant sect of Ishmaelite Islam. From its network of impregnable mountaintop fortresses, this group dispatched highly trained operatives to extend its influence, from fanatically suicidal hit men to skilled and patient deep-cover agents. Some consider this sect to be the Subtle Ones' crowning achievement, a spiritually inclined utopian society sustaining itself in the midst of a hostile social climate with a minimum of military force. Others see the Assassins as the very worst of the Subtle Ones' work — secluded and insular, using murder as a tool to separate themselves from the outside world for an autocratic leader who claims overweening spiritual authority while commanding his mind-slaves to kill themselves as a demonstration of his power. The final words of the sect's founder, the legendary Old Man of the Mountain, Hassan-i-Sabbah — "Nothing is true, everything is permitted!" — is often taken to indicate the deeply amoral identity of this Legacy.

In fact, the Subtle Ones do not hesitate to engage in acts that would be condemned by most spiritual traditions. The *Ahl-i-Batin* also employ a number of ascetic practices taken to potentially dangerous extremes, including fasting, flagellation and self-mutilation. Their long history of brainwashing, mind control and social manipulation is cause for concern as well. Among their other disciplines, they cultivate the way of the unseen assassin, and are not above using violence or a convincing threat of violence to achieve their aims. Thus, they can be said to wield considerable temporal power. The Subtle Ones do not consider themselves to be the masters of the world, but merely the goad-servants of human evolution, scourging mankind to drive it up the spiritual slope toward an eventual postulated universal Awakening.

As to when this will occur, the Legacy presents no clear answer. At present, the prevailing view is that too many secrets have been discovered (or leaked) to the Sleepers too soon, granting humanity a capacity for destruction in disproportionate excess to its current degree of moral development. This course presents a danger to the world as a whole, mages included, and so must be curbed by whatever means necessary.

**Parent Path or Order:** Mastigos or Guardians of the Veil
**Nickname:** Invisible Man

*Speak our name only in whispers, for we are at all times closer to you than your own jugular vein, though ye know it not.*



**Appearance:** The Subtle Ones have made a science of anonymity and tend to blend into their surroundings, taking on local dress and customs with great facility, able to disappear instantly into a crowd or traffic. Inheritors of this Legacy are noted — if identified at all — for their quiet and reserved demeanor, as well as for their piercing gaze.

**Background:** The historical influence of the Subtle Ones was most strongly expressed among various esoteric traditions of the Middle East — gnosticism, qabalism, Sufism — and so many of its most enlightened members come from those traditions. Most of the terminology found in this Legacy is of Arabic or Persian derivation. The operations of the Subtle Ones are global in scope and their methodology is highly eclectic, so that Subtle Ones can be found almost anywhere. (Actually, it might be more correct to say that Subtle Ones are *in place* almost anywhere in the world. Whether they can actually be *found* is another matter.)

**Organization:** Once his apprenticeship has concluded, the Subtle One seldom makes direct contact with other inheritors of his Legacy. Groups do sometimes form for a particular purpose, though; these are tightly knit and highly insular cells so extravagantly surreptitious that each member may not even know the identities of the others. Meetings are conducted with faces veiled and bodies cloaked. Speech never rises above a whisper, and separate routes are taken for entrances and exits. One might ask, with such a pall of secrecy, how the *Ahl-i-Batin* are able to maintain communications, much less a global conspiracy. The "master plan" of the Atlantean social engineers is reiterated throughout *Batini* lore, such that no inheritor is left without a thorough understanding of the role he is to play in the process of human evolution.

This is not to imply that a Subtle One is merely a cog in a great machine, following a preprogrammed pattern. On the contrary, creativity and originality are prized and encouraged both within the Legacy and in the world at large.

The local details of the collective plan vary from region to region, even from neighborhood to neighborhood in large cities, so facets must be communicated to newcomers. A Subtle One is trained to read broad cultural patterns — power structures, economic concerns, religious beliefs, artistic trends and personal tendencies — into styles of dress, art, building and music. Simply by glancing at any street corner or marketplace, he can divine any number of particulars about his surroundings. For example, the seemingly innocuous advertisements for shaving cream on local billboards might clue him in about a new religious fundamentalism that's taking hold in the community, even though it's not yet evident in anyone's behavior. While the connection between shaving cream and fundamentalism would never

occur to a casual observer, the subtle strands of unconscious belief and desire represented by the two forces are obvious to the Subtle One observer, allowing him to make intuitive leaps of understanding that are irrational or mystifying to others.

Furthermore, *Batini* are likely to have encoded their own innovations into the social fabric. Visitors might read specific messages and even elaborate reports in such ubiquitous details as an architectural ornament, a hemline border stitch, the layout of streets or the melody of a popular folk tune.

**Suggested Oblations:** Impersonating others, such as pretending to be a police officer and issuing tickets, or a stock-boy at the local convenience store; teaching others (the Subtle One could hold a real teaching position or pretend to be a substitute teacher); watching multiple television broadcasts at once to gain a sense of the social zeitgeist; practicing the art of camouflage by successfully hiding from another mage while within his vicinity

**Concepts:** Assassins, double agents (or triple, quadruple), diplomats, political advisors, architects, artists, songwriters

## Attainments

The mage who learns this Legacy must have awareness of the Mysteries of Mind and Fate, along with skills in what might best be termed "spycraft."

### 1st: The Subtle Dance

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Mind 2 (primary), Fate 1, Subterfuge 2

The mage walks unnoticed by others, blending perfectly into their expectations. While doing so, she reads from her special vantage clues in the artifacts of human culture — advertising, fashion — and the unconscious behavior of others. These clues hint at opportunities and openings for effecting major changes in society through minor deeds.

This attainment is similar to a combination of the Mind 2 "Incognito Presence" spell (p. 208, allowing her to walk openly but unnoticed by others) and the Fate 1 "The Sybil's Sight" spell (p. 149, allowing her to detect momentous events). To activate this attainment, the mage merely performs an instant action; no roll is required. The effect lasts for up to an hour.

### 2nd: False Presence

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Mind 3

The mage can assume a false persona and even image, using an effect similar to the Mind 3 "Imposter" spell (p. 211). He performs an instant action (no roll required) and affects a number of senses (sight, sound, smell, touch and even taste) equal to his Mind dots. The effect lasts for up to an hour.

In addition, he can alter the appearance of his own aura, changing its mental or emotional state (similar to the Mind 2 "Alter Aura" spell, p. 207), or even its nature (similar to the Prime 2 "Transform Aura" spell, p. 223. Use the mage's Mind dots for Potency when comparing this effect against anyone trying to see past it.

**Optional Arcanum:** Space 3

If she also knows Space 3, the mage can create sympathetic connections between people, places and things she observes during the Subtle Dance (above), similar to the Space 3 "New Threads" spell (p. 237). She performs an instant action and improves the degree of sympathy by one degree per dot of Space, although she cannot make a Sensory connection if the targets are not in sensory contact (direct sight, hearing or touch). An Intimate connection is the best possible in that situation. (The Storyteller determines the base degree of connection.) These threads are of lasting Duration, unless the natural course of events alters them (such as if two people's relations become strained, decreasing their connection).

### 3rd: Occlude the Mind

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Mind 4

The mage can literally cloud others' minds by altering their very memories, similar to the Mind 4 "Breach the Vault of Memory" spell (p. 214). An instant action is required and Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mind is rolled.

**Optional Arcanum:** Space 4

If she also knows Space 4, the mage can co-locate a number of False Presences in different places at the same time (similar to the Space 4 "Co-Location" spell, p. 239). She performs an instant action (no roll required) and can create one persona per dot of Mind that she has. She can multitask (as per the Mind 3 "Multi-Tasking" spell, p. 211) up to a total of two mental and/or social instant actions or three mental and/or social extended actions between herself and her false personas.

## Other Mastigos Legacies

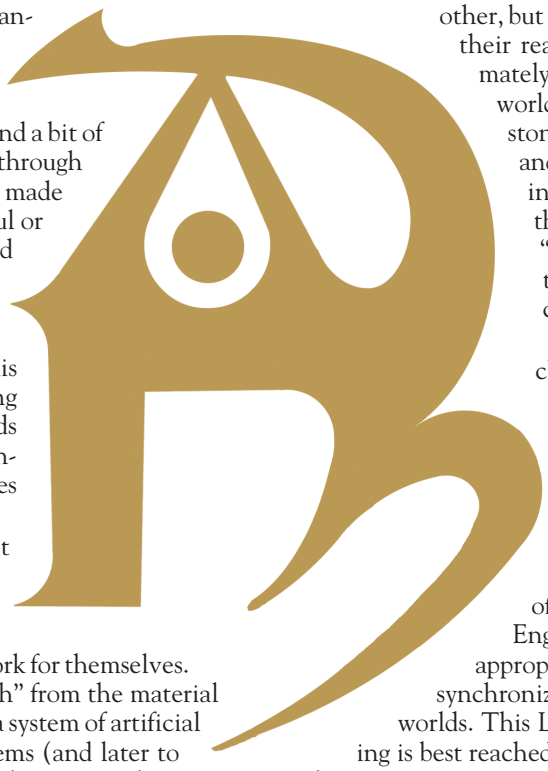
**Clavicularius ("Key-Keeper")**

The mage practices *goetia*, trucking with demons by studying the darker parts of his own psyche. Through sympathy, he gains control over the demons that reign over his sins. He learns the seals that name and bind these beings, as set down long ago by King Solomon.

**Sphinx**

The mage learns to master any conundrum, cipher or enigma, and can find his way out of any labyrinth. He can deduce truths even in the absence of facts. The Mysterium also teaches this Legacy.

# Uncrowned Kings



Since the dawn of civilization, mankind has dreamed of creating wealth from worthless matter. Such a dream can be made real, mankind found, but only through hard work and a bit of luck. A lump of stone or wood can, through carving, grinding or knapping, be made into an object that is useful, beautiful or both. Patience and toil can be applied to a patch of dirt to cause crops to spring up or livestock to increase and grow strong. Those willing to sacrifice their time and effort in this way often seem to feel that basing their lifestyle on such activity yields not only material wealth but also endows the soul with extended qualities of utility and beauty.

Not everyone was willing to put forth such effort, though, so some devised shortcuts to wealth, claiming credit for the work of others or even claiming the product of that work for themselves. They divorced the notion of "wealth" from the material benefits of work, reducing riches to a system of artificial value placed upon rare metals or gems (and later to printed scraps of paper and then to glowing numbers on a monitor screen). The actual work of enriching life was denigrated as a lowly occupation and the soulcraft it engendered dismissed as fantasy by those unwilling to engage in it.

Getting something for nothing only leaves one wanting more. Empty wealth, like food without nutrients, can be addictive, expanding the vacuum it was intended to fulfill. Into such a vacuous society there inevitably resurfaced distorted legends that told of how the mages of old learned the secret of tuning lead into gold, dirt into money, shit into Shinola. With the legends came charlatans, those who claimed to know the trick of getting something for nothing, who were sought out by kings with vacuous coffers, who fleeced their patrons by wrapping their lead ingots in polished brass foil and slipped out of the palace by night with their own empty wealth jingling in their purses. So the legends fell into disrepute (but without ever disappearing entirely) while the quest for empty wealth continued.

The truth behind those legends would shock the royal addicts who heard them. Indeed, the mages of Atlantis *had* learned the "trick" of transmuting one substance into another, but it was only an incidental side effect of their real work. Their labors were not ultimately directed toward the external material world, but inward. Like land, wood or stone, the human soul can be cultivated and shaped, they found, transformed into something both greater and finer than what it might otherwise be. The "lead" that they operated upon was themselves, and the "gold" that they created was themselves.

This is not to say that their "alchemy" was a purely contemplative practice, a type of meditation cloaked in a physical metaphor. The image of the secluded chamber with its kiln and clutter of alembic, retort and crucible is factually accurate. Experimentation in the material plane was as much a part of their practice as spiritual discipline. Engaging in a physical craft with an appropriate mindset of self-observation can synchronize changes in both the inner and outer worlds. This Legacy teaches that true understanding is best reached by mirroring the inner process with the outer.

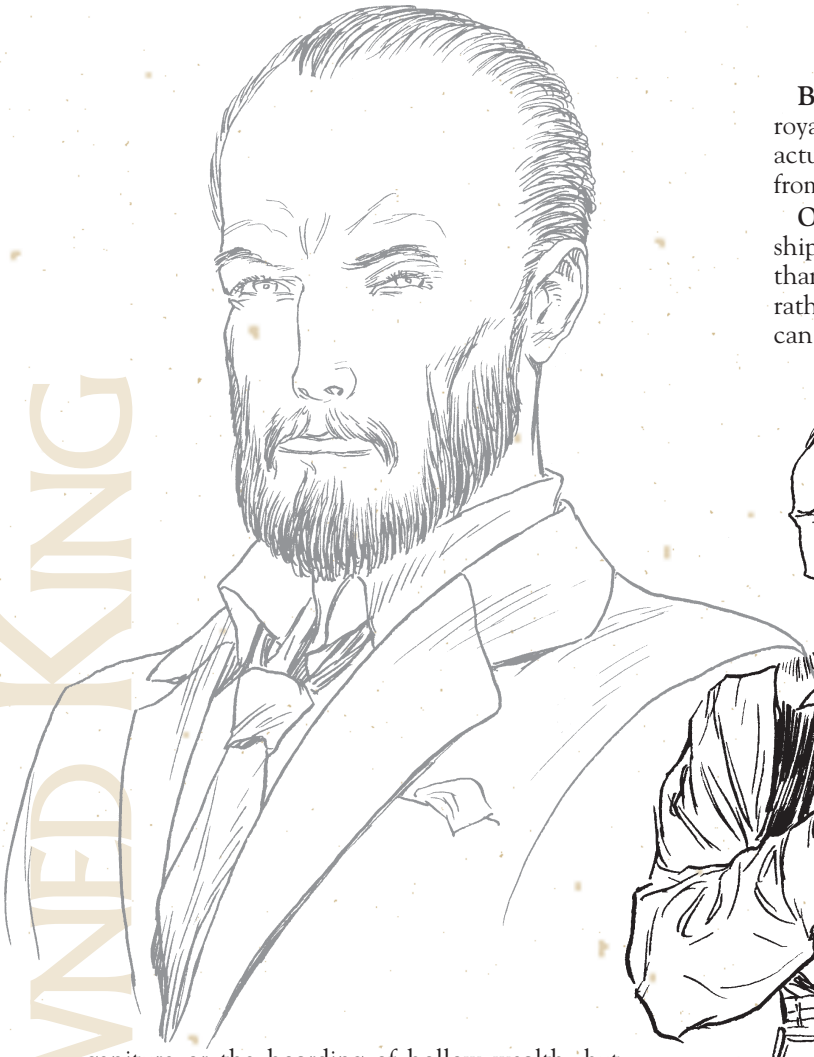
Just as matter can be shaped by heat and cold, by hammer's blow and chisel's cut, so too can the soul be shaped by pleasure and pain, by feeling and thought. Emotional baggage or faulty modes of thought can be trimmed away and desirable qualities such as honesty and compassion may be added to the alloy mixture in the crucible of the soul. Imperfection can be burned off, boiled out or frozen and chipped away. The soul's purest essence may be distilled out of the woes and trauma that weigh it down, leaving it free to become that which is rarer and more precious than gold — the fulfilling life of the complete person.

Inheritors of this Legacy are known as the "Uncrowned Kings," a term that most outsiders take to refer to the age of the charlatans, when the rulers of the world could be led by their vacuous desires and anyone who knew those desires could easily become a true "power behind the throne." But a more esoteric meaning is hidden in the name. Having perfected the technique of crafting their own souls, the Uncrowned could truly claim to be "self-made men," masters of their own souls. Their "royalty" is based, not upon primo-

UNCROWNED KING

THOUGH WOE AND WORRY
MAY WEIGH DOWN YOUR
SOUL LIKE LEAD,
BY THE HEAT OF YOUR
OWN EFFORTS MAY YOU YET
SHINE LIKE GOLD.

# Uncrowned King



geniture or the hoarding of hollow wealth, but upon the noble qualities that they have cultivated within themselves. They do not rule over nations, but over themselves to a degree that "common" folk can scarcely imagine.

The qualifier "Uncrowned" is equally significant on an esoteric level, beyond the fact that they do not openly display their unique nobility. The adornment of precious metals and gems is at once a metaphoric image connoting inner nobility and personal power, a reference to the physical transmutations that this Legacy practices. The title is also an oblique suggestion of the halo found in religious iconography denoting a brilliance or radiance of consciousness so bright that it shines directly through the skull (normally visible to those with aura perception but sometimes accessible to Sleepers in a religious context). But these Kings are emphatically *Un*crowned, eschewing not only the lauds of their peers, but also the empty wealth that they are capable of creating.

**Parent Path or Order:** Moros or Free Council

**Nickname:** Coal-burners

**Appearance:** While Uncrowned Kings may occasionally exhibit a regal demeanor or noble bearing that reflects their inner nature, their outward appearance usually belies such appearance with evidence of the physical toil that occupies their time. Fingers calloused from manual labor, shoulders stooped from heavy lifting and a complexion begrimed with soot and baked to a leathery texture are the most common marks of this Legacy.

**Background:** Mistakenly thought to be the province of royalty and the moneyed classes, the Uncrowned Kings are actually far more likely to extend their tutorship to aspirants from the low classes, laborers and craftsmen.

**Organization:** Aside from the teacher-student relationship, there is no real hierarchy among the Uncrowned other than a kind of general meritocracy, based on self-fulfillment rather than a shared notion of perfection. While this Legacy can be just as reclusive and secretive as any other class of mages, individual inheritors tend to engage in a large volume of correspondence to compare experimental notes in a way that mimics (or, more accurately, is mimicked by) the peer reviews of Sleeper scientific circles.

**Suggested Oblations:** Engaging in physical labor; meaningful work (other than the calling he practices for his attainments, described below); leading others in a coordinated teamwork effort; practicing a craft or hobby (again, other than his attainment's calling)

**Concepts:** Metallurgists and foundry workers, carpenters, farmers, stonecutters and masons, scientists (applied) and laboratory technicians

## Attainments

All Uncrowned attainments depend on the mage's regular practice of a call-

ing, usually alchemy, but auto-repair, craftsmanship or some other work that involves mind and body is acceptable. The mage must perform this calling and produce something from it at least once per month. This is an extended task, requiring a target number at least equal to the mage's Mind dots. Intelligence + Crafts is rolled, and the time per roll is at least half an hour, but it can be longer depending on the craft involved. If a month passes without him purifying his soul through the meditative process of labor, he loses his attainments until he succeeds in his calling.

Whenever a mage uses the 2nd or 3rd Uncrowned attainment, his head is wreathed in a shining halo, the sign of his alchemically purified soul. The halo can be seen only by mages or other supernatural beings using an aura-perception power (such as a Mind or Prime spell or a vampire's Auspex Discipline). It is too subtle for even Mage Sight.

### 1st: Nigredo

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 3, Matter 1, Mind 2 (primary), Crafts 2, Occult 1

The mage has a "Mental Shield" (p. 208) of indefinite duration that provides protection equal to her Mind dots.

In addition, she may study any product of her practice of the Matter Arcanum, such as an altered or transformed object, and see in it a mirror of her own soul. She can perceive her own aura, similar to the "Aura Perception" spell, p. 205. No roll is involved; just an instant action spent examining the object to read what it tells about herself. Following this action, she gains a +2 dice modifier on any Mind Arcanum Augmentation spells that boost her Mental and/or Social Attributes, as long as they are cast within the same scene as her examination.

### 2nd: Albedo

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 3, Mind 3

The mage can boost one specific Mental or Social Attribute, similar to the "Augment the Mind" spell (p. 210). When this attainment is first gained, the mage must choose a single Attribute (such as Intelligence or Composure) that he wishes to concentrate on in the Great Work of soulcrafting. He cannot later choose a different Attribute.

To gain the boost, he must first study his soul in the same manner as he does one of the products of his Matter magic, as described for Nigredo. Following this action, his Mind dots are added to the chosen Attribute. The effect lasts for up to one hour when invoked.

Since this is not a spell, the mage could use this attainment at the same time that he casts an "Augment the Mind" spell to gain a truly phenomenal Attribute rating. The one limitation, however, is that the default Duration of any spell that boosts the same Mental or Social Attribute becomes transitory (one turn), even if it is normally prolonged.

**Optional Arcanum:** Prime 3

If the mage also knows Prime 3, he gains the benefit of the "Armor of the Soul" (p. 223) effect as part of his Nigredo shield.

### 3rd: Rubedo

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 3, Mind 4

As Albedo, above, but the mage can now choose a second Mental or Social Attribute to boost. He can even use both of these attainments at the same time, as long as he spends separate instant actions studying his soul through the auspices of his work to activate the powers.

**Optional Arcanum:** Prime 4

If he also knows Prime 4, he can siphon Mana from objects he has worked his Matter magic upon, similar to the "Siphon Integrity" spell (p. 229). The object must have been created or modified by the mage himself using the Matter Arcanum, and only one such object can be siphoned per day. An instant action is performed and Resolve + Occult + Prime is rolled. Each success siphons one Mana, but inflicts two points of Structure damage to the item (bypassing Durability).

## Other Moros Legacies

**Bokor**

The mage rules over the legions of the animate dead, commanding zombies and revenants (but not ghosts).

**Tamer of Stone**

The mage masters the element of earth in all its literal and symbolic manifestations. In Atlantean lore, earth is the element of sensation and incarnation, the grounding principle.



# Walker in Mists

In seeking to grasp the higher order of the Supernal World, many mages look beyond the artificial reality constructed and maintained by mankind, toward the world of nature. While others leaf through dusty tomes or gaze into the smooth, polished surfaces of mirrors or glass balls in their secluded sanctums, there are those willing to step outside and draw knowledge and power from a greater world not of their own making. They read their incantations and prophecies in the stir of branches in the wind and the fall of leaves. They draw power and strength from the green, growing world.

There is a secret language in nature, and from those who are able to read it nothing in the Fallen World may be hidden, for all things are interconnected and everything is reflected in everything else. Nature displays its treasures for all to see, but unfolds in ways that few can ever fully comprehend, changeless only in its ever-changing evolutions, devolutions and revolutions. The diligent mage may divine the intricate syntax and grandiose grammar of this secret language, glimpsing even deeper secrets in the Mists that enshroud mysteries beyond mortal comprehension.

Most would halt or turn back, but some press on into this nature beyond nature, this "supernature," if you will. In the Mists can be found the implicit order from which the visible world grows, the sleeping giants whose bodies are the land, whose breath is the wind, of whose voices the thunder is but an echo. Here is where the faces of nymphs shine through flower and fruit and leaf, where the dances of sylphs trace breeze and gale, where gnomes churn away at the molten heart of the mountain. This is where magic is born, and even the mightiest mage must tread carefully or not at all.

The Walker in Mists reaches beyond the seen into the unseen, tapping magic at the source of all life as was done in times long forgot. Other mages look within themselves, or up at distant heavens, but the Walker actually travels in the world seeking realms of pure enchantment. He knows the deep caverns of the earth where dragons yet sleep, and what ancient invisible roads lead to the fae countries.

It was the Walker in Mists who first taught mankind to mark the trails it followed and to recognize landmarks that could lead unerringly from region to region. Rather than following seasonal growth or available game, mankind could choose its own path to its destiny. In short, he taught us not simply to migrate, but to actually *travel*. To the more settled folk he gave games of chance — the vagaries of which teach, in miniature, the mysteries of fate and destiny — that they too might experience the adventure of the unknown.

But with the spread of civilization, mankind forgot the wisdom of the Walker, taking his gifts for granted and detaching itself from the rhythms and cycles of the natural world. Even his games of chance — once used to divine the very will of the gods themselves — degenerated into a competitive orgy of materialistic greed, attracting crime and corruption. As broad, well-traveled roads carved up the wilderness and creased the face of the earth, the Walker found it increasingly necessary to rely upon ley lines to guide him invisibly through the Mists from grove to lake to mountain as he visited the few remaining sacred sites. In modern times, he is completely marginalized, a loner patrolling the fringes of the overdeveloped world.

**Parent Path or Order:** Acanthus or Mysterium

**Nickname:** Druid

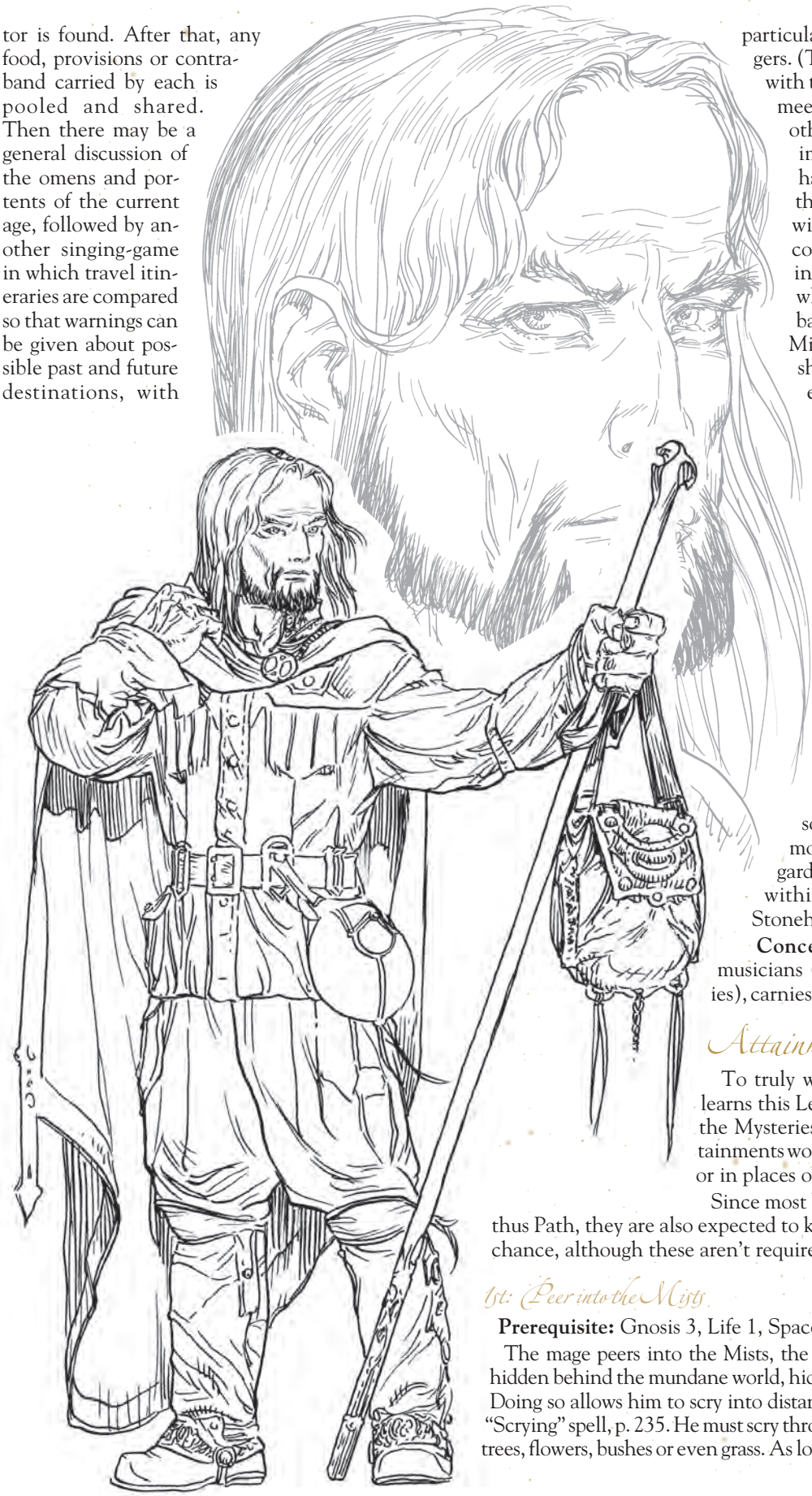
**Appearance:** While Walkers seem to occupy the extremes of the physiognomic spectrum, most tend toward lean physiques, better suited for constant travel, and often have tanned skin from the time spent outdoors (although, oddly, with generally smooth complexions). Most favor simple functional clothing when on the road, but all invariably seem to exhibit some natural flamboyance, howsoever understated, that usually blends bohemian and hippie fashions with styles from older historical periods: headbands and armbands, sashes instead of belts, robes or kilts instead of trousers.

**Background:** Inheritors of the Walking Legacy may emerge from nearly any socioeconomic demographic, although the super-rich seldom manage to take on the risks of this lifestyle. Those who travel frequently out of necessity or vocation are more likely to encounter a Walker, while those of an imaginative or artistic bent are more likely to appreciate a Walker's enchantments and seek to learn about the wonders he conjures. The subculture of gambling has provided fertile ground for this Legacy, but all Walkers unanimously abhor the commercialism that has degraded their once-sacred pastime.

**Organization:** Every Walker in the Mists is accustomed to the life of the solitary nomad. Although all destinies are shared, all paths leading to destiny are separate. Even teacher and student must part ways eventually. The crossing of paths, therefore, is a momentous occasion inaugurated by lengthy introductions recounting each Walker's origins and travels, followed by a kind of singing-game in which each takes turns reciting his tutorial lineage until a common spiritual ances-

"The trees have told me that those who seek us draw near."

tor is found. After that, any food, provisions or contraband carried by each is pooled and shared. Then there may be a general discussion of the omens and portents of the current age, followed by another singing-game in which travel itineraries are compared so that warnings can be given about possible past and future destinations, with particular emphasis on immediate dangers. (This exchange is in accordance with the old bardic line, "When two meet, each is about to go where the other has just been.") In times of impending crisis or necessary haste, all but the final phase of the ceremony may be dispensed with until some later date when convenience allows. The crossing of paths is rare, and even rarer when paths intertwine so that bands of Walkers take to the Mists. Walker groups, notoriously short-lived, are the stuff of legend, unheard of in the modern day. Rumors sometimes circulate of Walker families who tend to the world's dwindling virgin wildernesses and sacred sites.



**Suggested Oblations:** Trailblazing (following a path in a park, the woods or in wilderness that the character has never taken before); orienteering (finding one's way in a strange place without recourse to maps or directions, including a part of town the character has never been in); playing a game of chance in which failure costs something substantial (such as money or a favor owed); sacred gardening; a ceremony performed within an ancient ruin (such as Stonehenge)

**Concepts:** Explorers, naturalists, musicians (including roadies and groupies), carnies, drifters, professional gamblers

## Attainments

To truly walk the Mists, the mage who learns this Legacy needs to be proficient in the Mysteries of Life and Space. These attainments work best in natural environments or in places of ancient power.

Since most Walkers come from the Acanthus Path, they are also expected to know the Mysteries of Fate and chance, although these aren't required for their attainments.

### 1st: Peer into the Mists

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 3, Life 1, Space 2 (primary)

The mage peers into the Mists, the continuum of Nature that lies hidden behind the mundane world, hidden even from the Mage Sight. Doing so allows him to scry into distant places as if he were using the "Scrying" spell, p. 235. He must scry through the medium of plant life — trees, flowers, bushes or even grass. As long as there is some form of plant

life in the place he wishes to scry, the mage can see there. To peer into the Mists and spy the desired location (i.e., to open a scrying window), an instant action is performed and Wits + Survival + Space is rolled, modified by the sympathetic distance (see pp. 114-115). After he has established the window, a reflexive action is required to view through it.

**Optional Arcanum:** Time 2

If the mage also has Time 2, he can peer into the past at the location he is scrying, similar to the "Postcognition" spell, p. 260. He literally speaks to plants to get their memory of events viewed. He can view the past only if the plants currently present at the location were there during the time the mage wishes to view.

### 2nd: Mist Haven

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 5, Space 3

By cloaking himself (and others if desired) in the Mists, the mage can create a ward with a Ban of his choice (as long as he has the necessary Arcana knowledge), similar to the "Ward" (p. 236) and "Ban" (p. 237) spells. He can do this only amidst nature, where at least one green shoot grows from the earth. One Willpower point must be spent to summon the Mists if green space is lacking. To create the ward/Ban, he performs an instant action (no roll required) and affects an area based on his Space dots.

| Radius or | Unique Area | Space Dots |
|---|---|---|
| 4-yard radius | 20 sq. yards | ••• |
| 8-yard radius | 40 sq. yards | •••• |
| 16-yard radius | 80 sq. yards | ••••• |

If he has Space 4, you can resort to the advanced area-affecting chart (see p. 118), using dots instead of dice penalties.

**Optional Arcanum:** Time 3

If the mage also has Time 3, he can use Peer into the Mists (above) to divine the future, similar to the "Divination" spell (p. 263). The mage performs an instant action and can ask one question about the target's future per Time dot. The Mists can sometimes reveal the weave of Creation before it's made manifest. This power can be used in regard to the same target only once every 24 hours.

### 3rd: Paths Through the Mists

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 7, Space 4

The mage steps into the Mists, traveling wherever he desires as if he had created a Space portal. This ability is like the "Portal" spell, p. 238, although it is an instant action. The effect's duration, however, is only for the turn in which it is activated and the subsequent turn (in which the mage and/or his friends presumably step onto the Mist path and step out at their destination). To keep it open longer, the mage must concentrate (as with any concentration-based spell; see p. 119). He can only open a path at and travel to a place with some form of plant life (even a small patch of grass is acceptable). Others can join him on his journey through the Mists: One person of Size 5 or less can pass through the portal per turn; larger people can spend two turns squeezing through. An instant action is performed to activate this power, and Composure + Survival + Space is rolled to determine success (modified by the sympathetic distance of the destination).

**Optional Arcanum:** Time 4

If the mage also has Time 4, he can read prophecies from within his Mist Haven (above), similar to the "Prophecy" spell (p. 264). He performs an instant action and can ask one question about a subject's possible future (what *might* happen rather than what will happen) per Time dot. This power can be used concerning the same target only once every 24 hours.

## Other Acanthus Legacies

**Skald**

The mage discovers magical power through music and song. His heroic tales can uplift others and his satires can bring down kings. This Legacy comes from Nordic roots, but other similar Legacies find techniques and inspiration in any number of ancient bardic institutions, such as the Welsh *fili* or Irish *ollamh*.

**Tamer of Winds**

The mage masters the element of air in all its literal and symbolic manifestations. In Atlantean lore, air is the element of thought and cunning intelligence, a wit that "cuts like a knife."

## Left-Handed Legacies

The following Legacies are abhorred by the orders. Any mage who has clearly attained any degree in them is likely to be executed on sight. Mages who attain these dread teachings are said to walk the "Left-Handed Path," the road to treachery and ruin.

# Scelesti — The Accursed

Every mage must reach across the Abyss to grasp Supernal power. This is no mere initiatic hurdle to weed out the unworthy, but a very real danger to a mage's psyche, for the Abyss is far from empty. Awash in its torrents, its darkness clings, permeating clothing, body and soul. The slightest misstep in the Abyss can so derange the enlightened that any illumination they transmit is tainted with madness. Thus do the Legacies collectively known as the Scelesti — the Accursed — come into being.

If the hordes of the Abyss can be said to have an agenda or motive, it would seem to be a desire to claim the Fallen World in lieu of the shining realms of the Supernal World that are closed to them. These entities, languishing in a kind of non-existence between the pure light of the Supernal and the gross matter of the Fallen World, seek to establish themselves in the latter. To accomplish this, an Abyssal entity must have some instrument through which to work its will in the material world. The Scelesti are such instruments. Unable to emerge in being by their own power alone, Abyssal beings must first make themselves known to an Awakened consciousness, who can then make their presence real in the Fallen World by writing the spirits' unpronounceable names across the earth in letters of fear, suffering and disaster.

Mages who gaze too long into the Abyss fall prey to fascination and awe, their souls bound up in madness and obsession with the yawning chasms of unreason. Some might escape with psychic scars. Others fall prey to their own delusions and desires. Mistaking the vastness of the Abyss for a source of knowledge and strength, they abandon all sense and reason to lose themselves in endless chaos. Or they pledge themselves to the entities that lurk therein, and so consign their souls to oblivion.

Those who are able to retain enough of their identity to contain their madness find that the Abyss has power in and of itself, apart from the hordes of non-beings that haunt it. Some swim in a primordial ocean of chaosplasm, riding its currents and shaping it to their ends. Others are lost to the void, their inner light swallowed in darkness and silence. Still others may find twisted reflections of their Supernal ideals in delusions.

Meanwhile, the new overlords of the corrupted mages goad them on with promises of worldly glory and opulence — once the Fallen World has fallen into their clutches, of course. Such a thing cannot be accomplished alone, however, so the immediate task of the Scelesti becomes that of luring other mages into their sway and bringing them to the brink of the Abyss.

Being one of the Accursed has its advantages. In a corrupt world, the expert corrupter can rule. The Abyssal hordes are not without power, and grant portions of their might to a mage who can provide them with a foothold in the Fallen World. And there are legions of lesser entities, any of which may be dispatched to serve a Scelestus as slave, guardian or familiar.

Damnation by this magical course is not specific to any Path. Inheritors of this Legacy may be found practicing anywhere in mage society, using arcane symbolism and hermetic secrecy to conceal their true nature from peers and the rest of the world. Sometimes when a Scelestus is discovered within an order, his entire tutorial lineage may be stricken from the order's records if it cannot be determined at which point a teacher was corrupted. (Hence, the Scelesti are also sometimes called *Nefandi*, the Unutterable, or "that which is not to be spoken of.")

**Parent Path:** Any

**Nickname:** The Wicked

**Appearance:** There is no distinct physiognomy that marks the Accursed, but over time and with degenerate Wisdom damnation reveals itself by twisting one's Nimbus into exag-

Gaze into the Abyss!

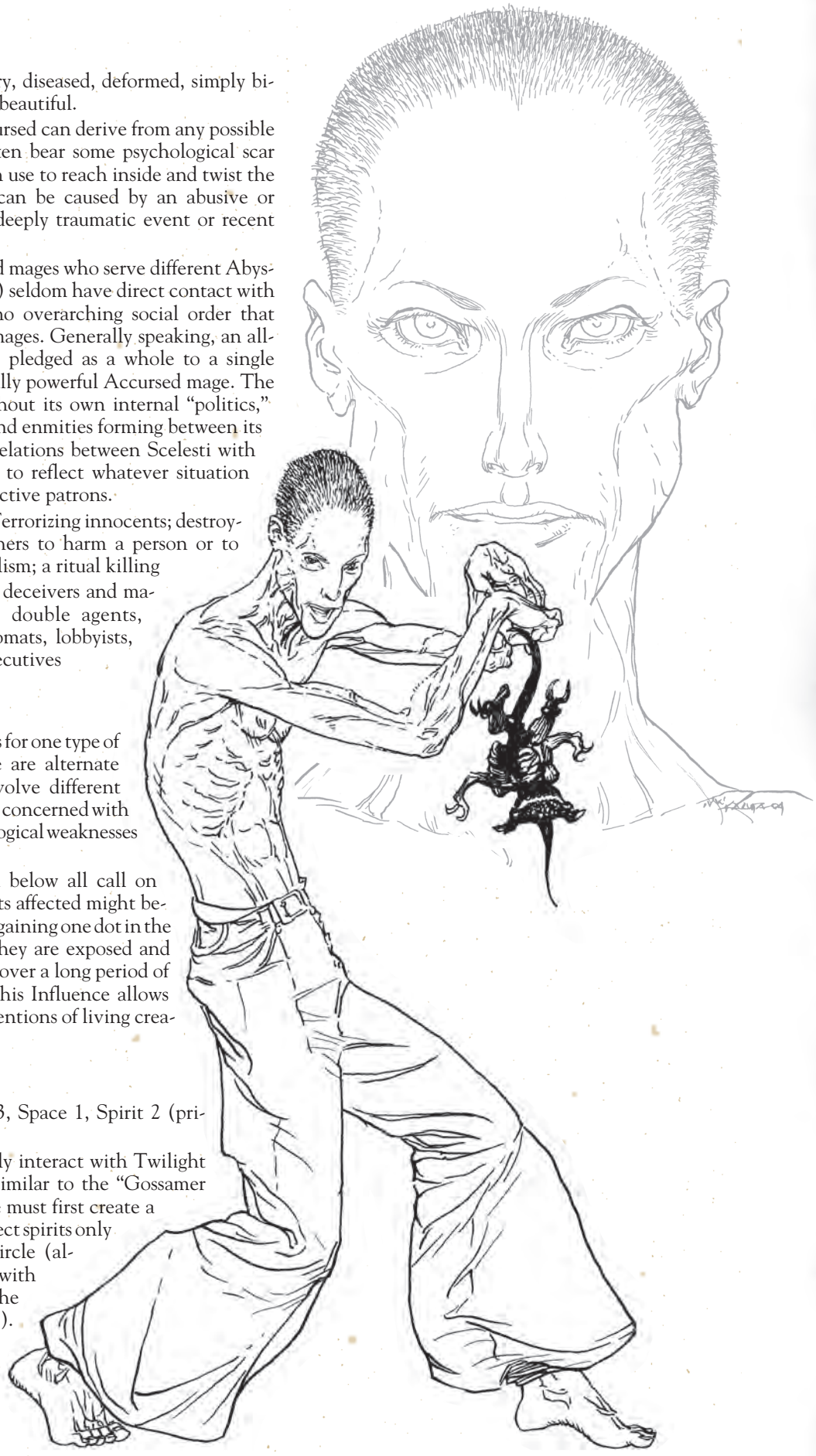
gerated forms — predatory, diseased, deformed, simply bizarre or even unnaturally beautiful.

**Background:** The Accursed can derive from any possible background, but most often bear some psychological scar that an Abyssal entity can use to reach inside and twist the mage's soul. Such scars can be caused by an abusive or neglectful upbringing, a deeply traumatic event or recent personal tragedy.

**Organization:** Accursed mages who serve different Abyssal entities (or none at all) seldom have direct contact with each other, so there is no overarching social order that encompasses all corrupt mages. Generally speaking, an all-Scelestus cabal would be pledged as a whole to a single overlord or an exceptionally powerful Accursed mage. The Abyss is not entirely without its own internal "politics," however, with alliances and enmities forming between its most powerful entities. Relations between Scelesti with different affiliations tend to reflect whatever situation exists between their respective patrons.

**Suggested Oblations:** Terrorizing innocents; destroying property; goading others to harm a person or to destroy property; cannibalism; a ritual killing

**Concepts:** Professional deceivers and manipulators: cult leaders, double agents, performers, lawyers, diplomats, lobbyists, media and advertising executives



## Attainments

The attainment below is for one type of Scelestus, although there are alternate tainted Legacies that involve different attainments, some of them concerned with identifying others' psychological weaknesses and exploiting them.

The attainments listed below all call on Abyssal powers. The spirits affected might become tainted and twisted, gaining one dot in the Corruption Influence if they are exposed and manipulated by the mage over a long period of time (at least a week). This Influence allows Scelesti to pervert the intentions of living creatures toward base ends.

### 1st: Magic Circle

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Space 1, Spirit 2 (primary), Occult 2

The mage can physically interact with Twilight spirits (but not ghosts), similar to the "Gossamer Touch" spell (p. 247). He must first create a "magic circle," and can affect spirits only while he is within the circle (although he can affect them with magic at a distance while he is standing in his circle). Creating the circle requires an instant action (no roll required), and its radius can equal the mage's Space dots.

| Radius or | Defined Area | Space Dots |
|---|---|---|
| 1-yard radius | 5 sq. yards | • |
| 2-yard radius | 10 sq. yards | •• |
| 4-yard radius | 20 sq. yards | ••• |
| 8-yard radius | 40 sq. yards | •••• |
| 16-yard radius | 80 sq. yards | ••••• |

If a mage has Space 2, he can use the advanced area-affecting chart (see p. 118), using dots instead of dice penalties.

Before the circle is complete, the mage must demarcate its outmost boundaries. The most common method is to scrape a piece of chalk or marker in a dash along each of the four cardinal directions, although the mage could just as easily place coins, empty coffee cups or soda cans, or even dirt if he doesn't want to be too obvious about doing something arcane. Once established, the circle lasts for up to one hour. If two or more of the four markers are moved or erased, the effect is canceled until the circle is established again.

While he stands within the circle, the mage gains an effect similar to the Spirit 1 "Spirit Tongue" spell (p. 246), allowing him to see and speak with nearby spirits.

**Optional Arcanum:** Death 2

If the mage also has Death 2, he can affect ghosts in the same manner that he affects spirits.

### 2nd: Abyssal Command

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Spirit 3

Within his magic circle, the Accursed can issue commands to spirits that they must heed, similar to the "Control Spirit" spell (p. 248). An instant action is performed and Presence + Intimidation + Spirit is rolled, contested by a Resistance roll for the spirit. Each success allows the mage to issue a command of increasing complexity. He can repeatedly use this attainment while the circle is operative, but he can issue only one command to a spirit at a time. He cannot command the same spirit again until his first command is completed.

**Optional Arcanum:** Time 3

If the mage also has Time 3, he can command a spirit to speak of the future. The spirit itself does not know the future, but becomes a mouthpiece by which the mage can ask questions of what is to come. This is similar to the Time 3 "Divination" spell (p. 263). The mage performs an instant action and can ask one question about a specified target's future per Time dot. This power can be used concerning the same target only once every 24 hours.

### 3rd: Shadow Circle

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Spirit 4

From within his magic circle, the mage can "step sideways" across the Gauntlet, similar to the Spirit 4 "Road Master" spell (p. 254). To step across, an instant action is performed and Presence + Occult + Spirit roll is rolled, modified by the Gauntlet's Strength (p. 282). The mage can do this as many times as he likes, stepping back and forth, as long as his magic circle is operative. He can leave the circle, but must return (or create a new circle) to step over again.

**Optional Arcanum:** Time 4

If the mage also has Time 4, he can use a spirit as the mouthpiece of a greater prophecy, similar to the Time 4 "Prophecy" spell (p. 264). He performs an instant action and can ask one question about a specified target's possible future (what *might* happen rather than what will happen) per Time dot. This power can be used concerning the same target only once every 24 hours.



# Tremere Lich

In the Dark Ages, when mages held more sway in the world and the orders waxed in power, great resources were spent in plumbing the most profound secrets of the earth. Sanctums swelled with students, vast libraries of lore were gathered, and expeditions were mounted to the most remote extremities of the globe. Mages journeyed to mist-shrouded mountaintops in legendary lands, deserted isles in uncharted latitudes, lost cities crumbling beneath waves of water, sand or jungle, and into the moldy vaults of rumor-haunted necropolises of antiquity. Some of those who pursued this last course dug too deep into the past and literally awoke the dead.

Even the most finely honed Awakened would be sorely pressed to resist the chilling intensity of an undying desire that has festered in darkness and hunger for centuries. These mages found that they had, willingly or not, taken on new instructors, keepers of profound knowledge and wielders of terrifying power, teachers who might have been human once, but were no longer. Masters with a particularly insatiable need.

Vampirism is a state of being that comes with fantastic potential, but it is nonetheless a curse. Young vampires do not always grasp the full import of this simple fact, but as the sunless decades of hunger pass, they learn that undying existence is not the same as eternal life. Raging against this fate, an obscure line of vampires called the Tremere encountered an entity from the Abyss and wrested from it certain secrets about the Supernal and Fallen Worlds. Using this forbid-

den knowledge, they formulated in their blood a way of circumventing their curse by stealing from the living the inner light that they themselves lacked. Through the drinking of blood, a Tremere could tap a victim's soul, allowing him to live for a short time as if he were nearly human, walking in twilight (but not full daylight) and becoming sated by normal food rather than blood. The process desiccated the stolen soul, however, leaving its owner to wither away into a slow, witless death. The souls of normal humans proved too dim and murky to sustain the Tremere for more than a few days at best. The undead needed something much brighter and clearer.

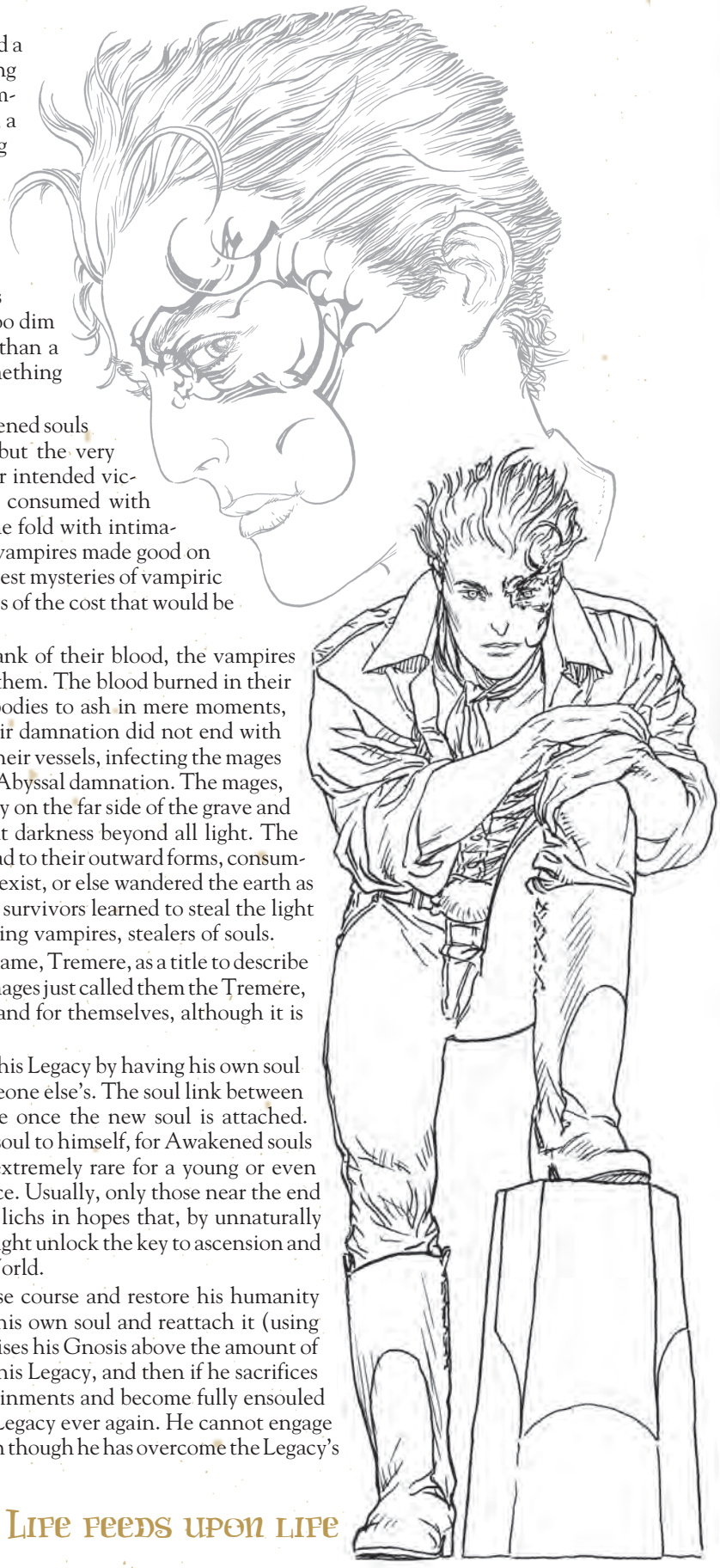
They found what they needed in the Awakened souls of the mages who intruded into their lair, but the very brilliance they desired also ensured that their intended victims were not mere cattle to be seized and consumed with impunity. The mages had to be lured into the fold with intimations of ancient power and arcane lore. The vampires made good on their temptations, unveiling some of the deepest mysteries of vampiric lore. The mages eagerly took the bait, heedless of the cost that would be exacted from them.

In tapping the mages' souls while they drank of their blood, the vampires discovered that their Abyssal lore had failed them. The blood burned in their veins with celestial fire and rendered their bodies to ash in mere moments, destroying every single one of them. But their damnation did not end with them. They passed on a part of their curse to their vessels, infecting the mages with the most virulent aspect of their unique Abyssal damnation. The mages, though not undead, had placed one foot firmly on the far side of the grave and found their souls eroding away into the great darkness beyond all light. The spiritual vacuum thus created eventually spread to their outward forms, consuming their bodies until some of them ceased to exist, or else wandered the earth as hungry ghosts. To fill their growing void, the survivors learned to steal the light from those who had it. They had become living vampires, stealers of souls.

At first, these sorcerers took the vampires' name, Tremere, as a title to describe their condition: "Tremere-inflicted." Other mages just called them the Tremere, and over time the lichs accepted this shorthand for themselves, although it is still used as an adjective: "Tremere lich."

A mage must be voluntarily initiated into this Legacy by having his own soul severed by his teacher and replaced with someone else's. The soul link between instructor and pupil transmits the lich curse once the new soul is attached. Usually, the master then attaches the pupil's soul to himself, for Awakened souls last much longer than Sleeping souls. It is extremely rare for a young or even middle-aged mage to make this hideous choice. Usually, only those near the end of their natural life spans choose to become lichs in hopes that, by unnaturally extending their lives on a diet of souls, they might unlock the key to ascension and rise to the deathless lands of the Supernal World.

And yet, it is possible for a pupil to reverse course and restore his humanity before he has gone too far. If he can regain his own soul and reattach it (using spells, not Tremere attainments) before he raises his Gnosis above the amount of dots he had when he was first initiated into this Legacy, and then if he sacrifices a dot of Willpower, he loses all Tremere attainments and become fully ensouled again. He cannot, however, learn any other Legacy ever again. He cannot engage in soulcraft with a Tremere-touched soul, even though he has overcome the Legacy's curse.



## Life feeds upon life

Some have wondered if the vampiric bloodline that damned the mages to lichdom still survives. Although the Tremere mages have searched for any signs of it, they have found none.

**Parent Path:** Moros

**Nickname:** The Embalmed

**Appearance:** Tremere mages look no different than normal mages. Even Mage Sight cannot reveal their nature, although the Prime Arcanum's Supernal Vision can. As a Tremere's soul ages, he tends to gain a distinctive pallor, paleness, shrunkenness and emptiness that, as he begins to lose Willpower (see below), becomes necrotic.

**Background:** Prospective recruits are often targeted according to the talents or resources they can bring to the Tremere. As a consequence, this Legacy tends to manifest in the most affluent and well-educated segment of mage society.

**Organization:** The Tremere is the mostly tightly organized of all the Legacies. Its cabals are small and very secretive. Because of the lichs' predatory nature, the master-student relationship within the Tremere is rigid. With the old feeding upon the young and the young feeding upon the "common herd" of humanity, this Legacy somewhat apes the hierarchic structure of vampire society.

**Suggested Oblations:** Practicing utter stillness for an hour without the need of magic and without falling asleep; embalming a corpse; engaging in necrophilia with a corpse; a sincere rite of mourning for someone who has recently died (this could include a stranger, but not someone the mage has killed himself or whose soul he has stolen); digging a grave; carving a headstone

**Concepts:** Aristocrats, plutocrats, scholars, historians, doctors, tax collectors

## Attainments

Tremere have traded their souls for raw power. Their attainments let them acquire powers normally beyond their abilities for the prerequisites involved, but they trade their own souls in return for these powers. Also, they acquire certain limitations: No Tremere mage can cast the Death 5 "Steal Lifespan" spell (p. 146), even as an improvised casting. That Stygian power is closed to them.

### 1st: Hideous Stipend

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Death 2 (primary)

The mage can steal souls from Sleepers, similar to the Death 3 "Sever the Sleeping Soul" spell (p. 141), although he does not need to spend Mana. An extended action with a Presence + Intimidation + Death roll is required, contested by the victim's Resolve. See the spell description for complete rules. Unlike normal uses of this spell, this attainment allows a mage to extend his life unnaturally, without any signs of aging (until the soul begins to desiccate; see "Soul Nourishment," below).

Additionally, the user can fashion a soul jar, like the Death 2 "Soul Jar" spell (p. 137), in which to store a soul until it can be attached to him. The process is an extended action that calls for Presence + Crafts + Death rolls, with one roll allowed per hour.

Finally, the mage can view the health of a soul before he severs it, similar to the Death 1 "Soul Marks" spell (p. 135). He merely spends an instant action (no roll required) gazing at the subject.

### 2nd: Wicked Claim

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Death 3

The mage can bind a stolen soul to himself, similar to the Death 4 "Soul Binding" spell (p. 144). The process is an extended action involving Presence + Empathy + Death rolls, with one roll allowed per hour; see the rules described above for stealing Sleeping souls. Until the mage gains this attainment or learns Death 4, he must rely on another Tremere with this power to attach a soul for him.

Additionally, the mage can steal Willpower and/or Mana from injured or dying victims, similar to the Death 3 "Devouring the Slain" spell. An instant action is performed and Manipulation + Intimidation + Death is rolled, subtracting the victim's Stamina from the dice pool. See the spell's description for complete effects.

**Optional Arcanum:** Prime 3

If the mage has Prime 3, he can distill a soul into tass instead of attaching it or storing it in a soul jar, similar to the Prime 3 "Create Tass" spell (p. 224). The tass automatically has an amount of Mana equal to its original owner's Mana (for a mage) or Willpower dots (for a Sleeper). This effect is lasting until the mage chooses to dissolve the tass, sending the soul back into a Twilight state, in which disembodied souls normally exist. Note that souls in tass form can still be affected by any magic that affects souls.

### 3rd: Supernal Theft

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Death 4

The mage can now take an Awakened soul, as he did a Sleeper soul with the first attainment. The victim contests with Resolve + Gnosis.

In addition, the mage can drain his enemies of their strength, similar to the Death 4 "Enervation" spell (p. 143), with an instant action and a Presence + Occult + Death roll. See the spell description for complete rules.

### Soul Nourishment

The length of time a stolen soul preserves a lich depends on the lich's age.

| Tremere's Age | Soul Begins to Erode After... |
|---|---|
| 1-50 | One year (i.e., the Tremere needs to steal only one soul per year) |
| 51-75 | Nine months |
| 76-100+ | Six months |
| 100+ | One month |

Once a soul begins to erode, a Tremere loses one Willpower *dot* per week until his will is gone. With each lost dot, the Tremere's body takes on increasingly morbid features, becoming necrotic until he resembles a rotting corpse or mummy (although his traits are not affected). Once he has no more Willpower dots, he can no longer regain Willpower points (through a Virtue, Vice or any other means), and he then begins to suffer one aggravated Health wound per week. He cannot heal this damage naturally, and it is Resistant, meaning it cannot be healed supernaturally (see "Resistant Damage," p. 124). Unless he gets a new soul before he runs out of Health, he perishes completely, with no trace or remnant of his identity left in the Tapestry. Only replacing an eroding soul with a fresh soul stops the decline, and the damage begins to heal naturally. Once the Tremere's Health is restored, he then begins regaining Willpower dots at a rate of one per week.

A mage's soul is far more valuable than any mere mortal's. Each Awakened soul can actually reduce a Tremere's chronological age by one stage on the chart above. Thus, a 100-year-old Tremere requires a human soul each month, but if he can steal the soul of another mage (other than a Tremere), he can go six months without a fresh sacrifice.

# Creating Legacies and Attainments

Storytellers and players can devise their own Legacies and/or attainments. The following steps offer suggestions for doing so.

## Step 1: Choose a Theme

Legacies are built on a theme or paradigm, a window through which students forevermore view magic. Think of the general concept you want a Legacy to represent, such as "magical assassin," "primordial shaman," or "angelic herald." Avoid mixing what are really two different concepts, such as "techno-assassin," implying a mage who is interested in technological-0riented magic and the professional study of killing people. Such a diverse focus does not lend itself to soulcrafting, which requires commitment, dedication and surety.

Also, think about the level of organization that students of your Legacy might have with one another. Most Legacies are between teacher and pupil and no other; students do not owe other initiates of the Legacy any attention. This is not always the case, however, such as in the example of the Subtle Ones or Tremere lichs. Even with order and hierarchy, Legacies should never hold the kind of power an order does. It is rare for there to be enough students in one area for them to ever collude together on any political issue.

The theme of your pursuit should also provide ideas on suggested oblations a mage can perform to gain Mana points.

## Step 2: Choose a Parent Path (and, Optionally, an Order)

The Legacy's theme should immediately suggest a Path that best represents its ideal or goals. For example, a Legacy that teaches students brotherhood with the animal kingdom is probably Thyrsus, while one that teaches mathematics as a metaphor for a divine clockwork universe might be Obrimos (or Mastigos, depending on how hellish you think math is).

Many Legacies (but not all) can be passed to mages of certain orders. Those orders' methods and ideals are closely aligned enough that their souls have little trouble adapting to the teaching.

## Step 3: Devise Attainments

The hardest part of designing a Legacy is getting the right balance for its attainments. They should mirror the Legacy's goals and provide a concrete way for mages to reach those goals — and an explanation for the stereotype others hold about the Legacy.

**A. Choose a Primary Arcanum**

The Legacy's theme dictates its primary powers. For example, subtle movers and shakers who go unnoticed among humankind probably have the Mind Arcanum (or maybe Forces, for invisibility). The Subtle Ones use mental tricks to achieve these goals.

**B. Choose a Conjunctional Arcanum**

If the theme dictates it, the attainment might require a substance or principles through which its power operates. The Walker in the Mist (p. 358) needs plant life — elements of the green, growing world — to fulfill his attainments, and so needs Life 1. The Accursed mage (p. 361) works his powers within a magical circle, drawn over an extended radius, and so needs Space 1.

Not all Legacies need a conjunctional Arcanum; it's mainly there to help balance powers and to emphasize theme.

**C. (Optional) Choose a Synergistic Arcanum**

Legacy students also pursue other Arcana studies, but there is usually one Arcanum in particular that works in synergy with their Legacy's attainments. For example, although Mind is the primary Arcanum for the Uncrowned King Legacy, its students gain extra advantages by also studying the Prime Arcanum.

**D. Devise the 1st Attainment**

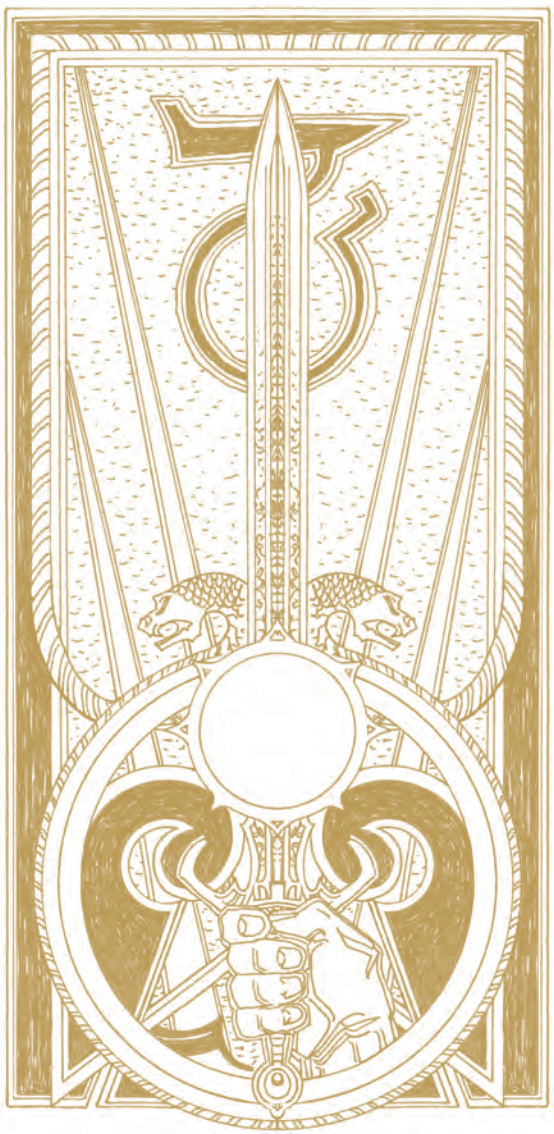
The prerequisite is Gnosis 3. (If the character is creating his own Legacy, the first attainment requires Gnosis 4.) This should involve a spell no higher than the second degree in an Arcanum, and if appropriate a conjunctional Arcanum of one dot. If applicable to the theme, one or more Skills might be required at varying dots (usually no more than two dots).

**E. Devise the 2nd Attainment**

The prerequisite is Gnosis 5. (If the character is creating his own Legacy, the second attainment requires Gnosis 6.) This should involve a spell no higher than the third degree in an Arcanum. In addition, it might include an optional ability based on a spell from the third degree of a synergistic Arcanum, usually used in conjunction with the 1st or 2nd attainment.

**F. Devise the 3rd Attainment**

The prerequisite is Gnosis 7. (If the character is creating his own Legacy, the third attainment requires Gnosis 8.) This should involve a spell from the fourth degree in an Arcanum. In addition, it might include an optional ability based on a spell from the fourth degree of the same synergistic Arcanum used for the 2nd attainment. If appropriate, a fourth-degree spell that normally requires an extended action might be made instant for the attainment.





# APPENDIX TWO: BOSTON



"Come out, hornling, come out of the muck and into the air," Angkhoda chanted as he parted the threads of time and space, opening a hole in reality to the Abyss that waited beyond. In answer to his command, the oily fluids in the hanging cauldron began to boil, steaming and popping. At the edges of the circle, a horde of spirits leaned forward in anticipation, hungry for a glimpse of this new being the mage had promised to conjure.

"Ah, there you are," Angkhoda said. A head appeared in the cauldron, slowly rising. It looked human, a female of the species, but without hair. As soon as her eyes rose above the muck, they opened, glaring with ineffable hatred at the creatures gathered to witness her birth. The spirits grew still and quiet, cowed by the intensity of the glare.

"Don't blame them, my dear," Angkhoda said. "I am the cause of your painful manifestation. All your hate and burning ire should be directed at me. It is mine by right." He said the last word with a snarl.

The female, now standing upright in the cauldron, her body revealed above her thighs, stared at Angkhoda. Her mouth opened and croaking noises came forth as she struggled to master control of her throat.

"Hurry, you wretched thing," Angkhoda said. "Speak! Tell me of the future, of the fate of the boy Gavin Aubrey Dulac. Is he a danger to me?"

A terrible moan came forth, eventually becoming words spoken in a deep, sibilant voice. "Oh, yesss, Ssscelesssti. The boy isss your Bane."

Angkhoda grimaced. "You lie. I bid you tell me true, or else that body will be yours forever."

The female's face betrayed a moment of horror before resuming its mask of hatred. " I ssspeak true. He will undo you."

"Oh, no. Not him. Now that I know his role in my own thread, I can cut him out of it. Where is he now?"

"In Bossston. The Emerald Ssscroll."

Angkhoda smiled. "So close?"

**In the chief examples of religious illumination, somewhat morbid, has mingled, in spite of the unquestionable increase of mental power. Must the highest good drag after it a quality which neutralizes and discredits it?**
**— Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Swedenborg; or, the Mystic"**

Boston is a popular port of call for mages. It's a gateway to the Atlantic, and thus a boon for willworkers looking to smuggle people or things in from the rest of the world. Many American sorcerers hunger for Old World artifacts, both for their ancient pedigree and the magical secrets they might reveal. Some mages prefer to study equally storied North American items, but after centuries of unrelenting thievery by settlers, aboriginal magicians and medicine workers have finally reclaimed some of the truly powerful items and aren't inclined to share. Naturally, the city also hosts mages who've come to track down stolen artifacts, but Boston's loose Awakened community and distant leadership frustrates their efforts.

New England hosts layers of history fully capable of rewarding a clever investigator — or haunting him with dark revelations of things not even the Awakened should know. Secret places where Mana flows and the Shadow Realm beckons riddle Massachusetts' landscape. Colonization, war and sheer age makes it difficult to account for every Hallow, ley line and strange location, but mages persist in tracking tales of rural witchcraft and strange lights at sea. Some discover caches of knowledge that can raise them to new heights of power. Others uncover horrors that can kill, possess or even devour them.

Pre-colonial nations and their medicine workers made the land's magic their own, but subsequent visitors have added so many layers of occult power that few mages can say where one influence ends and another begins. Local spirits are not immune to this evolution; each new generation reflects the changing land and its people. The denizens of the Shadow wear many forms recognizable to local cultures, but it is said that finding their "root" identity — the names they had before they were first beheld by human eyes — is the key to securing their cooperation.

## Awakened Boston at a Glance

Boston is dominated by a cabal called the Ebon Noose, which holds court out of Salem rather than Boston proper. It is an incredibly old group dominated by mages who follow the "pagan" Thyrsus and Acanthus Paths. Its leader, the Nemean, is the Hierarch of Boston. His Provost is a Christian Obrimos named Chain Parris, who is head of the White Putnams, another unusually old cabal. The Nemean's enforcer is the Sentinel Anacaona de Xaragua. Other local cabals have varying degrees of influence on the Consilium; the recently formed Shadow Chorus is one of them. The Nemean is reputed to be a somewhat lazy Hierarch, but given to menacing troublesome constituents.

Apart from the Consilium, the Dead Wrens is the most prominent of a group of independent cabals. The Wrens manage the Emerald Scroll, where mages meet to socialize and bargain. The Seers of the Throne treat Harvard as their own domain. Other cabals and supernatural entities call Boston home as well, and provide a steady stream of rumors and hazards for unwary mages.

## The Ebon Noose Arrives

Sleepers didn't have a monopoly on the ambition (or desperation) that drove pioneers to the Americas. Among Puritans, adventurers and merchants, an ancient cabal called the Ebon Noose made its way to New England. Most of the group's mages belonged to the Thyrsus Watchtower, though a few Acanthus and others shared interests. All studied the Supernal mysteries hidden in Greek and Celtic myths, and tested themselves in the wilderness. The New World promised the isolation and freedom they craved, where they might openly raise temples and consecrate groves to the old gods.

Like the Sleepers with whom they traveled, the mages of the Ebon Noose possessed a certain naivetÈ about their new home. They scarcely considered the possibility that other Awakened souls and unfamiliar magic might await them. Native mages also knew Atlantean High Speech, although they called Atlantis by a different name. Their mastery of Arcana was as mighty as that of any lineage, and they rarely tolerated rivals. Native willworkers had inherited the Atlantean orders, but gave seemingly strange names to them, choosing symbols like the wolf and the dawn instead of the Adamant and dragon of European lore. Each side was reluctant to compromise over the details of the Mysteries, much less share Hallows and secret lore.

Some Old World mages submitted to native authority. They migrated west to join aboriginal nations or establish isolated homesteads. Others died in mystic combat, far from Sleeper settlements, leaving their works to be claimed by native victors or the forest growth. Ignorant of local legends that often told of the strange spirit denizens and mysterious beings that lurked in Twilight and on the other side of the Gauntlet, new immigrants erected sanctums and claimed Hallows with little regard for who might already own such territories. Many of them soon discovered their error and were slain in spectacularly gruesome ways — their skin slowly flayed from them, their bodies roasted over fires, and their charred bones marked with chilling sigils to warn away other interlopers. The natives' legends about cruel cannibal *Manitou* were not mere fancy. These deaths, when discovered by Sleepers, were blamed on the Indians, inflaming the popular rhetoric against the "savages."

Sometimes, the indigenous mages would indeed aid certain spirits in conflicts against the newcomers, depending on ancient pacts made between the spirits and their ancestors. Other times they would exploit the situation to gain control over spirits weakened in battles with newcomer mages.

Some Old World mages held their ground and conquered their spirit attackers, driving them away or destroying them. It is said that in some cases they bound the spirits to fetters or into fetishes that might still hold them to this day. Those mages strong enough to survive but too weak to stand their ground fled to the outskirts of what is now the greater Boston region, which was mostly free of prior territorial claims by spirits.

The Ebon Noose cabal retreated from the wilderness to a Sleeper settlement under siege, with indigenous mages and spirits at their heels. There, the cabal cast spells to protect itself. One of these spells was called the Binding of the Blasphemous Scribe. The modern Ebon Noose says that an ancestor called the Lernaean knew the spell, but refused to cast it, even while enemies closed in. Anacaona de Xaragua today often tells the tale as a lesson to mages who'd try to defy the Noose's will. The Noose tortured the Lernaean for three days until she revealed the rite, and then used her flesh to power it.

Did the spell call up a power that the mages couldn't put down? No clear account of the fortress-settlement survives. All the Awakened know is that four of nine mages from the original settlement left their cabins to scatter into the wilderness, which was now strangely quiet and pacified, with few signs of the cannibal spirits. They used magic to molder and erase all signs of habitation. Mages who now meditate in the heart of Salem feel a faint pulse of Time magic and the chill of the Abyss, but nothing strong enough to reconstruct the old spell.

The first European mages' motives remain unknown, but their settlement location looms large in New England's occult history. In 1626, Roger Conant named the place Salem, and founded what would become a troubled community of Sleepers. Seventy-six years later, the Salem Witch Trials consumed the town. It would ever after be a place associated with hysteria and black magic.

## The Putnams and the Witch Trials

The Putnams were one of Salem's Puritan families. The poor farmers had rivals in the Porters, a family that wanted to amalgamate the region around Salem to benefit the clan's mercantile interests.

In 1689, the Putnams hired Samuel Parris to be their parson, but the Porter-controlled village council refused to levy a tax for his wages. Parris' sermons darkened, and he warned villagers that a "Satanic" influence stalked them. Several girls, including Parris' niece and daughter, started to act strangely. They complained of phantom pains and drifted in and out of strange trances. They accused Parris' slave Tituba and two other villagers of witchcraft. The Salem Witch Trials began.

Sleepers believe the trials happened because of a mix of political turmoil and religious fanaticism. Some mages blame Awakened scheming among the colonists, but Boston's occultists suspect the Ebon Noose inspired some malefic force to take an interest in the area. Local Awakened myth calls any such entity the Specter of Salem, but such a name provides no answers. Nobody knows whether the title belongs to a spirit, ghost, demon or even a spell gone wrong. Those who believe in the specter claim that it's responsible for at least some of the visitations and weird events that the trial's accusers alleged.

Was witchcraft really at work in Salem? The Awakened don't know. Sleeper Disbelief would undoubtedly have cloaked any blatant supernatural events, but many suspect that occultists deserve the blame. Cotton Mather was a renowned spiritualist. Judge John Hathorne's descendant, Nathanial Hawthorne, was also fascinated by mysticism and wrote about Salem as if it carried a special curse. Tituba (who was not hanged) admitted to creating figurines and charms — hardly unusual (and rarely magical), but still of interest.

The trials drove the Awakened from the region, at least as full-time residents. Salem's unique and mysterious resonance, hinting of something dark and potent hidden, drew the occasional mage now and then, but none of them established sanctums. In 1906, two cabals arrived in force to claim the place, ready to weave potent spells against one another.

The White Putnams, led by mages descended from Samuel Parris, came to reclaim their heritage, believing that a curse of retribution from the slain "witches" haunted them. Only by taking responsibility for the killing ground could they end the curse. The Ebon Noose sought to claim the land in the name of the wronged pagan witches (who may or may not have actually existed, depending on which version of history one chooses to believe). They also suspected that the hidden power in Salem was the fault of their predecessors, and that only they could master it.

The two cabals do not speak openly of that event even today. It's fair to assume that most modern members of both cabals don't even know for sure happened. Only rumors and legends whisper of the wizards' war and the terrible revelations their magic unearthed. The outcome was the brokering of the so-called Secret Concord between the two cabals and a mysterious third party (or, some mages whisper, a force or inhuman entity). The pact was kept secret from the rest of the Awakened community for decades. All other mages knew was that the Ebon Noose took control of Salem and the White Putnams returned to Boston. It was assumed that the mages remained antagonistic; their secret ties were hidden until 1980.

As the name of the Secret Concord implies, the details of the pact are still obscure, but are suspected to have influenced much of Salem's occult activity throughout the 20th century, from the subsequent decline of the Guardians of the Veil to the current strained humility of the White Putnams. The Secret Concord was allegedly sealed by a signed document. Decades after the pact's signing, a Free Council mage supposedly read the document itself. She described it as brief, signed in blood and containing the following preamble:

*We who exalt our common power, who peer into secrets, do bind each other by oath, and our successors, until the Terrible Word returns. For our common power is used to hide a common shame, and we who uncover secrets will keep this secret, lest the*

*hidden sin strike us down sevenfold.*

She never finished her description, because seconds after starting, her skin supposedly peeled away from her body and her tongue withered. She died, but her words were burned into the memory of Boston's mages. Soon after, the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams revealed their long-hidden alliance, but they did not elaborate on the Concord.

Popular speculation holds that the agreement ceded Salem and Danvers to the Ebon Noose, but compelled that cabal to hold a common court for aggrieved mages. All the hostilities between the Awakened that had come from the witch trial ceased. The treaty allegedly included various provisions and other, unknown signatories. Save for the dead Free Council willworker, no mage is known to have seen the signed agreement in over 100 years.



## The Golden Dawn and Guardians of the Veil

In 1890, Guardians of the Veil arrived in Boston as part of a wave of Old World investors eager to profit from the freshly tamed Americas. After a series of short, brutal occult conflicts, the order garnered enough security to institute its Labyrinth. In 1892, the order secretly sponsored the Masonic group called the Order of the Golden Dawn. The Golden Dawn's Sleepers opened their ninth lodge: The Temple of Thme. The lodge catered to amateur occultists from Boston's upper class. The most talented members learned about the secret matters of the Emerald Scroll, Boston's true Guardian cabal. Remaining Sleepers unwittingly served the Guardians of the Veil with their wealth and prestige, thanks to a combination of donations, secret deals and outright blackmail. Other orders accepted Guardian rule; the order sponsored a few token members of the Silver Ladder to give its regime an aura of respectability. Boston's Consilium was nearly powerless before the newcomers, because true influence lay in Guardian conspiracies. The order's web of high-society contacts and their connection to virtually every would-be Sleeper occultist were far more potent than normal diplomatic channels. The Emerald Scroll ensured that the masked Interfector who represented the cabal in the ruling council was threatening enough to stifle dissent.

Occasionally, new mages would Awaken using the Golden Dawn's rites, research the cult's past, and look for the Emerald Scroll: the legendary inner sanctum of the Temple. Six Guardians possessed enough personal power to divert new mages to their cause, but more and more members of the Temple followed false clues that led them to a group of enterprising Libertines. The Free Council exploited gray areas in the conspiracy, and for a time there were *two* Emerald Scrolls: the legitimate Guardians of the Veil and the new pretenders. Each side declared the other false and waged war for control of the Golden Dawn. The Free Council had the advantage for one reason: They just didn't lie as much. Frustrated with the twisting path of Guardian initiation, more and more of the Temple's constituency chose the straighter path offered by the "false" Scroll.

Open warfare followed. Mages fought battles reminiscent of the reputed Rosicrucian wars of previous times, in which rumors were as strong as actual curses. Both sides suffered serious attrition and the Temple of Thme collapsed. By 1935, the surviving Libertines retreated to the slums and working-

class haunts along Boston Harbor. The Guardians of the Veil would not lead a local cabal again until 1996, when the Shadow Chorus presented itself to a Consilium dominated by the Ebon Noose.

The Ebon Noose still thrived, composed of members of different orders, but who adhered primarily to their personal goals, inspired by their Paths. The cabal had grown in the wild and resented the Guardian's invasion. The primal cabal harassed traveling mages, demanding a cut of any tass or artifacts entering or leaving the city by land.

Puritan Obrimos bolstered the ranks of the Silver Ladder and grew to resent their order's supposed irrelevance. They ministered to Boston's factory workers and growing middle class to bypass Guardian power bases. Old money made room for 20th-century industrialists, and in their fold mages enjoyed a certain prestige.

### Recent History

In the 1960s and afterward, Boston's mages adapted to radical changes. Free Council cabals established a foothold at MIT. Sleepers discovered radical mathematics and computer technologies even as mages among them applied and improved the developments to great effect. As modern Sleepers play with lightweight wearable technologies and near-sapient expert systems, Awakened hackers actually put them to use.

Harvard hosts a growing conspiracy of Seers of the Throne mages. Banishers also stalk Boston, and cannibal cultists and Twilight creatures are said to travel the cobblestone streets or lurk in the stony countryside.

Elements of the neo-pagan movement treat Salem like a shrine, providing the Ebon Noose with a constant stream of unwitting Sleeper allies. In 1980, following the rumored revelation of the Secret Concord by a Free Council mage (who was allegedly killed by reading the document), the White Putnams and the Ebon Noose revealed their long-hidden alliance. The old witches' cabal from Salem threw its lot in largely with the Silver Ladder order. They declared a new Consilium and promised to rule lightly, but justly. The revealed union of two supposedly antagonistic factions startled the Wise of Boston, and speculation was rampant about the secret pact between the two cabals and another, unknown entity. Supposedly, the hidden "third backer" was not a mage, and bound the signatories together with hidden, potent oaths.

The Ebon witches now eclipse their allies, and do indeed rule lightly. As long as local mages provide an occasional tithe of artifacts and Mana, the Ebon Noose leaves them alone. It has countless Sleeping allies and its ranks include nearly a dozen Awakened. If Boston's Wise were a nation, nearby Salem would be the quiet but potent capital. The Noose cabal rarely intercedes in local affairs unless something directly threatens its interests. When that happens, it reacts swiftly — and sometimes, brutally. Thus, Boston is a city of shady deals, curses in the dark, and artifacts shipped from distant shores and ancient graves. Mages have to rely on their own wits to survive, because the Salem Consilium shows little concern for anything that doesn't threaten its own interests.

Representatives of all the known orders can be found in Boston. Their ability to foster their orders' goals is often hampered, however, by the conflicting goals of fellow cabal members. Few cabals are comprised of one order alone. While the Silver Ladder has the upper hand for now, with the Ebon Noose's Nemean as Hierarch, its power is not unquestioned. Many cabals, representing different orders, maintain a low profile, venturing into Consilium politics only as necessary.

A few cynical sorcerers might add that Boston is one of the oldest American cities, and New England has always had secrets. The games that young mages play are a distraction. The real secrets — the real dangers — live in the earth and in the constellations visible from the Atlantic shore. There are towns that don't appear on any map, where fishermen sing in languages that have no Earthly relative. They say there is a lighthouse where, if you speak a certain phrase, a ship carries off your soul. Laugh at the rumored cannibals and the strangely aligned rock formations in the woods all you like, but some day, these legends will move the earth.

## The City of Boston

Boston is one of the oldest cities in America, founded long before there was a United States. It has a long history as home to politicians, intellectuals and rabid sports fans. It's a city laid out on perhaps one of the least efficient street plans in the United States and its traffic has suffered for decades as a result, a situation which only now sees any real improvement (and which may well continue to be a thorn in Bostonians' sides for at least another decade).

But Boston is more than just Beacon Hill and Fenway Park. It is home to strange and often inexplicable phenomena. While it does not have the same sort of obvious paranormal allure as, say, Roswell, New Mexico or Stonehenge, the city and its New England surroundings have long been the focus of occult happenings.

### A College Town

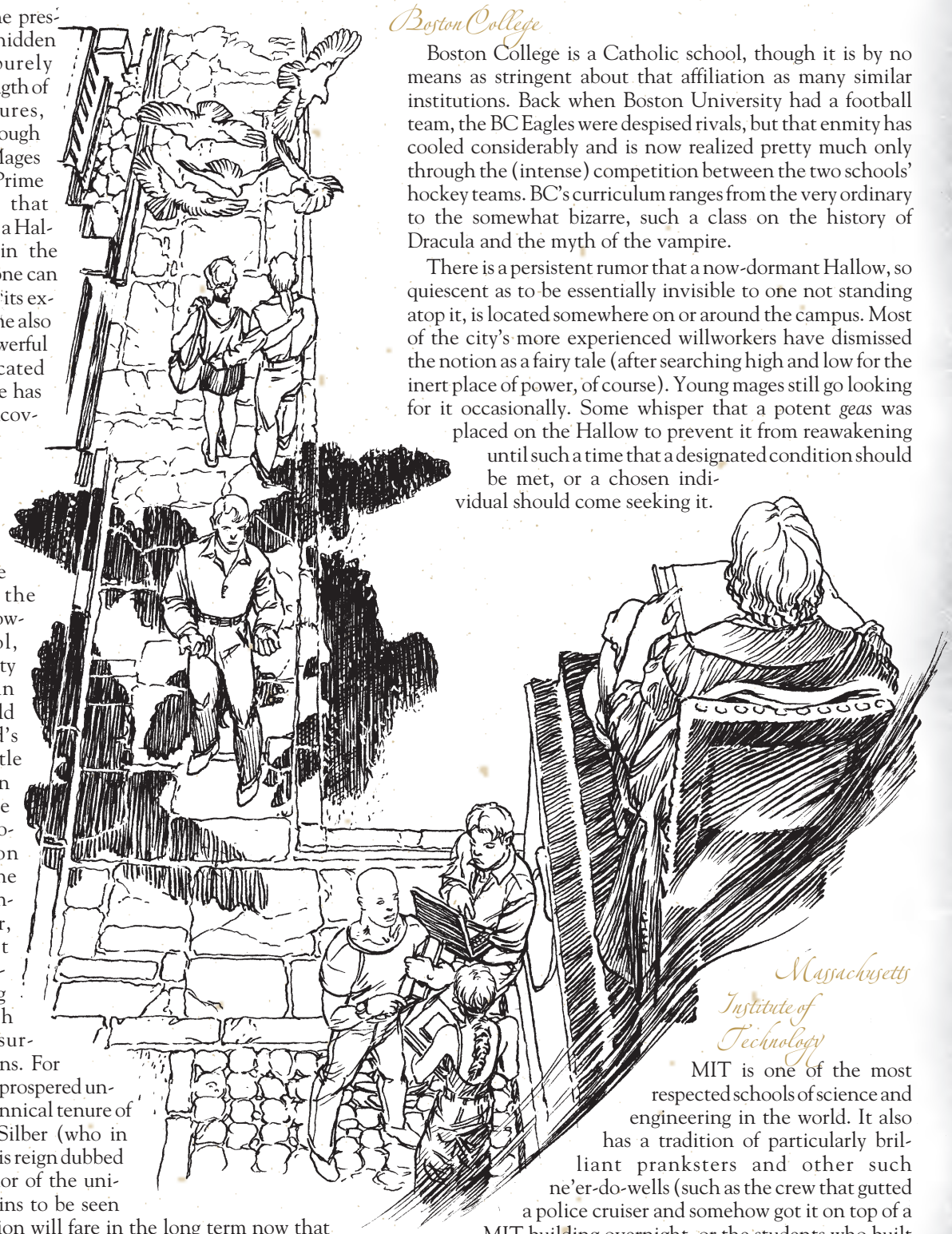
Boston has more colleges per square mile than any other city in America. Its population increases by as much as half from early September to late May. Higher education is the lifeblood of the city, and in many ways the axis on which it revolves. Four schools stand out as the wealthiest, most influential and well attended.

#### Harvard University

Perhaps the most respected school in America, Harvard has a long-standing tradition of academic excellence, and an equally well-established tradition of making connections for graduates. Some criticize the school for what they allege are policies on padding grades to establish an amazingly high student performance record. As *alma mater* to a considerable number of celebrities and intellectual luminaries, as well as having the kind of clout and budget needed to secure the finest of guest lecturers, Harvard plays host to many persons of distinction, especially around graduation each year.

A mysterious cabal of mages operates out of Harvard, rumored to dabble in the affairs of the university's psychology department. Whatever their agenda or affiliation, these willworkers are intensely secretive and appear to be capable of deflecting even the most intense scrutiny. Indeed, local

mages assume the presence of these hidden sorcerers purely through the strength of security measures, rather than through direct contact. Mages skilled in the Prime Arcanum note that there seems to be a Hallow *somewhere* in the vicinity, but no one can seem to pinpoint its exact location. Some also suspect that a powerful Demesne is located there, but no one has had any luck uncovering it.



## Boston University

Vying with Harvard for the position of the nation's most powerful school, Boston University is recognized in parts of the world where Harvard's name holds little sway (such as in China and the Middle East). Today, Boston University is the city's most expansive landowner, having bought much of the property along Commonwealth Avenue and surrounding environs. For years, the school prospered under the nigh-tyrannical tenure of President John Silber (who in the last years of his reign dubbed himself chancellor of the university). It remains to be seen how the institution will fare in the long term now that Silber has been ousted.

Boston University is really the melting pot of the city's colleges; a lot of students who aren't particularly drawn to the other three of the "big four" end up here. The school's business program is particularly well respected, and at least a few mages with an interest in finance (or no interest in finance, but with a desire for wealth) are known to scout there for Sleepwalker Retainers.

## Boston College

Boston College is a Catholic school, though it is by no means as stringent about that affiliation as many similar institutions. Back when Boston University had a football team, the BC Eagles were despised rivals, but that enmity has cooled considerably and is now realized pretty much only through the (intense) competition between the two schools' hockey teams. BC's curriculum ranges from the very ordinary to the somewhat bizarre, such a class on the history of Dracula and the myth of the vampire.

There is a persistent rumor that a now-dormant Hallow, so quiescent as to be essentially invisible to one not standing atop it, is located somewhere on or around the campus. Most of the city's more experienced willworkers have dismissed the notion as a fairy tale (after searching high and low for the inert place of power, of course). Young mages still go looking for it occasionally. Some whisper that a potent *geas* was placed on the Hallow to prevent it from reawakening until such a time that a designated condition should be met, or a chosen individual should come seeking it.

## Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MIT is one of the most respected schools of science and engineering in the world. It also has a tradition of particularly brilliant pranksters and other such ne'er-do-wells (such as the crew that gutted a police cruiser and somehow got it on top of a MIT building overnight, or the students who built a weekend card-counting operation that took many of America's casinos for millions). The projects that go on at MIT range from the harmless (ordinary laboratory work) to the downright bizarre and quite probably extremely hazardous (such as trying to build the first man-made singularity, or phasing matter into energy toward the eventual goal of physical teleportation).

A maverick cabal of modernist willworkers operates out of MIT, making use of mystic technologies, scientific savvy and no small measure of daring to demonstrate that the universe can be broken down into little more than an incredibly complex string of programming code. No one from outside the group is absolutely certain as to whether or not members of the cabal possess a Demesne or Hallow, but a number of local mages suspect that there is at least one or the other, if not both.

## Boston Nightlife

Of course, no discussion of Boston's schools would be complete without a look into the city's nightlife. Boston has a good number of hotspots, with the most significant clusters on Lansdowne Street (across the street from Fenway Park) and along Massachusetts Avenue, in Cambridge. Virtually every neighborhood has *somewhere* to hang out at night, drink and try to pick up people, but some areas are blessed with better prospects than others. Allston and Brighton do quite well in this regard, and downtown Boston has some bars and clubs tucked away here and there.

Much of the best nightlife, however, is to be found in parties thrown by private citizens in their off hours. It's mostly students and young professionals who put these shindigs together. These parties tend to go into the early morning on Saturday and Sunday. Drinking and recreational drug use are prolific (unsurprising in a college town). Cocaine is a particular favorite around the Boston club scene and has its advocates in every stratum, from poor white trash to wealthy Eurotrash.

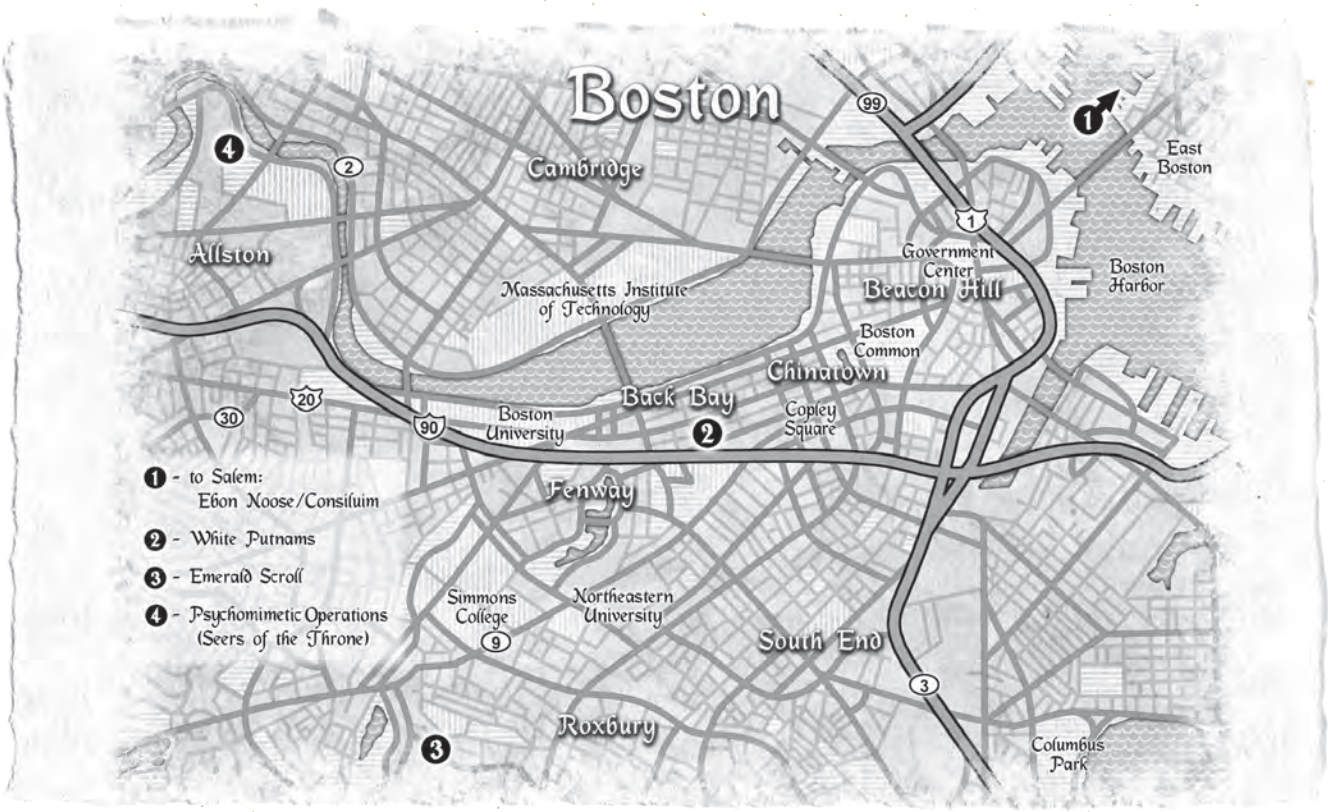
## Last Call

Boston can be charitably described as prudish as big cities go. It is probably more accurate to call the place puritanical. Massachusetts law is specifically founded on this sort of attitude. Until recently, alcohol could not be sold on Sundays (anywhere in the state, save for places within 20 miles of the New Hampshire border). Operating a tattoo parlor was only very recently legalized in Massachusetts. And of course there are stringent laws dictating what can and cannot be open at what hour of the night.

As of two in the morning, Boston more or less closes down. There is a handful of 24-hour greasy spoons in and around town, as well as some private after-hours clubs (several of them illegal), but most night-owl Bostonians have to make do with their own company.

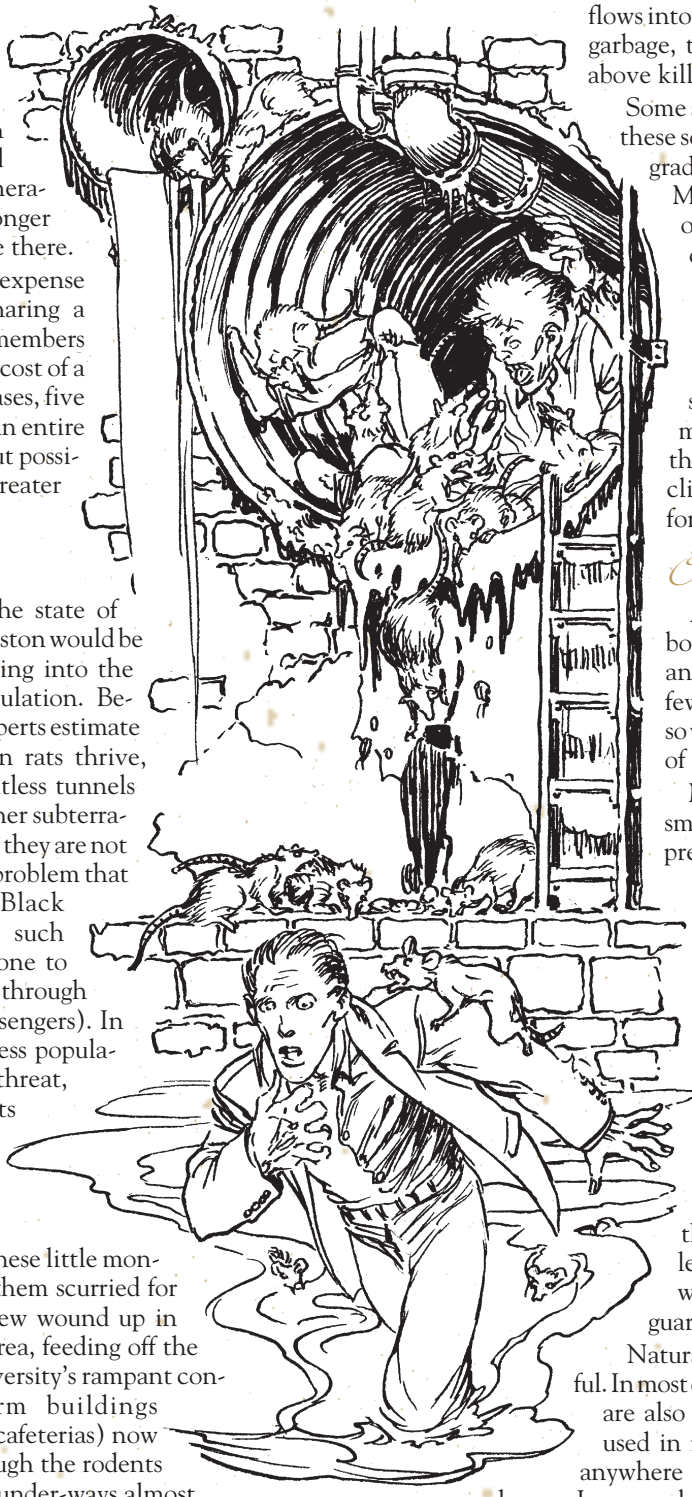
## Cost of Living

The presence of scores of thousands of college students has had a disastrous effect on Boston's cost of living. It is one of the world's most expensive cities to live in, and doesn't really offer pay commensurate with its expense. Most people who insist on living in town or in the immediate suburbs have at least a roommate or two. For many 20-somethings, splitting a place between *four* roommates is not unheard of. In town, it is considered reasonable to charge $1200 and up for monthly rent on a studio apartment, while one would be hard pressed to find such accommodations in the slummiest parts of Roxbury or Dorchester for less than $800 a month. Sadly, as some of Boston's biggest colleges charge such rates or higher for room and board, many students can convince their



parents to spring for off-campus apartments (which come with a far greater degree of freedom than the average dorm), reinforcing the cycle of ever-increasing rents. While it is still possible to find the occasional kindly old landlady who hasn't raised rents since the '70s, such deals are increasingly rare. Many lament the impending and seemingly inevitable point at which those who have called the city home for generations will simply no longer be able to afford to live there.

For the Awakened, expense usually necessitates sharing a single sanctum among members of a cabal, splitting the cost of a living space. In some cases, five or six mages spring for an entire house (often to rent, but possibly to own) in the Greater Boston Area.



## Rats

No description of the state of affairs in and around Boston would be complete without getting into the matter of the rat population. Beneath the city, some experts estimate as many as one billion rats thrive, scampering in the lightless tunnels of the T, sewers and other subterranean hideaways. While they are not quite the same kind of problem that they were for, say, Black Death-era Europeans, such pests *are* filthy and prone to spread disease (often through their own parasitic passengers). In some areas, the homeless population finds rats to be a threat, since so many rodents grow to ambitious proportions (some of Boston's rats get to the size of a housecat).

The Big Dig stirred these little monsters up, and many of them scurried for greener pastures. No few wound up in the Kenmore Square area, feeding off the detritus of Boston University's rampant consumer culture. Dorm buildings (especially those with cafeterias) now play host to them, though the rodents confine themselves to under-ways almost never seen by students.

Some solitary rats have gotten particularly bold and have gathered the courage to attack things much larger than themselves (as opposed to usual swarm tactics). Most times, aggressive rats can be dissuaded by a stomp on the pavement or a loud shout, but there are stories of people being bitten.

Rats are most numerous in and around the Boston University area, downtown (right around the Big Dig) and along the waterfront (either Boston Harbor or the Charles River that flows into it). For the most part, they subsist on garbage, though the large and mean are not above killing something small and weak.

Some speculate that an intelligence moves these scavengers and perhaps motivates the gradual change in their temperament. Maybe it's a more intellectually developed breed brought into being by combinations of recessive traits or by various toxins that have filtered down into the animals' realm. Some speak of a great rat spirit, skulking in the deepest darkness, or perhaps of some sort of grotesque human/rat hybrid, malevolent and undying. Of course, the only way to find out for certain is to climb down into the shadows and look for oneself.

## And Roaches

Another problem in Boston is the booming cockroach population. Most any place that serves food has at least a few roaches, though they're sometimes so well hidden that residents never know of them.

Most of Boston's roaches are of the smallish variety (no bigger than a long press-on nail), though even those are damnably hard to kill without resorting to an extermination program that borders on chemical warfare. Some (right around the Big Dig and from there in a more or less straight line to certain quarters of Boston University's holdings) are particularly enormous, around the size of a man's thumb or slightly larger. These armored behemoths have been seen to have the entire weight of a full-grown adult pressed down on them to little or no effect. At the very least, a vigorous stomp is required to wound them and such an attack is not guaranteed to be fatal.

Naturally, they thrive where food is plentiful. In most cases, that means garbage, but roaches are also drawn to the sweetness of the glue used in many cardboard products, meaning anywhere a lot of boxes are stored can be a haven. In some places they teem so thickly that they're a definitive health hazard, laying eggs with abandon and growing so numerous that people are forced to move out and hope that their possessions are not hopelessly seeded with un-hatched eggs.

Some who have observed the changing temperament of local rats have also noted the increasing boldness of cockroaches (some of the largest actually charge *at* human beings, rather than freezing in place or fleeing). Historically, many foul entities were associated with creatures that feasted on refuse and lived in filth. Could it be that the earliest European settlers brought such an evil with them? If such a thing exists, maybe it has been drawn by the surge in cockroach population. Scientifically minded sorts propose that roaches may develop a sense of community and deliberate cooperation (similar to what certain other varieties of insects demonstrate), or even a rudimentary gestalt consciousness.

## The Big Dig

A model of inefficiency so grand as to back up traffic in a major metropolis for well over a decade now, the Big Dig is an engineering project intended to relieve the city's untenable traffic situation. It's meant to replace an ugly, coiling mass of on-ramps, exits and suspended highways with a single road that stretches above downtown, with parks below and a pleasant view of the harbor to the east. Of course, the project is years overdue and billions of dollars over budget and many Bostonians wonder if it will ever be completed. Every time people begin to get antsy, new projections about how much longer it will take are issued from on high, but no one believes them. The dig is Boston's biggest business and everyone has found a way to put a finger in the pie. It is, ultimately, much more profitable as a never-ending engineering project than it could be as a completed work.

Despite hurdles, however, progress *is* made. Scandals involving leisurely workers or kickbacks have worn away public patience. Ever watchful for a worthy 11 o'clock scoop or lengthy investigative piece, local news sources circle the project like hyenas. Truth be told, such invasive inquiries have become the only thing that keeps the project honest. Under threat of continued scandal, the Big Dig finally seems to have a foreseeable future end (or perhaps that too is a ruse).

## An Occult History

Boston (indeed, all of New England) has a prominent place in the occult history of the West. Various historical and paranormal conspiracies (the Rosicrucians, Knights Templar and Illuminati, among others) have allegedly touched down in the area or touched upon the lives of prominent citizens. If Benjamin Franklin, who was born in Boston, actually belonged to as many occult conspiracies as some would attest, it is likely that he would still be alive today, if only to have enough time to actually track down the organizations and be properly initiated into them all.

Some say that New England was colonized (or perhaps briefly inhabited) by the Knights Templar after their break with the Priory of Sion and the Cutting of the Elm at Gisors. That is, the members of the Merovingian bloodline, believed among many conspiracy theorists to be the direct descendants of Jesus of Nazareth and Mary of Magdala, and a powerful line of sorcerers and miracle workers. Theories abound as to where these knights might have settled (some point to alleged ruins, which may be pre-Colonial structures, works of nature or something else), and what they might have brought with them. Some of the vast treasure of the Templars or even the Cup of Christ may be located somewhere in the area.

### Freemasonry and the Founding of America

There can be no doubt that a considerable number of the Founding Fathers were also Masons. What is perhaps less well known is that, in Massachusetts' Dedham Lodge, there supposedly exists a copy of the minutes of the meeting in which the Boston Tea Party was discussed, approved and planned, in effect laying the groundwork for the concerted rebellion that eventually led to the Revolutionary War.

## Beyond Boston

The cities and towns that once constituted the New England colonies are among the oldest permanent European settlements in the Americas. Urban centers are, comparatively speaking, packed closely together, but in between are some long stretches of wild, untamed land and lonely roads lit by nothing more than the sun, the moon, the stars and the headlights of one's car. Despite that most any point in New England is accessible in a day's ride, a certain feeling of distance and remoteness pervades the American northeast. The wilderness that was driven out ever seeks to crawl back in, and in unnoticed corners does so, gradually swallowing abandoned traces of civilization. There exist forsaken spans of highway, slowly crumbling and fading under the relentless encroachment of local flora; decrepit bridges dismissed from service and disintegrating under rain, snow, blistering heat and time; and even whole colonial villages gutted by the march of hundreds of seasons and left as little more than oddly placed stones, bits of rusted iron and detritus-filled cellars.

## Salem

A city of mainstream counterculture, Salem is historically considered a bastion of pagan faith, despite the fact that its most famous instances of "witchery" likely stemmed from nothing more than children's games gone horribly awry.

To call the proceedings in 1692 "trials" is a mockery of fair and just judicial process. What began as an amusing diversion taught to two young Puritan girls by a Caribbean slave rapidly grew out of control, until there were many who strongly suspected that the Devil himself walked the forlorn roads of New England's cold, dark winter.

The hysteria began with divinations taught to Elizabeth Parris and Abigail Williams by Tituba, a slave woman who belonged to Reverend Samuel Parris, Elizabeth's father and Abigail's uncle. Though proscribed by the Puritan faith of the colonists, divinations were a popular leisure activity, especially among young girls and adolescents. Some speculate that the girls became frightened by something they saw (or believed they saw) in the future. What is beyond doubt

is that the two (and several others soon thereafter) exhibited bizarre behavior. The local physician, unable to find anything physically wrong, confidently declared the girls bewitched.



Early accusations were directed at easy targets. Sarah Good was a homeless beggar who muttered unknown words at those who did not give her charity. Unfortunate happenings in the area were often attributed to her. Sarah Osborne was an elderly woman who had not attended church for over a year. Tituba, the outsider who had brought her own folk magic to the colony, confessed quickly to all sorts of fantastic acts, such as signing her name in the "Devil's Book," along with Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and others she did not recognize. She spoke of strange animals (such as black hounds and talking cats), and of a tall man in black who compelled her to sign the evil book put before her and who threatened her with harm if she did not comply.

Spurred on by this confession, accusers (whose numbers grew as the weeks went on) and authorities fed into one another's paranoia. Family members eventually turned on each other and a special committee was formed to oversee the whole affair. All told, at least 24 people died in the hysteria, 19 by hanging, four in prison and one, Giles Corey, crushed to death beneath wooden planks in an attempt to force a plea from him. (The laws of the time would have cheated his children of their inheritance should he have entered a plea and be deemed guilty.) As Corey died, he cursed Salem's sheriff and the town itself. Since then, troubles have plagued the office of the local sheriff, often heart troubles. (Corey's killer died of heart failure.)

Aside from Tituba's open admission and Giles Corey's curse on Salem, one other individual stands out from the otherwise innocent: former Salem Village minister, George Burroughs. He had left the area over issues with his salary and was a three-time widower widely rumored to have abused his wives. Most importantly, he would, when pushed to the limits of his temper, claim to possess supernatural powers. Whatever those powers might have been, they did not save Burroughs' life. Nor did his distance from the colony (he had relocated to Maine in 1682). Along with four others, the man named by the girls as "leader of the Salem Coven" was hanged on August 19th, 1692.

Much of Salem's modern tourism derives from the witch hysteria, though most of it has been sufficiently sanitized to serve as family entertainment. Silhouettes of broom-riding woman in long dresses and pointy hats are all over the self-proclaimed "Witch City." Every October, the place is packed with people indulging in the plastic atmosphere of America's most commercially spooky urban center. A countermovement of modern-day pagans (most numerous of whom are Wiccans) and others gathers in the city at that time for all manner of reasons, from social commentary to protest to spirituality to education. (All this despite the fact that it is highly questionable that any pagans were actually put to death in 1692.)

As far as the affairs of the Awakened go, Salem has been a significant city since the collapse of the Boston Consilium. The Ebon Noose (ranking among its numbers the Hierarch of the now much-expanded Consilium), is the area's most politically powerful and influential cabal.

### Northampton

Quite a ways west of Boston is Northampton (or Noho, as it is often called), probably one of the most eclectic and youth-culture-friendly places in the state. A lot of students and people freshly out of college live there, as well as older residents who are young at heart. The artistic and gay and lesbian communities in Northampton are strong and well-respected fixtures of local life.

While little exists to give Northampton the kind of fame enjoyed by Boston or Salem, it is a largely undiscovered jewel of the state, peopled largely by individuals who are friendly to new ideas, and for the most part respectful of ways other than their own. Needless to say, it is a popular town for mages, though the plague of high rents has resulted in a housing situation similar to that in Boston, with whole cabals taking up residence together.

### Quincy

While Salem has a likely undeserved reputation for paganism, Quincy may have once served as home to a coven of displaced European pagans. Details are scarce, but what is known is that a man named Thomas Morton took up residence in 1625 on the land then known by settlers as Mount Wollaston. He renamed it Merrymount after consultation with the natives, with whom he apparently enjoyed excellent relations.

By Morton's own account, he raised a Maypole 80 feet high and crowned with a buck's antlers, and invited local youths to partake in a barrel of beer he had brewed and to enjoy revelry "after the olde English custome." It is unclear how many people actually attended the celebration, but his own recollections indicate that the number was considerable. Morton's dour neighbors did not take kindly to this sort of business and were moved to call the place "Mount Dagon," where they gathered to force the gathering to disperse. Morton apparently continued as though the Puritans were not present, with his fellow celebrants dancing hand in hand about the Maypole, singing a song that invited others to doff their hats, drink liquor, make green garlands and generally be merry.

Morton's neighbors conspired against him constantly thereafter, and he spent spans of time imprisoned in England. After his first incarceration, he returned to find his colony disbanded. He kept trying to reestablish himself, but was eventually exiled from Massachusetts, living in Maine for the short time before his death.

History, confounded by the inextricable religiosity of almost all accounts, no longer remembers whether Thomas Morton was nothing more than a crude, libertine souse or if he was indeed a keeper of the Old Ways. What little can be gleaned from biased accounts suggests that he was likely a bit of both. Today, Quincy downplays Morton's role, dubbing him an infamous instigator who had to be deported by Myles Standish, instead emphasizing its status as "City of Presidents," birthplace of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, as well as John Hancock (considered by some the unofficial "first American president").

### Gloucester

This is H.P. Lovecraft country, alluded to in various tales of oceanic horrors, crawling from the depths to contaminate human bloodlines with hideous half-breeds and to give the world over to unfathomable masters. This is also the place where an eccentric genius named John Hays Hammond built his home, Abbadia Mare (now known to most simply as Hammond Castle). Hammond was an avid spiritualist and masterful technologist with a playful spirit and a driving desire to build a world for himself, a world he realized in his contemporary castle. He is remembered for a fondness for piloting remote-controlled boats out on the water near his castle, and for frightening fishermen half to death. (In fact, Hammond invented remote control using radio waves.) There are still stories told about John Hays Hammond's "ghost boats."

Abbadia Mare is filled with all sorts of curiosities, including the largest pipe organ ever placed inside a private residence, a wall made entirely from Roman grave markers, and a system of pipes designed to create "indoor rain" in an enclosed courtyard. Today, much of his home is open to the public (save during the winter months). It even hosts an annual King Arthur Faire in early April. Some areas are still off limits, however. After all, a man whose patents are more numerous than any save Thomas Edison's needs to keep a few secrets, even long after leaving this world.

## Cabals

The following cabals are not the only ones in Boston, but they are notable for their influence and history. Awakened Boston is a study in contrasts, and its cabals are no exception. If a prominent group doesn't have a generations-long pedigree it tends to be made of brash free agents: artifact-smugglers, enforcers and Mana-tappers whom elder groups tolerate so long as the upstarts don't truly upset the status quo. The known elder cabals — the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams — are aberrations. Most cabals do not survive the death of their founders. Newer cabals are wary of this longevity and the stranglehold the old regimes hold over the Consilium.

### Renegade Cabals

Boston has a number of cabals who refuse affiliation with the Consilium. While they have few ties to occult politics, the underworld or the rich, they pursue their own goals with just as much vigor. Boston has a reputation as a place to make loose, secret deals, so visitors are common. They rely on the openness of the city to trade in artifacts and magical secrets, and on the threat of the Ebon Noose's hammer to keep those deals from getting too dishonest. Boston's resident mages approach this fact with a mix of resentment and opportunism.
Such cabals include:

**Saint Michael's Promise:** These Christian Banishers are materially poor, martially skilled

and devoted to ridding Boston of whatever they deem to be "evil." They sometimes support themselves with the money they pilfer from "evildoers," which provides even more motivation for them to target organized crime and other profitably corrupt elements. These days, the Promise almost considers hunting mages to be less godly than rooting out criminals and cults. They know the Awakened use Sleepers to do their dirty work and want to "starve wizards out," and the money is better to boot. But now that the Combat Zone, Boston's red-light district, is less dangerous than it used to be, the group is bored, agitated and looking for a new crusade, and may try to confront other Awakened directly.

**The SMG**: MIT's Special Media Group is a Free Council cabal devoted to computer science and mathematics. It firmly believes that the universe can be reduced to programming code — and members run applications that seem to prove it. The cabal is constantly wired with the cutting edge in wearable computers. They've used these devices and their own talents to exploit casinos in Atlantic City and Las Vegas, but not so much as to draw undue attention — yet.

**The Red Word:** Local legend tells of this terrifying cabal: "The man was missing most of his right arm. There were ragged, tooth-marked flaps of flesh left. Similar gnawed wounds had taken an eye and ear. His mind was gone, but he managed to find his way to Davy Jones, a man who he'd traded information and Mana with a week before. The wounded mage babbled about the Red Word, about cannibals and languages that should never be spoken. 'They have taken a whole sentence from me,' said the mad mage, 'and I am damned for having known it.' Then he turned a killing spell on himself." Since then, rumors of the Red Word — cannibal occultists — stoke the fears of mages, even though stories conflict and none of the Awakened can claim to have ever seen one of them.

## The White Putnams

One of the two cabals with the oldest lineage in Boston, the White Putnams have spent the past three centuries transforming themselves from an obscure farming commune to a fellowship riddled with Massachusetts gentry.

In 1905, two Awakened sisters who claimed to be descendants of Samuel Parris moved to Boston and founded the White Putnams. The cabal's name was intended to reflect their ancestry and to symbolize that they repudiated the sins of the past. In a more practical vein, the sisters' humility made their allegiance to the Silver Ladder no threat to the then-ascendant Guardians of the Veil. They devoted themselves to teaching, charity and diplomacy and kept the Putnam name for their sanctum.

The cabal attempted to claim Salem in 1906, in a move to both accept responsibility for its ancestors' role in the city's past and to reclaim its heritage. The Ebon Noose opposed the Putnams. The conflict resulted in the Secret Concord and the Putnams' retreat to Boston, although the curse they believed had haunted them was now seemingly put to rest by their signing of the Concord.

The modern White Putnam cabal doesn't adhere to the Puritan stereotype. Under Provost Chain Parris' leadership, it pursues a repentant policy of tolerance. Its seven mages do not unanimously support the Provost's position, however. Three believe that the cabal has become *too* tolerant and they are tired of cooperating with heathens and blasphemers. The rest follow Parris' lead. These three have thrown their lot in with the Mysterium instead of the Silver Ladder of cabal tradition.

The White Putnams shadow the kinds of parties and meetings the rich descendants of Mayflower colonists hold. When the elite need a streak of luck or an ironclad secret revealed, they glance at the White Putnams' brass ring, slink to their side and bargain for services. Originally, the cabal supported rising middle-class Sleepers, but as those ordinary folks' station among mages declines, cabal members comfort themselves with the wealth and ritual of Sleeper high society. Nevertheless, the cabal refuses jobs that don't meet its ethical standards and charges dearly for the ones it does accept. The resulting fees and favors go to Christian charities and to a constantly shifting array of projects.

The White Putnams have been known to hire visiting or struggling mages for a number of tasks, including surveillance, tracking smuggled artifacts and "correcting" the behavior of other visiting mages.

### Chain Parris

**Quote:** *This is a lovely summer getaway, Senator. Looking out at the water, we can almost forget about that boating accident. What? Certainly — a charitable contribution does reflect genuine penitence. Actually, I have a suggestion along those lines.*

**Background:** Jonathan "Chain" Parris cuts a handsome figure through upscale Massachusetts, a laughing man who's always just to the left of the spotlight at politically charged weddings, regattas and similar events. There's no need to invite him to events; the proper people just know that he should be there. He stands out among the idle rich because of his simple, healthy lifestyle.



Chain and his friends are the people to see when trouble looms, but they won't hide bodies or let an ugly state of affairs persist. For example, when a certain rich rapist haunted debutante parties, concerned parents brought it up with Chain. Nobody identified the man they found floating face down in Martha's Vineyard as the culprit. Five years later, lawyers unsealed the rapist's will to find that he'd given everything to women's charities and churches. Nobody had to suffer anything as ugly as a trial.

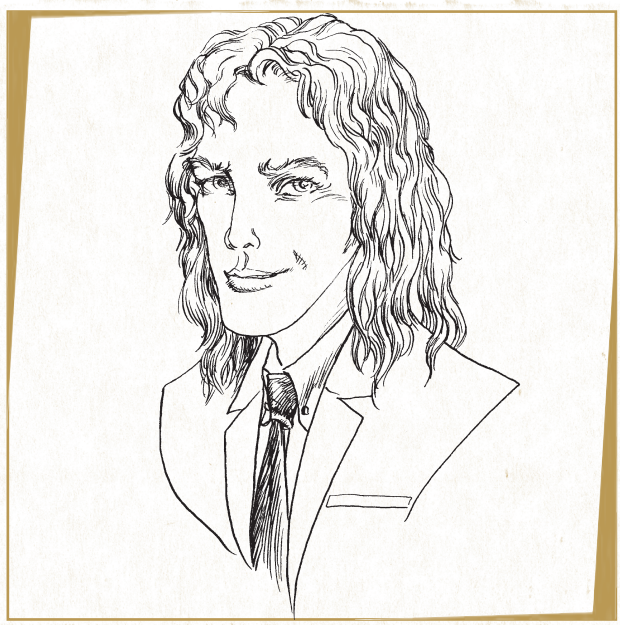
The White Putnams preserve the communal organization of their Puritan ancestors, but they hold Chain in high regard because of his heritage. And yet, they resent what they've come to see as his overweening self-loathing and a tendency to buckle under when the "damned heathen Noose" makes demands.

**Description:** Chain is a handsome 30-year-old man, though his wide grin and slick mid-Atlantic voice seem a bit oily. His Sleeper peers respect his unfashionable affectations such as his thin sideburns and sun-bleached, shoulder-length hair. Depending on the season, he wears white or pale-gray suits. He always wears the brass ring of the White Putnams, and a plain wooden crucifix under his tailored shirt. He has blue eyes and a bronzed face.

His Nimbus appears as a halo of glowing light coming from above, as if clouds had parted to let in the light of the sun.

**Storytelling Hints:** Chain believes that humility is essential to the cabal's spiritual integrity, especially when so many Sleepers are wealthy. Some other Christian mages live under much more humble circumstances, so perhaps they can afford to be bombastic in their righteousness, but the rich carry an extra burden. It's Chain's self-imposed job to remind everyone of that, most of all himself. Such charity toward the rich in no way impairs his ability to scheme and tug on the ties he has with the elite. He simply directs the results toward nobler goals than many. It's rumored that, Secret Concord aside, wealthy ties are why the Nemean tolerates Chain's position as Provost.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Bible



**Real Name:** Jonathan Parris
**Path:** Obrimos
**Order:** Mysterium
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3
**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 3
**Mental Skills:** Academics (Boston History) 4, Investigation 4, Medicine 2, Occult 4, Politics (High Society) 4
**Physical Skills:** Drive 2, Brawl 2, Firearms 3
**Social Skills:** Intimidation 4, Persuasion 4, Socialize (High Society) 4, Subterfuge 4
**Merits:** Contacts (High Society, Politics) 2, Hallow (shared with White Putnams) 2, High Speech, Occultation 3, Resources 4, Sanctum (shared with White Putnams) 2, Status (Consilium 4, Order 2)
**Willpower:** 7
**Wisdom:** 6
**Virtue:** Charity
**Vice:** Envy
**Initiative:** 5
**Defense:** 2
**Speed:** 10
**Health:** 8
**Gnosis:** 4
**Arcana:** Forces 3, Mind 2, Prime 3, Space 2, Time 3
**Rotes:** *Forces* — Nightsight (•), Control Sound (••), Telekinetic Strike (•••); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), First Impressions (••); *Prime* — Inscribe Grimoire (•), Magic Shield (••), Squaring the Circle (••); *Time* — Momentary Flux (•), Augury (••), Shield of Chronos (••), Temporal Shift (•••)
**Mana/per turn:** 13/4
**Armor:** 3 ("Temporal Dodge," Time ••)
**Magic Shield:** 3 (Prime ••)

## The Ebon Noose

The Ebon Noose is infamous for its age, power and greed. Some of Salem's old neo-pagans believe that the Noose has secret levels of initiation within their own religions, and certain of Boston's elite criminals abort any attempt to rob a building or person wearing the Noose's mark.

The Ebon Noose is a veritably ancient cabal. Where most occult conspiracies are lucky to last the lifetimes of their members, the Noose can claim a lineage stretching back to the early colonial period. By the 16th century, Acanthus and Thyrsus mages were hard-pressed to conceal their Arts in Christian Europe. Many cultivated Atlantis' lore through polytheistic rites or ecstatic practices that were anathema to mainstream society. When rumors of the New World were finally confirmed, some of these mages decided that this great and supposedly sparsely inhabited land would unveil new opportunities. The Ebon Noose set out in the same ships as the Puritans — and for much the same reason. Like the Puritans, adventurous mages could live as they wished in the wild.

But the land wasn't vacant. The group discovered that entire nations claimed it, and that their cabals held its places of power. Indigenous mages knew Atlantis existed, but their stories did little to affirm the Ebon Noose's legends. Fundamentals were there. They told of the nation's rise and fall, but did not honor the Old World's traditions. All the prestige



gained in the dueling circles and Consilium courts of Europe meant nothing to the natives, and they were quick to monitor and contain newcomers.

So the Ebon Noose scattered to the margins of New England society, where even the Puritans knew that sometimes prayer could be supplemented by the divining rod of a water-witch or a sorcerer's glance at the moon. The cabal made it known that it would not tolerate persecution and could sow death among an enemy's animals and fields. Members left the forming city to the Guardians of the Veil and rarely dealt with Boston's rising Consilium.

But in 1906, the Ebon Noose and White Putnams came to Salem. Their conflict culminated in an unknown rite and the signing of a pledge. They brokered what Boston's mages still call the Secret Concord, and created a hidden power bloc capable of trumping the local Guardians of the Veil. Common wisdom holds that the Putnams were on a mission of repentance and the Ebon Noose was pleased to exploit it. Yet, there are intimations of another agenda at work. The signers of the Concord came to Salem girded for war, with reserves of Mana and mystic weapons. Shortly after the conflict gave way to the alliance between the combatants, a green cloud rained snakes on Salem. Seven townswomen dreamt of a great, gray house hiding a terrible secret, and then wept blood and went mad. The allies of the Concord had worked some terrible spell, but bound by magical oaths, refused to talk of it or reveal the full nature of the agreement.

The Ebon Noose made Salem home. Members quietly searched for apprentices to maintain their numbers and did little else, except to closely monitor mages who passed through town. The cabal purchased real estate with money accumulated without a whiff of magic, using a combination of wise investment and bequests from one mage to another. The cabal is rumored to harbor a Demesne somewhere in the woods outside Salem.

In the 1960s, the cabal experienced a cultural windfall. It found itself dominating a pilgrimage site for the growing neo-pagan movement. These human seekers used some of the old pagan symbolism of the Ebon Noose without knowing its Supernal ties. From a base of thousands of believers, the cabal could pick its share of students and forge alliances across the country. After the Guardians of the Veil hegemony collapsed and the White Putnams retreated to upper-class circles, the Ebon Noose parleyed its new strength into securing personal power. Its members tolerate much, but those mages who cross an unspoken line find that the cabal delivers a harsh lesson, often at the hands of its Sentinel, Anacaona de Xaragua.

At present, nine mages of various orders claim membership in the cabal, although the Silver Ladder has the most adherents, including the Nemean Hierarch. Members recognize the problems plaguing such a large group, especially since many of the Wise want to claim membership. In the past, the Noose has lent support to itinerant cabals that paid due respect, sometimes sending one of its number to train or assist these lesser gatherings. Associate groups occasionally use the Ebon Noose's signs as well, creating the illusion that the cabal is even larger than it actually is.

### *Anacaona de Xaragua*

**Quote:** *I don't want to repeat myself — forcefully. Comprendez-vous?*

**Background:** Boston's mages fear Anacaona de Xaragua (pronounced Ksa-RA-gua) in a particular way: a passive kind of itch that makes them ask themselves whether any given act might offend the Sentinel they call "Mademoiselle Scorpion," "Anaconda," or "the Ax."

She Awakened in Haiti almost 27 years ago and used her talents to catapult her family out of poverty, but at a price. *Bocors* associated with Francois Duvalier's paramilitaries attempted to recruit and indoctrinate her. After a bloody confrontation that cost the lives of her three brothers, she arranged to send herself and her parents to America. Those events drove Anacaona away from Vodoun symbolism. Instead, she turned to Caribbean native traditions to translate the Supernal Art. That turn changed her magical style and motivated her to acquire a master's degree in Anthropology.

Her academic pursuits did nothing to soften the nearly ruthless expedience she applied to life and magic. She was curious about Salem because of Tituba, an Arawak islander tied to the witch trials, but it was an astral dream-journey that inspired her to move there. She has not volunteered details, but the experience was intense enough for her to force her way into the Ebon Noose. She claimed a place as the cabal's enforcer, but the Noose's senior mages suspect that she ultimately wants to lead.

**Description:** Anacaona's intense gaze complements a dark-skinned, athletic physique. Her coiled hair is long; she usually wears a bandanna to keep it out of her eyes. Her arms are tattooed with stylized depictions of two Arawak *zemis* (gods). Yocahu, the Creator, adorns her right arm, and Jurak·n, god of night and devastation, her left.

Her Nimbus appears as the sound of a drum, which is actually the beating of blood through heart and veins.

**Storytelling Hints:** De Xaragua carries out most of her duties with aloof disinterest. She is, however, skilled at appearing respectful and concerned, especially when it comes to the Noose's ties to Salem's neo-pagans, people with whom she feels no connection whatsoever. Despite this ambivalence, and speculations about her ambitions, she tirelessly promotes the cabal's interests. Anacaona de Xaragua may be cold and unpleasant at times, but she's put her life on the line for allied mages on numerous occasions. As Boston's primary Sentinel, she sometimes uses the Hierarch Nemean's reputation for quick anger to intimidate others, but she is more than capable of using a withering stare and confident posture to cow fellow Awakened.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Knife



**Real Name:** Odette Gaulthier
**Path:** Thyrsus
**Order:** Adamantine Arrow
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 5
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4
**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 2
**Mental Skills:** Academics 4, Crafts (Tattooing) 3, Investigation 4, Medicine 3, Occult (Caribbean Religion) 5, Politics 3
**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Firearms 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Weaponry 3
**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Withering Stare) 4, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3
**Merits:** Allies 4, Contacts (Neo-pagans) 1, Hallow (shared with Ebon Noose) 2, High Speech, Languages (French, English, Arawak, Latin) 4, Occultation 3, Resources 4, Sanctum (shared with Ebon Noose) 1, Status (Consilium 2, Order 3)
**Willpower:** 7
**Wisdom:** 5
**Virtue:** Hope
**Vice:** Wrath
**Initiative:** 6
**Defense:** 4
**Speed:** 13
**Health:** 9
**Gnosis:** 4
**Arcana:** Death 2, Forces 2, Life 4, Prime 2, Space 2, Spirit 3
**Rotes:** *Death* — Grim Sight (•); *Life* — Cleanse the Body (•), Organic Resilience (••), Self-Healing (••), Eagle's Talon (•••), Supreme Honing (••••); *Space* — Omnivision (•); *Spirit* — Exorcist's Eye (•), Gossamer Touch (••), Control Spirit (•••)
**Mana/per turn:** 13/4
**Armor:** 4 ("Organic Resilience," Life ••)
**Magic Shield:** 2 (Prime ••)

## Dead Wrens

Larcenous and daring, the Dead Wrens dominate occult activity in Boston Harbor. They preside over an unlikely alliance of longshoremen, fences, Port Authority officials and antiquarians.

They are inheritors of Boston's Free Council freebooting legacy. Following a long conflict with Boston's ruling Guardians of the Veil in the early 20th Century, some Free Council mages adapted to the situation and decided to take up smuggling, sea trade and piracy. War struck Europe, and the new cabal found itself in great demand. With the danger of U-Boats and US patrols, the price of transatlantic contraband rose dramatically. The mages combined seamanship and magic to great effect, pulling off nearly impossible jobs under the noses of the world's militaries. In their success, they found a common identity. A series of Free Council cabals followed. The Dead Wrens are the latest of the line, named after the wren feathers that sailors used as good-luck charms.

The Dead Wrens' sanctum is a Hallow that mockingly recreates the old Guardians of the Veil's Emerald Scroll sanctum. The Wrens run it as a "free house" for Boston's mages — a place to haggle, eavesdrop and contact the Wrens themselves.

The Wrens believe that mages should mind their own business, do as they please, and defend their liberty with necessary force, but minimal fuss. Even though the Dead Wrens are the product of Free Council maneuvers, they are strictly apolitical. Two libertines and one member of every order except for the Guardians of the Veil belong to this cabal.

## Davy Jones

**Quote:** *Dead men tell no tales and necromancers are bad luck. Meet me at the Scroll with cash in hand, and I'll pass off a trinket that solves the former problem without causing the latter.*

**Background:** Like his Finnish father, Jones loves the sea. Like his Spanish mother, he's a profligate spender. This combination inspired him to sign aboard a merchant vessel at the age of 16. Already versed in a morass of nautical and gambling superstitions, Jones Awakened when his ship encountered a savage storm. Though half the crew died, the vessel managed to limp to Boston Harbor. Shaken by the experience, Jones stayed in his cabin while the survivors rested on dry land. Where the rest of the crew saw only great waves and heard only the creaking of the ship, Jones experi-



enced the ship sailing to the mythic edge of the world to be devoured by nameless, horrifically formed creatures beyond. It had taken every bit of his will to climb a spar and learn the secret tides and vortices that would bring the ship to safety. Nowadays, he knows that he experienced a "waking world" Awakening — with the spar as the Acanthus Watchtower — but he doesn't always *believe* it.

He encountered the second surprise of his life when two cabals snuck aboard ship and fought a magical battle for possession of an obscure piece of cargo. In an instant, he somehow *felt* that one of the groups was responsible for the storm, so he helped the other. His new allies were the Dead Wrens. They drove the other cabal away and offered Jones training and adventure in return for the disputed cargo. He accepted, and initiated himself into the Free Council.

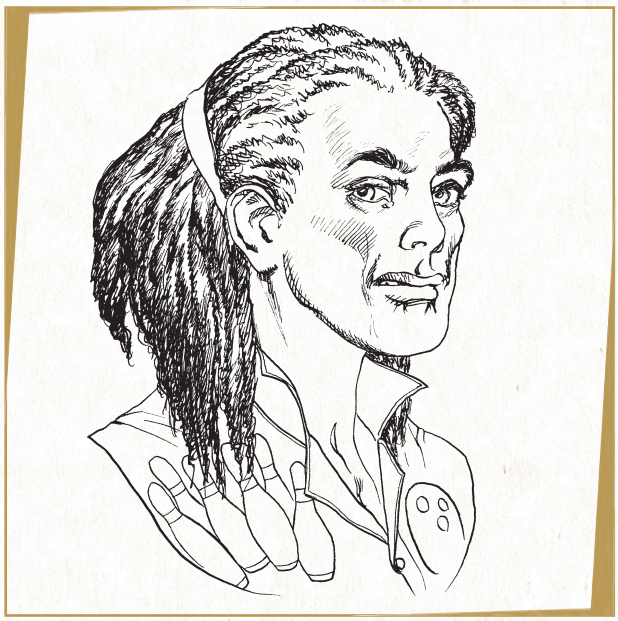
Nowadays, Davy Jones patrols the waterfront in a patched black motorboat. On most days, he deals with sailors, longshoremen and petty smugglers for the Dead Wrens. Jones spends his money freely, cheerfully deals with visitors to the city, and dreams of sailing a modest ship around the world for a bit of anti-authoritarian piracy. Will he disrupt the flow of oil or precious metals? He hasn't decided yet.

**Description:** Jones has long, black dreadlocks, ice-blue eyes and a lithe body given to flamboyant gestures. He usually brings a bit of good rope, a large knife and a smoking pipe (for idle moments) with him to any job. His outfits consist of a mix of sandals, steel-toed boots, coveralls, army-surplus wear and an open bowling shirt. He's 22 years old.

His Nimbus appears as a momentary visual sharpening or accentuation of his physical presence, as if he carried a great weight of importance.

**Storytelling Hints:** Most people will never meet anyone else who says "Avast!" without the slightest hint of self-consciousness. To Jones, pirate talk is just another part of his convoluted magical praxis — a modern freebooter's koans. Other mages treat his habits and shadow name with anything from amusement to contempt, believing Jones to be something of a comedian. The mage takes it all quite seriously, however, and is willing to talk at length about the progressive social revolutions that occurred in historical pirate communities. He peppers his self-indulgent talk with all kinds of rumors, offerings and warnings, since he often takes a liking to visitors and underdogs.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Compass
**Real Name:** Joachim Mhekka
**Path:** Acanthus
**Order:** Free Council
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3
**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4
**Mental Skills:** Computers 2, Crafts (Knot Tying) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Science 2
**Physical Skills:** Brawl 3, Drive 4, Firearms (Pistols) 4, Larceny 4, Stealth 3, Weaponry 2
**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise (The Docks) 4, Subterfuge 4
**Merits:** Contacts (Underworld) 1, Hallow (Shared; The Emerald Scroll) 3, High Speech, Library (Shared; Local Legends, Witchcraft, Haunted Ships), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared; The Emerald Scroll) 5, Status (Order 3)



**Willpower:** 7
**Wisdom:** 7
**Virtue:** Fortitude
**Vice:** Pride
**Initiative:** 8
**Defense:** 4
**Speed:** 11
**Health:** 8
**Gnosis:** 3
**Arcana:** Fate 3, Life 2, Mind 1, Space 3, Time 1
**Rotes:** *Fate* — Quantum Flux (•), Fortune's Protection (••), Alter Oaths (•••); *Life* — Sense Life (•), Self-Healing (••); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•); *Space* — Correspondence (•), Scrying (••)
**Mana/per turn:** 12/3
**Armor:** 3 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

## The Shadow Chorus

The true faces of the Shadow Chorus mages are supposedly known only to Chain Parris and the Nemean himself. At Consilium functions, the mages appear in grotesque masks. Otherwise, all use magic to regularly change their height and facial features. The mages' Shadow Names are Angerona, Discordia, Culsu and Februs. Local mages know that the first two belong to the Mysterium and the last two are Guardians of the Veil, and that they are capable of acquiring extremely large sums of money on short notice.

While Boston's mages don't know much about the Chorus, they've had certain suspicions ever since the cabal arrived on the scene in 1996. The most popular theory about the group is that its members are from a lineage of apprentices founded by Guardians of the Veil mages who used to control Boston. In the early 20th century, the Golden Dawn's Temple of Thme indoctrinated wealthy Sleepers and supplied the Guardians of the Veil with allies, wealth and apprentices. These connections once financed the real Guardian cabal, the Emerald Scroll, but by 1924, the Temple of Thme had grown



beyond the control of the Guardians of the Veil. Dozens of Sleepers used the Golden Dawn's secrets to start rival societies and twist watered-down occult theory to suit it members' whims. Although such infiltration of the masses was a common enough strategy in the Guardians' Labyrinth, it backfired by creating a social climate too mercurial to obey the rules of its own masters. A group of Free Council mages called the Patriotic Hell-Fire Society took advantage of the confusion and set themselves up as an alternative group of "secret masters," touching off an occult conflict that killed enough libertines, Guardians and Sleeper interlopers to dissolve the entire operation and end the Guardians' reign in Boston.

Culsu leads the Shadow Chorus in the classic Guardian style, revealing little and using Sleepers to further the group's aims. The Chorus is linked to a number of short-lived cults. Such societies are invariably led by charismatic Sleepers whose magnetism owes much to the cabal's magic. Instead of hierarchical conspiracies, these cults are small, intertwined cells that are mobile and disposable, with beliefs that drive them to pursue cabal projects. One recent example was the Western Grail: neo-Templars who believed that a certain rock impregnated with the blood of Christ could be found somewhere in Boston. The group murdered a mage carrying an artifact that fit the rock's description. Reprisals wiped out all six Sleepers, but a month later, the Shadow Chorus offered the stone to the Ebon Noose as payment for unspecified favors.

The Chorus has been openly hostile to Free Council causes before. Using bribery and threats, it's persuaded some visitors to avoid the Dead Wrens' Emerald Scroll sanctum. Culsu himself killed two libertines under suspicious circumstances that the cabal claims were matters of self-defense. And yet, the cabal has given unsolicited clues to mages of all orders about the location of enchanted items and Hallows in old Boston.

## Psychomimetic Operations

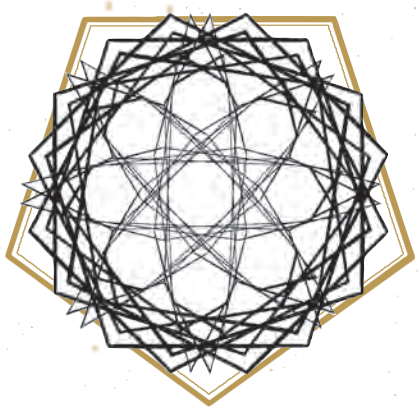
Harvard belongs to the Throne. While other mages raided the university for only research, the Seers of the Throne recognized the school's potential early on and took the long, slow path to control it. Starting with the Greek letter societies, they eventually took hold of the university through donors, prominent alumni and a few vulnerable faculty.

Then LSD appeared. It had the potential to hide mind-altering magic from the effects of Sleeper Disbelief, and in some cases even replace it. Science could mold the drug into the perfect tool, or turn it into a vice to be avoided. Through CIA-sponsored professors, the Seers of the Throne had the drug classified it as "psychomimetic," capable of creating a psychotic state. Researchers like Timothy Leary preferred to call it a "psychedelic" and believed it could greatly enhance psychotherapy, but also entertained the possibility that the drug could be used to reach "mystical" states of consciousness.

In the 1960s, Harvard was on the forefront of LSD research. But Dr. Leary's apparent rebelliousness was something of a double blind. Despite his ties to the growing counterculture, he later served as an FBI informant, providing information about radicals like the Weather Underground in hopes of negotiating his release from jail. Mages with both authoritarian and anti-establishment leanings were highly suspicious of Leary and his agenda. Instead of suborning him, they fought over the meaning of his work. In particular, Libertines wanted to promote psychedelics as a self-initiation tool to bypass the hierarchical training of the other orders. The Seers of the Throne wanted to ensure that LSD and its successors were thought of as nothing more than a quick path to insanity. Other mages took positions between those extremes.

This is not to say that the Seers of the Throne had no use for artificial "madness." They exploited Harvard LSD research to spur on further experiments (including their own alchemical enhancements) through the CIA's MK-ULTRA project. They developed a whole range of drugs designed to incapacitate enemies and control minds. The most sophisticated concealed Seers' spells from subjects' perceptions, protecting mages from Paradoxes. Byproducts like the combat hallucinogen BZ were passed on to the US government in exchange for classified access.

In 1977, the Seer pylon known as Psychomimetic Operations became Harvard's dominant occult clique under the cover of a classified campus research group. After floating through FBI and CIA hands, the operation is currently funded by the Department of Homeland Security. Similarly, membership has changed over the years thanks to a series of duels and assassinations. Seers struggle to acquire membership and its benefits: government funding, and the run of the university and the group's secret archives. Psychomimetic Operations pretends to study the threat of psychoactive drugs as a terrorist weapon and even sends reports to the federal government, but its primary mission is to explore and manipulate the human mind. If its researchers can delve even deeper to twist the substance of the soul, they might



develop magic capable of manipulating the Quiescence and tainting the Awakening itself.

Even though the pylon is the preeminent magical presence on campus, the Seers of the Throne — and perhaps the Exarchs above them — rarely infiltrate an organization with just one layer of conspiracy. And that might indicate the presence of the Asylum, a group rumored to exist "above" Psychomimetic Operations.

## The Asylum

Psychomimetic Operations wields a great deal of influence at Harvard, but layers of conspiracy operate above it. The Asylum is one of these, but it does not appear to trouble itself with street deals or field agents. Psychomimetic Operations fears the Asylum. Is it the pylon's designated master or a rival? Other mages know the Asylum as a cautionary tale or myth with a dangerous grain of truth, just as they might view alien visitations or black helicopters.

The Awakened life is dangerous enough. Mages have a tendency to vanish in the aftermath of potent spells or arcane investigations. Boston's mages often blame the Asylum for these disappearances, because on rare occasions a vanished mage has returned with bizarre, horrific stories of being imprisoned. The details are always different, but hospital imagery occurs throughout. Former captives describe elaborate psychodramas played out by Shadow creatures, doppelgangers rent from their dreams, and brainwashing that thrusts them into lives as an entirely different people. Some of these memories seem to involve known signs of the Seers of the Throne. Mages who remember their capture almost always describe a figure in white and a troop of masked attendants.

Once released (or do they escape?), captives endure fractured memories, post-hypnotic programming and other lingering modifications. A few feel a marvelous ecstasy, as if they have been cured of some terrible affliction. These subjects cannot work magic again; they've gone back to Sleep. Sometimes, captives remain the different people as whom they seem to be programmed.

### *Doctor Amanda Kether*

**Quote:** *No, I'm afraid you're mistaken. You want the other lab. What was your name again?*

**Background:** Technically, Amanda Kether occupies a dull post as an untenured assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, but she's been in that position for 35 years. The medical faculty knows she has some sort of power. Professors who've disagreed with her have found that their positions weren't as secure as they had hoped. Co-workers often experience awful nightmares about her a few months after settling in, but no two staff members have actually gotten together and compared notes. Her degrees could practically wallpaper her small office, but none of her colleagues could tell you exactly what they are. None of them think that this — or their nearly primal fear of her — is particularly unusual.

Dr. Kether has been a mage since she was a teenager. She joined the Seers of the Throne to get the mundane education denied her by an impoverished rural upbringing. In the process, she became one of the unknown pioneers of psychiatric medicine, drug culture and the very small set of mind-control techniques that Sleepers have accepted as effective. She wants to continue her work; the more successful it is, the more bargaining power she has with other Seers. Kether is both a chemist and an alchemist. She has expanded her own knowledge of the mystical properties of physical substances to include cutting-edge hallucinogens, and she knows the astrological correspondences of planets that Sleepers have only just discovered. Most mages are comfortable with the symbolism of gold and Jupiter. Kether knows the correct runes of Pluto and the wands that purify serotonin and helium.

**Description:** At 60, Kether looks exceptionally fit for her age. She is; magic gives her the stamina of an Olympian. Her facial features, hair and eye color change at regular intervals, but co-workers never seem to notice. She regards most people with a bored voice and expression, unless she's actively collecting experimental data. In those cases, she speaks in rapid, clipped syllables with an impatient frown.

Her Nimbus makes nearby objects momentarily appear transparent, as if seen through x-ray vision. (This does, however, not reveal the actual internal composition of the objects; it is a Platonic figment.)

**Storytelling Hints:** Kether does not use Sleeper proxies and is therefore the Seer whom characters might learn to recognize first. She is, however, skilled at redirecting talk



that threatens to reveal her order, and almost always prefers to masquerade as a Sleeper. If pressed, she uses occult talents and mundane connections to misdirect students, staff and security into harassing curious mages.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Harvard ID (inscribed on the back: "Et Ego Arcadia")
**Real Name:** Lilly Hawrish
**Path:** Moros
**Order:** Seers of the Throne (Panopticon Ministry)
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 5
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5
**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 5
**Mental Skills:** Crafts 3, Medicine (Pharmacology) 5, Occult (Alchemy) 5, Science (Chemistry) 5
**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Firearms 3, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1
**Social Skills:** Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 4
**Merits:** Allies (Harvard Administrators) 5, Contacts (FBI, CIA, Pentagon, Drug Underground) 5, Hallow (shared with Psychomimetic Operations) 2, Occultation 4, Sanctum (shared with Psychomimetic Operations) 2, Resources 3
**Willpower:** 10
**Wisdom:** 3 (Narcissism, Suspicion)
**Virtue:** Faith
**Vice:** Pride
**Initiative:** 8
**Defense:** 3
**Speed:** 11
**Health:** 10
**Gnosis:** 4
**Arcana:** Death 3, Life 4, Matter 4, Mind 3
**Rotes:** *Death* — Grim Sight (•), Ectoplasm (••); *Life* — Healer's Trance (•), Self-Purging (••), Honing the Form (•••); *Matter* — Detect Substance (•), Steel Windows (••); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), Alter Aura (••), Emotional Urging (••)
**Mana/per turn:** 13/4
**Armor:** 4 ("Unseen Aegis," Matter ••)

## Political Affairs and Power Bases

The most powerful cabal in the region, the Ebon Noose is the city's de facto leader. Even so, members come out of Salem in force only when there's a fairly serious problem to solve. Mages can steal, duel to the death — anything that doesn't inspire enemies to occupy the region or draw the ire of Sleeper authorities. The cabal occasionally asks for Mana and other favors to serve its own projects. Mages who refuse to grant a favor tend to suffer awful luck. Local Sleeper occultists also shun them. The Nemean is lazy enough to tolerate quite a bit of conflict, but is prone to unpredictable, punishing rulings.

Under Chain Parris, the White Putnams believe they've learned history's hard lessons and would put a more humble face on Boston's Consilium. Young cabal members argue that the time for humility has long passed. After all, only Parris himself is actually bound to the witch trials by blood. The modern Ebon Noose is adept at using the witch trials as an example of religious sentiment gone mad, and Parris seems to accept this interpretation when he acts as a compliant Provost for the Noose-dominated Consilium. Awakened observers wonder whether Parris follows a *very* subtle scheme to seize power for the Putnams, or whether his own cabal will tire of his submissive attitude and replace him.

The Emerald Scroll is the sort of place you might get if you converted a Masonic Lodge into a bingo hall, swap meet and pub. The Dead Wrens run the place with a loose hand. Mages flock to the site to bargain, trade rumors and to simply socialize. It's the place to go to learn about Boston's underside and the grimy elements of the supernatural scene. Salem's Awakened elite tolerate the Wrens and their cabal, occasionally extorting a punitive amount of Mana if the Emerald Scroll causes trouble. The Mana from a modest Hallow is the Wrens' primary "merchandise," but artifacts and grimoires also pass through their hands.

Banishers and Seers of the Throne have been known to visit the Emerald Scroll incognito. After some spying and occasional clashes, knowledgeable mages know that Psychomimetic Operations exerts considerable influence at Harvard.

Other mages make Boston their home, but most keep a low profile. Do the Silver Ladder and Free Council fight for control of MIT's faculty? What is the Adamantine Arrow up to? Are Guardians of the Veil planning a comeback? The Shadow Chorus' attitude toward current affairs is well known, but nobody really knows its plans. What exactly is written in the Secret Concord, and what is the Asylum? If there's profit to be had by answering these questions, an inquisitive cabal will surely set out to make it. Ambitious mages usually ally with the Putnams or the Ebon Noose to acquire prestige by association. The two cabals make use of affiliated groups when it suits them, sending newcomers to investigate local anomalies or to act as proxies in schemes. Nevertheless, the Noose and Putnams are closed-mouthed when it comes to the Secret Concord and the gray areas in their own histories.

Mages often discover that what the elder cabals don't tell them can hurt or kill them. Agents have been sent to find a dangerous artifact only to see the sign of the Noose on it before it cursed them. Cabals who claim to work for the White Putnams have earned the wrath of a creature called Black-Eyed John, who leaves the heads of victims on forest trails.

"New England," says the Nemean, "is like an old, gnarled tree. If you chop it down and look at the rings, you'll see a history of fire, burrowing parasites and axes that have struck in vain. You'll see hard knots twisted around fragments of metal and char. But we must content ourselves with a little ignorance. Chop down the tree, and you kill it."

## Cormant House: The Consilium

Boston's Consilium can meet nearly anywhere in town and the outlying area, but the Nemean prefers Cormant House, a mansion that the Ebon Noose donated to Salem 25 years ago. The bequest (the house was willed to the town by one of the mages) specifies that the house be converted into a small museum presenting "The legitimate history of Salem and Danvers," with the upstairs providing income as executive suites. The house stands in a small woodlot: two acres of quiet a few minutes away from the gaudy middle of town.

The museum is unpopular because its "legitimate history" barely mentions the witch trials and concentrates on architecture. In short: It's boring, and tour guides only recommended it for completionists. Cormant House's executive board doesn't really want to improve the place's profile. As chairman, the Nemean rather likes a place that's theoretically public, but practically unknown.

Cormant House has no enchantments except for what mages bring with them. The Nemean doesn't care whether mages scry on each other and has threatened to kill anyone who enchants the building. In fact, he frowns on any spells in the house, but realizes that mages will back up their desires with magic too often to impose a blanket rule. The Wise are encouraged to comport themselves as if they were mere Sleepers, and mages who attend the Consilium are asked to donate a few dollars to cover renting the upstairs suites. Entering or leaving the grounds magically is considered a serious breach of etiquette.

The Consilium meets in a Cormant House boardroom at least once a month. The ruling council is made up of prominent mages from the region, most of them rather apolitical and unwilling to argue over much with the Nemean. Anacaona De Xaragua leads a security detail and Chain Parris calls meetings to order. The Nemean is an active (and perhaps overbearing) Hierarch. He leads with a combination of uncouth honesty and raw power, imposing the Ebon Noose's wishes as forcefully as possible. Fortunately, the Noose's desires are mostly reactionary; the cabal does nothing to improve regional security or relations between willworkers, touting this approach as a libertarian stance. Mages who pay occasional tribute can do almost anything they wish in greater Boston.

### *The Nemean, Hierarch of Boston*

**Quote:** *Have you ever eaten a human heart? Neither have I, but your incompetence is making me positively famished.*

**Background:** The Nemean originally went by the Shadow Name of Savham, but before that, he was Mark Long, a high-school dropout who came of age in the late '60s. Mark cleaved to the hippie stereotype, experimenting with drugs and exotic spirituality. He was, however, more than a dilettante. Frequent hallucinations made it impossible for him to hold a job, and drove him to seek spiritual comfort. He bounced between new religions and drugs to keep the voices out. The result was occasional work as a small-time dealer; he carried over a thousand hits of LSD with him to Boston.

Mark had discovered Wicca and hoped the drug money would fund an extended stay in Salem, where he hoped to join the growing neo-pagan community. His plans changed when bikers nearly beat him to death for selling on their turf, triggering his Awakening.

Mark climbed the Thyrsus Watchtower from a bloody curb in Boston, and returned as Savham, a mage flush with Life magic and a brutal temper. He made it to Salem, after all, and wasted little time virtually enslaving a handful of Wiccan Sleepers. Threats and miracles made him their living god.

The Ebon Noose quickly apprenticed Savham. His voices were made little more than whispers, and he could devote his full concentration to the Arcana and associated lore. He grew powerful enough to be the right hand of the cabal, and acted as Consilium Sentinel by 1982. Savham spent a decade terrorizing mages who disobeyed the Consilium. Finally, he attained Life mastery and challenged the leader of the Ebon Noose. The then-leader lost and left Salem, and Savham became the Nemean, the 22nd leader of the cabal. He claimed the Hierarch's chair without controversy.

**Description:** Broad shouldered and settling into late middle age, the Nemean looks like an old lion, rudely stuffed into tweed and khakis, and grimacing at the experience. Long, gray-shot hair frames a wide, bearded face. His nails are unusually long and slightly pointed.

His Nimbus appears as a pack of predator animal spirits, prowling and growling around him, ready to leap upon any threat.

**Storytelling Hints:** Some Hierarchs style themselves after legendary sages. Others prefer modern CEOs. The Nemean scoffs at such gentleness and enjoys being something of a monster. Boston's mages have learned to fear the displeased tap of his nails on the Cormant House conference table.

The Nemean prefers simple, violent solutions. He does not encourage proactive efforts to improve relations between mages. He prefers Awakened Boston to be a fractious place where his cabal's power is hard to challenge. For the most part, he intervenes little unless there's a serious threat to regional security, but he is fond of influencing affairs with threats. He levies onerous burdens on unpopular mages who cross the line, but who don't deserve death or exile. New cabals often suffer this penalty. They are sent to acquire Mana, artifacts or occult curiosities according to the Nemean's dictates.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Flint knife, crow feather (Spirit magic)
**Real Name:** Mark Long
**Path:** Thyrsus
**Order:** The Silver Ladder
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 4
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4
**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 4



**Mental Skills:** Crafts 3, Investigation 4, Medicine 3, Occult (Neo-paganism) 5, Politics (Threats) 3

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 2, Firearms 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Weaponry (Knives) 3

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 5, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Allies (Neo-pagans) 4, Dream 4, Hallow (personal) 2, Holistic Awareness, High Speech, Sanctum (personal) 3, Resources 3, Status (Consilium 5, Order 3)

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 4 (Suspicious)

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 5

**Arcana:** Death 2, Life 5, Mind 1, Prime 3, Space 2, Spirit 5

**Rotes:** *Death* — Shadow Sculpting (•); *Life* — Sense Life (•), Organic Resilience (••), Eagle's Talon (•••), Healing Heart (•••), Transform Self (•••), Greater Shapeshifting (•••••); *Prime* — Analyze Enchanted Item (•), Activate Enchanted Item (••); *Spirit* — Coaxing the Spirits (•), Lesser Spirit Summons (••), Control Spirit (•••), Create Fetish (••••)

**Mana/per turn:** 14/5

**Armor:** 5 ("Ephemeral Shield," Spirit ••)

## The Emerald Scroll

The original Emerald Scroll was founded in 1892 to serve Guardians of the Veil and allies in the Order of the Golden Dawn. Proceeds from the Temple of Thme enriched the true cabal: the Emerald Scroll. The Golden Dawn's Sleepers knew nothing of the cabal but its name, and assumed that it was some secret rank of initiation. That knowledge made them even more committed to their brotherhood in their thirst for whatever prize the rank might offer.

Founding a secret society to lure the wealthy and attract apprentices was a standard practice, but the order campaigned for prestige more blatantly than it had elsewhere. In the end, the cabal cheapened its position and gave away Golden Dawn degrees too freely. Bostonian Sleepers eventually saw membership as just another social bauble that entertained them with secret handshakes and other nonsense. Eventually, dissatisfied initiates founded rival societies with their own idiosyncrasies, deviating ever further from Golden Dawn's slivers of true magical theory.

The Emerald Scroll's mages scattered after the Free Council's subversion, but not before they suffered a final insult. The twisted, corrupt remnants of the Golden Dawn and its offshoots managed to spark Awakenings of their own: mages who joined a "false" inner circle of the Free Council. A small contingent from the Guardians of the Veil did their best to destroy these upstart mages, but the survivors tenaciously stuck to the margins of Boston's underworld.

The libertines submerged themselves in the city's maritime sector. The Second World War was an immense boon. Lend-Lease trade with England, war trophies and smuggled artifacts netted immense profits. Successive cabals used newfound resources to scout locations that other mages had never searched, until they found a Hallow southwest of the city proper, in Roxbury. They paid to get a blocky brick building built around it and christened it the Emerald Scroll — a final claim to supremacy. That building is now where Boston's mages (and enlightened visitors) meet to do business and socialize. The Dead Wrens own it today, and tolerate a wide range of behavior, but violence or anything that would obviously piss off the Ebon Noose is not allowed.

Modern Roxbury is a rundown neighborhood; open drug dealing and shootings are common. The building looks a little out of place, because it has a front as an upscale, members-only club. After passing through a foyer, visitors reach a large main hall decorated with stained-glass panels of the Tarot's Major Arcana. Across from a stage, a bar serves drinks at cost. One of the Dead Wrens is usually sitting there, chatting with the bartender. The bartender is the only Sleeper allowed on the premises (she's a Sleepwalker, someone who doesn't act as a witness for Paradoxes). She's a relative of one of the Wrens who needs extra cash. She is paid handsomely and usually magically compelled to keep quiet about what goes on inside. No other Sleepers staff the place.

On the upper levels, private meeting rooms cater to the Dead Wrens and anyone who wants privacy. Mages are generally not allowed to sleep here. The Wrens allow visitors to browse their library and even acquire Tass (in the form of arrowheads and pottery shards), but they must pay steep prices. Costs fluctuate, but Tass usually goes for around $10,000 per point of Mana (a unit called a "pawn"; payment must be in genuine US Mint currency and non-sequential bills). The Dead Wrens are hospitable enough, but nothing's free.

### Sanctum Traits

The locale called the Emerald Scroll encompasses the following Merits: Sanctum 5 (4 Size, 1 Security), Library (contents vary greatly as the cabal is constantly lending and borrowing books, but the following are usually available: Local Legends, Witchcraft, Haunted Ships), Hallow 3 (on the roof; rainwater there has a strange, green glow).

Einar,

I don't recommend you try to move against the boy. He is too well guarded now. I hope you are proud: triggering an Awakening is a momentous event. You have freed one more soul from the shackles of Sleep and ignorance. I'm sure you will interpret this as sarcasm, but it's not intended as such. I know the old you, Einar, the man you used to be. You would have been proud, and justly so. Moran would have been proud, too. Imagine if it had been your own son who had been brought to Awakening so?

I don't say that to hurt you. I say it to help you. You are not so far gone that you cannot turn back on the path you've chosen. Others call you Scelestus, and number you among the Wicked. I know your soul, and know that pain and anguish drives you. You say you have left it behind. No. It is what drives you forward down your foolish path, seeking to numb your hurt with the salve of the Abyss. There is no comfort to be found there. Come back from the brink.

I say all this and you know I mean it. But you will also know that I mean what I say next: If you act against me or mine, I will end you. You think that your power has kept you safe so far, but it was I who turned the Nemean's wrath against you to another target. For that, I shall surely pay dearly. My friendship with you was too deep to easily discard, despite your own choice to discard mine. I will not stay his or any other's hand from now on.

I saw you as you taunted the boy, unleashing that dread book upon him. Yes, I scried you, and you did not know it. Does that anger you? It should.

It took me a long time to find you, and I am not happy with what I have found. What have you done to your body? You, who once extolled the virtues of the bodily temple. Do you even possess a gender anymore? It is said among the gossips at the Emerald Tablet that you gave up your generative organs in a sacrifice to some nameless entity. They say that, in return, you gained the ability to adjust your skin color to that of your surroundings, blending in like a chameleon. To better utilize this power, they say, you often wear no clothes whatsoever, or only clothes that can be removed quickly.

Are these rumors true? Do they even hold a shred or truth? If so, I truly mourn for the man I once knew. We have all lost loved ones in this life, but your grief no longer excuses your actions.

Your chosen shadow name tells me your intent: Angrboda, the Norse giantess who birthed monsters. Was the boy to be your next monster? End this goal now. I am far more versed in the Arcana than when you last knew me. Do not think that you can stand before me. Nothing you do will be unknown to me, no matter how you sever your aura with Death spells. I will find a trace and track it to its source, for I walk the Mists now and see the time that is yet to be. I will see the shadow of your coming before you have even decided your intent, and I will thwart you before you even put your pawns into motion.

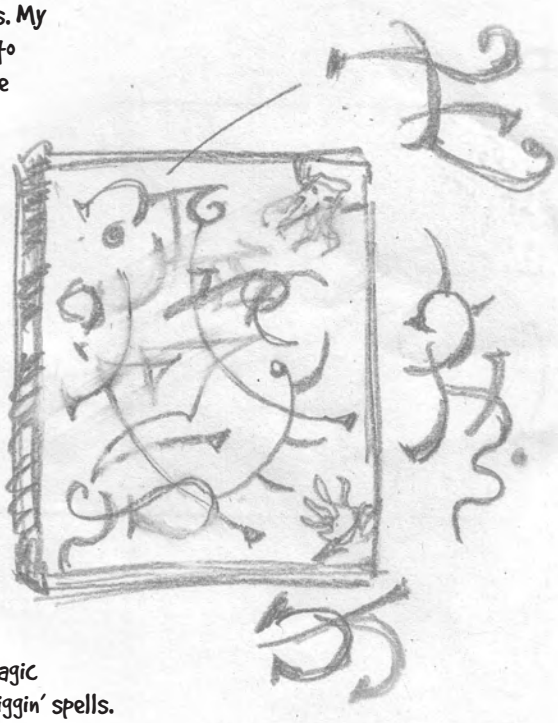
I will be watching from the Mists, and you will not sense it.

If you move against me again, not even the Abyss and the Hidden Lords you worship will keep my hands from your neck.

Farewell, Einar.

Morvran

A package came for me today, with no return address. My parents don't even know where I am; they've got a P.o. box to send stuff to. Masters Aurem and Potestas wouldn't let me touch it. They cordoned off the area and went to work on it. What worried them more than the fact that it came from someone unknown is that its resonance was gone. Whoever had sent it had cut all ties of resonance, leaving it a blank slate, with nothing anybody could use to sympathetically trace it back to its sender.



After they figured out that it wasn't going to explode, they carefully opened it. Inside was a book, a big leather-bound journal with handwritten pages. It wasn't just any book. It was *the* book.

The same one I'd used to summon that thing that killed Sigmund and almost got me.

Angrboda. He sent me a present. I guess he wants me to continue my studies.

Of course, the masters are having none of it. They say it's a *grimoire*, a book with actual magic in it not just writings about magic, but real friggin' spells.

I'm not allowed to touch it. They quickly disappeared with the book and probably stowed it away in whatever vault they use for keeping dangerous stuff. It doesn't matter. I don't want the damn thing. I'm sure everybody's afraid I'll be tempted to look in it and conjure up something new, as if I caught a curiosity virus off it the first time or something. Fuck no. They can keep it wherever they've hidden it.

Unless Maybe there's something in there about how to bring people back from that place Sigmund went. I mean, I didn't actually see him die. He might still be alive, trapped in there, waiting for me to get him out.

Shit.

I bet this is exactly the sort of thing Angrboda wants me to think. If I could save Sigmund, Morvran would have told me. He'd be on his way to help him now. Right?

He would, wouldn't he?

Secrets. Everybody keeps secrets. Would they tell me if they knew? Hell, would they tell me the *truth*? I don't know.

I guess I'll have to find out for myself.

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# MAGE THE AWAKENING

Name: | Concept: | Path:

Player: | Virtue: | Order:

Chronicle: | Vice: | Cabal:

## Attributes

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Power | Intelligence | ●OOOO | Strength | ●OOOO | Presence | ●OOOO |
| Finesse | Wits | ●OOOO | Dexterity | ●OOOO | Manipulation | ●OOOO |
| Resistance | Resolve | ●OOOO | Stamina | ●OOOO | Composure | ●OOOO |

## Skills

### Mental
(-3 unskilled)

| Rote Skill | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Academics | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Computer | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Crafts | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Investigation | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Medicine | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Occult | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Politics | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Science | OOOOO |

### Physical
(-1 unskilled)

| Rote Skill | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Athletics | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Brawl | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Drive | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Firearms | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Larceny | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Stealth | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Survival | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Weaponry | OOOOO |

### Social
(-1 unskilled)

| Rote Skill | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Animal Ken | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Empathy | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Expression | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Intimidation | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Persuasion | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Socialize | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Streetwise | OOOOO |
| ☐ | Subterfuge | OOOOO |

## Other Traits

### Merits

_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

### Flaws

_____
_____
_____

Size _____
Defense _____
Initiative Mod _____
Speed _____
Experience _____

### Arcana

| | |
|---|---|
| Death | OOOOO |
| Fate | OOOOO |
| Forces | OOOOO |
| Life | OOOOO |
| Matter | OOOOO |
| Mind | OOOOO |
| Prime | OOOOO |
| Space | OOOOO |
| Spirit | OOOOO |
| Time | OOOOO |

### Health

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

### Willpower

O O O O O O O O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

### Mana

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Points per turn: _____

### Gnosis

● O O O O O O O O O

### Wisdom

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | _____ | O |
| 9 | _____ | O |
| 8 | _____ | O |
| 7 | _____ | O |
| 6 | _____ | O |
| 5 | _____ | O |
| 4 | _____ | O |
| 3 | _____ | O |
| 2 | _____ | O |
| 1 | _____ | O |

### Armor

Type | Points

_____

### Protective Spells

Name | Points

_____

_____

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Favored Resistance Attribute — Acanthus, Moros, Thyrsus: +1 Composure; Mastigos, Obrimos: +1 Resolve • Arcana — 2 dots in 1st Arcanum, 2 dots in 2nd, 1 dot in 3rd, (two of these must be the Path's Ruling Arcana) +1 dot in any Arcanum • Rotes 6 • Merits 7 • (Buying the 5th dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs 2 points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = Wisdom

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## Active Spells

Max = Gnosis +3

## Spells Cast Upon Self

Spell tolerance = Stamina;
-1 dice per extra spell)

## Nimbus

## Paradox Marks

**Bedlam:** _____

**Brand:** _____

## Dedicated Magical Tool

**Arcana Based Tools:** _____

## Experience

## Arcane Experience

## Rotes

| Dots | Arcana | Name | Dice Pool | Page # |
|---|---|---|---|---|

## Weapons

| Type | Damage Range | Clip | Size | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|

## Enchanted Items

| Type | Power | Dice Pool | Mana |
|---|---|---|---|

## Equipment

| Type | Dice Mod. |
|---|---|

## Familiar

**Type:** _____

**Description:** _____

**Power:** _____

**Finesse:** _____

**Resistance:** _____

**Skills:** _____

**Initiative:** _____

**Defense:** _____

**Speed:** _____

**Size:** _____

**Influence:** _____

| Numina | Cost |
|---|---|

**Ban:** _____

**Corpus/Health**

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

**Willpower**

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

**Essence**

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

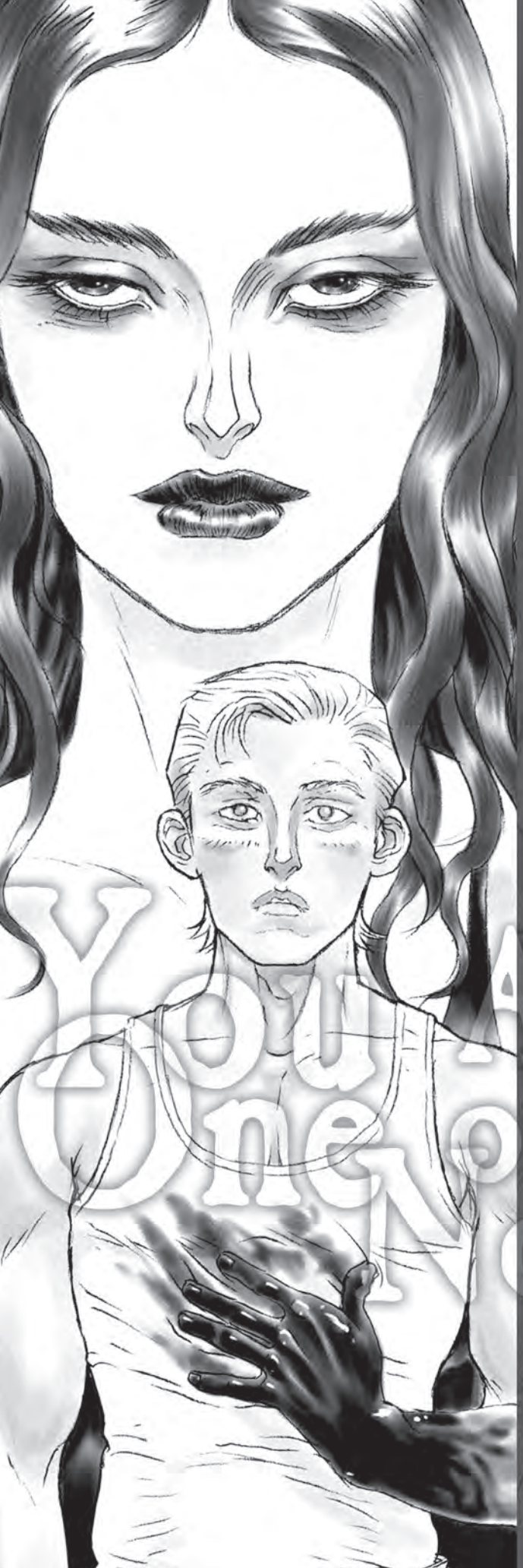
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