

*the*  
*Burning Wheel*

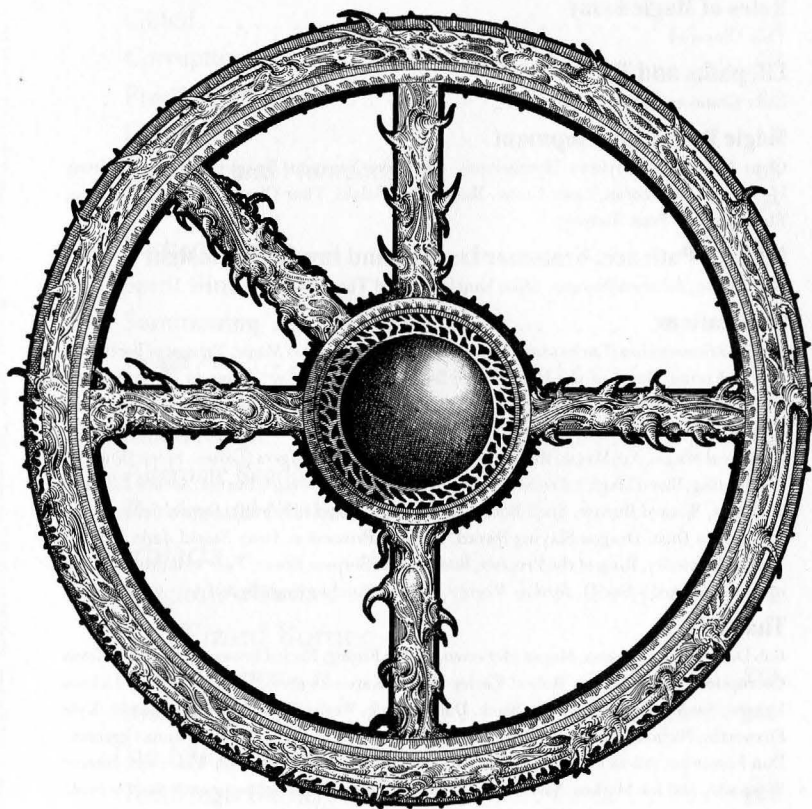


*Magic Burner*



*the*  
*Burning Wheel*

# Magic Burner





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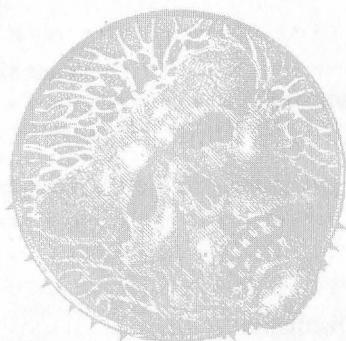
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# *the* Fire Within





# Jump in the Fire

At long last, the age of magic is dawning. Fire and eldritch force shall combine with such a thunderous clap that your world cannot hope to survive unchanged.

This book is about magic in the Burning Wheel Fantasy Roleplaying System. By magic, I mean wizards, priests, miracles, spells, powers and artifacts.

The terms wizard and sorcerer are used loosely—anyone who is burdened with arcane power is considered a wizard or sorcerer in the context of this book.

A wealth of options and information are contained herein. There is, perhaps, too much in this book. So take care as you delve further, because there is only one sure thing about mercurial magic: It will change your world!

## The Structure of the Magic Burner

The Magic Burner is divided into five sections: The Roles of Magic, the Arcane Library, Magical Artifacts, the Wizard Burner and the Magic Burner itself.

The book begins with an essay by Thor Olavsrud, our esteemed editor, on the roles of magic in fiction. This essay is likely the most important part of this book. Thor breaks down what it means to be a wizard and wield power for good or ill. He asserts that there can be no magic without a wizard to employ it. In the Burning Wheel, magic is secondary to the characters.

The next section, the Arcane Library, presents 13 magical systems and variants for use in your Burning Wheel game: Gifted, Corruption, Practical Magic, Religion, Art Magic, Enchanting, Spirit Binding, Summoning, Death Art, Blood Magic, Abstraction and Distillation, Revised Practicals and the Arsenal Method. It's a veritable library of arcana.





After the magical systems, I present you with 25 magical artifacts. Some of these pieces are humble and subtle, while others possess earth-shattering power. Each artifact includes a suggested hook, something designed to spark the imagination for ways to include the item in your game.

The Wizard Burner section focuses on wielders of magic and those who surround them. Most of the lifepaths are designed for Men. Sorcerous magic is their art, and these paths grant them access to more dark roads. Some of the paths are designed to be incorporated into extant settings, and in addition, two completely new settings have been provided for your pleasure: the College of Magic and the Death Cult. This chapter also details the new traits and skills associated with these lifepaths.

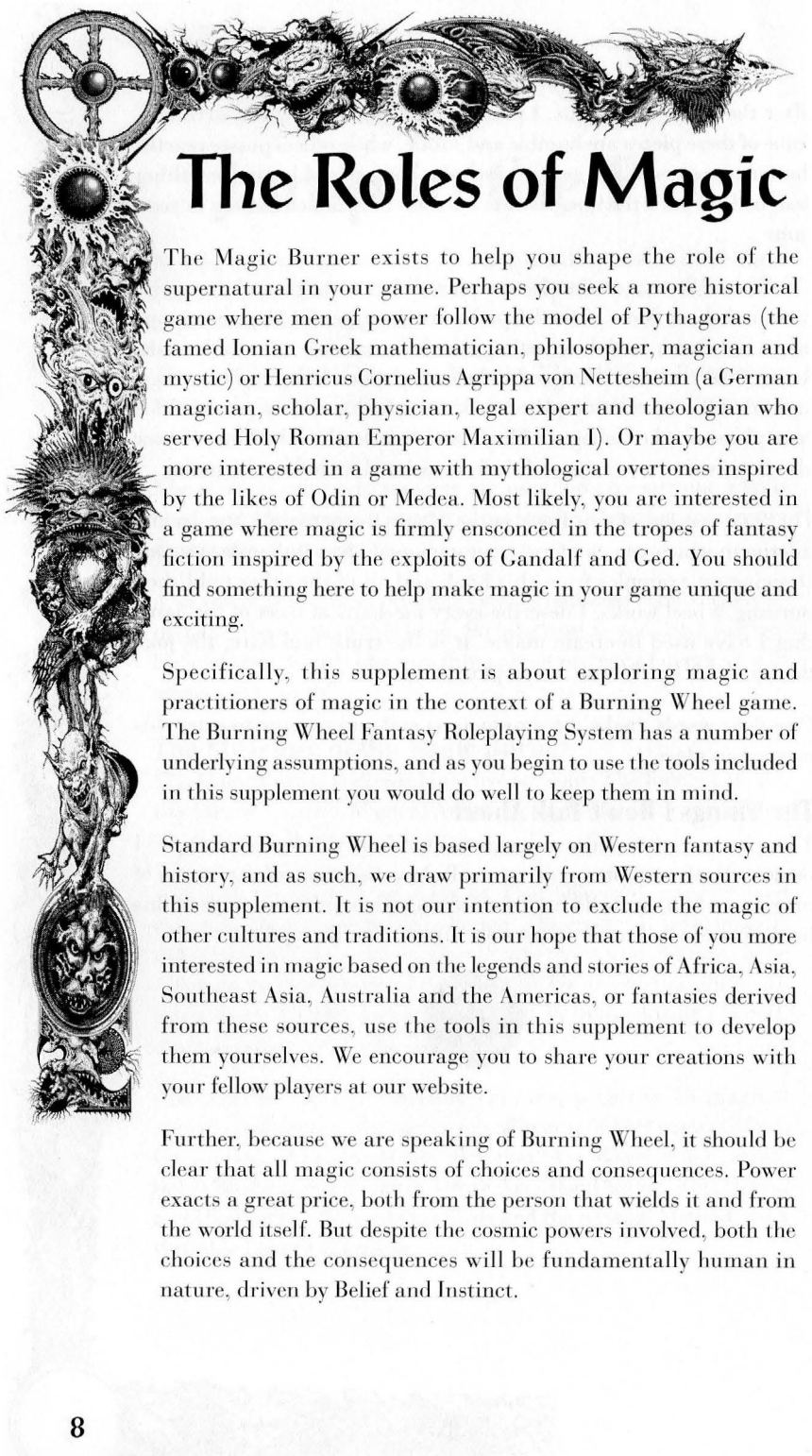
The final section of this book is the Magic Burner itself, the arcane inferno in which you can forge your own mad ideas into utile systems. Drawing on examples from this book and all of the other published Burning Wheel works, I describe every mechanical facet of the game that I have used to create magic. It is the truth laid bare, the joke dissected. It's heady stuff, so prepare yourself!

Cast your wards, make the sign to avert evil and prepare to enter this mysterious place!

## The Things I Don't Talk About

There is one rather major element omitted from this book on magic: I do not talk about fantasy *culture* at all. Any discussion of the impact of magic on a fantasy world has been left out; it's beyond the scope of this book. The Magic Burner focuses on wizards and their power.





# The Roles of Magic

The Magic Burner exists to help you shape the role of the supernatural in your game. Perhaps you seek a more historical game where men of power follow the model of Pythagoras (the famed Ionian Greek mathematician, philosopher, magician and mystic) or Henricus Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (a German magician, scholar, physician, legal expert and theologian who served Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I). Or maybe you are more interested in a game with mythological overtones inspired by the likes of Odin or Medea. Most likely, you are interested in a game where magic is firmly ensconced in the tropes of fantasy fiction inspired by the exploits of Gandalf and Ged. You should find something here to help make magic in your game unique and exciting.

Specifically, this supplement is about exploring magic and practitioners of magic in the context of a Burning Wheel game. The Burning Wheel Fantasy Roleplaying System has a number of underlying assumptions, and as you begin to use the tools included in this supplement you would do well to keep them in mind.

Standard Burning Wheel is based largely on Western fantasy and history, and as such, we draw primarily from Western sources in this supplement. It is not our intention to exclude the magic of other cultures and traditions. It is our hope that those of you more interested in magic based on the legends and stories of Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia and the Americas, or fantasies derived from these sources, use the tools in this supplement to develop them yourselves. We encourage you to share your creations with your fellow players at our website.

Further, because we are speaking of Burning Wheel, it should be clear that all magic consists of choices and consequences. Power exacts a great price, both from the person that wields it and from the world itself. But despite the cosmic powers involved, both the choices and the consequences will be fundamentally human in nature, driven by Belief and Instinct.



To this end, we should be clear that while magical powers hold a degree of novelty in themselves, our conceit is that the decision to use power or not, how to apply it and the price to be paid for it is far more interesting than the actual power itself. The best stories of magic are about the choices that its use presents.

Finally, it is worth noting that the magic in this book is heavily flavored by the source material we used for inspiration. At Burning Wheel Headquarters, our pole star for matters magical is Ursula K. Le Guin and her stories of Earthsea. It is no coincidence that we return to her stories again and again to illustrate our points. Stephen R. Donaldson's stories of Thomas Covenant are another powerful inspiration, and it should come as no surprise that J. R. R. Tolkien's stories helped to guide us as well. Norse and Greek mythology also play an important role in our thinking, and we have drawn from them heavily.

## Magical Magic

Magic is a supernatural power that defies the natural order. It is a force that controls both man and nature. Magic has laws that govern its working, though they are often alien from the laws that describe the working of the natural world. In many cases, only another application of magic or faith is sufficient to guard against it or break its power.

In historical or mythological conceptions of magic, it is generally a power granted by the gods or spirits of some kind.

Such magic is usually innate in the case of gods (though some, like Odin, must quest or sacrifice for deeper secrets). For men, visions and callings are a common way to discover power, from Moses and the burning bush to the Oglala Lakota medicine man, Black Elk, who received his vision at a young age during an intense, life-threatening fever. Men, in general, invoke the power—the power does not belong to the men themselves.

In Western fantastic literature, wizards and witches generally keep the quasi-scientific trappings of the Renaissance- or Enlightenment-era magus. The historical and religious overtones of such magic are usually left behind (a great many Renaissance magicians were monks, like Giordano Bruno, Tommaso Campanella or Abbot Johannes Trithemius).



Such magic is usually tapped through esoteric formulae and incantations. Often—but not always—the one who seeks to control such powers must have been born with a special gift. Others, like Pan Twardowski (a sorcerer from Polish folklore) or Dr. Faust (of German legend and literature), gain access to their powers by bargaining with the Devil.

### Archetypes in Magical Fiction

There are three important terms we use in this essay that bear definition: the other, the mistake and the forbidden place. These are three archetypes that appear in fantastic fiction. We need to look at them before we can delve too deeply into the roles of magic.

#### *The Other*

The other is a person who, although acknowledged by a community, is considered outside it. Wizards stand apart as others because they are different; they wield a power that regular people neither have nor understand, and their names are written in the book of destiny. Communities either fear a wizard's power, revere that power or both.

#### *The Mistake*

The mistake is a terrible error committed by a young wizard in hubris or ignorance. The error has far-reaching consequences that threaten doom to the wizard, his loved ones and often the world itself.

#### *The Forbidden Place*

The forbidden place appears in story after story. It is a place that the community considers taboo. It appears in many guises: a cave, a haunted forest, a lost temple, a deep mine, a tomb, a labyrinth or even the land of the dead. The forbidden place is fraught with terrible danger. Perhaps most dangerously of all, the forbidden place forces the wizard to examine himself, to face who and what he is.

## Sorcerer and the Community

Sorcerers and wizards always exist in relation to a community, whether they are its protector, its outcast or its terrifying adversary. The stories of sorcerous heroes often begin with a pressing need within a community. The community will be threatened, whether by natural disaster, conquest or even more insidious perils, like the weakening of the barrier that separates the living from the dead.





As one who stands apart, the sorcerer is in a unique position to answer the community's need, for he is able to see in ways the community cannot. Further, he has, or can find, the power to act on what he sees.

If the community recognizes its need and sorcery is revered, or at least accepted, the sorcerer may be seen as a savior by his community. Prophecy may identify him as anointed for the role.

Ramon Alonzo, the hero of Lord Dunsany's 1926 fantasy novel *The Charwoman's Shadow*, is a prime example. His father is the Lord of the Tower and Rocky Forest, but the family has fallen on hard times and has no money for the dowry of Ramon's sister, Mirandola. Ramon is sent to study with a nearby magician so as to learn how to turn dross into gold and thus supply his sister's dowry. In this story, the community is small, consisting only of Ramon's family. It works because the story remains relentlessly focused on the personal level, even though Ramon's actions ultimately affect all of Spain and one long-suffering charwoman.

Galen Bradwarden provides another example in the film *Dragonslayer*. Galen's community is the whole of the kingdom of Urland. He steps into the role of savior by summoning his master from the dead with an incantation so that he may confront the dreaded dragon Vermithrax Pejorative.

Thomas Covenant, of Stephen R. Donaldson's *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever*, is the quintessential antihero. He shows another side of this type of wizard. The White-Gold Wielder, and supposed reincarnation of a great hero of the Land, is recognized as a savior by almost everyone in that place except for himself. He is sent forth in accord with prophecy to use his wild magic to thwart the machinations of the dreaded Lord Foul.

Other times, the need is only hinted at in prophecy, and only a select few recognize the portents. Heroes in such stories are often underestimated and even scorned, for the community does not see its need. Yet when trouble strikes and only a man or woman of power has the ability to face it, it is fortunate indeed that such a person is nearby to hear the call.

Once the need has been identified, the anointed one must step forward as destiny requires—the living embodiment of the mystical other who possesses the power to cure the incurable.



## The Light Side

Whether the source of inspiration is historical, mythological or literary, certain themes recur. Magical heroes generally take one of four roles: the Adept, the Bringer of Fire, the Maker or the Oracle. Sometimes a hero is purely one type, while some heroes blend them.

Our examples are far from exhaustive. We've pared them down to our favorites and encourage you to reflect on yours. In some cases, we've left out the most obvious examples because, well, they're very obvious.

### The Adept

*"Ged, listen to me now. Have you never thought how danger must surround power as shadow does light? This sorcery is not a game we play for pleasure or praise. Think of this: that every word, every act of our Art is said and is done either for good, or for evil. Before you speak or do you must know the price that is to pay!"*

—Ursula K. Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*

The Adept is a young wizard or sorceress, flush with power—often beyond that of magical peers—but lacking the wisdom and experience to understand the deeper ramifications of his actions.

The story of the Adept is one of power, error and redemption. The need to redeem himself, to fix an error, is what separates the Adept from the other roles.

The Adept is powerful, but he is also innocent, naïve and vulnerable. In his arrogance or ignorance, the Adept uses his magic to play with powers he does not yet understand and breaks a fundamental law or rule that is beyond his mastery. Often, repeated warnings against the danger of his chosen path go unheeded. The core question of his story is whether he will earn the wisdom to redeem his mistake (and thereby to practice his art as a master), or succumb to corruption and be enveloped by it.

The mistakes of wizards are not small. They threaten the world, a community or a soul, often all three. The Adept—vulnerable and corruptible—must go forth as a savior on a quest to undo what he has wrought.

Such quests generally have three stages, as follows:



The Roles of Magic



First, the Adept must recognize the extent of his mistake and that only he has the ability to fix it. He cannot run from his mistake, nor can a mentor or Oracle resolve it for him.



Second, the Adept must accept that the mistake was the result of a flaw in himself. Outside forces may have played a role in bringing him to his mistake, but he alone is ultimately responsible for his fate.

Finally, the Adept must confront his mistake, usually in a lost or forbidden place, and pay a price (which could be anything from humility to death) to redeem it.

Ged of Earthsea defines the role of the Adept in *A Wizard of Earthsea*, when his arrogance and envy lead him to attempt to summon the dead. Instead, he brings forth a monstrous shadow and must undertake a long and harrowing quest beyond the edge of the world to master both it and himself. Only by vanquishing his pride, learning humility, and accepting the dark things within himself as part of his being, is he able to overcome the shadow that he summoned.

Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever is another Adept. In *Lord Foul's Bane*, his disregard leads him to commit an unforgivable crime that he must struggle to redeem. Somewhat uniquely for an Adept, Thomas Covenant's mistake is not tied to misuse of magical power, but rather to a refusal to acknowledge the world around him and his role in it. Only by accepting the world and his place in it can he draw on the wild and unpredictable magic of his ring to defeat Lord Foul.

John Constantine, too, is an embodiment of the Adept. As a young man, Constantine thought he had the wisdom and power to end a demonic possession. Instead, he damned a little girl's soul and doomed himself and the friends who participated in the ritual. The comic *Hellblazer* is a long and winding chronicle of his doomed effort to live with his mistake and his addiction to walking the razor's edge between the role of the Adept and the role of the Dark Disciple.





## The Bringer of Fire

*Prometheus was one of the Titans, a gigantic race, who inhabited the earth before the creation of man. To him and his brother Epimetheus was committed the office of making man, and providing him and all other animals with the faculties necessary for their preservation. Epimetheus undertook to do this, and Prometheus was to overlook his work, when it was done. Epimetheus accordingly proceeded to bestow upon the different animals the various gifts of courage, strength, swiftness, sagacity; wings to one, claws to another, a shelly covering to a third, etc. But when man came to be provided for, who was to be superior to all other animals, Epimetheus had been so prodigal of his resources that he had nothing left to bestow upon him. In his perplexity he resorted to his brother Prometheus, who, with the aid of Minerva, went up to heaven, and lighted his torch at the chariot of the sun and brought down fire to man. With this gift man was more than a match for all other animals. It enabled him to make weapons wherewith to subdue them; tools with which to cultivate the earth; to warm his dwelling, so as to be comparatively independent of climate; and finally to introduce the arts and to coin money, the means of trade and commerce.*

—Thomas Bullfinch, *The Age of Fable*

The Bringer of Fire is one who recreates the feat of Prometheus by journeying to lost or forbidden places, to bring forth salvation for the people. It should be noted that this represents two distinct arcs for the Bringer of Fire—the journey to that forbidden place and the return to society with his fire.

Fire represents many things. It is the force of creation, and also destruction. It is a source of protection, and also terror. It transforms, consumes and purifies. It represents technology and man's ability to tame nature, but also nature's ability to reclaim what man has made—civilization and primal forces at once. It allows man to communicate his prayers to the gods in the form of burnt offerings. Fire is magic.

But it comes with a steep price. Man does not steal the power of gods lightly. Ask Crow, who lost his brilliant plumage; or Dr. Frankenstein, who lost everything. A victorious Bringer of Fire will be feted by his people, but the price he pays will forever set him apart.

The Bringer of Fire is both savior and trickster, for power alone is not enough to steal power. Wisdom, cunning, ingenuity and a true heart are required to defeat the challenge of the forbidden place.





The forbidden place can be frighteningly real or sublimely spiritual. The prize can be a physical treasure, eldritch might or lost or forgotten lore.

The Bringer of Fire doesn't always make his journey with the fate of the world at stake. The people can often continue as they are without the Bringer of Fire's intervention, yet he can make their lives better and more meaningful if his quest is successful.

The Bringer of Fire has not erred, as the Adept has. But neither is he perfect. His quest will test and change him. He will have to prove his wisdom, cunning and heart to succeed.

Ged of Earthsea takes on the mantle of the Bringer of Fire when he enters the lightless depths of the Tombs of Atuan and brings forth the Ring of Erreth-Akbe, thus restoring the Bond Rune, the sign of Peace. The Ring is a physical treasure, but it also represents forgotten lore. Ged's strength and will are put to the supreme test in the tombs, as he struggles against darkness and the oppressive force of the Nameless powers of the earth. But his true test is discovering Arha, the Eaten One, and kindling the light of her desire for freedom in order to guide her from the belly of the Nameless Ones and allow her to be reborn as Tenar.

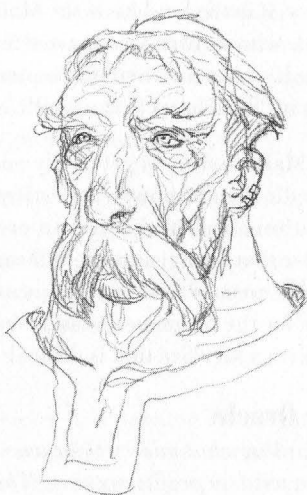
Norse mythology gives us yet another example in the form of Odin the Allfather, who takes a more spiritual journey by hanging himself from the World Tree for nine days, a sacrifice to himself, so that he might bring forth the Runes of Power—eldritch might. He learns many things, from spells to stay the weather and extinguish fires to spells for blunting weapons and healing. Odin sacrifices an eye so that he might drink from the Well of Wisdom and so see into the past, present and future. Odin's tests are physical in nature, but also tests of will, requiring the king of the gods to humble himself and suffer for power.

In *Journey to the West*, Tripitaka the monk (also known as Xuanzang) and his disciples become Bringers of Fire when they journey to Vulture Peak in India to bring forth the Buddhist scriptures. Tripitaka's main magical ability is guidance from Buddha himself, though his companions, like Monkey, have flashier abilities, such as transformation or leaping incredibly long distances. Countless evils, both physical and spiritual, test the companions on their journey along the Silk Road and prove their worthiness to carry the scriptures back to China.



## The Maker

*In that time were made those things that afterwards were most renowned of all the works of the Elves. For Fëanor, being come to his full might, was filled with a new thought, or it may be that some shadow of foreknowledge came to him of the doom that drew near; and he pondered how the light of the Trees, the glory of the Blessed Realm, might be preserved imperishable. Then he began a long and secret labor, and he summoned all his lore, and his power, and his subtle skills, and at the end of all he made the Silmarils.*



—J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*

The Maker is a skilled technician, a craftsman who accepts the gift of fire and tames it so that it becomes a power of creation rather than destruction.

Most frequently it is the product of the Maker's labors that initiates or is the goal of a quest.

Sometimes, this product can lead to more harm than good, as happened with Fëanor and his sons, who became so enamored of his greatest creation that they swore an oath that would lead to great suffering and misery in the world. The stories of such treasures rarely have happy endings.

Other times, the Maker crafts physical treasures of power, like the Finnish god-smith Ilmarinen, who created the mysterious Sampo, a magical artifact that manufactured flour, salt and gold from thin air.

The Maker also exists to mend such treasures, like Elrond Half-Elven taking up the shattered pieces of Narsil—symbolic of the broken kingdom of Arnor and Gondor—and forging them anew as Andúril, the Flame of the West, in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Fellowship of the Ring*.



Rarely, it is the land itself the Maker seeks to mend. Heleth, master of Aihal, who in turn was master to Ged, shows this face of the Maker when he stills the earthquake, mending the fault beneath the Isle of Gont in “The Bones of the Earth.”

The Maker’s story is primarily one of building and shaping, whether it be an item of power, a destiny, a nation or a person. It requires something broken that a man or woman of power might mend, or a danger that a magician might face by crafting a treasure. The mending is never an easy task, and frequently requires a journey to a forbidden place for the reagents necessary for a making. Invariably, the making requires a sacrifice that is difficult for the magician to bear.

## **The Oracle**

*Alas, alas, what misery to be wise  
When wisdom profits nothing! This old lore  
I had forgotten; else I were not here.*

—Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*

The Oracle is an advisor and guide, a keeper of secrets and lost lore. His role is to inform, never to act. The Oracle is always a supporting character, great in power but unable to perform the task for which the hero is destined.

Oracles deliver knowledge from unattainable sources—the gods, the future, the past, the dead—and transmit it to the hero so he might continue his quest. Not infrequently, the hero denies the Oracle’s wisdom to his misfortune.

The Oracle can appear at the beginning of a tale so that he might commune with the otherworld and relay the hero’s destined path—one that is surely filled with misfortune or anguish. But the Oracle can also be a goal of a hero’s quest, dwelling in the forbidden place to deliver the otherworld’s lore to the Bringer of Fire.

Teiresias the blind seer plays the role of Oracle many times in his appearances in epic poetry and tragedies. In *Oedipus Rex* he reveals the cause of the curse on Thebes to the furious and disbelieving King Oedipus. Even death does not dull the prophet’s abilities, for Odysseus ventures into the Underworld itself to learn from the ghost of Teiresias what he must do to assuage the sea god Poseidon’s wrath.



Then there is the tragic Cassandra of the *Iliad*, whose sufferings seem endless. She foresaw the destruction of Troy, as well as her own demise and defilement, with the oracular powers inflicted on her by Apollo. Despite this, her brothers Hector and Paris, and her father Priam, thought her mad and imprisoned her, denying her visions.

Dallben and his adoptive mothers, Orddu, Orwen and Orgoch all play the Oracle to the hero Taran in the *Chronicles of Prydain*. As an Oracle, Dallben helps Taran begin his quests. Taran's two journeys into the Marshes of Morva—the forbidden place—to visit Orddu, Orwen and Orgoch mark important turning points in his destiny.

## Playing the Light Side

When a player creates a magical character in a Burning Wheel game, it is worth considering which of the roles that character will play. All player characters in Burning Wheel are expected to be dynamic protagonists. It is expected that the story of the game revolves around the characters and that the characters' Beliefs will be challenged and changed in the course of play.

Of the wizardly roles described above, two—the Adept and the Bringer of Fire—lend themselves to the role of protagonist. The Adept, especially, addresses the fundamental question of magic: What is the proper use of magic? When is its price worth paying and when is it not?

The other two roles—the Maker and the Oracle—are rarely protagonists; they are usually supporting characters that aid or guide the protagonist in some way.

The reason comes down to choice. Adepts and Bringers of Fire are in the process of questioning their choices about magic and themselves. Their stories are about answering those questions. Makers and Oracles have typically made their choices and paid their prices. They are not expected to become something else at the end of the story.

Heleth, cited as a Maker, is an example of a rare exception for this type. He is a character who still has a choice to make and a price to pay, and so he is a fit protagonist for a tale.



In any event, when creating a magical character—whether that character uses sorcery, faith, or some other magical power—ask yourself what price and what choice stands before the character. What does the character struggle with? How does that struggle define magic in your game? Write a Belief about that struggle.

## The Dark Side

Magical villains generally take one of four roles: the Dark Disciple, the Deceiver, the Bringer of Darkness and the Unmaker.

### The Dark Disciple

*Then, grotesquely, his laval eyes took on an angle of cunning. Twitching nods over his shoulder, he hissed in a raw voice, "Here—this is fair. Fair. Better than promise. All of them—here. All little Lords and puny Bloodguard—humans. Ready for crushing." He started to laugh, broke into a fit of coughing. "Crush!" he spat when he regained control of himself. "Crush with power." He made a little noise like cracking of bones in his throat. "Power! Little Lords. Mighty Drool. Better than promises."*

— Stephen R. Donaldson, *Lord Foul's Bane*

The Dark Disciple is one who walked the path of the Adept but was unable to redeem himself. Instead, he was consumed by his mistake. Redemption might still be possible, but it is outside the Dark Disciple's reach alone. The impetus must come from another.

The *possibility* of redemption is the defining attribute of a Dark Disciple. Whether that redemption comes to fruition or not is another story. The mere possibility gives the character humanity and also makes the character an excellent foil for the protagonist, who should, in turn, recognize that he too might fall as the Dark Disciple has fallen.

In the meantime, the Dark Disciple must serve an evil master and pay for his mistake by spreading suffering and terror. The Dark Disciple is a servant of a greater evil. He must be confronted, and vanquished or redeemed, before the true evil can be faced.

Each Dark Disciple has a weakness, sown from his own arrogance and corresponding to his mistake. The one who discovers that weakness can use it to remind the Dark Disciple of his humanity, or to break his power if the Dark Disciple refuses redemption.





In general, if the Dark Disciple is the foil of an Adept, the mistake of the Dark Disciple should be the same as the one with which the Adept struggles. A Dark Disciple works best when held up as a mirror to the protagonist.

Dark Disciples are the most human of sorcerous antagonists. Their motives are typically discernible and understandable. We may not feel that we would make a similar mistake, but we should be able to understand the choice that was made.

Dark Disciples are often the servants of Bringers of Darkness and Unmakers, archetypes who rarely interact with the protagonists directly.

Darth Vader is perhaps the most iconic Dark Disciple. His flaws are pride and anger. He is ruled by those passions, as typified by using the mystical powers of the Force to kill subordinates who question his power or fail in their duties. Pride—his desire to overthrow his master—leads him to seek a reunion with his son, leaving the door open for that son to awaken feelings in him that he had long buried. Whereas Darth Vader succumbed to his passions and fell to the Dark Side, his son, though tempted, resists. That resistance proves to be the example Darth Vader needs to struggle anew against his own mistake.

Saruman, chief of the Order of the Istari in *The Lord of the Rings*, represents another face of the Dark Disciple. Like his eventual master, Sauron, Saruman was a servant of the Valar Aulë; like many of Aulë's servants, he was predisposed to covetousness. His lust for ring lore and Sauron's power led him to abandon his original quest in Middle Earth and to become Sauron's accomplice and servant, raising up armies of orcs. His desire for power led to his weakness: His pride blinds him to the anger he arouses in the primal forces of Fangorn. He sends all his armies into Helm's Deep in an effort to conquer Rohan, and leaves his stronghold undefended against the march of the Ents. Gandalf offers Saruman a chance to redeem himself, but Saruman is unwilling, and so Gandalf breaks his staff and his power with it.

Drool Rockworm, in *Lord Foul's Bane*, is a classic Dark Disciple. Thinking that he has captured and mastered the Staff of Law himself, he merely performs Lord Foul's bidding. Lord Foul, potent and cunning, grants Drool power so that the twisted cavewight can lead Thomas Covenant into a trap and further bind the hapless hero to Lord Foul



himself. Drool is a pawn in the game, and though he nearly obliterates Covenant and his companions, it is he who is destroyed by Covenant's wild magic power.

## The Deceiver

*Moreover [the Noldor] were not at peace in their hearts, since they had refused to return into the West, and they desired both to stay in Middle-earth, which indeed they loved, and yet to enjoy the bliss of those that had departed. Therefore they harkened to Sauron, and they learned of him many things, for his knowledge was great. In those days the smiths of Ost-in-Edhil surpassed all that they had contrived before; they took thought, and they made the Rings of Power. But Sauron guided their labors, and he was aware of all that they did; for his desire was to set a bond upon the Elves and bring them under his vigilance.*

—J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*

The Deceiver is a dark Oracle, an agent of evil sent to twist the hero's destiny and send him hurtling down the wrong path.

The Deceiver's power stems from his ability to fool and manipulate the protagonist. The Deceiver rarely has the power to stand up to a protagonist in a fair fight once his lies have been revealed. Instead, the Deceiver plays upon the weaknesses of his victims to encourage them to destroy themselves.

Although the Deceiver's methods are often employed by more powerful entities with apocalyptic goals, the Deceiver himself is not seeking the end of the world. He seeks control, like the Bringer of Darkness, but is not strong enough to take it by force. Instead, the Deceiver's enemies must be manipulated into giving up control.

To function, a Deceiver must gain the trust of a person of power and the ability to influence that person. The victim falls under the Deceiver's influence due to the Deceiver's evil power, but also due to a flaw or weakness in the victim's character. The Deceiver guides his victim to wrong actions, but ultimately it is the victim's choice. The Deceiver does not make anyone do anything.



Often, the baleful influence of the Deceiver becomes apparent to those who truly care for the victim, but by the time it does, the victim is too far under the Deceiver's spell. Those who can see the truth are never in a position to act directly against the Deceiver without hurting the victim.

Deceivers most often work on behalf of other powers. They are rarely the main villains and frequently turn on their masters at the end, though it is rarely out of penitence. Their evil and selfishness does not allow them to care for anyone but themselves.

Gríma Wormtongue of *The Two Towers* is one of the most recognizable Deceivers. He uses his arts, learned at the feet of Saruman, to enfeeble and influence Théoden, king of the Rohirrim. Under Wormtongue's influence, Théoden King drives his loyal subjects into exile and forsakes his duties. Gríma works also to poison the mind of the king against Gandalf and the companions. When Wormtongue is undone, he turns upon his master.

Sauron himself, in his guise as Annatar, the Lord of Gifts, shows himself a very potent Deceiver. Sauron takes the role of Annatar at the beginning of the Second Age, befriendng the Elven smiths of Eregion and instructing them in ring lore and magic, despite the doubts of Galadriel and Gil-galad. It is under Annatar's direction that the rings of power are made. Later in the Second Age, captured by the king of Númenor, Sauron the Deceiver convinces them to build a temple to the Dark Lord Melkor where human sacrifices are made. Eventually, under his dark guidance, Númenoreans make war upon Valinor itself, and Eru sinks the isle beneath the waves for their presumption. And so Sauron's manipulation and lies ended one of the greatest threats to Melkor's ultimate rule of Middle Earth.

In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, it is Serret, daughter of the lord of Re Albi and Lady of the Court of the Terrenon, who performs the duties of the Deceiver. It is she that goads Ged into making the terrible mistake for which he pays dearly. She senses the weakness in him—his pride and arrogance—and plays upon it. Later she seeks to enslave him to the Terrenon, one of the Old Powers of the Earth, thinking that she had mastered that dread stone and could control Ged through it. Through Serret, the Terrenon promises Ged mastery and rule. By way of much suffering and heartache, Ged is able to see through her wiles to the truth of slavery nestled within her lies. In the end, as is inevitable with a Deceiver, Serret betrays her master.



## The Bringer of Darkness

*He thought of Yara, the high priest, who worked strange dooms from this jeweled tower, and the Cimmerian's hair prickled as he remembered a tale told by a drunken page of the court—how Yara had laughed in the face of a hostile prince, and held up a glowing, evil gem before him, and how rays shot blindingly from that unholy jewel, to envelop the prince, who screamed and fell down, and shrank to a withered blackened lump that changed to a black spider which scamped wildly about the chamber until Yara set his heel upon it.*

—Robert E. Howard, *The Tower of the Elephant*

The Bringer of Darkness is a sorcerer whose mastery is bent to infecting the land with fear and ignorance. The Bringer of Darkness seeks his own aggrandizement and power, temporal or otherwise.

Such sorcerers seek dominion over the earth, and they pursue this goal by employing or making deals with dark powers and by seeking to break the bonds of civilization. They seek to make men ignorant and savage in order to make them easier to rule.

The Bringer of Darkness is not bent on destruction for its own sake. If the world were destroyed, there would be nothing to rule and dominate.

While it is harder to relate to the motives of the Bringer of Darkness than to the motives of the Dark Disciple, the Bringer of Darkness still has recognizably human qualities. The desire for power and domination drives the Bringer of Darkness, though it is not necessarily clear what the Bringer of Darkness hopes to do with this power should he gain it.

Without a clear purpose behind the drive for domination, the Bringer of Darkness can be a bit one-dimensional. It is therefore best to keep him as a menace looming in the background, rather than a force that confronts the protagonists directly. These characters most frequently confront the protagonists through their minions, Deceivers and Dark Disciples in their service.

On the other hand, a Bringer of Darkness with a fully formed motive can become a truly memorable and terrible foe to a group of protagonists.

Arawn Death-Lord, the tyrant that overshadows all of the *Chronicles of Prydain* from his stronghold in Annuvin, is a Bringer of Darkness. Able to take any shape he chooses, he spends years traveling the land of Prydain, stealing enchanted tools and knowledge. Rather than using







them for himself, he locks them in the treasure vaults of Annuvin, where their power can benefit no one. He maintains his power by keeping men ignorant and weak. While he is a looming threat, he most often acts through his servants, like the Horned King, the gwythaints, the Cauldron-Born, the Huntsmen of Annuvin and power-hungry men that flock to his banner.

The Magician, from *The Charwoman's Shadow*, initially seems to be a less menacing Bringer of Darkness but proves to be all the more sinister for it. Dedicated to cultivating his own power and wresting away the secrets of heaven, the Magician tricks his servants into giving away their shadows in exchange for his gifts, but all too soon they discover that doing so has put them deep in his power. The Magician's defeat at Ramon Alonzo's hand, while freeing those who suffered in the Magician's clutches, does not drive back the darkness. Instead, the Magician sets off on a voyage through Spain, drawing all the hidden creatures of magic to him and taking them with him to the Country Beyond the Moon's Rising. The Magician's departure brings an end to all magic and Spain's Golden Age.

Jadis, the White Witch of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, is another Bringer of Darkness. The beautiful Amazon dominates all Narnia with a wand that turns those who oppose her to stone (reminiscent of Circe's wand, which turns victims into swine). The remaining, fearful subjects of her police state suffer a never-ending winter. In addition to her wand and other sorceries, Jadis maintains her power with an army of evil creatures, including wolves, giants, dwarves, werewolves and ogres.



## The Unmaker

*Fall'n Cherube, to be weak is miserable  
Doing or Suffering: but of this be sure,  
To do ought good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight,  
As being the contrary to his high will  
Whom we resist. If then his Providence  
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,  
Our labour must be to pervert that end,  
And out of good still to find means of evil;  
Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps  
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb  
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.*

—Satan to Beelzebub upon the Fall, John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

The Unmaker is a sorcerer whose mastery is focused upon bringing destruction. Unlike the Bringer of Darkness, the Unmaker does not concern himself with dominion, nor is power really his ultimate end.

Unmakers seek to bring about the end of the world and the destruction of all things.

Unmakers are not so much characters as plot elements. Their motives are typically inexplicable, their powers vast, and they rarely appear to the protagonists. Instead, they act behind the scenes and through minions, and their actions have widespread consequences.

Because they rarely have motives with which we can sympathize, it is best to leave Unmakers off the stage as much as possible in our games. Instead, the protagonists encounter the Unmaker and his acts through his minions, especially Dark Disciples and Deceivers in his service.

The key to the Unmaker is not his motive, but the methods he employs. They are what give each Unmaker a unique flavor. In a sense, the Unmaker is a metaphor for a fear or darkness in ourselves. Additionally, though powerful, the Unmaker is not without limits. There are certain rules to how he must accomplish his ends, and these rules are almost always tied to the method the Unmaker employs.

Cob, the villain of *The Farthest Shore*, is a symbol of the fear of death. To defeat death, Cob breaches the wall between worlds. This act grants Cob eternal life of a sort, but also slowly strips away all that is good and worthwhile in the world. Without the intervention of Ged and Arren,



Cob would exist forever, but there would be no real life. Cob plays upon the fear of death in those he encounters, convincing them to willingly give up their names in exchange for supposed never-ending existence. But when they do so, they also give up the things inside themselves that allow them to take pleasure in life. Each person who gives up his name to Cob further erodes the wall that separates the world of life from the Dry Land.

Meanwhile, Lord Foul the Despiser, of the Thomas Covenant stories, ultimately seeks to destroy the Arch of Time and thus unmake Creation. Lord Foul works through despair, corruption and seduction. He makes his foes think their fight is hopeless, exposes them to their flaws to make them succumb to despair, and seduces those who do not react in horror when they are confronted with their flaws. Slowly, through his expert manipulation, he subverts all those who would fight him and turns them to his cause. Indeed, it becomes clear that Lord Foul must work this way because there is a fundamental mystic rule which he must obey: The White Gold Ring and its wild magic must be given to him willingly. He cannot take it by force.

## Playing the Dark Side

*Each film is only as good as its villain. Since the heroes and the gimmicks tend to repeat from film to film, only a great villain can transform a good try into a triumph.*

—Roger Ebert, review of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*

Whereas the children of light are protagonists, the children of darkness are intended to be antagonists, plain and simple. Aside from the player characters, antagonists are the most important characters in any Burning Wheel game. To appropriate Mr. Ebert's analysis, a hero is only as good as the villain who makes him interesting.

While each Burning Wheel game is about the player characters, it is the antagonist, the villain, who will provide them with the opportunity to be great. Sorcerous villains are especially fun, as their powers are wide-ranging and they can rarely be countered by anything short of magic or faith.

Your primary sorcerous villains will be Dark Disciples. They are the most human of the villainous types, and therefore the easiest for us to understand. The ability to understand motivations is what separates a villain from a force of nature. Dark Disciples are also reflections of the choices and potential future facing the protagonist.



In addition, Dark Disciples have a personal stake in the defeat or destruction of the protagonists. A Dark Disciple should incorporate his mistake and the protagonist into at least one Belief.

The Deceiver, meanwhile, must get close to the player characters—or someone they care about—in order to do his work. The Deceiver poisons from close up. He, like the Dark Disciple, usually has strong and complex motivations. It is essential that the characters either not recognize him for what he is at first, or not have the political power to confront him directly.

A Deceiver whom the players know about but cannot touch due to his political influence can be one of the best, most maddening villains players will ever face. Such a villain will take great care and cunning on the players' parts to attack.

Deceivers have Beliefs based upon subverting their victims and getting them to do something in the interest of the Deceiver or his master. If the victim is not a player character, he should be a relationship of a player character.

The Bringer of Darkness and Unmaker are more plot elements than villains. They are forces of nature, and the player characters are usually beneath their notice. They seek the destruction of the protagonists in an impersonal way. They are the big picture problem tied inextricably into the fabric of the setting. It just so happens that the protagonists stand in their way. Should the protagonists' actions be brought to their attention, the Bringer of Darkness will take personal interest in their destruction. They will send monstrous minions, Deceivers and their servant Dark Disciples to carry out the task. Because their motivations are typically one-dimensional, it is best to keep Bringers of Darkness and Unmakers in the background. The players should see and feel the results of their actions but shouldn't come face to face with them until the final climactic moments.

Bringers of Darkness and Unmakers should have Beliefs born of their goals and their motivations. They rarely take protagonists into account in their Beliefs. Instead, they obliquely attack the protagonists through the ideological core of protagonists' Beliefs.



## Questions, Questions

In order to make the most of magic in your game, you should consider both the nature of magic in the world in which the characters live, and how the characters' communities relate to the power. Review the following questions. Their answers will add a great deal of depth to the magic in your game and help establish its boundaries.

How does magic take shape in your game? Does it work subtly or blatantly? Are speech and gestures required to use the power?

Does magic come from an external supernatural agency? Is it a gift with which only a select few are born or are study and discipline enough to allow anyone to master the art?

What limitations bind the magic in your game? What can't it do? What does it excel at doing?

How is mastery taught or learned? Do people know about it and, if so, how do they feel about it? Are the men and women who wield these powers revered or hated? What does religion have to say on the matter? What of the law?

Are there rituals a practitioner must observe? Are certain actions or possessions taboo for sorcerers? Are certain magical actions forbidden or restricted?

The remainder of this book will provide you with game mechanical options to support your answers to those questions.





*the*  
**Arcane  
Library**





# The Arcane Library

This section contains 13 chapters detailing new magic systems, variations of extant systems and a couple of new magical powers.

The *Gifted* chapter presents rules for using characters who possess the Gifted trait but are untrained in any sorcerous art. It introduces an element of magical mayhem into the game—something for lovers of young adult fantasy fiction.

*Corruption* presents a new emotional attribute for mages. Tampering with ancient forces can empower the character, but at great cost and risk!

*Practical Magic* offers up a very simple form of magic in which sorcerers are merely skilled craftsmen. It's subtle and low-key, perfect for anyone sick of White Fire bolts destroying every monster in the path of the sorcerer.

The *Religion* chapter talks about ways to codify Faith into religion. It describes the powers of gods and pantheons and offers small variants for the versatile Faith mechanics.

*Familiars and Homunculi* offers a handful of rules so wizards and witches can acquire their iconic little friends.

*Art Magic* presents an alternate Sorcery system. Using Art Magic, the wizard player can devise his spells on the fly, rather than prepurchase spells from a list. Of course, this versatility comes with a price!

The long-awaited *Enchanting* chapter provides an extensive system that allows characters to create their own magical artifacts—whether it's something created quickly to be used once or something painstakingly crafted and meant to last a generation.

The next chapter, *Spirit Binding*, details the mysterious and dangerous art of calling and binding the very forces of nature.



*Summoning* is the sister to Spirit Binding, but rather than the implacable forces of nature, the summoner trucks with the dead, demons, angels and gods.

No arcane library would be complete without a treatise on raising the dead. The *Death Art* chapter offers the chilling details of this powerful, obscene art. If you wish to raise corpses from death and have these tormented souls blindly serve you, this is your foul home.

Following Death Art, the *Abstractions and Distillations* chapter details a method for creating spells for the traditional Burning Wheel Sorcery system. It's difficult, volatile and powerful.

*Blood Magic* isn't a full magic system per se. It is an optional subsystem that you can tack on to nearly any of the systems in this book or to canon Burning Wheel. Blood Magic provides the awful details on using ritual torture and murder to fuel your other magics.

Finally, the Arcane Library concludes with a short entry describing an alternate method for learning spells in the *Revised Practicals* chapter and new rules for memorizing spells in the *Arsenal Method*, both for use with the traditional Burning Wheel Sorcery system.

## Danger

This book is not a list of pretty new toys to be dumped into your game. Do not toss in all of the options on top of Faith, traditional Sorcery, Elven Songs, Dwarven Art and Orc Rituals!

Individually, each of these systems is dangerous. If you want to use one, introduce it to your campaign with care and caution. Discuss the system with your whole group. Hell, if you can, read the whole thing together. Any single one of these can change the face of a game. Therefore, everyone should be aware of the possibilities, even those who aren't playing mages.

So, when starting a new game, pick a couple of magical elements to bring into play. Let each character have access to one—a new system, a new item or a new trait—and go from there.

Burning Wheel doesn't have system limits on power-gaming. If you want to power-game, you can. Including lots of magical systems and artifacts in your game opens the door. If you're not into that, just be cautious about what you introduce.



Another power-gamer pitfall is the multi-talented magic character: the character with Faith, Sorcery and Enchanting or Death Art, Summoning and Corruption or myriad other awful combinations. To reduce campaign-breaking power-gaming, limit each character to one form of magic until your group gets a feel for the scale of the systems.

After you're comfortable with the new elements, introduce more systems and have fun!

### Sorcerous Skills

Sorcerous-type skills—Alchemy, Aura Reading, Death Art, Enchanting, Practical Magic, Sorcery, Spirit Binding and Summoning—cannot be learned just by unskilled testing. In order to learn one of these skills, the first test toward learning the skill must come from Instruction. Thereafter, all other tests needed to learn the skill can come from Beginner's Luck or Instruction.

### System Review

Before a system can be introduced into your game, the whole group must have a chance to review it. At least two players should read the chapter and explain the positive and negative aspects of that type of magic. If the group doesn't think the system is a good fit, they may decline to allow the system into the game.





# Gifted

When I originally designed the Burning Wheel magic system, I wanted sorcerers to be rare individuals. Inspired by Ursula K. Le Guin's fiction, I wanted them to possess a special quality that gave them access to their power. The Gifted trait is the first conceit of the Burning Wheel Sorcery rules. It is the first limit—a restriction on learning the magic of Sorcery. Sorcerers, summoners, enchanters and death artists all must be Gifted in order to work their wonders.

The following section describes options for omitting, modifying and tailoring the Gifted trait for your game.

## Magic for the Masses

The Gifted trait can be removed from the game. In this case, Sorcery and other similar skills no longer require it in order to tap true magical power.

Removing the Gifted requirement opens up magic for all to learn. On one hand, magic then becomes more about finding the dusty tomes and old teachers and learning secrets than about a cadre of elite men and women with the power to destroy all life.

On the other hand, anyone who's played a fantasy roleplaying game knows that this option could quickly lead to every man, woman and child in the setting learning Sorcery and gaining the power to destroy all life.

Still, for magic-infused settings where every farmer knows a charm to herd cattle and every doctor knows a chant to knit bone, this option can be viable.

The key to making this option work is to make learning sorcerous skills arcane and mystical, or at least difficult. If there's an open exchange of information, all spells will be available to everyone and that becomes problematic. But if there's a cult to explore or an economy to navigate, spells will be restricted to those who have access to the mysteries or to those who can afford them.



## Raw Talent

It is possible to create a character who is Gifted but untrained in any art. In standard Burning Wheel canon, this condition means that the character possesses untapped potential. He needs a sorcerer to teach him.

There is another way to play this. In this case, the Gifted trait indicates that the character possesses the ability to work great magic, but also a raw talent and wild power.

The following powers—Stress, Concentration and Accident-Prone—manifest in Gifted characters who do not possess any sorcerous skills like Sorcery, Death Art or Aura Reading. As soon as any sorcerous skill is opened, these abilities are no longer available to the character.

### Stress

When an unskilled and Gifted character fails a Steel test, his powers manifest in unanticipated ways. Roll on the table below to generate a trait. The trait is applied regardless of whether or not the character would otherwise be eligible for it. The trait is temporary. It lasts until the end of the scene in which the character was stressed.

| Gifted Stress Table |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2D6                 | Stress Trait       |
| 2                   | Bottomless Stomach |
| 3                   | Clumsy             |
| 4                   | Commanding Aura    |
| 5                   | Eldritch Sink      |
| 6                   | Child Prodigy      |
| 7                   | Second Sight       |
| 8                   | Low Speech         |
| 9                   | Lesser Muse        |
| 10                  | Touch of the Devil |
| 11                  | Lawbreaker         |
| 12                  | Brass Skin         |

If the player is stressed again in a future scene, he may decide not to roll on the table and let the previous trait manifest again, or he may choose to gamble and roll again on the table.



The specific effects of traits like Child Prodigy or Lesser Muse must be decided upon when the trait is rolled. If the player is stressed again and opts to use the previously generated trait, those modified abilities remain the same as when they were first manifested. If the trait is cast off for a new trait, but then later rolled again on the table, the player may assign the benefits to new abilities or the old ones as he sees fit.

*Lesser Muse grants +2D to a skill. If I roll it once and choose Cooking, it grants a +2D bonus for the scene. If I'm stressed again and I roll Lesser Muse again, I can choose to apply the muse to a different skill, like Research or whatever I need at the time.*

The traits on the Gifted Stress table can be found in the Character Burner and the Monster Burner.

## Concentration

The untried hero may spend a persona point to add his Will dice to a Beginner's Luck test.

However, concentrating in such a manner is draining and dangerous. The player must make a Forte test at an obstacle equal to the Beginner's Luck test (using the doubled obstacle). This counts as a standard tax test for Sorcery.

*My character is testing his Perception for Beginner's Luck for Aura Reading. It's an Ob 1 test to detect an Aura trait, doubled to 2 since I don't have the skill. After the Perception test, whether I pass or fail, I have to make an Ob 2 Forte test to resist the tax.*

## Accident-Prone

When Gifted characters fail an attempt at any *skill* test, the results are spectacular. First, the failure results in the worst possible outcome for the situation. It's bad. There are loud, painful crashing sounds. This calamity must affect the people around the character, including his friends and allies. It cannot only affect the mageling.

*If he were trying to cast a spell, for example, there could be no harmless dissipation result. It'd have to be either an unwanted summoning or a garbled transmission.*

However, this incident is coupled with another unlikely event. Shortly after the catastrophic failure, the young mage-to-be gains a new friend or companion, or an important item. Treat these conditions as either



a successful Circles test or Resources test. If you need a value for the person or object, it can be the equivalent Circles or Resources test obstacle equal to the test's margin of failure.

*If you fail by two, then the object can be up worth up to whatever an Ob 2 Resources test would buy you.*

## Learning

When using the Raw Talent rules, Gifted characters are subject to the Stress, Concentration and Accident-Prone rules until they open a sorcerous skill. The powers are lost when they open a sorcerous skill. The Gifted trait reverts to its standard manifestation.

Due to their accident-prone nature, learning Sorcery and casting spells with Beginner's Luck is very dangerous. Once given a test for advancement toward Sorcery, Death Art, Summoning or Enchanting, the Gifted child may begin attempting to test these skills. He does so at a double obstacle penalty!

*Should an apprentice actually manage to learn a spell for traditional Sorcery prior to opening the skill, he casts with a double obstacle penalty for Beginner's Luck plus a double obstacle penalty for casting a spell during practicals. That's a double double obstacle penalty. Very nasty. To avoid this, he needs to open the Sorcery skill first, then begin casting spells.*

## Specifically Gifted

Another option for the Gifted trait is to make it specific to one or two sorcerous skills. The character may learn and use skills for which he is Gifted, but not any others.

*For example, if a character is Gifted for Sorcery, he may not use Art Magic.*

I strongly recommend this option for campaigns which use multiple spellcasting variants, like Art Magic, Sorcery, Death Magic and Enchanting.





# Corruption

Corruption is a new emotional attribute designed to emphasize the effects of magic upon its users in settings where magical lore is unnatural or forbidden.

The more the sorcerer calls upon his power, the more corrupted he becomes—in body and soul—and the more twisted and vile he grows.

The Corruption emotional attribute can be combined with nearly any of the extant magic systems, but it works especially well with the Death Art, Sorcery, Summoning, Spirit Binding and Faith mechanics.

Inspiration for this system of tampering with dark powers who punish and reward at a whim is taken from H.P. Lovecraft's various tales, Stephen R. Donaldson's *Thomas Covenant* series and Games Workshop's *Realms of Chaos*, *Rogue Trader* and *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* games.

## Starting Corruption

The Corruption emotional attribute starts at B0. Everyone has the potential to travel down this path. Those who wield magic or truck with dark powers hasten the speed at which they travel. Increase the starting Corruption exponent using the following list:

- +1 if the character has the Gifted trait.
- +1 if the character has the Faithful trait.
- +1 if the character has the Chosen One trait.
- +1 for each point of Spirit Marks (see Spirit Binding).
- +1 for each point of Orders (see Summoning).
- +1 if the character has ever prayed alone at night to remote, unholy gods to aid him.
- +1 if the character has ever entered into a pact with a demon.





If a character has a starting Corruption value of 10 or more, the player must spend five exponent points to shade shift to gray. He may not begin play with a Corruption exponent greater than 9.

## Starting Corruption in Play

If a character meets the conditions for any of the above in play—he earns a trait, prays to bad things at night, gains a Mark or Order—he earns the Corruption emotional attribute at a value appropriate to the starting Corruption conditions. Usually, that'll be B1.

## Starting Corruption Traits

A player whose character who begins the game with Corruption rolls once on the Corrupted Body and Soul table (found later in this chapter) to get a free trait. He may choose whether to take the primary or alternate version, but this affects his future choices.

# Using Corruption

Corruption may be used to aid a sorcerer's actions during play. It works similarly to Greed or Shame in that regard. It may only be called upon when the character is undertaking a vile, dark or corrupt act. This can be due to overt actions or simple intent. The group is the final arbiter of whether an act is degenerate enough to warrant help from the chattering gods who dwell in the shadows of men's dreams.

## The Temptation

- For one fate point, a sorcerer may call upon the dark powers to help him. Corruption may then *help* any stat or skill test, whether one of the character's own abilities or a comrade's. Help gives 1D for exponent 4 or lower, 2D for exponent 5 and higher. The help is literally from an outside force, like fallen gods or lurking demons. This bonus is in addition to standard FoRKs and help.
- For one persona point, a sorcerer may substitute his Corruption for any skill or stat in any test.
- For one deeds point, a sorcerer may add his Corruption exponent to any skill or stat test.



## Corruption Brings Strength

Corruption may always be substituted for Forte to pass tax tests if the player desires. If dice are lost due to a failed test, Forte is reduced, not Corruption. If using the Art Magic or Religion rules in combination with this emotional attribute, Corruption *must* be used to pass tax tests.

## Advancing Corruption

Corruption advances like a skill, but like Greed, *routine* tests always count for advancement—even when advancing Corruption from exponents 5 to 10. For exponent 5 and higher, routine tests equal to the exponent count as one category of advancement filled. Therefore, from exponent 5 and higher, the attribute advances if any two of the three categories—routine, difficult or challenging—are filled.

Tests for advancement are earned when Corruption itself is tested (when it replaces a stat or skill), when the attribute is used to help another test and when certain situations arise in the game. The replaced stat or skill does not earn a test for advancement when persona points are spent for replacement or when using the Corruption Brings Strength rules. The aided stat or skill earns a test for advancement as per the standard testing, helping and advancement rules.

If a deeds point is used to add Corruption to a stat or skill test, the standard artha rules apply—the stat or skill earns a test, but the added dice don't affect the number of dice rolled for that test. The Corruption attribute does earn a difficult test for advancement in that instance.

When the Corruption attribute advances, the character's body and soul are changed. See the Corrupted Body and Soul rules below.

## We Have Eternity to Know Your Flesh

When Corruption reaches exponent 10, the dark ones, demons or outer gods from whom the character has been granted power come for him. They cruelly grant him one last gift before taking him from this realm into theirs. Roll on the Corrupted Traits table one last time to see what trait the sorcerer has earned by advancing his Corruption. The character is then removed from play.



## Situational Tests

Tests for advancing Corruption are also earned through actions in play. If the character meets any of the conditions below, the player must mark down the advancement as if he had passed a test at the appropriate obstacle.

The situations described in the following section only count toward advancement if the Corruption attribute has been opened. The Corruption attribute may not be opened via these situations, only through those described under Starting Corruption.

### **Obstacle 1 Corruption**

Lying or committing a willful falsehood. Casting a spell.

### **Obstacle 2 Corruption**

Learning a new spell. Summoning an imp for any purpose. Physically causing harm to another person.

### **Obstacle 3 Corruption**

Casting a spell that affects another person. Learning a new facet or school of magic. Summoning a greater imp for any purpose. Paying tribute to a demon. Discovering a marked item.

### **Obstacle 4 Corruption**

Mutilating an animal, human, Elf, Orc, Dwarf, etc. Casting a spell with harmful intent. Summoning a lesser demon for any purpose. Commanding a demon to perform a social service (as per Summoning). Owning a marked item (as per Enchanting).

### **Obstacle 5 Corruption**

Murder, by any means. Summoning a demon for any purpose. Commanding a demon to perform a physical service that leads to the injury of a person (as per Summoning). Being Marked by a demon (as per Summoning).

### **Obstacle 6 Corruption**

Torture—to cause physical and emotional pain to a subject so as to extract information or derive pleasure from them. Summoning a greater demon for any purpose. Commanding a demon to perform a physical service that leads to the death of a person (as per Summoning). Paying a physical price for a service (as per Summoning).



### Obstacle 7 Corruption

Necrophilia. Commanding a spirit service from a demon (as per Summoning). Owning many marked items (as per Enchanting).

### Obstacle 8 Corruption

Necrophagia. Selling the soul of another to a demon.

### Obstacle 9 Corruption

Being possessed by a demon.

### Obstacle 10 Corruption

Selling your own soul to a demon.

## Corrupted Body and Soul

When your Corruption advances in play, roll one die and add the result to your new Corruption exponent. This will generate a number from 2 to 16. Consult the table below. Listed next to the number are two traits, primary and alternate. The first time a player rolls on this chart, he may choose which of these two traits he wants. However, the next time he advances his Corruption, he must choose from the opposite category. The following time, he must take a trait from the other category, and so on.

*If I advance my Corruption from 1 to 2 and I roll a 1 on the die, I can choose between Rat Speak (primary) or Lunatic (alternate). Let's say I choose Rat Speak from the primary column. The next time I choose, I must take the alternate trait. And the following time, I have to take the primary. The time after that, I have to take the alternate. And so on, and so forth.*

### Corruption Traits

The Corruption traits can be found in the Character Burner and the Monster Burner. Some of the traits are not particularly nice. Some are not harmful, nor even useful. The character is stuck with them, though. One set of traits is particularly vicious—Tongueless and Radula. The Gods of Corruption are cruel and mocking. It amuses them that sorcerers would become so corrupt that they could no longer speak the words of their spells but not corrupt enough to ascend into their divine ranks.

If a character already has the trait he's rolled, then tough luck. He's earned no benefit from his debauched ways.





| Corrupted Body and Soul Traits Table |                     |                  |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Roll Result                          | Primary Trait       | Alternate Trait  |
| 2                                    | Zoophagia           | Dissent Parasite |
| 3                                    | Rat Speak           | Lunatic          |
| 4                                    | Bottomless Stomach  | Dreamer          |
| 5                                    | Lame                | Forked Tongue    |
| 6                                    | Palsy               | Cilia            |
| 7                                    | Diseased            | Tough            |
| 8                                    | Blind               | Fearless         |
| 9                                    | Maimed              | Dreadful         |
| 10                                   | Aura of Malevolence | Aura of Fear     |
| 11                                   | Enlarged Venom Sacs | Wolverine        |
| 12                                   | Fur                 | Spines           |
| 13                                   | Tongueless          | Radula           |
| 14                                   | Hermaphrodite       | Tentacles        |
| 15                                   | Believer            | Tough as Nails   |
| 16                                   | Amoeboid            | Shadow and Dust  |

## Corrupted Life

Corruption draws other souls to its foul light like moths to flame. Corrupted characters are often the focus of the attention of dilettantes and seekers of knowledge, but also of hunters and exterminators.

### The Creepy Clause

Failed Circles tests for characters with the Corruption emotional attribute are always interesting. Rather than the standard Enmity Clause, the GM can invoke this rule, which allows him to bring forth unsavory, detestable seekers of knowledge and power. These characters are always mad in some fashion, and murderous. They either seek to gain the power of Corruption from the sorcerer, or wish to elevate the sorcerer to an exalted place of power (and thereby reap a reward for themselves). They may very well be unwitting pawns of powers who seek to aid or destroy the sorcerer (sometimes both). Men, Orcs, Dark Elves, Great Spiders and Roden serve well in this capacity. Trolls, Great Wolves, Elves and Dwarves do not.



## The Mortal Enemy Clause

Instead of bringing in creepy ne'er-do-wells, the GM can choose to use the Enmity Clause in a grand and brutal fashion—rather than those who seek to aid and uplift the corrupted, he can bring forth those who seek to destroy him. Witch hunters (Village Born, Kid, Village Guard, Pilgrim, Zealous Convert) or inquisitors (Born Noble, Religious Acolyte, Priest, Archpriest, Inquisitor) with a pair of zealous knights (Born Noble, Page, Squire, Knight) backing them up make for good times!

## The Gift of Corruption

Corruption dwells not just in the hearts of men, but also in the fabric of life. When a corrupted soul fails a Resources test and the Gift of Kindness is invoked, the sorcerer has stumbled upon some previously unknown secret of the dark and forbidden forces. Whatever it is that he sought bears the arcane taint of some degenerate power. It is a “marked” item, and just knowing of it, touching it, seeing it, increases the sorcerer’s own Corruption. Marked items are described in the Enchanting chapter.

Marked items often possess some magical power of their own. It’s more likely a curse than a blessing. Use the Enchanting rules to determine the nature and power of the item. The obstacle of the enchantment cannot exceed the margin of failure of the Resources test. Assume that a proper antecedent was used to create the item.

Note that just seeing such an item counts as a test toward advancing Corruption (Ob 3), and owning one counts even more so (Ob 4).





# Practical Magic

In this form of magic, there are no spells, no sustaining, no casting times, no flash, no great effects. It is a simple magic. A sorcerer is less a thunderous god and more a potent, skilled man who can overcome any task set before him.

*You can't use Practical Magic to weave a fishing net that hauls itself in, but you could use it to weave an eerily efficient fishing net.*

## Practical Process

When using the Practical Magic rules, the Sorcery skill may be used as a proxy to test against obstacles that fall under one of the skills in one of the sorcerer's schools of magic. The Sorcery skill rolls are open-ended.

When the player wishes to attempt a test using his Sorcery, he incants an extemporaneous spell and undertakes the task using magic rather than simple, mundane means. Test Sorcery against the obstacle. The standard success and failure rules apply.

There is no "duration" for these spells. They last as long as the skill test would otherwise last. So if you make a pot using Sorcery rather than Blacksmithing, it lasts as long as a pot would last.

Normal skill test rules apply—FoRKs (from other mundane skills), linked tests, help, etc. Time for the Practical Magic test is as the skill for which it is being substituted.

And just to be clear, the Sorcery skill may not be used as a stat or for Beginner's Luck tests.

## Weaving Charms

A sorcerer player can earn a 1D advantage to his Sorcery test if he names the spell he is casting and describes the effect. For practical magic, the effects must be simple and low key. This is not the stuff of high-energy magic.

*When using Sorcery as the Rituals skill to sanctify a body, I inscribe it with the rune of ending.*



## Tools

Tools and raw materials are required for individual tests as per the standard skill rules.

*When using Sorcery to count for Blacksmithing, you must have Blacksmithing tools and metal to work with.*



## Schools of Magic

In order to gain power in a certain realm, the sorcerer must study a school of magic. Schools of magic provide access to the expertise of certain groups of skills. They are a part of the Sorcery skill.

A school of magic contains the knowledge of a skill category as described in the Advancement chapter of Burning Wheel Revised. When the sorcerer has mastered that school, he may use his Sorcery skill as the equivalent of any skill that falls into the associated skill category.

Practical Magic may be used with general, Mannish and Roden skills only. Skills specific to any other character stocks are not part of this art.

### Starting Schools of Magic

The sorcerer begins the game with the Sorcerous skill category for free. He also gains an additional school of magic for each lifepath he took during character burning. *The school of magic is derived from the skill category of the first skill on the lifepath skills list.* If the sorcerer already knows that school of magic from a previous path, he's out of luck. This lifepath doesn't teach him anything new.

The player may purchase additional schools of magic using resource points.

#### Practical Schools of Magic

#### RP Cost

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Academic          | 16 rps |
| Artisan           | 12 rps |
| Artist            | 7 rps  |
| Craftsman         | 18 rps |
| Forester          | 15 rps |
| Martial           | 12 rps |
| Medicinal         | 13 rps |
| Military          | 9 rps  |
| Musical           | 7 rps  |
| Peasant           | 12 rps |
| Physical          | 7 rps  |
| School of Thought | 9 rps  |
| Seafaring         | 12 rps |
| Social            | 25 rps |
| Sorcerous         | free   |
| Special           | 18 rps |



### Wises Restricted

Wises may not be folded into the Sorcery skill. They are not a part of its practical magic application.

## Adopting Schools of Magic in Play

Players may have their characters learn new schools of magic in play. Consult the table below and note the Adoption Obstacle for the particular school. The obstacle must be divided into an obstacle for a Will test and an obstacle for a Resources test. The obstacle number may be split in any fashion, with a minimum value of one.

In order to learn a school, the mage must find someone or *something* willing to divulge this knowledge. No test need be made by this entity. The player tests his Will to learn from him and his Resources to make him an offering.

| Practical Schools of Magic | Adoption Obstacle |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Academic                   | 8                 |
| Artisan                    | 6                 |
| Artist                     | 4                 |
| Craftsman                  | 9                 |
| Forester                   | 8                 |
| Martial                    | 6                 |
| Medicinal                  | 7                 |
| Military                   | 5                 |
| Musical                    | 4                 |
| Peasant                    | 6                 |
| Physical                   | 4                 |
| School of Thought          | 5                 |
| Seafaring                  | 6                 |
| Social                     | 13                |
| Sorcerous                  | —                 |
| Special                    | 9                 |

*For example, the Craftsman school is listed with an Adoption Obstacle of 9. This may be split into an Ob 4 Will test and an Ob 5 Resources test or an Ob 2 Will test and an Ob 7 Resources test or in any other fashion the player sees fit.*





### ***Adoption Time***

Adopting a new school of magic requires one full skill practice cycle for that category. No other skills may be practiced or learned during that time. Both tests must be made during that span of game time.

*If I want to adopt the peasant school, I must practice it for three months.*

If both tests are successful, the character may now cast spells in this school of magic.

### ***Will Failure***

If the Will test is failed, that school of magic cannot be adopted by this character.

### ***Resources Failure***

If the Resources test is failed, the character has researched or uncovered a perverted version of the school. Resources is taxed as normal. In addition, the margin of failure for the test is added as an obstacle penalty when casting spells in the school.

*If I fail the Resources test to adopt the peasant school of magic by one, I have a +1 Ob penalty to all Sorcery tests in that school.*

## **Tax**

When casting a Practical Magic spell, the caster must resist tax equal to the Sorcery skill test obstacle. Test the caster's Forte against the skill test obstacle. In the case of a versus test, the Sorcerer's Forte test obstacle is equal the number of successes rolled by his opponent. If the test is open, then the tax obstacle is 1.

If the Forte test is passed, there is no ill effect. If the test is failed, Forte is temporarily reduced by a number of dice equal to the margin of failure. If Forte reaches zero, the character is incapacitated.

*If I use my Sorcery to pass an Ob 3 History test, I must also test my Forte against Ob 3. If I roll two successes, my Forte is temporarily reduced by one die.*

If the Sorcery test was successful, he passes out after completing his task. If the test was failed, he passes out before completing the task.

Use the standard tax recovery rules described in the Sorcery chapter of Burning Wheel Revised.



*Weaver's Balm is a charm to aid using practical magic for Weaving. The charm soothes the fingers of the weaver. The Spring Steel is a charm for practical Sword skill magic. The spell both lightens and strengthens the blade of the caster.*

## No Turning Back

Once you start using magic in place of a given skill for a Duel of Wits, Range and Cover, Fight! or any other series test, you cannot return to the mundane for any instance of that skill until the end of the conflict. A sorcerer player can opt not to test if he feels that the tax would be too much for him. But in this case, any opponent would get to test against him unopposed for that action.

## Practically Gifted

At the outset of your campaign, you may decide if Practical Magic can be used with or without the Gifted trait. If used with the trait, it's a rare art just like Sorcery in standard Burning Wheel. This has the additional effect of making magic very low-key for the campaign world.

If used without the Gifted trait, magic is more easily accessed, but since this isn't a powerful art, it shouldn't be overwhelming. Rather, it has the effect of creating a magic-rich world in which many different types of people know a little sorcery. If you limit the schools of magic available, individual groups will have magical specialties and unique flavor.

## Sorcerous Skill Practical Magic

The sorcerous skill category for Practical Magic is intended to allow the mage to have access to Alchemy, Aura Reading and Circination through his Sorcery skill. It is not intended that the wizard have access to Death Art, Enchanting, Summoning, Art Magic, Spirit Binding or any other full-blown art through Practical Magic. However, we recognize that by default, the literal description of Practical Magic allows access to all sorcerous skills and hence those arts. Allowing that loophole to remain makes Practical Magic the supreme magical art. Experiment with that loophole at your own risk!





# Religion

Religion is dealt with very lightly in Burning Wheel. The Faith rules assume all deities in the game are of equal power, and the powers they grant are uniform. This chapter provides guidelines for introducing a variety of faiths and powers into your Burning Wheel game.

In our experience, we've found that the Faith rules are much more interesting when limits are imposed. The rules described in this chapter provide limits and strictures for the extant Faith rules. They create a sense of religious order and structure in the game world to help differentiate adherents.

## Theism

Before proceeding, you must decide how your culture's religions view their deities. Is there one chief god and a handful of minor ones? Are there many entities with a variety of duties and spheres? Or is there a singular super-religion that derives all its power from the same source?

### Monotheist

A monotheist society worships a singular divine entity who espouses a singular ideology. He is not universal and omnipotent; he is powerful, but limited. Miracles are then limited to the god's idiom.

*For example, a tribe that worships a local volcano god.*

### Polytheist

A polytheistic culture contains many gods and their attendant religions. Each deity rules over a sphere of power. There are ranks of deities—chief deity, deity, minor deity.

In these cultures, the priest has a patron who favors him, but he may call upon the aid of other powers so long as he performs the proper rituals.



## Supertheist

Supertheism describes a single, overarching, all-encompassing ideology. Divine power is universal, and all power is derived from a single source. Using Burning Wheel's unadulterated Faith mechanics produces a supertheistic culture. Even if there are multiple gods in play, all entities have the same power and influence.

## The Spheres of Gods

In monotheistic and polytheistic cultures, deific power comes in many forms—gods of war, fire and law.

To simplify the myriad possibilities, we've divided the domains of divine power into three spheres: Nature, the Human Condition and Society. Nature encompasses the natural world outside of humanity's control. The Human Condition describes what we are individually, for good or for ill. Society describes what we, as groups, do. Use these spheres to design deities for your campaign. The list is by no means exhaustive, so feel free to add elements to it.

### Nature

Fire, Wind, Oceans, Water, Earth, Sun, Fertility, Time, Volcanoes, Sky, Mountain, Chaos, Ice, Darkness, the Moon, the Underworld, Grain, Spring, Twilight, Dawn, Rain, Storms, Thunder, Earthquakes, Rivers, Hills.

### The Human Condition

Love, War, Luck, Betrayal, Revenge, Work, Labor, Marriage, Poetry, Knowledge, Family, Hunger, Famine, Plenty, Death, Birth, Childhood, Adulthood, Illness, Health, Honor, Fear, Courage, Forethought, Order, Discord, Harmony, Justice, Grief, Joy, Sex, Anger.

### Society

Contracts, the Written Word, Travel, Trade, Law, Military, Harvest, Protection, Medicine, Augury, Magic, Agriculture, Trade, Temples, Necropoli, Ships, Markets, Roads, Craft, Architecture, Crime.



# The Power of Gods

Gods are broken down into three levels of power: chief deities, deities, and minor deities.

## Chief Deities

These are singular entities who head up a whole pantheon or exist on their own as the sole representatives of their religion. They're powerful. When determining their nature, choose one domain from each sphere, plus at least two more domains from any of the three.

*Odin, Zeus and Ahura Mazda are examples of chief deities. Odin's spheres are justice, magic, the sky, death and family (in the form of the All-Father).*

## Deities

Deities have one domain in each of the three spheres.

*Athena, Thor and Angra Mainyu are examples of deities.*

*For example, the Roman god Vulcan is the god of fire (Nature), the god of smithing (Society) and is tied to the harvest (Human Condition)—both in ripening it with his heat and protecting it from fire.*

## Minor Deities

Minor deities have control of one domain in one of the spheres.

*Thetis is one of the 50 Nereids, a sea nymph and the mother of Achilles. Her domain is the Aegean Sea.*

*Dagr is the god of day. He is the son of Delling, the god of twilight. His mother is Nótt, the goddess of night.*

*Ammit is she who dwells in the Hall of Ma'at. Her domain is divine retribution. When the hearts of the dead are weighed by Anubis, those who fail are given to her to devour.*

## Faith in the Nature of God

Once you have a god and his spheres of power delineated, you have also described the sphere of influence for his worshippers' Faith abilities. This doesn't restrict the categories of miracles described on pages 232 and 233 of the Burning Wheel. It does restrict where and how those





miracles can be performed. Gods of oceans are diminished on land; gods of revenge are only empowered when their followers are seeking vengeance and not altruism.

## Divine Afflictions

Afflictions are curses and hindrances handed down from the gods for angering them with your mortal concerns. These rules, if used, replace the standard rules for failure for Faith.

If a priest fails a Faith test, the GM has two options. He may give him a pass and inform him that his patron has failed to heed his cries. The failure has no additional adverse effect. Or he may hit him with an affliction! Use one of the following:

### Empower Thine Enemies!

The prayers to your god have angered him. Your temerity is inexcusable. To teach you a lesson, rather than grant you aid, he empowers one of his more favored, who happens to be your enemy.

The GM grants persona points equal to the Faith test's margin of failure to one character of his choosing. This character must be opposed to the faithful character's goals. He may be a PC or NPC.

*Confronting a death artist, I fail a crucial Faith test by three. The GM decides that my cries were heard by the dark gods. He immediately gives the death artist three persona points to use against me.*

### Tax Thine Allies

How dare you question the power of the gods? Your temerity causes the very vitality to be sapped from your allies. See how you've caused them to suffer! If the spell is failed, the GM may call for an immediate tax test to be made by one of the character's *allies*. This poor soul can be a player character or a GM-controlled character. He must pass a Forte test with an obstacle equal to the obstacle of the Faith test. Margin of failure temporarily reduces Forte. If Forte is reduced to zero, the character is incapacitated. If Forte is reduced below zero, the character also evinces stigmata and suffers wounds. The wound is pips equal to the obstacle multiplied by each die below zero.

*So a tax test for a minor miracle (Ob 5) that reduces Forte two below zero knocks him out and does a B10 wound to the character.*



## Awful Revelation

Your patron stuns you with an awful revelation. The GM may call for the faithful to make a Steel test. The character's hesitation is increased by the margin of failure of the Faith test. If the test is failed, the player may not Run Screaming or Stand and Drool from this revelation. He may only Swoon or Fall Prone (and beg for mercy).

## Enmity

Such profane utterances offend the faithful! The GM may turn a relationship or named Circle on the priest character's sheet from favorable to hateful or rivalrous. This invokes the Enmity Clause conditions for Duel of Wits! If no relationship is available, the GM may assign one instead. Failure by one success indicates a minor relationship. Failure by two or three successes indicates a important relationship. Failure by four or more indicates a powerful relationship.

## Infamy

Your arrogance defies reason! The deity curses you for having idly called upon his power. The GM may assign you an infamous reputation. The reputation is of a value equal to or less than the margin of failure, at a maximum of 3D.

## Isolation

Now you must walk in the desert alone. The worst affliction the deity can impose on his follower is to cut him off from the divine conduit. On the condition of a failed Major Miracle test, the GM may impose *isolation* upon this character or an allied Faithful character. The isolated character may not call upon the powers of this deity again until he has atoned for this sin. He must take the Lost Faith trait until he either performs a ritual of atonement or satisfies the requirements of the Lost Faith trait.

# Curses

The Curse is a new Faith miracle. It can be used by any of the faithful on anyone who is opposed to the religion. It cannot be used on other faithful members of your religion, no matter your differences of opinion.

**Curse**—Ob 3. This miracle summons the power of the gods to hurt or hinder blasphemers! It adds +1 Ob to one of the target's abilities of the player's choosing for the duration of the scene.



## Rituals

The faithful may alleviate certain divine afflictions—Enmity, Infamy and Isolation—by performing the proper rituals to propitiate his god.

Test the Rituals skill. The obstacle for the ritual is one less than the Faith test obstacle that got him into trouble in the first place. The player may get help and may use linked tests from Doctrine or Resources.

*If you earned your isolation from an attempted major miracle (Ob 10), it is an Ob 9 Rituals test to ritualistically atone.*

If the player does not have the Rituals skill, he may hire a priest to perform the ritual for him. In this case, he must pass a Resources test to fund the ritual. The obstacle to donate to the priest's cause is the same as the failed Faith test obstacle.

## Faith in Dead Gods

The gods you follow are long fallen, given way—pushed aside, perhaps even murdered—by the new gods. But even in death, the power of Dead Gods still resonates across time and civilization. A faded echo of power still rumbles through the bowels of humanity, and it is to this frequency the faithful are attuned.

Faith in Dead Gods is a variant of the Faith rules. You may replace the Faithful trait and Faith emotional attribute with the Faith in Dead Gods trait and emotional attribute. This attribute behaves in a manner similar to Faith. Use the following rules for the specific characteristics of the ability.

Faith in Dead Gods uses mechanics similar to Faith. However the power of these gods is diminished, and faith in them only grants the faithful miraculous power over himself and other believers. The character may heal the believing sick, and bend the minds of the believing wayward. However, he has no dominion over non-believers and apostates—he cannot affect them with the power of the dead ones.

### Starting Faith in Dead Gods

Use the starting Faith questions. The shade of Faith is that of the character's Will.



## Faith in Dead Gods in Play

Faith in Dead Gods only affects the character himself and other believers. These believers must have an appropriate Belief that clearly states they adhere to the doctrine that the faithful preaches. It otherwise is tested and advances like Faith.

## The Limitations of Faith in Dead Gods

The faithful may call for blessing, curse, aid, boon, guidance, minor miracle and inspiration. He may not call for an intercession, miracle, purification, hindrance or consecration.

## The Twists of Faith

The faithful has access to two other miracles of moribund power. Hypnotism may be used on non-believers.

### *Hypnotism (Ob = Victim's Will)*

The faithful may channel the siren call of the dead gods through his eyes and speech. Make a Faith in Dead Gods test at an obstacle equal to the victim's Will. If successful, the victim hesitates for two actions and will obey one simple, direct command from the faithful. This requires a few moments of peace alone with the victim.

*My Satyr pagan priest is attempting to seduce a young girl, lost in the forest. Her Will is B4. I test my B5 Faith in Dead Gods against an Ob 4. I pass and tell her that she should come dance with me and my friends at the standing stones tonight at midnight.*

### *Sublime Transformation (Ob 5)*

The priest of the Old Ones may assume the form of an animal representative of the physical qualities of his patron. In this form, he retains his own thought and philosophy. Use the appropriate stat block for the animal from Pete's Farm or Pete's Wild World of Discovery in the Monster Burner.

## Closer to God

As his Faith in the Dead Gods rises, the faithful grows closer to his ancestors. The span of time seems to fold around him and he begins to exist in the old temple as if it were new. Once his Faith in Dead Gods reaches exponent 10, the faithful joins his strange deities in the void in which they reside.



## Dealing with Deities

If a situation should ever arise in play in which a character has to confront a deity, use the following traits liberally for the divine beings. Minor deities all have the Force of Nature trait. Deities have the Higher Power trait. Chief deities have the I Am God trait.

### Force of Nature

*Dt*

7 pts

This entity is tied into the very fabric of time and tide. His will is a force of nature. If this entity should ever lose a Duel of Wits against a being of equal or lesser stature, he receives a minor compromise in addition to the compromise determined by the state of his opponent's body of argument.

### Higher Power

*Dt*

9 pts

This deity governs over spheres of nature, society and humanity. He is potent and revered. If this entity should ever lose a Duel of Wits against a being of equal or lesser stature, he receives a compromise in addition to the compromise determined by the state of his opponent's body of argument.

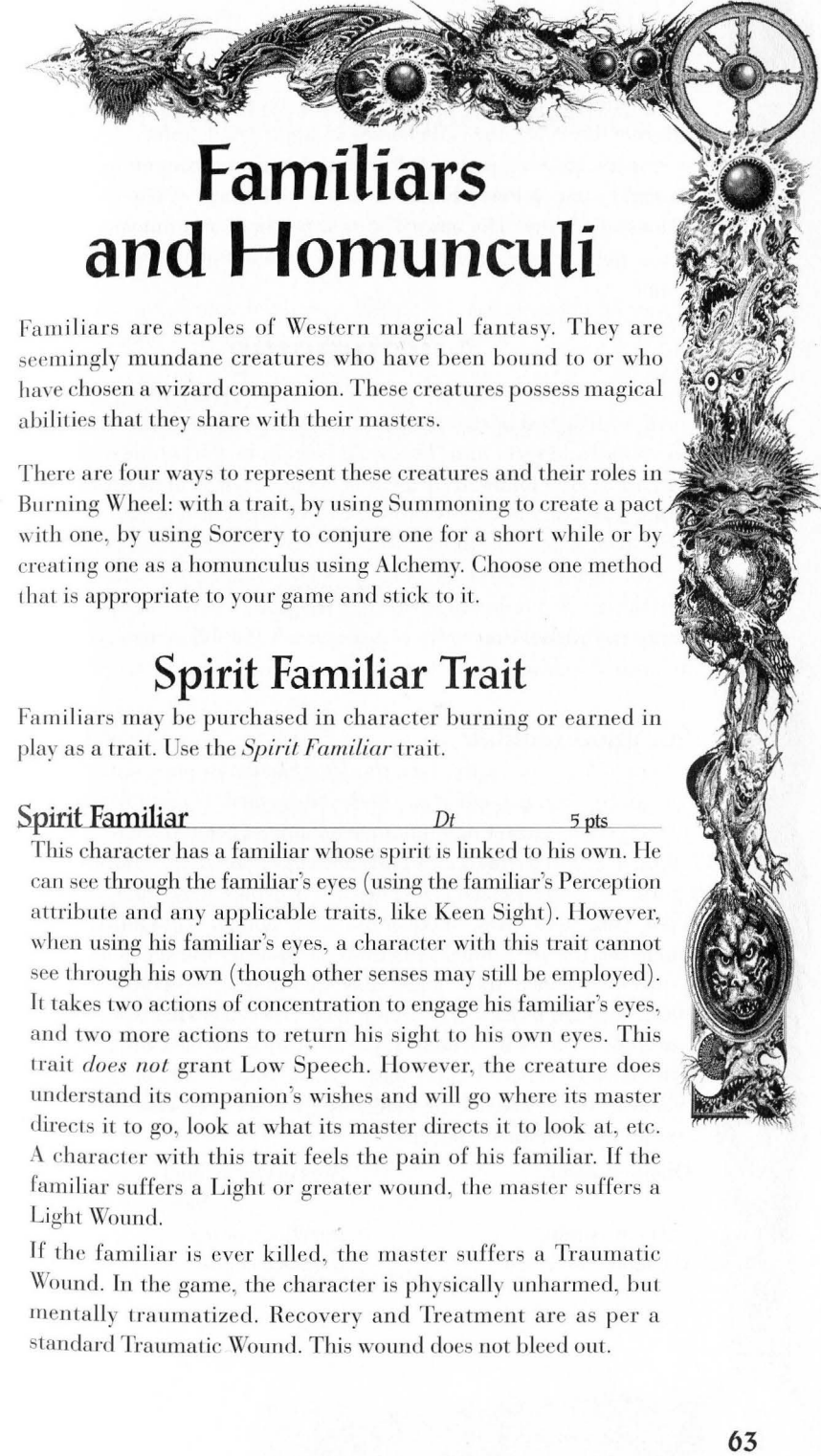
### I Am God

*Dt*

12 pts

Chief Deities rule over gods, men and all the creatures of their many spheres. Powerful beyond understanding, they are not to be trifled with. If this entity should ever lose a Duel of Wits against a being of equal or lesser stature, he receives a major compromise in addition to the compromise determined by the state of his opponent's body of argument.





# Familiars and Homunculi

Familiars are staples of Western magical fantasy. They are seemingly mundane creatures who have been bound to or who have chosen a wizard companion. These creatures possess magical abilities that they share with their masters.

There are four ways to represent these creatures and their roles in Burning Wheel: with a trait, by using Summoning to create a pact with one, by using Sorcery to conjure one for a short while or by creating one as a homunculus using Alchemy. Choose one method that is appropriate to your game and stick to it.

## Spirit Familiar Trait

Familiars may be purchased in character burning or earned in play as a trait. Use the *Spirit Familiar* trait.

### Spirit Familiar

Dt

5 pts

This character has a familiar whose spirit is linked to his own. He can see through the familiar's eyes (using the familiar's Perception attribute and any applicable traits, like Keen Sight). However, when using his familiar's eyes, a character with this trait cannot see through his own (though other senses may still be employed). It takes two actions of concentration to engage his familiar's eyes, and two more actions to return his sight to his own eyes. This trait *does not* grant Low Speech. However, the creature does understand its companion's wishes and will go where its master directs it to go, look at what its master directs it to look at, etc. A character with this trait feels the pain of his familiar. If the familiar suffers a Light or greater wound, the master suffers a Light Wound.

If the familiar is ever killed, the master suffers a Traumatic Wound. In the game, the character is physically unharmed, but mentally traumatized. Recovery and Treatment are as per a standard Traumatic Wound. This wound does not bleed out.



The familiar uses the stats of the Imp on page 300 of the Monster Burner. However, the GM chooses an appropriate animal form for the creature. He may pick a few identifying traits from an appropriate animal body in Pete's Farm or Pete's Wild World of Discovery in the Monster Burner. The animal should be small and innocuous. Dogs, cats, pigs, ravens, rabbits, foxes and such are okay. No bear or wolf imps.

## Summoning

Using the Summoning rules presented in this book, a sorcerer may call forth a spirit and bargain with it to either possess or take the form of an animal and serve him. This would simply be part of the terms of the bargain. Being followed by a cat is far less conspicuous than a giant, flaming demon.

## Sorcery

Using traditional Sorcery, a player can use the following spell to bind an animal to him.

### Summon Familiar

Ob 3

90 Actions

*The cat broke away from the shadows like ink running across the page. He silently padded out to do the master's bidding.* Using this spell, a sorcerer may summon an animal companion to aid him. The spell sends scents and calls out on the night winds to lure forth a suitable animal. The player may choose between a cat, owl, dog, frog, toad, crow, snake or hare. The animal is not inherently magical. Use the animal stats from the Monster Burner. While the spell is sustained, the sorcerer may see through the creature's eyes, hear through its ears, feel what it feels and smell what it smells. He may also control its actions. If the creature is harmed while under the sorcerer's control, this counts as a *may not* for the sorcerer. The sorcerer must then also immediately retest for tax as per the Power Still Flows Through Him rule.

**Origin:** Presence

**Area of Effect:** Single Target/  
Natural Effect

**Element:** Anima

**Impetus:** Control

**Duration:** Sustained

**Resource Points:** 6



# Alchemy and the Homunculus

Alchemists may fashion familiars of their own. Using a variety of possible processes, the alchemist creates a miniature man who will serve his creator so long as he is fed and tended to. These creatures are called homunculi, little men.

Creating a homunculus requires a Resources test to gather materials and an Alchemy skill test to execute the process.

## Alchemical Resources

There are three possible methods for creating the little man.

### *Mandrake*

The first method requires mandrake grown beneath gallows where men have been hanged. The root must be unearthed before dawn on a Friday. It must then be kept bathed in milk and honey until it fully forms into a small man. Acquiring the mandrake of this specific nature requires an Ob 4 Resources test. Alternately, the player may make an Ob 5 Foraging or appropriate wise test.

### *The Black Hen Egg*

The second method requires an egg laid by a black hen. A tiny hole is poked in the shell. A bean-sized portion of the white is replaced with human semen. The hole is then sealed with virgin parchment, following which the egg is buried. A homunculus will emerge from the egg after thirty days. This method requires an Ob 3 Resources test to acquire the virgin parchment and an Ob 3 Animal Husbandry test to acquire the black hen egg.

### *Bones and Hair*

Method the third uses a collection of skin and hair from an animal, a bag of bones, a small pile of horse manure and a sample of the alchemist's semen. Acquiring all of these items, except the last, is an Ob 2 Resources test. The last item must be freshly deposited on the completed alchemical space. I leave it to your imagination as to how this can be accomplished. This creature may only be created by male characters.

## Alchemy Obstacles

- The Mandrake method is an Ob 3 Alchemy test.
- The Black Hen Egg method is an Ob 4 Alchemy test.
- The Bones and Hair method is an Ob 5 Alchemy test.



Success creates a living, thinking, feeling little man.

## The Connection

Once successfully created, the homunculus and its master are connected in spirit. They both know the other's location at all times. The master alchemist may command his creation. It willingly does as he asks.

This connection costs a Will die to sustain, in a similar fashion to sustained spells in Sorcery. This die may only be relinquished if the alchemist willingly gives up control of his creation, if the creation is destroyed, or if the alchemist dies while the homunculus is in his control. Once given up, the link can never be reestablished. The little man is free.

### Homunculus Sustainer

Using the Enchanting rules, a sorcerer could build a device to sustain the connection to the homunculus for him. See Useful Magical Devices in the Enchanting chapter.

## Homunculus Stats

All homunculi may speak the language of their creator. The GM may write Beliefs and Instincts for them. They may learn skills and advance skills up to exponent 5. They may not make use of artha.

### Mandrake

The Mandrake Homunculus is a dangerous creature. It's poisonous!

| Mandrake Homunculus |      |                                                                               |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
|---------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----------|----|---------------------|----|-----|-----|
| Wi                  | Pe   | Ag                                                                            | Sp | Po | Fo | He       | Re | Ste                 | Mw | Res | Cir |
| B2                  | B3   | B3                                                                            | B3 | B2 | B2 | B2       | B3 | B5                  | B7 | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier    |      |                                                                               | x3 |    |    |          |    | Hesitation          |    | 8   |     |
| PTGS                |      | Su                                                                            | Li | Mi | Se | Tr       | Mo | Alchemy Obstacle: 3 |    |     |     |
|                     |      | B2                                                                            | B3 | B4 | B5 | B6       | B7 |                     |    |     |     |
| Traits              | Char | Protective                                                                    |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
|                     | Die  | Small Stature, Manhunter, Repulsive Blood, Piercing Fangs, Intoxicating Venom |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
|                     | Call | —                                                                             |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
| Skills              |      | Stealthy B4, Climbing B4, Biting B3                                           |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage  |      | Type/Name                                                                     | I  | M  | S  | Length   | VA | Spd                 |    |     |     |
|                     |      | Bite                                                                          | B1 | B2 | B3 | Shortest | 1  | Fast                |    |     |     |



### Black Hen Egg

Homunculi made from the egg of a black hen are the smallest and most docile of the homunculi. In addition to being tiny and fast, they take on traits and skills of their master.

| Black Hen Egg Homunculus |      |                                                         |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
|--------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----------|----|---------------------|----|-----|-----|
| Wi                       | Pe   | Ag                                                      | Sp | Po | Fo | He       | Re | Ste                 | Mw | Res | Cir |
| B2                       | B4   | B4                                                      | B4 | B1 | B1 | B2       | B4 | B4                  | B7 | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier         |      |                                                         | x4 |    |    |          |    | Hesitation          |    | 8   |     |
| PTGS                     |      | Su                                                      |    | Mi |    |          | Mo | Alchemy Obstacle: 4 |    |     |     |
|                          |      | B2                                                      |    | B4 |    | B6       |    |                     |    |     |     |
| Traits                   | Char | Up to one character trait from the creator              |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
|                          | Die  | Tiny Stature, plus up to one die trait from the creator |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
|                          | Call | Up to one call-on trait from the creator                |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
| Skills                   |      | Choose two skills from the creator                      |    |    |    |          |    |                     |    |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage       |      | Type/Name                                               | I  | M  | S  | Length   | VA | Spd                 |    |     |     |
|                          |      | Unarmed                                                 | B1 | B1 | B2 | Shortest | —  | Fast                |    |     |     |

### Bones and Hair

A homunculus of this type adopts a character trait and a die trait of the animal from whose hair it was made. It also takes a character trait from its master. The creature's stats are as follows:

| Homunculus of Bones and Hair |           |                                                                   |    |    |    |          |    |                     |      |     |     |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----------|----|---------------------|------|-----|-----|
| Wi                           | Pe        | Ag                                                                | Sp | Po | Fo | He       | Re | Ste                 | Mw   | Res | Cir |
| B2                           | B3        | B4                                                                | B4 | B2 | B4 | B3       | B3 | B4                  | B8   | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier             |           |                                                                   | x3 |    |    |          |    | Hesitation          |      | 8   |     |
| PTGS                         |           | Su                                                                | Li | Mi | Se | Tr       | Mo | Alchemy Obstacle: 5 |      |     |     |
|                              |           | B3                                                                | B4 | B5 | B6 | B7       | B8 |                     |      |     |     |
| Traits                       | Char      | Choose a character trait from master, character trait from animal |    |    |    |          |    |                     |      |     |     |
|                              | Die       | Small Stature, plus a trait of the animal                         |    |    |    |          |    |                     |      |     |     |
|                              | Call      | —                                                                 |    |    |    |          |    |                     |      |     |     |
| Skills                       |           | Stealthy B4, Climbing B4                                          |    |    |    |          |    |                     |      |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage           | Type/Name |                                                                   | I  | M  | S  | Length   |    | VA                  | Spd  |     |     |
|                              | Unarmed   |                                                                   | B1 | B2 | B3 | Shortest |    | —                   | Fast |     |     |

### Alchemical Failure: Goo, Gremlins and Imps

There are three things that can happen when an erstwhile alchemist fails the Alchemy test to create a homunculus: goo, gremlins or imps. The GM may choose whichever result he feels is appropriate.



### *Goo*

Goo is the most merciful result. The experiment simply dissolves into a mess. All of the materials are consumed and wasted.

### *Gremlins*

On the other hand, the failed alchemical experimentations could give birth to something unexpected. Rather than a homunculus, the alchemist creates a Grey Gremlin as described on pages 296 and 297 of the Monster Burner. The gremlin will initially appear obedient and helpful, but will begin wreaking havoc at the soonest opportunity.

### *Imps*

Lastly, the vessel created may be possessed by a Lesser Imp as described on pages 299 and 300 of the Monster Burner. At first, this experiment will appear to be successful. The homunculus will form and animate as it should. But soon after, the waxy flesh of the simulacrum will peel away, revealing the demonic form underneath. The imp will do everything in its power to reassure the alchemist that this is a normal part of the process.

These failed results do not require the Connection die, and neither is the creature required to be obedient to the alchemist. The GM may write Beliefs for the creatures and control them as he sees fit.

## Maintaining the Homunculus

Maintaining a homunculus is a burden on the alchemist's Resources. The creatures have strange needs and requirements. So long as the connection lasts, the summoner suffers a +1 Ob penalty to his Resources lifestyle maintenance. If the Resources test is failed, the homunculus feels spurned and neglected by his master. He snuffles, packs a bag and shambles dejectedly into the night. The connection is unbroken, but the master must find his charge and bring him home. This does not apply to gremlins or imps. They're free!

## One at a Time

A character may only ever have one homunculus in his service at one time. If one homunculus is lost or set free, another may be created to replace it.







# Art Magic

Art Magic is a variant of the standard Sorcery mechanics presented in the Burning Wheel. This system does not use a set spell list. Instead, the sorcerer gathers his art, skill and inspiration together and calls upon the eldritch powers to obey his will and aid him as he requires.

This art can't recreate all of the effects of standard Sorcery. There are certain big magic effects that have been necessarily left out, and it's not nearly as destructive as Sorcery. However, it is incredibly versatile.

This system is challenging to use. The sorcerer player must think of the outcome of his spell before he can cast. He must envision the result, not only in terms of eldritch and arcana, but in the form of a game-mechanical effect. This takes some practice, but once the player masters it, he may never want to leave the warm embrace of Art Magic.

## Sorcerers Use Sorcery

To build a spell using Art Magic, the sorcerer player must first choose the effect, breadth and duration for the spell. Once those facets are chosen, determine if his school of magic applies. Next, the player must either name the spell or speak a bit of the incantation. These steps determine the obstacle for the spell and any advantage dice available. Test Sorcery plus the advantage dice against the obstacle. If the test is successful, then the spell has its intended effect. If failed, the GM may choose the consequences.

### Sorcery, not Sorcery

Art Magic is accessed through the standard Sorcery skill. When using Art Magic, the rules for standard Sorcery are replaced with these rules. Do not use any of the rules in the standard Sorcery chapter unless otherwise instructed to do so in this chapter.

We strongly recommend against having Art Magic and Sorcery in one game at the same time.

### Gifted

Characters must be Gifted to use Art Magic.



## Effects

What does the sorcerer want his spell to do? There are nine effects to choose from in Art Magic: Hinder, Advantage, Arcane Knowledge, Sorcerous Weapon, Destroy with Sorcerous Fire, Evoke, Arcane Action, Illusion and Trait. Multiple effects can be combined in a single spell.

### Hinder

The magician may hinder one or more of the target's abilities. When using this effect, the player must name which specific ability (or abilities, depending on the breadth of the spell) he is targeting.

Hindrance can manifest as commanding branches to entangle, conjuring illusions to blind, or casting diseases or afflictions on your target.

| Hinder Effect | Casting Obstacle |
|---------------|------------------|
| +1 0b         | 0b 2             |
| +2 0b         | 0b 3             |
| +3 0b         | 0b 5             |

### Advantage

The sorcerer may use his art to grant himself and his allies aid. Using this effect, he may add advantage dice to stats, skills, Steel, Resources, Circles or a speed multiplier. The speed multiplier is increased by 1 per advantage die added. Multiple abilities may be targeted using the breadth modifier.

Advantage can manifest as a favorable wind in the sails, a burst of strength, a flash of insight, a quickening of the pulse or the blessing of spirits and gods.

| Advantage Effect | Casting Obstacle |
|------------------|------------------|
| +1D              | 0b 2             |
| +2D              | 0b 3             |
| +3D              | 0b 4             |

### Recursive Curse

A Sorcerer may not directly or indirectly give advantage dice to Sorcery, Enchanting, Summoning, Spirit Binding, Death Art or any other similar spellcasting art.



## **Arcane Knowledge**

The sorcerer may plumb the wells of magic in his search for knowledge. To use the Arcane Knowledge effect, test Sorcery. In this case, Sorcery counts as a proxy for any academic skill in the skill list. The obstacle for the effect is the same as the skill test obstacle for the academic skill, plus breadth and duration.

## **Sorcerous Weapon**

The sorcerer may summon forth an eldritch weapon to wield against his enemies! He may call forth the sorcerous equivalent of a sword, spear, axe or mace. This may be wielded in Fight! like a normal weapon—it requires use of a weapon skill or Beginner's Luck. Rather than using Power as a base for the weapon damage, use the sorcerer's Will exponent. Add the weapon power from the appropriate conjured weapon. Also, use the weapon's length, speed, Add and VA categories for the appropriate weapon type.

### ***Burning Spear of Arcane Fury***

With an Ob 1 Sorcery test, the wizard may conjure to his hand an eldritch (but run-of-the-mill) spear, sword or mace ringed in arcane fire. The player must choose which weapon he desires before the spell is cast. To make the weapon superior quality, increase the obstacle by +2 Ob. The weapon may also be conjured as a spirit weapon. To do so, increase the casting obstacle by +2 Ob.

### ***Death's Axe***

This spell effect summons forth a shimmering silver black axe. The obstacle is 4. Use the stats for the Sweet Axe. The weapon may also be conjured as a spirit weapon at +2 Ob.

## **Destroy with Sorcerous Fire!**

The sorcerer chants violent and profane syllables as white fire jets from his fingertips! Base Ob 4. Must be combined with the One Test Duration if being used to harm characters. Otherwise, any duration is applicable to set up walls of magic fire! May not be used on Self. Damage as follows: Sorcerer's Will as base Power, +1 Power per extra success, VA 2, Die of Fate as a bow. Successes may be used to increase damage, increase the VA or modify the Die of Fate. Weapon Length: Longest. Range Dice: 3D.



## Illusion

A sorcerer may use his magic to create illusions to confuse or deceive. Make a versus test between Sorcery and the victim's Perception. Be sure to add obstacle penalties to the Sorcery test for breadth and duration. If the sorcerer wins the versus test, his victim believes the illusion to be true.



This spell cannot be used to harm its victims or create perfect simulacra. It may only be used to frighten, confuse, deceive, bamboozle or otherwise fool them into thinking something is real when it is not. Illusion costs 3 actions in Fight!

## Evoked

Using the Evoke effect, the sorcerer can force a *versus* test between his Sorcery skill and a target's physical stat, martial or physical skill or the Health attribute. When using this effect, the sorcerer must declare his intent to shove, grab, immobilize, knock down or something similar. He may not use this effect to directly injure. Any other effects of this spell come from the results of the physical reaction of the target—if he is pushed into a freezing pond, for example.

*A wizard could use the Evoke effect to keep a team of orcs from pulling up a tree: Sorcery versus Tree-Pulling. He could stop an enemy sorcerer from being able to draw enough breath to cast a spell himself: Sorcery versus Health. Or he could knock a bird off its perch: Sorcery versus Speed.*

To cast the spell, make a versus test between Sorcery and the target. Be sure to add the obstacle modifiers for breadth and duration.

Evoked spells cost two actions to perform in Fight!

## Arcane Action

Using the Arcane Action effect, the sorcerer may overcome the material world around him with his arcane power. Sorcery may be used to pass any simple physical test—pushing, leaping, grabbing, thrusting. The obstacle for this effect is 1 plus the obstacle of the test at hand. Success indicates that the wizard has passed the test as if he had been testing the appropriate ability. Failure on the skill test also counts as a failed spell!

*Using this, the sorcerer may strike an unsuspecting opponent with a sword or climb a wall.*

## Trait

Using this spell effect, the sorcerer may grant the target access to a trait from the Character Burner, Magic Burner or Monster Burner. Ob 1 plus the trait point cost for a beneficial effect. Ob 2 plus trait cost for a curse or detrimental effect. Unpriced lifepath traits in the individual character stock chapters are Ob 4. Common traits from the eight existing character stocks are Ob 5. Call-ons may not be so granted.



## Transform

A wizard may transform himself into an animal. Obstacles are as follows: Mundane, harmless creature (like a bird or a fish), Ob 3. Mundane, effective or threatening creature (like a wolf or a bear), Ob 4. The wizard is completely transformed into that creature. Use the appropriate stat block from Pete's Farm or Pete's Wild World of Discovery in the Monster Burner. He may not cast other spells while so changed.

To transform another it's Ob 1 plus the victim's Forte, plus a +1 Ob penalty per difference in stature from the original form to the new one.

*Changing a Dragon (Gigantic Stature) to a bird (Small Stature) is a base obstacle 13 (1 plus G10 Forte plus 2, assuming our wizard has black shade Sorcery) plus four for the difference in stature. Ob 17, plus breadth and duration. Good luck!*

Turning a target to stone or salt is Ob 1 plus the victim's Forte.

## Breadth

Breadth describes how much the spell affects. Does it affect the caster, or the whole town? Choose the breadth of your spell from the list below.

| Breadth of Target                         | Obstacle Modifier |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Self (One Ability)                        | —                 |
| Single Target, One Person (One Ability)   | +1 Ob             |
| Group, Handful, Two Abilities             | +3 Ob             |
| Crowd, Copse, Cluster, Three Abilities    | +4 Ob             |
| Village, Pond, Four Abilities             | +6 Ob             |
| Town, Countryside, Castle, Five Abilities | +7 Ob             |
| City, Forest, Six Abilities               | +8 Ob             |
| Mountain, Plain, All Abilities            | +9 Ob             |
| Sky, Ocean                                | +10 Ob            |

The parenthetical “(One Ability)” listed with Self and One Person indicates you can affect one ability on yourself for no penalty or one ability on another character for +1 Ob. If you're affecting an object, use the Single Target breadth.

*Breadth is cumulative. If you wanted to affect the Faith and Will of an entire city, it would be Two Abilities +3 Ob of a City +8 Ob = 11 Ob.*





## Duration of Spell

There are five possible durations for an Art Magic spell: one test, conflict, session, adventure and campaign. Choose the duration for your intended effect from the list below.

| Duration                                                  | Obstacle Modifier |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>One Test</b> (according to Let It Ride)                | —                 |
| <b>Conflict</b> (Range and Cover, Fight! or Duel of Wits) | <b>+1 0b</b>      |
| <b>Session</b>                                            | <b>+2 0b</b>      |
| <b>Adventure</b>                                          | <b>+3 0b</b>      |
| <b>Campaign</b>                                           | <b>+4 0b</b>      |

A *one test* duration indicates the effect lasts for a single roll or a series of rolls as per the Let It Ride rule—anything short of a conflict like Fight!, Range and Cover or Duel of Wits. One goal, no change of venue, no introduction of new problems.

A *conflict* duration indicates the effect lasts for one Fight!, Range and Cover, Duel of Wits, Pursuit or Chase. This is a nice hefty duration, because those mechanics indicate that the character is doing something important.

A *session* duration is the simplest to measure. The effect lasts until the end of the session. That's it.

The *adventure* durations remains in effect until the group has completed some agreed-upon future goal—slay the dragon, rescue the princess, break into the bank.

*Campaign* durations usually last until the group has accomplished a great goal and then drifts off into retirement. It's not much of a limit at all. Typically the game's over at the end of the campaign. But campaign duration does have a cool flavor, especially if you end up coming back to the game later and pulling those characters out of retirement.

### Lasting Effects

The effect may last beyond the duration of the spell if the spell changed the environment in some way. For example, you may conjure a scourging fire to burn a forest. After one scene, the fire is gone, but the forest remains burnt.



## Casting Time

The casting time for a spell is a number of actions equal to its obstacle. Since they are versus tests, and have no obstacle from which actions can be judged, Evoke spells cost two actions and Illusion spells cost three. Use the Incant Spell action in Fight! A sorcerer may cast up to 20 actions of one spell during one volley of Range and Cover or Duel of Wits instead of performing one of the standard actions. Dangerous!

## Casting Under Pressure

A sorcerer must complete his spell uninterrupted. He needs his hands and mouth to do this. Therefore, a sorcerer may not be locked, injured, knocked off his feet or fail a Steel test while he is casting a spell. If he is, the spell is automatically failed at the full margin of failure.

A sorcerer may cast a spell while otherwise on the move, in a fight or argument.

## Schools of Magic

Using Art Magic, sorcerers are trained at various schools and taught to favor one form of magic over another. Schools of magic are rated at 1D, 2D or 3D. Sorcerer players may develop their own schools or may consult the GM for schools he has devised for the campaign.

A school of magic encompasses an idiomatic magical expression that benefits the casting of certain spells. When using Art Magic, only spells that fall within the idiom may gain the advantage dice associated with the school.

*For example, if the sorcerer studied at the Collegia Pyrotechnica Magia (school of fire magic), he may not use his school of magic in relation to water, ice or wind magic.*

*Other examples include the Circle of the Psyche (spells of the mind), Wheel of the White Hand (studies raw arcane energies, wind and weather and ice) and the Temple of the Four Winds (for spells of wind, breath, air and direction).*

## Starting Schools of Magic

In character burning, schools of magic cost resource points. You may start with as many schools as you can afford.



- 1D school of magic costs 10 rps.
- 2D school of magic costs 25 rps.
- 3D school of magic costs 50 rps.

## Joining Schools of Magic in Play

To join a school of magic during the course of a game, a player must find a member of the school who is willing to instruct him on its theories and methods. To learn from this teacher, the student must forge a mystical connection with him. To do so, the student must pass a Will test with an obstacle equal to 10 minus the teacher's Will. If this test is passed, the sorcerer player learns the arts of the school at 1D.

## Founding a New School of Magic

A sorcerer may found his own school of magic. This requires a year of time and an Ob 5 Research test. Symbology, Astrology and Obscure History are acceptable FoRKs.

If the test is successful, the sorcerer founds a new school of magic at 1D. If the test is failed, the sorcerer has founded a corrupted or distorted version of the school he was attempting. The school is founded at 1D as normal, but all spells in that school are cast at an obstacle penalty equal to the margin of failure of the Research test.

*For example, if you're trying to found the School of Brilliant Oratical Techniques (1D) and you fail by two, all spells cast in that school grant the +1D advantage, but suffer a +2 Ob as well.*

Once a school is founded, all appropriate spells must be cast through that school, even if they come at a penalty.

## Increasing Schools of Magic in Play

To increase the power of a school of magic, a sorcerer must invest and research. To increase a school from 1D to 2D requires an Ob 5 Resources test and an Ob 6 Research test. To increase a school from 2D to 3D requires an Ob 8 Resources test and an Ob 7 Research test. Failure on the Resource test causes tax as per the Gift of Kindness rules. Failure on the Research test corrupts the school as described under Founding a New School of Magic.

## Restricting Spells to the School

This is an optional rule. The GM may restrict Art Magic so that spells may only be cast within a sorcerer's schools.



## Incantation

If the sorcerer player names his spell with an appropriately florid name or offers a bit of chant or verse for the spell, then he gains +1D to cast the spell.

## Consequences

Art Magic has five possible prices that can be paid for each spell. If the player fails to properly cast an Art Magic spell, his sorcerer suffers one of the following consequences: Tax, Hindrance, Enmity, Infamy or an Unintended Effect.

The GM applies the consequences of the Sorcery based on the margin of failure and his judgement of the situation.

### Tax

If the spell is failed, the GM may call for a tax test (as per the standard rules). The sorcerer must pass a Forte test with an obstacle equal to the obstacle of the spell. Margin of failure temporarily reduces Forte. If Forte is reduced to zero, the character is incapacitated. If Forte is reduced below zero, the character suffers a wound equal to the obstacle multiplied by each die below zero. Taxed Forte is recovered as per the rule described in the Sorcery chapter of Burning Wheel.

### Hindrance

The GM may apply an obstacle penalty equal to the margin of failure. The hindrance has the same duration and breadth as the intended spell.

### Enmity and Infamy

A spell gone awry causes friends to become enemies! When using this failure condition, the GM must describe how the casting goes wrong. The spell has an effect, but it's not exactly what was planned.

The GM may change a relationship or named Circle on the Sorcerer character's sheet from favorable to hateful or rivalrous. This invokes the Enmity Clause conditions for Duel of Wits! If no relationship is present, the GM may assign one. Failure by one success indicates a minor relationship. Failure by two or three successes indicates an important relationship. Failure by four or more indicates a powerful relationship.

Alternately, the sorcerer can gain an infamous reputation among people, spirits or animals. If the spell is failed by one to three successes, the GM



may assign the character an infamous reputation of a value equal to or less than the margin of failure in an appropriate sphere of the GM's choice (people, spirits or animals).

*Even the birds have heard about what a bastard you are.*

### **Unintended Effect**

The GM can make up some eerie nonsense that happens as the spell is cast. The spell goes off; cue eerie nonsense.

## **Weaving Magic into the Fiber of My Being**

Using this mechanic, a Sorcerer may eventually weave the fabric of spells and incantations into his very being. If he casts a spell successfully a number of times equal to 10 minus his Will, he has "woven" the spell. From thereafter, the player gains an additional +1D when casting the spell. This is in addition to his schools of magic and the +1D for the Incantation rule.

This rule is optional for Art Magic. It's beneficial to the sorcerer player, but it requires that he do a substantial amount of bookkeeping—he must track the spells he's cast and the number of times he's cast them. If the player doesn't want to do that, don't use this rule!

## **Versus Sorcery**

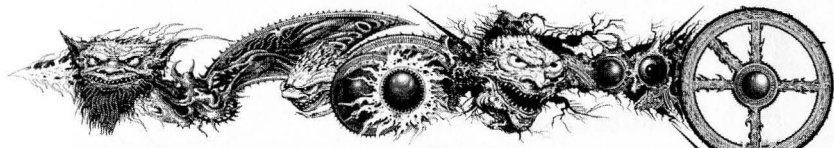
The GM can call for Art Magic tests to be resolved using simple versus tests. The sorcerer player states the spell he's casting and declares his intent, then he makes the versus test. If he succeeds, he may describe how his magics have overcome his opponents.

This process mirrors the one described on page 140 of the Burning Wheel.

### **Bloody Sorcery**

Sorcery can also be substituted for a martial skill in the Bloody Versus test described on pages 140 and 141 of the Burning Wheel.





# Enchanting

Enchanting is the art of imparting an otherwise mundane object with magical properties. The skill can be used in one of two ways—to temporarily and quickly imbue an extant item with power, or to create and enchant a new item.

## Imbuing

Imbuing requires the Enchanting skill, an Enchanting tool kit and another complementary skill.

### Complementary Knowledge

When imbuing an item with power, the enchanter must use a complementary store of knowledge (or power) in order to guide his will. The complementary skill provides the spark of magic that the enchanter then blows on like an ember so it blossoms into fire. Complementary skills must be one of the following: Doctrine, Sing, Folklore, Ancient History, Obscure History, Ancient Languages, Astrology, Demonology or Empyrealia. One or more of these skills must be FoRKed into the Enchanting roll. The item being enhanced or the power being bestowed must relate to or draw from the complementary skill. Enchanting isn't enough. There must be art and knowledge as well.

### Imbuing Process

Imbuing is done using just the Enchanting skill (plus FoRKs and help). The test is open-ended. Imbuing requires hours equal to the obstacle. This time may be reduced by working quickly. The imbued power lasts for one test or series test. An item may be imbued for multiple effects with multiple rolls, but you must roll for each effect. Let It Ride doesn't count in this case!

Failure indicates that the item cannot hold the power. The time is wasted, but the materials remain.

You may not imbue an item to aid the Enchanting skill.





## Imbuing Effects

Choose one of the following effects to imbue into your target object:

- Grant +1D advantage, Ob 3.
- Open-ended test for one ability when using the item, Ob 4.
- Negate a +1 Ob disadvantage when using the item, Ob 3. Ob 4 to negate a +2 Ob disadvantage and Ob 5 for a +3 Ob penalty.

*Ramne the wizard brews up some special tea for his adventurer friends. When drunk, it negates the +1 Ob penalty for a Superficial wound.*

## Antecedents

True Enchanting requires a core or root substance that possesses a similar nature to the power to be infused into the creation. This root substance is called an *antecedent*. In game terms, an antecedent is a trait extracted from a creature and repurposed for the enchantment.

### Alchemy and Taxidermy

The Enchanting skill itself cannot be used to extract antecedents. Alchemy or Taxidermy is used instead. Taxidermy requires a carcass; Alchemy requires significant sample portions of the creature. This is a process of extraction and preservation. It is delicate and difficult. If the proper procedures are not taken (if the test is failed), the inherent power of the substance is lost.

#### Identifying Traits

The obstacle to identify the traits of a creature or substance using the Alchemy or Taxidermy skills are as follows: Character traits, Ob 1. Call-ons, Ob 2. Die traits, Ob 3.

Aura Reading may be used to identify traits as well. See the Magical Skills section for details on identifying traits using Aura Reading.

### Extracting Antecedents

The obstacle to extract a trait to be used as an antecedent is equal to the point cost of the trait. Unpriced lifepath traits are Ob 4 to extract.

#### Extracting Common Traits

Some creatures have certain traits as part of their body and soul. These are described in the Common Traits listing for each character stock. It is a flat Ob 3 Taxidermy or Alchemy test to extract a common trait.



### Specific Antecedent for Each Specific Need

An antecedent is extracted for a specific enchantment. It cannot be used for more than one enchantment, nor can it be used for multiple purposes within the same item. A player must declare his intent—the nature of the enchantment—when extracting an antecedent.



*An antecedent cannot be extracted for a Forte-enhancing enchantment and then later be used for an enchantment for rounding the Mortal Wound.*

## Enchanting

When a sorcerer player wishes to create an item of power, he tests his character's skill plus bonus dice accrued from the following choices: Vessel, Name, Antecedent, Effect, Internal Duration, External Duration, Trigger, Frequency of Use, Target, Side Effects, Recharge and Modularity. It's a big list with many options. A variety of interesting devices can be created!

Enchanting is separate from imbuing. The two may not be combined in a single item.

### Enchanting Requirements and Restrictions

Enchanting requires the Enchanting skill, a tool kit, an antecedent and usually a vessel. Unlike Sorcery, Enchanting does not use the Will+Skill combination. There is no tax for Enchanting. Enchanting cannot use the Hastily, Carefully and Patiently rules for spellcasting. It can use the Carefully, Patiently, Quickly rules for skill tests, though.

Choose from the following selections and questions to determine an obstacle and an amount of advantage dice to be used to create the item in question.

### Vessels and Name

If the enchantment is designed for a specialized item like a sword or a shield, then that item must be created and infused with the antecedent during the enchantment. The proper skills, materials and tools are required to create this vessel. They can be part of the enchanter's repertoire or be accessed via help. If the item in question is just a simple bauble or trinket, no additional craft or materials are required.

A successfully created vessel that is formed explicitly for the enchanting process and then given a unique name gives the enchanter +1D to his Enchanting roll.

*Maleraux's Green Boots, the Staff of Heartwood or Dvalin's Steel Gauntlets.*



## Antecedent Trait

The Enchanter must obtain a trait which represents the source for his enchantment. The trait, separated from its source, is the antecedent. Antecedents are meant to be figurative and metaphorical, not literal. Use the following modifiers for Enchanting using certain antecedents:

- Character trait antecedent, +1 Ob.
- Call-on, no bonus or penalty.
- Die trait antecedent, +1D.

*The blood of a character with the Evil trait could be used to make a compass that detects evil in others. The hair from the head of a child with the Aura of Innocence can be woven into a chain that renders the speaker glib. The husk of a B'hemah's Brass Skin can be used to forge some very potent armor!*

## Basic Enchantment Effects

There are 10 different effects an enchanter can bestow upon his item: Advantage, Obstacle, Grant Skill, Grant Stat, Trait Transference, Test Tweaks, Weapon Enchantments, Magic Armor and Useful Magical Item. Multiple effects can be combined in a single enchantment.

### Make Magic

An enchanter may invest his work with a dweomer or faerie fire. It casts no light and has no mechanical advantage, but each dweomer is unique to the enchanter who creates it, like a fingerprint. This is an Ob 1 effect.

### Advantage

An enchanter may have his item bestow advantage dice upon its user. Advantage dice may be granted to a stat, a skill, Health, Steel, Circles or Resources. The ability benefitted must be noted at the time of enchanting.

One to three dice may be granted. The obstacle is equal to the advantage dice to be granted.

An enchanter may not create items which give advantage directly or indirectly to the Enchanting skill.

### Obstacle

A magical device can impose an obstacle penalty upon its target. The obstacle penalty can be set to a stat, a skill, Health, Steel, Circles or



Resources. The ability targeted must be determined at the time of enchanting. The Enchanting obstacle is the same as the obstacle to be imposed—Ob 1, 2 or 3.

Rather than a set obstacle penalty, the item can impose a double obstacle penalty on a stat, a skill, Health, Steel, Circles or Resources. This is base Ob 4 for the Enchanting test.

### ***Negate Penalty***

An enchanter may negate an obstacle penalty like dim light, Superficial Wounds or Obfuscate penalties. The obstacle is 1 plus the value of the penalty.

### ***Grant Skill***

This effect allows the enchanted item to grant the bearer a skill he might not otherwise have. The obstacle is equal to the skill exponent to be granted. This skill must be possessed by the creature that was the source of the antecedent. If the bearer of the item already has the skill at a greater exponent, he gains no benefit from the enchantment. If he has the skill at a lesser exponent, he can let the item test or test himself. In this case, if the item tests, he may help it.

An enchanter may not create an item which grants the Enchanting skill.

### ***Grant Stat***

The magical object may grant a new stat exponent. The obstacle for this effect is 1 plus the exponent of the stat to be granted. The shade of the stat is the same as the enchanter's skill. The stat exponent must be represented in the stat line from the creature who was the source of the antecedent. The stat to be granted must be determined during the enchanting process. When used, this effect replaces the wielder's ability with that of the item.

### ***Trait Transference***

Use the trait transference enchanting effect for magic like flight, underwater breathing, flaming eyes, etc. Apply a trait's effects to the item, the wielder of the item or the target of the item. The trait must be a part of the antecedent. Obstacle is equal to the point value of the trait. This may only grant character, cosmetic and die traits. Call-on traits may not be transferred. If a dual-purposed trait is transferred, only the non-call-on part works. If using an unpriced lifepath trait from one of the eight existing character stocks, the obstacle is 4. If using a common trait from one of the character stocks, the obstacle is 5.

The Gifted, Faith and Chosen One traits may not be transferred.



### Test Tweaks

The enchanter can imbue the item with a bit of fighting spirit stolen from the source creature for the antecedent. It can be used to create doors that resist being opened, pictures that seduce onlookers or gloves that grab things they shouldn't.

When activated, the item causes a versus test between itself and its target. The ability that the item uses comes from the source creature. During the enchanting process, choose a stat, skill, Health or Steel attribute that the item will challenge. This is an Ob 2 Enchanting effect.

Steel tweaks: Steel is not generally used in versus tests. If the enchanter wants to build a Steel tweak, he can use this effect obstacle, but no versus test is made. The item simply causes its target to make a standard Steel test.

### Weapon Enhancements

The effectiveness of a weapon can be increased through Enchanting. There are five ways to modify a weapon: increase its VA, increase its weapon power, modify its weapon speed, reduce its add and modify its weapon length. This effect requires a vessel that is a weapon.

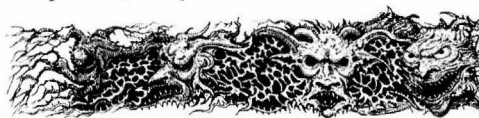
- *Increase VA*: Ob 1 plus value of the new VA.
- *Increase weapon power*: Ob 1 plus value of the new Power.
- *Modify weapon speed*: Unwieldy to Slow, Ob 2. Slow to Fast, Ob 3. Fast to Slow, Ob 2. Slow to Unwieldy, Ob 3.
- *Reduce add*: Ob 4.
- *Modify weapon length*: Magically reduce one weapon length, Ob 1. Magically increase one weapon length, Ob 2.
- *Spirit Weapon*: Make the weapon a spirit weapon so it can harm those of Spirit Nature, Ob 3.

### Magical Armor

An item may be enchanted to confer armor protection upon its bearer. There are four body locations in Burning Wheel: head, arms, torso and legs. Use the following obstacles for type and location:

Protects as leather, +1 Ob per location. Plated Leather, +2 Ob per location. Chain, +3 Ob per location. Plated Chain, +4 Ob per location. Full Plate, +5 Ob per location.

The armor is run of the mill and may be damaged when 1s are rolled. The armor may be made Superior Quality for a cost of +2 Ob.





If an armor piece is destroyed, that piece loses any and all enchantments. Armor may be repaired using Enchanting or craftsman skills appropriate to the vessel. Obstacles are 1 plus the standard armor repair obstacles.

*If you possess a coronet that provides helmet protection for the head and it is damaged, the jeweler skill may be used to repair it.*

### Useful Magical Devices

*Tools, Ob 2:* Despite its unlikely appearance, this item may be used as *tools* for a specific skill.

*Spell Matrix, obstacle equal to spell:* Use the item to store a spell that can then be released when the wielder chooses. Once released, it's as if the spell had been cast at that moment. Use the spell's own effect, breadth, duration and area of effect. If appropriate, the owner of the spell matrix may direct the spell.

The obstacle to create a spell matrix is equal to the spell to be stored. The spell must then be cast into the item. It can be cast into the item at any time, not just during the enchanting process. Casting the spell into the item determines the results of the spell when it is finally released—margin of success, etc. Tax or other consequences are dealt with by the caster when the spell is initially cast, not when it is released. To release a spell from a spell matrix, the user must abide by the trigger. See the Trigger heading in this chapter.

Sustained spells may not be placed into a spell matrix unless the item is also a sustainer.

*Sustainer, Ob 4:* This item sustains one Sorcery spell or homunculus connection die. Its purpose must be chosen when the sustainer is created or first activated. Thereafter it may only ever sustain that particular spell.

Once cast, the spell is sustained so long as the sustainer remains in contact with the sorcerer's skin. He does not have to allocate a Will die to the spell. Also, the sustainer does not protect against tax. The Sorcerer *must retest tax* as per the Power Still Flows Through Him rule.

*To use a sustainer the mage simply casts a "Duration: Sustained" spell and then states, "I am putting Mage Light in my staff [or pendant, or ring, or whatever]." The spell is then considered maintained by the sustainer. The mage does not have to allocate a Will die to hold the spell.*



**Multiplier:** This item may be used to increase a spell's area of effect, breadth or target of a spell on the following scale: Increase one level, +2 Ob. Increase two levels, +3 Ob. Increase three levels, +4 Ob. Increase four levels, +5 Ob. Increase five levels, +6 Ob. Multipliers must be enchanted with a specific spell in mind. They are not all-purpose devices. For standard Sorcery area of effects, use this list to determine the order: Caster, Single Target, Half Presence, Paces, Presence, Double Presence, Tens of Paces, Hundreds of Paces, Miles, Natural Effect, Tens of Miles. For Art Magic, use the breadth scale. This may not be used to effect the Enchanting skill.

## Target

Whom does the effect affect?

| Target of Enchantment                     | Obstacle Modifier |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| The Item Itself                           | +1D               |
| Wielder of Item, One Ability              | —                 |
| Single Target, One Ability                | +1 Ob             |
| Group, Handful, Two Abilities             | +3 Ob             |
| Crowd, Copse, Cluster, Three Abilities    | +4 Ob             |
| Village, Pond, Four Abilities             | +6 Ob             |
| Town, Countryside, Castle, Five Abilities | +7 Ob             |
| City, Forest, Six Abilities               | +8 Ob             |
| Mountain, Plain, All Abilities            | +9 Ob             |
| Sky, Ocean                                | +10 Ob            |

## Internal Duration—Enchantment Duration

How long does the item hold the enchantment? Does the enchantment fade over time? Does it have to be used within a certain time frame?

| Enchantment Duration                    | Ob/Dice Modifier |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|
| Lasts until used and is then expended   | —                |
| Only lasts until the end of the session | +1D              |
| Specific physical condition             | +2D              |
| Lasts until failed test                 | +1 Ob            |
| Multiple uses                           | +1 Ob            |
| Lasts until the end of the adventure    | +2 Ob            |
| Lasts until the end of the campaign     | +3 Ob            |
| Lasts forever                           | +4 Ob            |



Most of the Internal Durations are self-explanatory. The tricky ones are described below.

## Specific Physical Condition

The item's power fails if a specific physical condition is met (or is unmet). Physical conditions are varied—the item can't be wet, the item can never touch the ground, the item must always be held, the owner may never refuse a handshake. This is the most dynamic duration category; it's a lot of fun. These conditions can heavily influence the behavior of the character. The enchanter can develop his own physical condition for his item. It must not be obscure, but neither should it be very common.

## Failed Test

This item holds its enchantment until a specific test is failed. The enchanter may determine the nature of the test—what stat, skill or attribute is in question. The test or type of test must relate to the use of the item or to the antecedent. If an ability test of that type is failed while the character possesses the artifact, its power fades. It may not be used again unless it is recharged.

## Multiple Uses

Items that use the Multiple Uses internal duration hold their enchantment for a variable amount of uses. Some may never run out, some expire after only a few uses. Each time the item is used after the first, roll a Die of Fate. If the die comes up a 1, the item's powers have expired. It cannot be used again unless it is recharged.

## External Duration—Effect Duration

If the item's effect has an external duration, how long does that last? If your enchantment only affects the item itself—like a weapon or a piece of armor—do not use this category.

*In other words, how long are you frozen if I hit you with my freezie wand?*

| Duration of Effect            | Obstacle Modifier |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| No External Duration          | —                 |
| One test/instantaneous        | +1D               |
| One conflict or series test   | —                 |
| Session                       | +1 0b             |
| Adventure (multiple sessions) | +2 0b             |
| Campaign                      | +3 0b             |
| Forever                       | +4 0b             |



## Trigger

What activates or triggers the enchantment? How is the magic evoked from the item? Potions benefit from the somatic component bonus—they need to be drunk. A magic wand that emits bolts of fire at the caster's mental command must use the Mind Meld penalty. Magic swords merely need to be held, so they don't have a trigger.

| Enchantment Trigger         | Ob/Dice Modifier |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| No trigger                  | —                |
| Mind meld/thought control   | +2 0b            |
| Verbal or somatic component | +1D              |
| Must be touching bearer     | +1 0b            |
| Crazy ritual                | +2D              |

### *Mind Meld or Thought Control*

This trigger allows the bearer to merely think his commands and the item will obey. This requires two tandem actions in Fight! or Range and Cover to trigger. It's nearly instantaneous!

### *Verbal or Somatic Component or Conditional Trigger*

The item requires that a command be spoken or gesture performed before it can be used. The creator may determine which is more appropriate. If used in Fight!, this trigger requires actions in equal to half the Enchanting obstacle. These count as spellcasting actions.

Alternately, this trigger can be used for a condition like "when it rains" or "when someone opens the door."

### *No Trigger*

This entry is for items that don't require triggers, like certain magic swords, magic helmets, sustainers or multipliers. Do not get cheeky with this and create wands of ever-burning-gouts-of-fire.

### *Must Be Touching Bearer*

In order for the magic to be active in this item, it must be held in the proper fashion so that it touches the bearer's flesh—either held in the hand, worn as a ring or hung on a pendant around the neck.

### *Crazy Ritual*

The crazy ritual requires that the user perform some lengthy task before the item can be used. The task takes at least its own scene to perform—it cannot be performed in a conflict. The task also requires a successful test of its own using Doctrine, Ritual, Etiquette or



something similar. The obstacle for the ritual is 2. If the test is failed, the item may not be used for its intended effect.

The creator of the item may describe the format of the crazy ritual and the skill needed to activate the item.

## Recharge!

Most enchanted items lose their power after a period of time or number of uses. The internal duration determines how much power the item has in it. Once that power is used up—the duration expires—the item is rendered inert.

The enchanter may build a charm into his creation so that, once the internal duration expires, he may recharge it. Adding the recharge option to an item increases the Enchanting obstacle by +1 Ob.

The creator must detail how the item is recharged. This process must either require a test of an appropriate ability, a quest for some rare thing or a change of ownership.

## Modularity

Would you like to design the item so it can be further enchanted and enhanced in the future? If yes, increase the Enchanting obstacle by +1 Ob.

If the modularity option is chosen, further enchantments can be added to the item without having to create a new vessel. However, additional antecedents are required for further enchantments. If modularity is not chosen, the item/vessel is closed off to further enhancements.

## Heroic and Supernatural Gear

Creating heroic (gray shade) and supernatural (white shade) enchantments requires heroic and supernatural skill (even if acquired by temporary means) and a heroic or supernatural antecedent.

A device created with a heroic or supernatural skill and antecedent takes on the shade of its creator.

*A sword created with a temporary epiphany to gray shade and dragon's blood or giant's sinew is a gray weapon.*

*Or, you could make an item using a gray Enchanting skill and daemon's hair, which would grant a G5 Disguise skill.*



This grants the Skill and Stat and Tweak abilities as the shade of the skill of the enchanter. Alternately, creating a weapon under these conditions brings forth a heroic or supernatural device, respective to the shade of the enchanter's skill.





## Some Enchanted Failure: Sacrifice, Curses and Perversion



If the Enchanting roll is failed, the GM may choose one of the following results—Sacrifice, Curse or Perversion—appropriate to the item's nature and the margin of failure for the test.

In the case of Sacrifice and Curse, the enchantment counts as having succeeded and the magic has its intended effect in addition to the effects of failure. For Perversion, the GM may decide on a new, twisted effect for the item. It does not count as having succeeded in the intent.

If none of these options tickle the GM's fancy, he may opt to simply have the Enchanting test fail with no further consequences. Consequences can be such fun though.

### **Sacrifice**

These corrupted items require a sacrifice in order to be used. In this case, the sacrifice counts as an additional trigger for the item. This sacrifice can come in a variety of forms: blood, wealth or harvest.

#### *Blood*

In order to squeeze an effect from the item, the user must either use it to spill blood or spill blood onto the item itself. Note the margin of failure from the Enchanting test. Margin of failure of one indicates the user must inflict a Superficial wound with the item or must sustain that wound himself. Margin of failure of two indicates the user must inflict or sustain a Light wound. Margin of failure of three indicates the user must inflict or sustain a Midi wound. Margin of failure of four indicates the user must inflict or sustain a Severe wound. Margin of failure of five indicates the user must inflict or sustain a Traumatic wound. Margin of failure of six indicates a Mortal Wound must be inflicted or sustained.

The injury must be inflicted on an intelligent being capable of feeling pain and suffering. The injury may not be tended or shrugged off while the item is in use.



### Wealth

If the item requires wealth as a sacrifice, the user must offer the item or the appropriate gods an amount of gold and gems. Note the margin of failure for the Enchanting test. This is the obstacle for Resources tests to sacrifice wealth to the item (or its patron gods).

### Harvest

The enchantment may require an offering of harvest. The margin of failure from the Enchanting test is the obstacle for a Farming and/or Animal Husbandry test required to activate the item. This represents the necessity to harvest the grain and raise the livestock.

Harvest can be used with a margin of failure of five or less. Blood can be used with a margin of failure of up to six. Wealth can be used with any margin of failure.

### Curses

The item can be cursed. A curse makes the item so desirable that it destroys the relationships of those who use it. A cursed item is coveted by its owner, who believes it to be mighty and powerful.

If the player wishes his character to give up the item, a Will test is required. The obstacle is equal to the Enchanting obstacle.

If, during the course of play, another character offers to purchase or trade for the item and is rebuffed by the owner, he too is cursed! He gains the benefit of the Enmity Clause when dealing with the bearer of the cursed item. Cursed items *always* cause a Greed test in Dwarves.

### Perversion

A perversion changes the nature of the item to something twisted. A perverted enchantment's effect changes to the opposite of the intention of the enchanter. If the item was meant to heal, it harms. If it was meant to protect, it makes vulnerable. If it was meant to aid, it hinders.

### Corrupted and Marked Items

These sacrifices, curses and perversions all count as marked items as described under the Gift of Corruption heading in the Corruption chapter.



## Enchanting Time

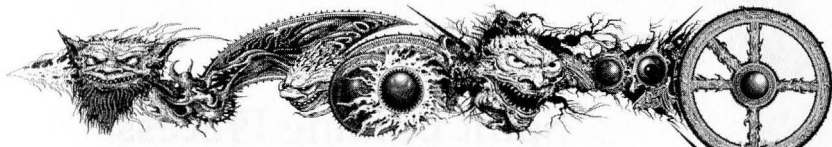
Enchanting takes days equal to the obstacle. Time may be reduced by working quickly. If the GM decides to use a straight failure result, the times are as follows: Failure by a margin of one to four successes requires the complete time to manufacture. Failure by five or more requires a day or so of mucking about before you make a complete mess of things.

If an Enchanting test is failed and the GM uses Sacrifice, Curse or Perversion mechanics, the test takes the full required time—days equal to the obstacle.

## GM-Created Items

GMs may create items for their campaigns at will. Use the steps described in this chapter, but no Enchanting skill test is necessary. Be creative, but also be *conservative*. Magical artifacts are very potent in Burning Wheel.





# Spirit Binding

Spirit Binding is the art of calling forth the spirits that dwell in the earth, sky, rivers, stones, rain, roads and even the homes of Men, Elves, Dwarves and Ores.

Spirit Binding requires daring on the part of the character, a bit of imagination on the part of the player and a bit of luck on the dice. As you'll see, this form of magic differs substantially from Sorcery in game play. It is subtle and potent, and it comes with a price.

In the game, Spirit Binding is meant to act like the Circles attribute. There are no set spells or list of spirits that the summoner can call. Instead, the summoner has a range of locations—determined by his lifepaths—in which he can bind spirits.

## Spirit Binding

Will

Spirits abound. They infuse the world around us, and those who know their secrets call them forth and bind them into service.

Using this skill, a summoner binds a spirit and sets it to a task.

To summon and bind, the player totals his dice from Spirit Binding, a domain binding, a spirit mark, summoning circles and any offerings. He tests those dice against an obstacle that combines the spirit's Strength, the task, the summoner's own Immanence, the immediate need for the spirit and the scope of the domain affected. If successful, the summoner can name his task and reduce the amount of retribution the spirit will visit upon him. If failed, the summoner has angered the spirit and will suffer the consequences in either retribution or enmity.

**Obstacles:** See the Spirit Binding Obstacles and Spirit Services in this chapter.

**ForKs:** Astrology. Linked tests are appropriate.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** No.



## Spirit Binding Process

When a player wishes to call on the spirit world for aid, he undertakes a series of short steps. Determine if the summoner is in one of his domains (see Domain Bindings). Total the dice from Spirit Binding, the appropriate domain binding, spirit marks, summoning circles (see Circination) and offerings (see Offerings). Determine the task the spirit is to perform, then determine the necessary Strength of the spirit to be summoned. Consult the obstacles for Immanence, Need, Medium and Domain. Total the Strength and obstacle modifiers.

All of the dice rolled for a Spirit Binding test are open-ended.

### Retribution, Not Tax

After the dice are cast for a Spirit Binding, whether the result is success or a failure, see the Retribution section. There is no tax for this magic, but there are consequences.

## Spirit Binding Terminology

### Nameless Spirits

Nameless spirits are entities born from the original elements of creation—the first river, the first sea, the first wind, the first mountain, the first road, the first fire—and have been broken down and spread across the earth through the millennia. They have no resemblance to life as we know it. They are wild, willful, capricious and unpredictable forces of nature, tied directly to their domains. One who knows their ways can master the very environs around him.

These entities are not intelligent by human measure; they are not sympathetic and have no desire to befriend living creatures. They are nature. In order to command them—to tap their primordial power—one must use sturdy and clever magics. One must reach into their domains and bind the spirits to one's will!

### Spirit Strength

A spirit's Strength determines both how old it is and how potent it will be when it manifests through its medium. Spirit Strength ranges from exponent 1 to 10. Whenever the spirit is tasked to accomplish something, use its Strength dice for the test. Spirit Strength dice are always open-ended.



## Domain and Medium

A domain is a conceptual geographic location where a spirit exists. A domain can be a house, a field, a river, a hill, a mountain, a storm, a lake, a sea. It is a broad concept—these are not specific houses or seas, but all houses and all seas.

A spirit's medium is the element or object by which it manifests in its domain. A medium is a specific thing: a rock, a branch, a door, a gravestone, a cold current, a wind in the shutters.

## Spirit Binding Obstacle

To determine the Spirit Binding obstacle, add the Spirit's Strength to the obstacle modifiers in Immanence, Medium, Domain and Need.

### Strength

The base obstacle to bind a spirit is its Strength exponent. The spirit binder player determines the Strength of the spirit that he is attempting to bind and thus sets his base obstacle for the test.

There are a number of considerations to take into account when determining the Strength of a spirit to summon. Certain spirit Strengths are necessary for certain tasks. The following list describes some of the possible tasks for spirits and the recommended Strength for that task. A more in-depth list for spirit tasks is described in the Spirit Tasks section.

#### *Reveal Information*

Reveal information about the medium or domain: *Strength 3*.

#### *Service: Hinder*

*Strength 2* spirits hinder their targets with a +1 Ob penalty. *Strength 4* spirits impose a +2 Ob. *Strength 6* spirits impose +3 Ob. *Strength 8* spirits impose +4 Ob. *Strength 10* spirits impose +5 Ob.

#### *Service: Help*

*Strength 1* spirits grant 1D of help. *Strength 5* spirits grant 2D of help. *Strength 9* spirits grant 3D of help. A spirit may not help you with a Spirit Binding test.

#### *Service: Harm*

Here are a few examples of using a spirit to harm: A *Strength 4* spirit of lightning does IMS: B4, B7, B10 (VA: 8). A *Strength 5* spirit of fire does IMS: B4, B7, B10 (VA: 5). A *Strength 6* spirit of earth, wood or stone does IMS: B4, B7, B10 (VA: 1).





## Immanence

Immanence describes how close to the spirit world the character is. Consult the following list of traits and apply the appropriate modifier.

### *Immanent, +1D*

Characters with the following traits contain within them a portion of the spirit world: Spirit Nature, Immortal, Essence of the Earth, Cold Black Blood.

### *Pre-Immanent, No Modifier*

Pre-Immanence indicates the character contains a sliver of the spirit world in him. He stands firmly between two worlds, the mundane and the divine. Pre-Immanent characters are marked by one of the following traits: Mark of the Ancient, Stone's Age, Shaped from Earth and Stone, Second Sight, Touch of Ages, Mark of the Beast, Haunted, Tainted Legacy or Fey Blood.

### *Mundane and Mortal, +2 Ob*

Creatures and characters without any of the above traits suffer a +2 Ob when attempting to use the Spirit Binding skill. Note, though, that they are not restricted from using the skill. There is no required trait like Gifted for Sorcery.

## Medium and Domain

The spirit binder player determines how he wants the spirit to manifest, in a specific medium, as a portion of the domain or as the whole domain.

### *Specific Medium, No Modifier*

A grave, a single room, a tree, a large stone in a field, the ruts on a road, a wave at sea, a rushing wind (in a storm), a hearth, a well, a door. A spirit summoned in a specific medium can only affect one person or object or a small structure.

### *Partial Domain or Expansive Medium, +1 Ob*

A clearing, a pond, the shallows of a great lake, the rapids of a river, the breeze through a house, the stretch of road between two villages, the lightning of a storm, the hallway in a castle, doldrums in a sea, the dunes of a desert, a single rain cloud in a rain storm. A spirit summoned from a partial domain or expansive medium can only affect a few people (up to its spirit Strength), a group of objects or the structure of its domain or medium.



### ***Domains, +3 Ob***

Summoning forth the power of the entire domain—the lake, the house, the sea, the castle, the mountain, the road, the caldera, the north wind, the storm, the desert—incur a +3 Ob penalty. Spirits of the domain may equally affect everyone and everything in their domain.

### ***People and Possessions***

People and their possessions are not part of any domain and may not have a spirit evoked from them.

## **Need**

The obstacle for summoning a spirit increases the more and sooner you need it.

### ***Unhurried, Not in a Conflict, No Modifier***

If the spirit binder is unhurried and has a few peaceful moments to conjure, there is no obstacle penalty.

### ***Hurried, +1 Ob***

If the spirit is being summoned to aid in a versus test or to overcome an immediate obstacle—the summoner needs aid to overcome an opponent—then apply a +1 Ob penalty.

### ***In Range and Cover or Duel of Wits, +2 Ob***

If the summoner is embroiled in Range and Cover or the Duel of Wits and he needs a spirit, apply a +2 Ob modifier to Spirit Binding. This costs an action.

### ***Fight!, +3 Ob***

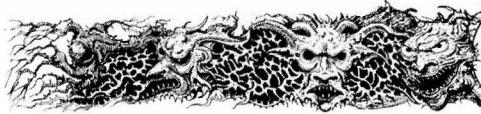
If involved in Fight! and a spirit must be summoned, add +3 to the Spirit Binding obstacle. This costs an action.

## **Spirit Tasks**

These spirits are forces of nature, not ghosts, animals or people. They act on a different plane, with different energy and different intent. Understanding them is difficult, mastering them even more so. Once summoned, they may be bound to attempt one of three general types of services: reveal, succor or serve.

## **Reveal**

There are two aspects to the reveal power: Spirits Are Wise and Reveal Unto Me This Fact.



### ***Spirits Are Wise***

A spirit tasked to reveal may grant the summoner any wise appropriate to the domain or medium. The summoner may test for the wise as per the normal wise rules (on pages 267-268 of the Character Burner). The exponent is equal to the spirit's Strength. This roll is open-ended.

### ***Reveal Unto Me This Fact***

Reveal may also be used to have the spirit inform the summoner about a certain game setting fact: directions, the weather, the lay of the land. This is for "no contest" setting stuff—pure info dump of spirit coolness. Game setting facts are established by the GM. This type of reveal requires a Strength 3 spirit.

## **Succor**

Spirits may be called on to protect the summoner (and his companions if a partial domain or full domain is summoned). Succor protects from Natural Effect sorcery and natural phenomena of equivalent force to the ratings on the Natural Effect scale so long as the effect is appropriate to the domain or medium. A spirit cannot protect against any effect higher than its Strength. The Natural Effect list is on page 214 of the Burning Wheel.

### ***Spirit versus Magic***

Succor can also be used to protect against damaging and taxing impetus magic. If such protection is appropriate to the spirit's idiom, test the spirit's Strength. The test is open-ended. Successes reduce incoming spell successes. If the spell is reduced below its obstacle, it has no effect on the summoner.

## **Service**

Spirits may be bound to evoke a spooky atmosphere, perform a physical service—like lifting or throwing—or induced to hinder, to help or to harm.

### ***Spooky Stuff***

A spirit may be tasked to influence its domain in a spooky, supernatural manner. This is an Ob 1 service. This has no in-game mechanical effect.

*Eerie silence falls in the forest. A clear pool roils. Fire burns cold.*



### *Like an Ox*

Spirits may be induced to perform a physical stat-based task. A spirit's physical stats are equal to the spirit's Strength. This includes Locks, Throws and Pushes, but not Strikes or anything causing direct harm.

### *Hindrance*

Spirits may be induced to hinder. Such hindrance causes an obstacle penalty to all physical actions or Perception-based actions (whatever's appropriate to the idiom). Strength 2 spirits hinder their targets with a +1 Ob penalty. Strength 4 spirits impose +2 Ob. Strength 6 spirits impose +3 Ob. Strength 8 spirits impose +4 Ob. Strength 10 spirits impose +5 Ob.

### *Help*

Spirits may be induced to help a character with skill (or stat) tests appropriate to the domain. Help as per the standard rules. Use the Strength as the spirit's skill or stat exponent: Spirits of Strength 1 provide 1D of help, Strength 5 provides 2D of help, Strength 9 provides 3D of help.

A spirit will never help a Spirit Binding test. They're very jealous of the power of the spirit binder and thus it is one thing they simply will not do.

### *Harm*

If appropriate to their idiom, spirits may be forced to harm another character, object or structure. Such an attack must manifest within the spirit's idiom: rock falls, falling branches, lightning strikes and bursts of flame, for example. The Power of such an attack is equal to the spirit's Strength plus the idiomatic material of the attack: stone is Power +1, flame is Power +2, lightning is Power +3. Factor the damage just like a melee weapon. Roll the Die of Fate to determine actual damage: 1-2 Incidental, 3-4 Mark, 5-6 Superb.

## Retribution

All spirit bindings—whether successful or not—have the potential to bring retribution down upon the summoner. Spirits never forget that they have been bound and commanded. As much as they can be said to show emotion, they despise the summoner for treating them thusly. Hence they will always try to return in kind what was asked of them.



## Successful Binding

### *Binding Meets Obstacle*

If the Spirit Binding test meets, but does not exceed, its obstacle, the summoner will suffer retribution. The retribution is doled out at the Strength of the spirit. See Retribution Suitable to the Task below.

### *Binding Exceeds Obstacle*

If the Spirit Binding test exceeds the obstacle, the margin of success reduces the Strength of the spirit for purposes of retribution. See Retribution Suitable to the Task below.

If the margin of success reduces the spirit's Strength to zero, no retribution is suffered (except maybe for a flung plate, banging shutter, groaning foundation or cracked window pane).

## Failed Binding

When the spirit binder fails to meet the obstacle of a Spirit Binding test, the GM has three options: He can benignly declare that there is no answer to the call because there are no spirits available. No further retribution is suffered. Or he can determine the player has angered a spirit more powerful than he bargained for—see Anger of Ancients. Or he can decide that the spirit has gone wild and will eternally plague the summoner—see the Enmity Clause.

### *Anger of the Ancients*

The summoner has angered this entity with his prattle. Add the margin of failure of the Spirit Binding to the summoned spirit's Strength for purposes of retribution. This new Strength indicates the true nature of the spirit in the area. The spirit may take one act of retribution. See Retribution Suitable to the Task below.

### *Enmity Clause*

Alternately, the GM may declare that the summoner has raised the permanent ire of his intended victim or driven the spirit of this domain mad. This invokes the Enmity Clause. The spirit may now enact retribution (at its original Strength) whenever the summoner enters its domain until it is imprisoned.

## Retribution Suitable to the Task

Spirits who are asked to reveal will later attempt to obscure. Spirits who are asked for succor take retribution in the form of hindrance or may steal from the summoner. Spirits who are asked to serve may obscure, steal, hinder or harm depending on the exact nature of the service asked of them. Invariably, the spirit will wait for the right moment to





interfere with the summoner, a crucial or critical juncture come to pass in the spirit's domain. Time is very different for them; they can afford to wait.

### ***Obscure***

A spirit bound to reveal will later attempt to obscure. Add its spirit Strength as an obstacle against an appropriate Perception test or Perception-rooted skill test of the GM's choosing.

### ***Hinder***

Spirits can add their Strength as an obstacle penalty to an applicable physical task. Spirits of wind can blow in the eyes. Spirits of fire can refuse to light. Spirits of earth and water can trip up or bog down characters (causing Speed test penalties, for example).

### ***Steal***

Spirits previously bound to succor or serve may take retribution by fouling or stealing the summoner's possessions: Wind will carry away unlikely items (like the summoner's staff), a muddy road will suck under a precious boot, clouds will bring a sudden squall down while the summoner is looking at a fragile, ancient map.

These items can only be recovered by a Strength 3 Reveal Unto Me or a Like an Ox Service. Alternately, the GM may toss them back into play at his discretion.

### ***Harm***

Spirits who are asked to do harm to others will invariably attempt to do harm in return. A hillside spirit will roll a stone down upon the summoner or smash him with a falling branch. Wind will kick up too hard while the summoner is crossing a ledge and toss him off. Water will heave and suck him under.

The Power of such an attack is equal to the spirit's Strength plus the idiomatic material of the attack: stone is Power +1, flame is Power +2, lightning is Power +3. Factor the damage just like a melee weapon. Roll the Die of Fate like a bow to determine actual damage.

Alternately, instead of doing direct harm, spirits may use their Strength to Push, Lock or Throw the summoner at an inopportune time—like when he's crossing a lake or climbing a wall. The summoner may roll his Natural Defenses against the attack.





## Scope of Retribution

Everyone who has benefitted from the spirit's service suffers from its retribution. If the Spirit Binding test was failed, the GM determines the targets of the retribution so long as they fall in the limits of the medium and domain obstacles that the summoner player set out for the test.

## Timing of Retribution

Retribution rarely comes immediately, but it always arrives at the worst possible moment. If a spirit is set to kill its tormentor, it is not enough to just murder him in his sleep. The spirit waits until other people are relying on the summoner to save them, then makes its attempt. Spirits detest being bound and commanded; they will demonstrate their ire in the most wicked and vengeful ways possible.

## Laws of Service

Listed below are a few limitations to bear in mind when dealing with these nameless spirits.

- *Spirits are limited to their domains.* The spirit of the pond knows nothing of the hills, the wind knows nothing of what dwells beneath the waves, the stone knows little of the birds on the wind, and the fire knows only the taste of air and the fragrance of wood.
- *Spirit memories are long and their senses broad*—they know much of what transpires in their domains—but a fire just lit will only know of the wood he eats and the air he breathes, nothing more. A stone taken from his birthplace and dropped in a new land will only know about himself and his past, nothing about this new place until he has had a good long time to get to know his new neighbors. But a river summoned forth to account for itself will know its length and breadth, from source to mouth.
- *Spirits may only act in their elements.* Wind may rise or fall, brooks may run fast or slow, the earth may yawn, and fires may douse. But branches never instantaneously grow around the enemies of the summoner, rocks never roll across level ground, water never forms into a wall and fire does not speak.
- *Spirits reveal through idiom.* Spirits in general do not speak the tongue of man. Rather, bubbles will rise in water, a path will end abruptly in the forest, fire will flare vaguely taking shape, wind will blow from a certain direction.



- *Spirits act unseen.* Demanding to be led from the forest while standing still, awaiting a sprite to take you by the hand, will only produce a very long wait. Walk with eyes half-closed while whistling a merry tune and you will find yourself at the forest's edge rather quickly. Watching for ephemera will only serve to delay the act and may anger the spirit further.
- *A spirit bound must complete its task.* It cannot delay or deviate from the task given to it. Once its service is complete, then it is released from the summoner's spell.
- Being bound to the summoner and forced to act in his will is a painful and arduous affair for a spirit. Invariably, this arouses a retributive anger in the spirit. *Once it is released from its service the spirit will exact retribution.* When a spirit does so it will take payment in kind for the service stolen from it.

## Spirit Task Duration

If the length of a spirit's task is longer than a day or so—if the spirit is asked to guard some location, for example—consult the table below to see exactly how long the spirit sticks around. Spirits will carry out their sentence as quickly as possible, but they know no time. Roll 2D6 and consult the chart below.

| Length of Service Table |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 2D6                     | Length of Service      |
| 2                       | Mere moments           |
| 3                       | 2x Strength in Months  |
| 4                       | Strength in Months     |
| 5                       | 10x Strength in Months |
| 6                       | 2x Strength in Days    |
| 7                       | Strength in Days       |
| 8                       | 10x Strength in Days   |
| 9                       | 2x Strength in Years   |
| 10                      | Strength in Years      |
| 11                      | 10x Strength in Years  |
| 12                      | Forever                |



## Domain Bindings

Domain bindings are a ritual spiritual bond the summoner has with an archetypal location. They are to Spirit Binding what affiliations are to Circles.

*Example domains are: abyssal, alluvial plain, badlands, castle, caldera, coast, desert, doldrums, foothills, forest, house, lake, mountain, oasis, ridge, river, road, sea, taiga, tundra, wadi, north wind, westerlies, storm, forest fire, prairie fire or cold current.*

When creating domain bindings, the player may choose from our examples or make up his own.

### Starting Domain Bindings

The character starts with one *bound* domain for each lifepath and appropriate trait. You may summon spirits in bound domains, but you are not powerful there. The player describes the most prominent geographic location from each lifepath. The summoner is bound to this domain.

*For example, if the summoner grew up on a farm (and has the Farmer lifepath), he takes the domain binding Farms. Whenever he is on a farm, he may conjure its spirits, even if it isn't the farm he grew up on.*

Additional 0-level bindings may be purchased for 4 rps each.

### Domain Traits

The following traits each grant the spirit binder a bound domain, in addition to any other qualities the individual traits provide. If the trait doesn't specify or connote a geographic location, the player may choose a domain for the trait before play begins:

Adventurer, Back-Breaking Labor, Beespeaker, Black Lung, Bookworm, Claustrophobic, Deep Sense, Down to Earth, Exile, Hiding, I Know This Ship..., Keys to the Church, Landlubber, Lost, Scavenger, Street Smart, Sword of the White Towers and World Weary.

### Summoner Must Be Bound to a Domain

A spirit binder must have at least a zero-level domain binding in a particular domain in order to summon there. If a spirit binder does not have a lifepath or a binding associated with a particular domain, he may not conjure spirits from that domain.



*A character who has never been at sea cannot conjure while at sea.  
A character who has never been to a mountain prairie cannot call its  
spirits to him.*

## Domain Binding Levels

Additional domain bindings may be bought at level 0-3 during character burning. Also, the spirit binder's starting domains may be increased in rank in character burning. There are four levels of Domain Bindings:

| Domain Binding Level | Rating | Resources Point Cost |
|----------------------|--------|----------------------|
| <b>Bound</b>         | 0D     | 4 rps                |
| <b>Sworn</b>         | 1D     | 7 rps                |
| <b>Embodied</b>      | 2D     | 25 rps               |
| <b>Mastered</b>      | 3D     | 45 rps               |

Advantage dice from a domain binding may only be used when the summoner is conjuring within the appropriate domain. You may only have one binding per domain.

*Embodied in Laval Fire, for example, costs 25 resource points in character burning. This then grants the player +2D to his Spirit Binding skill when he's in or near lava.*

## Spirit Marks

As the spirit binder practices his craft, the spirits start to imprint themselves on him. They leave their mark, and he becomes more spirit-like. This benefits the summoner tremendously—it gives him greater sway over the spirit world—but it is dangerous to his own soul.

Spirit marks apply to a medium, not a domain: Fire Walk With Us, Teeth of Granite, Ghost of Trees, Whispers of Water, Destiny of Wind, Pebble in the Pond. Spirit marks are more versatile than domain bindings. They can be used in a variety of domains, so long as the appropriate medium is present.

The spirit binder player may devise his own spirit marks.



Whenever the element, medium or idiom of the mark is involved in the Spirit Binding test, whether or not the summoner is in one of his domains, he gains the applicable bonus dice to the test. Spirit marks are the equivalent of reputations in Circles. They are more broadly applicable than domain bindings, but not universally so.

There are three levels of spirit marks. A character does not automatically start with any. They must be purchased prior to play.

| Spirit Mark Level | Rating | Resources Point Cost |
|-------------------|--------|----------------------|
| <b>Touched</b>    | 1D     | 10 rps               |
| <b>Marked</b>     | 2D     | 25 rps               |
| <b>Infused</b>    | 3D     | 50 rps               |

Spirit marks are earned in play like reputations. They are voted on by the group when the group performs a trait vote.

## Spirit Taint

If the total of *all* of the Spirit Binder's spirit mark dice is higher than his *current* Will exponent, he is in grave danger. If he fails his next Spirit Binding test, he suffers retribution, and he gains the Ancestral Taint trait (page 229 of the Monster Burner).

The starting exponent for Ancestral Taint is equal to the character's total spirit mark dice.

*If he has three spirit marks (2D, 1D and 3D), he starts with a B6 Ancestral Taint.*

Thereafter, the Strength of each spirit summoned and bound counts as a test for advancement of *Ancestral Taint*.

*If he summons a Strength 4 spirit, it counts as an Ob 4 test for Ancestral Taint.*

When Ancestral Taint advances to exponent 10, the character is absorbed into the spirit world. He is stripped of all intelligence and consciousness and becomes one with the fabric of nature. Nothing and no one can bring him back.



Spirit Binding





## Circination

To the uneducated eye, the summoner is forever scratching in the dirt and wasting time puzzling over sigils and runes. He drags his staff in complex patterns then cries to the heavens. For what? Nothing ever comes of it! Or so it seems...

### Circination

Per/Ag

Circination is the art of drawing circles and sigils which aid the spirit binder in his art. There are three types of circles that may be drawn: the summoning circle, the fortress circle and the prison circle. The summoning circle aids in conjuring and binding spirits. The fortress protects the summoner from retribution, and the prison traps unruly spirits. Circination is tested like a regular skill: It is not open-ended and does not get combined with anything special (except help or FoRKs) when tested.

Circles are specific to a spirit or ritual and may not be repurposed for summoning spirits other than the ones they were originally intended for.

**Obstacles:** Summoning Circle: The spirit binder may set his obstacle.

The Fortress: obstacle is equal to the spirit Strength to be deflected.

The Prison: obstacle is twice the spirit strength to be trapped.

**FoRKs:** Illumination, Cartography plus appropriate wises

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** For summoning circles, no;  
for prison and fortress  
circles, yes.

### The Summoning Circle

To draw a viable summoning circle, simply set your obstacle and test your skill. If successful, the Circination obstacle equals advantage dice for the Spirit Binding test. Time to draw a summoning circle is 1 hour per obstacle point. Extra successes reduce time by 10 percent per success.

### The Fortress Circle

This circle protects against retribution. The obstacle to draw a fortress is equal to the Strength of the spirit the summoner intends to conjure. The time is two hours per obstacle point. The fortress will avert retribution from a spirit of that Strength or lower. If the summoner is in a Fortress when retribution comes, the spirit will "deflect" and forget about it for now. The summoner may exit the domain safely. If he tarries or returns, the retribution is back on!



## The Prison Circle

If a spirit is wreaking havoc in a domain, a summoner may bind it to this circle so that it becomes trapped. An imprisoned spirit may not be summoned to serve nor may it enact retribution on anyone outside the prison. The obstacle for a prison is twice the Strength of the spirit to be imprisoned. The time to draw a prison circle is three hours per obstacle point.

If the circle is successfully drawn, the spirit becomes bound and trapped within it. If the Circination fails, the spirit may enact retribution on the Circle-drawer as if it had been commanded to serve.

## Making Offerings

A spirit binder may make offerings to the spirits before he summons them. Offerings must be appropriate to the domain and must be important or vital to the summoner or those who live in the domain: wine poured, harvest proffered and animals sacrificed.

An offering requires a Resources test equal to the strength of the spirit being summoned. Success grants +1D to the Spirit Binding test. Failure causes Resources to be taxed, and there is no Gift of Kindness for an offering.

## Binding Oneself to a Domain

During play, the spirit binder may wish to gain power over a new domain so that he may summon the spirits within it. Doing so requires that the summoner spend time in the domain, at least a season, but more time if possible, and he must offer a substantial sacrifice—cattle slaughtered, wine poured, harvest offered and burned.

### Sacrifice Resources Obstacles

| Domain Binding  | Rating | Sacrifice Resources Obstacle |
|-----------------|--------|------------------------------|
| <b>Bound</b>    | 0D     | Ob 4                         |
| <b>Sworn</b>    | 1D     | Ob 5                         |
| <b>Embodied</b> | 2D     | Ob 6                         |
| <b>Mastered</b> | 3D     | Ob 7                         |

#### Time Spent in Domain

|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| Years    | —     |
| 1 year   | +1 Ob |
| A season | +2 Ob |



## Linking to Domain Binding

Astrology, Spirit Binding, Circination and appropriate wises may be used as *linked tests* toward the Domain Binding Sacrifice Resources test.

## Spirit Encounters

Spirits make great encounters, whether or not there's a spirit binder in the group. Here are two suggestions for bringing them into the game.

### Wild Spirits

Wild spirits make great adversaries, especially for spirit binders. A wild spirit is one who was summoned or disturbed at some point and now visits harm and hindrance upon all who enter its domain. This is how forests become lost and haunted, seas become unsailable and mountain passes uncrossable. They also make the spirit binders who tame them famous.

### Imprisoned Spirits

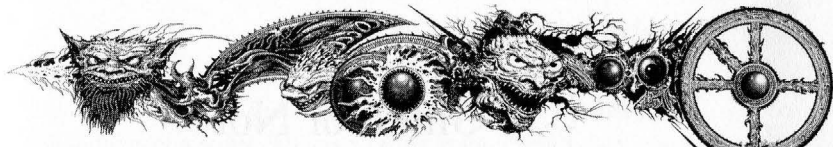
Though rare, it's possible to stumble across the work of another spirit binder—his circle and an imprisoned spirit within. Perhaps the domain of the spirit has fallen to waste since it has been imprisoned for so long. Freeing it will restore life to the place but might also invite retribution. To free a spirit, you must damage or destroy the prison circle which contains it.

Or perhaps a spirit that contains necessary secrets has been locked away in a remote place. Finding it, freeing it and rebinding it could make for an epic quest.

### Spirits Don't Talk or Bargain

Spirits do not talk, bargain or gossip. They will never engage in a Duel of Wits. They cannot be motivated with social skills. If you wish to motivate a spirit of the type described in this chapter, you must use Spirit Binding.





# Summoning

This magical art focuses on the summoning of arcane, supernatural, otherworldly and divine entities. Through his art, the summoner sends out a call. An entity responds, the summoner asks a service, the entity asks a price and the two forge a pact.

## Summoning Process

Summoning operates similarly to the Circles mechanic described in the Burning Wheel. A summoner has certain supernatural “circles” from which he may call on favors. He uses his knowledge of those circles, his skill in Summoning and his reputations within the supernatural world to bring forth spirits.

Once summoned, the conjurer and entity bargain to form a supernatural pact. A pact is an agreement for service and the price of that service.

Decide what type of service is needed, then determine the order of entity to be summoned who can fulfill said service. The summoner must have at least a journeyman level in this order to summon from it. Test summoning plus the gate, orders, reputation and advantage dice from the creature’s name against the obstacle.

If the obstacle is met, an entity of the proper order appears before the summoner, willing to perform his service. Failure indicates that the creature fails to appear, appears irritated or enraged by the summoner—as per the Enmity Clause in the Circles rules—or another creature appears in its stead.

A summoner may call forth a spirit of the appropriate order whenever he has a few minutes of peace, whether or not he has drawn a circle.

## Linked Tests for Summoning

Astrology, Demonology, Empyrealia, Folklore, Symbology, Doctrine and Obscure History may be used as linked tests into Summoning. There are no FoRKs other than wises.



## Gifted or Not?

Summoning can be used by both the Gifted and the mundane. Gifted characters use the rules as written. If a non-Gifted character wishes to summon, he must pass a Circination skill test with an obstacle equal to the order of spirit he wishes to summon. Once that circle is drawn, he may summon using the rules as presented. This is separate from any gate, fortress or prison circle he might draw.

## Service

These spirits are not wish granters. A summoner cannot demand wealth from a demon and expect for it to instantly appear in piles beneath his feet. A summoned entity must go forth, find and acquire that wealth and return it to the summoner. The creatures described in this chapter are limited by their stats, skills, attributes and traits. They are potent, but not omnipotent. Consider this when asking for a service!

The nature of the service is used to determine the price the spirit asks in return. Use the following guidelines to determine where your service falls in this scheme.

### Types of Service

Listed below is a suggested list of services for summoned spirits. The exact form and degree of service is shaped by the entity that performs it.

*A revelation from a ghost may come in the form of a nightmare, whereas a revelation from a deity is a soul-shaking affair—it's not a mere dream!*

#### Physical

This is the simplest form of service a summoner can ask of a spirit. Physical services include: murder, kidnapping, transport (of an item or person), guarding or infesting an area and protecting the summoner.

#### Economic

A summoner may demand wealth from a spirit. This wealth can come in many forms. It is not always just a pile of gold. If the spirit has Resources, he may grant the summoner loans, cash and funds as per the standard rules. If the summoner is asking for something more, like an item or land, the spirit must go forth and procure it.

#### Social

A summoner may ask a spirit to go forth and convince another person of something he desires them to know or feel—love, fear, respect,



promotion, etc. Love and affection may be earned through the machinations of a spirit. This is a rather complex and open-ended task, the means of which are left entirely to the spirit—assassination, bribery, arranged marriages and worse are not out of the question.

### Empowerment

Empowerment is a spiritual binding that grants the summoner or a character of his choice one of the spirit's *stats*.

### Transference

Transference is the process by which the summoner or a character of his choice may take on one of the entity's *traits*. During the term of service, the creature does not have access to the transferred trait.

### Revelation

Revelation is a question answered. If the consulted entity does not know the answer, it returns to its realm and seeks those who might. Asking questions of creatures of this ilk is always unwise, yet some still persist in doing so; the answers are always far worse than ignorance. Revelation may be conveyed in the form of a dream or a vision. The summoner may request the revelation for himself or another person. Revelations always reveal truth. They may be obscure or confusing, but they are never false.

## Summoning Obstacles

The player chooses what type of service he requires and a corresponding order that can perform said service. This sets the obstacle for the Summoning skill test and the price for the service.

Summoning Obstacles by Service and Order

| Service                               | Order                        | Obstacle | Price                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| Revelation, Transfer, Physical        | <i>Restless Dead</i>         | Ob 4     | Tribute                        |
| Revelation, Transfer, Social          | <i>Sanctified Dead</i>       | Ob 5     | Tribute                        |
| Physical, Economic, Social            | <i>Minor Corporal Spirit</i> | Ob 7     | Possession                     |
| All but Revelation                    | <i>Corporal Spirit</i>       | Ob 8     | Physical                       |
| All but Social                        | <i>Major Corporal Spirit</i> | Ob 9     | Mark plus other soul           |
| Social, Transfer, Revelation, Empower | <i>Minor Deity</i>           | Ob 10    | Mark plus any one except souls |
| Social, Transfer, Revelation, Empower | <i>Deity</i>                 | Ob 11    | Other soul plus tribute        |
| Social, Revelation                    | <i>Chief Deity</i>           | Ob 12    | Own soul plus other soul       |





## Orders

There are eight orders of supernatural, infernal, celestial and divine beings: restless dead, sanctified dead, minor corporal spirit, corporal spirit, major corporal spirit, minor deity, deity and chief deity.

Restless dead are ghosts of souls who have not been properly buried or who have had their graves disturbed—this includes those disinterred and bound by death artists. Sanctified dead are souls who have been given the proper rites to send them to their final resting place. Corporal spirits are entities that manifest physically before the summoner to do his bidding. This includes imps and querubim who fall into the minor corporal and corporal spirit categories. Dæmonim and seraphim are categorized as corporal and major corporal spirits. Deities are the saints, gods and divinities of this world. They are not tampered with lightly!

Customize the orders to your game world. Minor corporal spirits might be imps in one setting, gebbeths in another or animal companions in still another. When Summoning is introduced into your game, decide what forms these spirits can take.

## The Summoned

The creature or spirit that appears before the summoner is a representative of his order. His exact personality, body type and position are up to the GM to decide.

If the summoner player wishes to conjure forth a specific spirit, he must add +1 Ob to his Summoning test. Once a summoner has learned one of a particular creature's names, as per the One Name of the Many in this chapter, the summoner no longer suffers this penalty for calling forth this particular creature.

## Success and Failure in Summoning

If the summoner passes the test, he has successfully brought an entity before him. This entity will perform a service for him.

### Successful Summoning

If he met his obstacle, an entity of the appropriate type and of the GM's choosing appears before the summoner. He announces one of his many names and the price of his help. He agrees to perform the service for the price described for his order. No bargain is possible for this result.



If the summoner exceeded his obstacle, he has skillfully cast his summoning spell and earned some leverage over the entity he has called forth. The creature announces itself with one of its personal names and agrees to perform the service for the price described for his order. However, the summoner may spend his extra successes as follows:

### *Spending Margin of Success to Bargain*

One success may be spent to gain an opportunity to Bargain or Haggle with the entity. Make a Bargaining or Hagglng versus test. If the summoner wins, he may lower the price or increase the duration of the service by one step per success in his margin of success.

If the entity wins the Bargaining test, he raises the price one step. Do not trifle with me, mortal man!

If the summoner loses a round of Bargaining and the price is raised, he may spend one of his remaining extra successes (if any) to continue bargaining to try to lower the price or increase the duration.

The summoner may agree to the current terms before he rolls to bargain or he may attempt to gamble and test himself against the entity. There's no backing out once the Bargaining dice have been rolled, though. Even if the terms are now drastically in the creature's favor.

### *Price and Duration Scale*

Use the following scale for prices: mark, tribute, possession, physical, untainted mortal soul, summoner's soul. The maximum price is the summoner's soul plus any number of other prices!

Use the following scale for duration: a single event, a day, a week, a month, a year, many years, a lifetime.

### *Spending Margin of Success for Advantage*

Up to two Summoning successes may be spent to add advantage dice to the Bargaining or Hagglng test. Each success adds +1D.

## **One Name of Many**

If the summoner exceeds his obstacle to summon, he also learns one of the creature's names. The advantage of a name is two-fold. The summoner may call on this creature specifically without penalty. And he gains +1D to attempts to summon this creature in the future. This bonus does not increase if he successfully summons the creature multiple times.



## Failed Summoning

If the summoner failed his test, there are three possible results. The GM may declare that no spirit heeds his call, that the summoner has angered his intended target or that something unintended has heeded the call and appeared instead.

### *Angry Spirits*

If the GM decides to bring in the intended entity, the creature is angered by the summoner's attempt to bring him forth. He does not have to perform the service asked. He may return from whence he came after berating the erstwhile Faust, or he may stay in the summoner's world and wreak havoc.

He may be convinced to bargain through a Duel of Wits. However, he counts as having the Enmity Clause against the summoner. As such, the creature gains +4s to the Body of Argument for any Duel of Wits (including bargaining) with the summoner. This penalty lasts until the summoner convinces the creature he is not his enemy. If unconvinced, the spirit can retain his +4s bonus across many encounters and pacts.

### *Unintended Summoning*

If the summoner failed his test, the GM may bring in another creature of greater or lesser strength. This is entirely the GM's call. Consult the order list if you're stuck for options. Use a creature one order greater or lesser than the intended target. The creature is not obligated to perform a service or bargain. It may propose its own pact and price to the summoner if the GM has something in mind. Otherwise, unless it is contained by a prison circle, it may either return to whence it came or wander off into the summoner's world, causing chaos.

## The Pact

The result of the summoner's spell is a *pact*, a spiritual bond with the spirit. This pact is as binding as a Duel of Wits result.

*A spirit must endeavor to do everything in his power to complete the terms of the pact.* He will cleave to the exact letter of the agreement, but he will never do more than he is required unless it benefits him.

If he wins, the summoner gets what he asked for. Sometimes this is more than he bargained for.



### ***Breaking a Pact***

If one side fails to complete his side of the bargain, the other party is freed from any obligation to the agreement. If it is the summoner who breaks the pact, the spirit is free to remain in the material world for 555 days. During that time, he may take revenge on the summoner for breaking his word, or he may attend to other matters. During this time, he may not be summoned!

If, due to extenuating circumstances, the spirit fails to complete his appointed task, then the summoner is freed from paying the price. The spirit may return to the summoner to attempt to strike up a new bargain; otherwise he returns home.

## Price of Service

Each spirit asks for a price dependent on his nature.

### Summoner's Soul

The ultimate price for a service is the summoner's mortal soul.

### Untainted Mortal Soul

There are times a summoner may bargain with a spirit for the gift of another soul. This soul must be free from taint (and other pacts). By the conclusion of the spirit's part of the bargain, the summoner must proffer and sacrifice the untainted soul. The spirit must be present to receive the offering.

### Physical Price

The entity demands a physical sacrifice from the summoner. The eyes, the tongue, a hand, an arm or a leg must be removed as part of the bargain. The character must take an appropriate physical disfigurement trait such as Maimed, One-Eyed or Tongueless.

### Possession

The spirit may demand access to the summoner's body and senses as payment for its services. This state lasts for the same period of time as the duration of the original service. The player who accepts this price gains the Possessed trait for the term of the possession.

### Tribute

As payment for services rendered, the summoner must build a shrine to the sovereign powers of the spirit, commission a work of art in its name, recover a lost artifact, or fund a thousand rites to be spoken to the patron gods. Whatever the final payment is, it is a costly endeavor and must be completed lest the summoner violate the pact. The obstacle of the Resources test is equal to the obstacle of the order of the creature.

### Mark

The summoner agrees to wear the insignia or mark of the spirit visible on his person or flesh. For lesser orders like the dead or minor spirits,



the mark comes in the form of a symbol worn on the person. For other spirits, the mark appears as a scar or tattoo. The mark can be anywhere at all on the summoner's body. It is immutable, will never fade and will resist all attempts to efface it. The character must take the character trait Marked by X (whatever the spirit's name is). For deities, a mark consists of a character trait as described above plus a reputation with that spirit's order. The reputation is infamous with that spirit's enemies.

## Duration of Service

A spirit wishes to serve for as short a span as possible. As such, when the initial service for a price offer is made, the entity agrees to perform a single service or task, or agrees to extend his protection or provenance for the length of a single event.

As per the rules described under the Successful Summoning heading, a summoner may bargain to increase the duration of the service. Bargaining begins with the duration of a single event and progresses up the following scale: a day, a week, a month, a year, many years, a lifetime.

### *Time of Payment*

The time at which the price is to be paid must be negotiated between the summoner and his servant. The player and the GM should work out an appropriate time of payment as part of the Bargaining ritual.

*Murder is complete at the death of the subject. When the information is presented, a Revelation is ended. When the summoner has bedded his new wife, the spirit's social role is done.*

## Affiliated Orders and Reputations

Orders are the fundamental element of the summoner's power. An order is an affiliation with the spirit realm. They act like affiliations do in the Circles mechanic. A summoner may only call creatures to him from orders with which he is affiliated.

Summoners may also have reputations among the spirits. His name may ring out in the halls of hell!





## Starting Affiliated Orders

All summoners begin the game with the *restless dead* order at Journeyman level for free. The value of this order may be increased or additional orders may be bought during character burning using the following prices:

| Degree of Order  | Rating | RP Cost     |
|------------------|--------|-------------|
| Journeyman Order | 0D     | 10 rps base |
| First Order      | 1D     | 20 rps base |
| Second Order     | 2D     | 25 rps base |
| Third Order      | 3D     | 50 rps base |

Modify the cost according to the exact order of spirits:

| Order Affiliations Cost Modifier | RP Cost |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Restless Dead                    | Free    |
| Sanctified Dead                  | +4 rps  |
| Minor Corporal Spirit            | +5 rps  |
| Corporal Spirit                  | +6 rps  |
| Major Corporal Spirit            | +7 rps  |
| Minor Deity                      | +8 rps  |
| Deity                            | +9 rps  |
| Chief Deity                      | +10 rps |

*A 2D affiliation with the order of chief deity costs 35 resource points in character burning.*

## Reputation

Reputations among the spirits may be bought in character burning using resource points, just like buying regular reputations.

Reputations cost 10 rps for 1D, 20 rps for 2D and 30 rps for 3D. The reputation applies to one order of spirits for each die of its rating. So a 1D reputation applies to one order, a 2D applies to two orders and a 3D reputation applies to three orders.

*Giver Of Tribute (1D) among the order of the restless dead or Harvester of Souls (2D) among the sanctified dead and the minor corporal spirits.*



## Joining New Orders

To join new orders, the summoner must do one of two things: either he must pay the price of the order or submit to a geas.

### *The Price of the Order*

A summoner may submit an offering to the order in order to join its ranks and gain its benefits. The offering is equivalent to the price of a service from a spirit in the order. The GM determines the exact composition of the price.

The summoner gathers the price, pronounces his holy and mystic binding to the order and then makes his payment. No test is required to make the payment. If the price is paid, the summoner gains a journeyman rank in that order. If the order offers multiple price options, start with the lower price.

*Before he can join the ranks of the sanctified dead, the summoner must repair his family's tomb as tribute, for example. To be bound to the corporal spirits, he must cut off his hand.*

### *Geas*

Rather than pay a price, a summoner may submit himself before the powers of the order and accept a geas. The orders send word through signs and omens that the summoner must complete a quest:

To join an order as a journeyman, he must complete one goal as described by the powers that be.

In order to complete a goal, the player must write it into one of his Beliefs and resolve it, earning a persona point. The GM determines the nature of a goal, but the player may write his Belief as he sees fit. Scale the goals according to the power of the order. A goal for the sanctified dead is less dangerous than what deities demand.

## Increasing the Rank of an Order

The rank of an order may be increased by paying a further, more expensive price or by completing a more elaborate, more dangerous geas.

### *Paying the Price of an Order*

If an order has a single price listed, an appropriate iteration of that category must be paid. Each price must be greater than the last. If an order has multiple prices listed, use the first price for the journeyman rank, second price for the first order, etc. If you run out of prices, just keep increasing the value of the last one listed.



### **Increasing Orders by Geas**

To increase the rank of your order, you may also submit to a more arduous geas. The mechanics are the same as those described above, but each level requires more goals to be completed.

To become a member of the first order, the summoner must complete two goals as proclaimed by the powers of the order.

To become a member of the second order, he must complete three goals set by the powers.

To become a member of the third order, he must complete four goals determined by the powers that be.

## **Earning and Increasing Reputations**

Reputations are earned and increased according to the mechanics described on pages 118 and 119 of the Burning Wheel.

## **Circination**

Circination for summoners is slightly different than for spirit binders. Rather than draw a summoning circle, they draw a *gate*. A summoner should have the prison drawn before he summons. If he does not, this willful spirit will take its liberty before striking a bargain. He may draw his fortress to protect himself as does the spirit binder.

Gates and prisons are specific to a spirit or ritual and may not be repurposed or used for summoning spirits other than the ones for which they were originally intended. Fortresses may be applied to any spirit or order. They may be reused.

### **Circination**

Per/Ag

Circination is the art of drawing circles and sigils that aid the summoner in summoning spirits. There are three types that may be drawn: a summoning gate, the fortress circle and the prison circle. The gate aids in conjuring and binding spirits. The fortress protects the summoner from harm at the hands of spirits and the prison traps spirits. Circination is tested like a regular skill: It is not open-ended and does not get combined with anything special (except help or FoRKs) when tested.

**Obstacles:** Summoner's Gate: The player sets his obstacle according to how many advantage dice he hopes to earn. If successful, the test grants advantage dice equal to the obstacle. The Fortress: This circle



imposes an obstacle penalty on spirits trying to get in. The obstacle to draw the circle is 1 plus the obstacle penalty the summoner wishes to impose against attacking spirits. The Prison: The obstacle is equal to the Will of the spirit.

**ForKS:** Illumination, Cartography, Etching, Engraving, Whitesmith,

Symbology plus appropriate wises

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** Yes

## The Summoner's Gate

To draw a viable gate, simply set your obstacle and test your skill. If successful, the Circination obstacle equals advantage dice for the Summoning test. The time required to draw a summoning circle is one hour per obstacle point. Extra successes reduce time by 10 percent per success.

## The Prison Circle

The prison circle traps a spirit within it. An entity may not project any of its powers beyond the circle—it may not twist, burn or harm while in the prison. A spirit trapped within a prison may only bargain with its summoner or wait.

The obstacle to draw a prison is equal to the Will exponent of the spirit to be imprisoned. If the creature's Will is gray shade and the imprisoning skill is black shade, increase the obstacle by +2. If the creature's Will is white shade and the imprisoning skill is gray or black shade, increase the obstacle by +3. It takes a number of hours equal to three times the obstacle to draw the prison circle.

If the circle is successfully drawn, the spirit becomes bound and trapped within it until the circle itself is physically damaged or altered.

## The Fortress Circle

A summoner may draw a circle to protect himself from harm inflicted by spirits. Any hostile act from a spirit made against those within suffers an obstacle penalty equal to the rating of the circle. If any portion, part or article of the protected passes outside the bounds of the circle, it may be grasped, attacked or ensorcelled by the spirit creature.

The obstacle to draw a fortress is 1 plus the obstacle penalty the summoner wishes to apply to otherworldly interlopers. Fortresses may be reused. It takes two hours per obstacle point to draw the fortress circle.



## True Names

All creatures have a true name. This fabled moniker grants intense leverage to the summoner. A creature will never under any circumstances give up its own true name. However, it will occasionally give up known true names of its enemies.

### Named

*Dt*

This creature possesses and knows its true name. When its name is spoken, it knows who the speaker is and where he is.

Knowledge of a true name grants the summoner +3D to summon that specific spirit and +3D Bargaining tests or to the body of argument roll for any Duels of Wits conducted against the creature.

## Demon, I Abjure Thee!

### Faith Versus the Summoned

The Faithful may attempt to banish a spirit entity from this world and send it back to its own side. Banishing restless dead, sanctified dead and minor corporal spirits requires a minor miracle. Banishing anything greater requires a major miracle.

## Spirits of the Dead

Spirits of the dead have no corporal form. They are ghosts. As such, they only have Perception and Will for stats; they also have traits and skills. Beliefs and Instincts may be assigned by the GM. In general, use the Beliefs, Instincts, stats, traits and skills the creature had in life. In other words, pick a stat block for a Mannish, Roden, Great Spider or Great Wolf character and drop the physical stats. Elves, Orcs, Dwarves and Trolls may not be summoned as spirits.

There is one exception to this rule. If the spirit of the summoned dead has been bound into his corpse by a death artist, the spirit heeds the summoner's call in the tattered trappings of his rotting flesh. He is mute and in anguish. The GM can use the stats for the Risen Corpse unless he has something worse in mind!

### Restless Dead

The restless dead have two additional traits, Spirit Nature and Poltergeist.





## **Poltergeist**

*Dt*

This creature is ethereal and may only affect the physical world through an act of Will. If the creature wishes to touch, push, pull, slap, etc., test Will against the obstacle rather than Power or Agility. If a test is failed, Will is reduced by the margin of failure. The creature's physical skills may also be channeled through its Will. Test for the skill as normal. After the test, test the creature's Will against the obstacle. Will is reduced by margin of failure. If Will is reduced to zero, the creature dissipates and may not reform or be summoned for months equal to its Will exponent.

## **Sanctified Dead**

The sanctified dead also have two additional traits, Spirit Nature and Rest in Peace. Spirit Nature is described in the Monster Burner. Rest in Peace is described below.

## **Rest in Peace**

*Dt*

Spirits who have gone peacefully to death and whose bodies were properly sanctified have great difficulty returning to and communicating with the world of the living. They cannot use any physical ability or skill to affect the material world. Those abilities are lost to them. Also, while they will do whatever is in their power to aid the living, they are reluctant to undertake any act that will disturb their peaceful rest or get them kicked out of heaven. When bargaining with a summoner, spirits of the sanctified dead may add +2D to a social skill. When in a Duel of Wits add +2s to their body of argument if their opponent's request goes against their better judgement.

## **Relationships with the Supernatural**

There's no rule that says a relationship has to be living or flesh and blood. If appropriate to your game, players may have relationships with gods, demons or the restless dead. The standard rules for relationships apply.

You may also develop a relationship with a summoned entity. Add together the summoner's skill exponent and order rating appropriate to the creature. If the summoner successfully brings forth a creature a number of times equal to 10 minus that number, he may add him as a relationship.



## GMing Summoned Creatures

The summoner's art is a solitary and remote one. He conjures forth demons in private and sends them forth to do his bidding. It is not a fast or flashy art, though it is useful.

Much of the burden of making Summoning useful is placed on the GM. When the summoner dispatches his minions to topple a king, the GM must arbitrate if the errand is successful or not. There are two ways to play this. First, consider the price. It is the most important element in summoning. If the price is juicy enough fruit, then by all means, have the creature succeed at its ordained task and return with due haste to the summoner to demand payment.

Second, if the completion of the task is in doubt, make a versus test (or series of tests) between the creature and its intended target. Allow the summoner player to act out and roll for his charge.

If a spirit has been commanded to accompany and protect the summoner, or some similar task, allow the summoner player access to the creature's stats. Let him make rolls for the beast when appropriate. If there is ever a question of conflict between the entity and the summoner, the GM should take on its role.





# Death Art

The Death Art is a ritual magic, not a battle magic or a spell cast instantaneously to ameliorate some obstacle. Using this dark lore, the sorcerer creates a menagerie of reanimated creatures to do his bidding.

## Skill and Faith

Death Art can be incorporated into your game in two ways. It can be used as a skill, like Sorcery or Enchanting, using the rules described in this chapter. Or the powers and obstacles described in this chapter can be attributed to Faith. If using Faith, the Death Art skill replaces the Ritual skill for priests. All of the Death Art tests delineated in this chapter are made using Faith, rather than the Death Art skill. Death Art is used for linked tests or to create tools. Tools and workshops are required whether using the skill or Faith.

## Gifted at Death

In order to use Death Art magic as a skill, the character must have the Gifted or Cold Black Blood trait.

## Mortal Soul

Death Art combines elements both physical and spiritual. Though the physical aspect of the art—creating walking corpses—is obviously important, the spirit is the prime target. When a death artist wishes to animate a corpse, he is calling that creature's soul back into its body. He is trapping it in a cage of rotting flesh and decaying bone, using the soul as a fuel for his evil deeds.

Therefore, this art may only be used on the corpses of those creatures who are mortal and who are considered to have a soul—a soul being defined here as native intelligence, imagination, creativity and the ability to endure suffering. This means no animals or insects and no immortal creatures.



Orcs, Elves and other immortal creatures may not have their corpses so used. Dwarves and Trolls, while not effectively immortal, are certainly a part of the land in a way that most mortals are not. It's recommended that they be exempt from this as well. And, while it's not listed as a trait, consider Dragons immortal as well.

## Death Art Process

Death Art uses three general spells: Rise!, Ritual Reanimation and Death of the Spirit. Rise! is a short spell used to quickly reanimate a corpse and put it under the death artist's control. Ritual Reanimation is a lengthy process that also raises corpses to serve the sorcerer, but using the ritual method, the death artist has much more control of the shape of his servant. The Death of the Spirit spell is a long, complicated and difficult process that enables the sorcerer to slowly transform a living person into a ghoul, shade or liche.

## Dead Flesh

Before we dig into the black magic of raising corpses to do your bidding, we must discuss the physical state of the dead body. This is an important consideration for the death artist.

### Decomposition

The state of decay affects the obstacles for the Rise! and Ritual Reanimation spells. The obstacle modifiers are listed with each entry below.

#### *3 days dead, no penalty*

A corpse remains fresh and usable for up to three days after the time of death. It attracts flies—who come to lay their eggs—but it has yet to become infested. It still looks human but for the flat eyes and waxy skin.

#### *10 days dead, +1 Ob*

Up to ten days after death, the body begins to putrefy and bloat. The pressure of the gases inflates the body cavity and forces fluids to either collect in the cavity or exit from various orifices. It's a messy time.

#### *20 days dead, +2 Ob*

At this stage, the bloating ceases and the body collapses in on itself. The fluids drain away and the flesh of the corpse turns to a creamy consistency. Insects—particularly flies and beetles—swarm to the body to consume it. The body is typically covered in a crawling cloak of maggots.



**50 days dead, +3 Ob**

After 50 days of decomposition, the corpse is a putrescent mass of rotting flesh, inhabited by maggots, flies, wasps and corpse-eating beetles. It is a barely recognizable horror of what it once was.

**1 year dead, +4 Ob**

After one year of death, the corpse is a ragged collection of dried, leathery skin, hair and bones. It is very difficult to reanimate such debris.

**Many years gone**

Contrary to popular belief, an ancient desiccated corpse is useless to a Death Artist. There's not enough material left to reanimate.

## Preserving the Corpse

Corpses rot. It's an unfortunate fact of life. Even under the care of a diligent death artist, they fall apart. For about the first year, this can be held off, but after a year of living death, the corpse falls apart.

In order to preserve a corpse and gain more life from it, the death artist may use the Taxidermy skill. The obstacle for preservation is 1 plus its current state of decomposition as described above. If the test is successful, the corpse will not fall apart after a year has elapsed. The sorcerer can squeeze another year of life out of it. It continues to age, of course, but the sorcerer may also continue to preserve it after each year by making the Ob 5 Taxidermy test.

If the test is failed, the corpse crumbles to dust at an inopportune time within the next year. The GM may have the corpse dissipate during play at a point whenever he likes.

## Living Traits

If the corpse possessed certain traits during life, the sorcerer gains advantage dice when casting the Rise! or Ritual Reanimation spells on it. Add +1D to the Death Art roll for each of the following traits: Aura of Malevolence, Cold-Blooded, Dreadful, Fearless, Horrific Aura, Lost, Quiescent, Resigned to Death and Weak-Willed. After being reanimated, all such traits are lost.

Physical traits that represent the creature's form and function remain. However, any trait that requires regeneration or organic manufacture—the Earth's Blood or Silk Spinner traits, for example—is lost upon the creature's death.



## All Good Children Go to Heaven

The following traits add +1 Ob to the Rise!, Ritual Reanimation or Death of the Spirit obstacle: Aura of Martyrdom, Aura of Holiness, Entropic, Fey Blood, Iron Will, Misplaced Aura, Obscure Aura, Stubborn and Wolverine.

Corpses that bore the Eldritch Sink trait in life may not be reanimated or evoked.

## Rise!

The most basic Death Art spell allows the sorcerer to command a corpse to gather itself up, rise to its feet and heed his commands. This ability is inherent in the skill. The obstacle is 4 plus the state of decomposition. Advantage dice to the Rise! test can be gained from the victim's traits. See Living Traits. If performed in Fight! this spell costs one action *per obstacle point*. In Range and Cover or Duel of Wits, Rise! takes one volley to cast.

Success indicates that the monstrosity shambles to its feet, ready to do its master's bidding. See the Risen Corpse stat block.

Failure indicates either that the spell did not take hold or that the creature is reanimated, but it turns on the caster. The GM determines which result is appropriate. If the creature turns on its erstwhile master, use the Risen Corpse stat block.

Corpses commanded to rise must be in the sorcerer's presence. Unfortunately, this means that interred or entombed corpses may not be so commanded. The necromancer needs to unearth the body to free it so that it might serve him.

The Rise! spell can be cast without tools and without preparation. If the death artist wants more from his corpse servants, he must use the Ritual Reanimation spell.

## The Life of the Corpse

A reanimated corpse of a human adult uses the stats, skills, attributes and traits listed in the Risen Corpse stat block.





| Risen Corpse       |            |                                                                                                |      |    |          |     |      |                        |     |     |     |
|--------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|----------|-----|------|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Wi                 | Pe         | Ag                                                                                             | Sp   | Po | Fo       | He  | Re   | Ste                    | Mw  | Res | Cir |
| B9                 | B1         | B3                                                                                             | B3   | B5 | B5       | —   | B2   | B7                     | B11 | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier   |            |                                                                                                | x3.5 |    |          |     |      | Hesitation             |     | 1   |     |
| PTGS               |            | Su                                                                                             | Li   | Mi | Se       | Tr  | Mo   | Base Rise! Obstacle: 4 |     |     |     |
|                    |            | B3                                                                                             | B6   | B8 | B9       | B10 | B11  |                        |     |     |     |
| Traits             | Char       | Hungry Dead, Mute                                                                              |      |    |          |     |      |                        |     |     |     |
|                    | Die        | Reanimated Corpse, Hideous, Tough as Nails, Dead to Pain, Unfeeling, Clumsy Walker, Night Eyed |      |    |          |     |      |                        |     |     |     |
|                    | Call       |                                                                                                |      |    |          |     |      |                        |     |     |     |
| Skills             |            | Savage Attack B3                                                                               |      |    |          |     |      |                        |     |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage | Type/Name  | I                                                                                              | M    | S  | Length   | VA  | Spd  |                        |     |     |     |
|                    | Nails/Bite | B3                                                                                             | B5   | B7 | Shortest | —   | Slow |                        |     |     |     |

## Reanimated Corpse

*Dt*

This trait grants the reanimated corpse the Wi B9, Pe B1, Ag B3, Sp B3, Po B5, Fo B5 stat line and eliminates the Health, Resources and Circles attributes. These creatures may not recover from injury. However, neither do they bleed to death or suffer from any type of disease or poison. Also, these creatures may advance extant skills, but they may not learn new skills in play.

The Reanimated Corpse trait also gives the creature the mindless ability to act in a mob. Up to five walking corpses may help each other at once with any task, including dragging down their victims and eating them (in other words, positioning and Lock actions). When one corpse helps another, he adds helping dice as per usual, but he may not then act on his own. The act of helping essentially counts as his action.

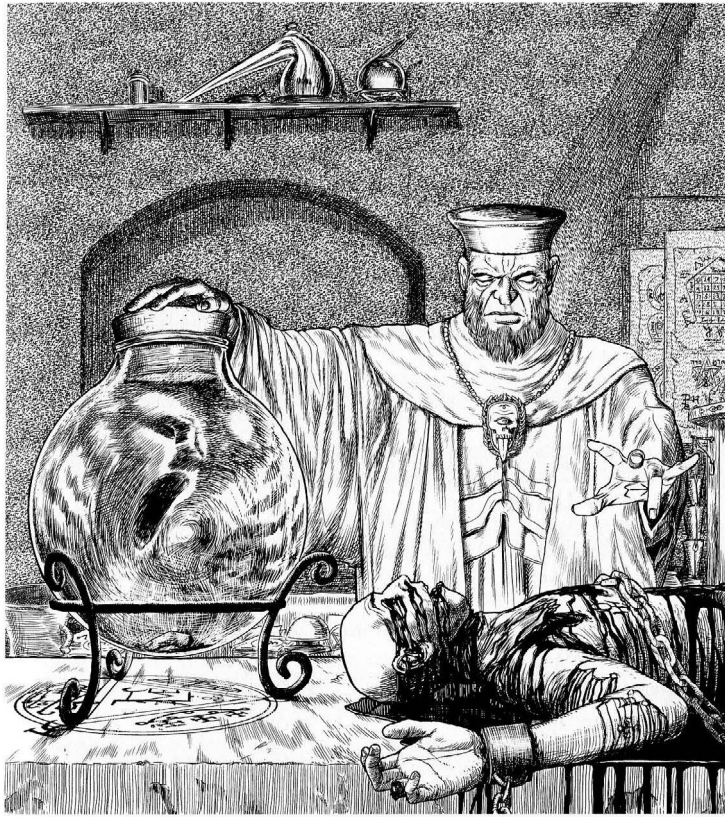
## Hungry Dead

*Char*

As a side effect of their reanimation, the dead become insatiably hungry. They may consume normal foodstuffs, but the only dish that truly curbs their desire is living human flesh.

## Ritual Reanimation

Raising a corpse back to its unsteady feet is not the only feat a death artist may perform. Given time and materials, he can reshape a corpse into a grim horror capable of efficiently carrying out his maleficent will. The base obstacle for ritual reanimation is significantly lower than the Rise! spell.



This process requires a workshop for Death Art and a number of hours equal to the obstacle of the spell to be cast to raise the corpse. The sorcerer may work patiently, carefully and quickly as per the standard skill rules.

## The Ritual of Reanimation.

There are four types of rituals for creating a corpse servant—reanimated corpse, soldier of the damned, abomination and night hunter. Each ritual produces a different body type and a different stat block. The sorcerer must choose which body type he wishes to begin with. Factor the corpse's state of decomposition into the obstacle. The death artist may further modify the body and the obstacle by using the rules described in the Transmogrification section. Finally, the death artist player can grant his character bonus dice to the skill test by imparting his servant with Beliefs and Instincts.



## Rituals of Reanimation Obstacles and Advantages

### Rituals

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Basic Ritual          | Ob 2 |
| Soldier of the Damned | Ob 3 |
| Abomination           | Ob 4 |
| Night Hunter          | Ob 5 |

### Decomposition

|                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 3 days dead        | —            |
| 10 days dead       | +1 Ob        |
| 20 days dead       | +2 Ob        |
| 50 days dead       | +3 Ob        |
| 1 year dead        | + 4 Ob       |
| More than one year | Not possible |

### Traits of the Living

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Living Traits              | +1D per trait   |
| All Good Children Go to... | +1 Ob per trait |

### Transmogrification

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Enhance stat (2-4)             | +1 Ob per point |
| Enhance stat (5 and up)        | +2 Ob per point |
| Enhance skill (2-4)            | +1 Ob per point |
| Enhance skill (5 and up)       | +2 Ob per point |
| Add skill                      | +1 Ob per skill |
| Monstrous corpse trait level 1 | +1 Ob per trait |
| Monstrous corpse trait level 2 | +2 Ob per trait |
| Monstrous corpse trait level 3 | +3 Ob per trait |

### In Morti ad Vivo

|              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Add Instinct | +1D per Instinct         |
| Add Belief   | +2D per Belief (max two) |

### I Am Night

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Add Night Blooded Trait | +2D |
|-------------------------|-----|

## Time of Death, Preferred Corpse

Any corpse that's been dead for a year or less may be so raised. Soldiers of the Damned are best made from fresh kills of strong young men and women. Abominations are often assembled from the outsized bodies of criminals, madmen and lepers. Children on the cusp of coming of age make the best fodder for Night Hunters.



## Transmogrification

The sorcerer may tinker with the strength, ability and adaptability of his creation. The modifications and enhancements that may be made to a corpse are listed below. Enjoy!

### *Enhancing the Body*

The sorcerer may concoct solutions and lay wards to increase the physical mettle of his creation. The player may increase physical stats from the base numbers listed with the body. Raising a stat from 2-4 increases the Death Art obstacle by one for each die added. Raising a stat to 5 or higher increases the Death Art obstacle by two for each die added.

The player may increase skill exponents from the base numbers listed with the body. Raising a skill from 1-4 increases the Death Art obstacle by one for each die added. Raising a skill to 5 or higher increases the Death Art obstacle by two for each die added.

### *Adding Skills*

The sorcerer may imbue his creations with additional skills. Each skill added increases the Ritual Reanimation obstacle by +1 Ob. Each skill added opens at *root plus 2*. You may select from the following list:

Weapon skills, Brawling, Throwing, Hauling, Climbing, Riding, Stealthy, Ditch Digging, Armor Training, Shield Training.

### *Monstrous Corpse Traits Level 1, +1 Ob*

The sorcerer may add any of the following traits to his creation. Each trait added increases the obstacle to reanimate by 1: Aggressive, Brute, Rending Claws, Slashing Claws, Tearing Claws, Devourer, Fangs, Fused Rib Cage, Heaving, Numb, Hideous!, Single-Minded or Silent. These traits are not described in this book. They can be found in the Monster Burner.

### *Monstrous Corpse Traits Level 2, +2 Ob*

The following traits may be bound into a corpse before it's reanimated. They increase the obstacle by 2 each: Berzerker, Cruel Strength, Dead to Pain, Brutal Fangs, Piercing Fangs, Hammer Hands, Repulsive Blood, Stillness, Unfeeling or Unflinching.

### *Monstrous Corpse Traits Level 3, +3 Ob*

Aura of Fear, Crushing Jaws, Dense Sinew, Devastator, Iron Hide, Leathery Skin.



## **In Morti ad Vivo**

Tinkering with the corpse's composition is primarily a spiritual and magical act. This process changes the nature of the creature. The more qualities the death artist grants to his rotting monster, the more lifelike it becomes. The more lifelike it becomes, the more willful and self-sufficient it becomes, but also the more vulnerable it grows to fear and pain.

### ***Revenge Is a Vulture***

Reanimated corpses lose all of the Beliefs and Instincts they had in life. The will and energy required to maintain such things in life are fuel for the bindings which lock the spirit in the fleshy prison and power its foul deeds. The soul is trapped in a hellish place between life and death. It only knows pain, loss and sorrow. But it experiences them without understanding. However, the more power the death artist grants to his creation, the closer to life and remembering it becomes.

The death artist player may grant his creations Instincts and Beliefs in order to gain bonus dice for the reanimation rituals.

- Granting a creature an Instinct gives +1D to the reanimation ritual. A creature may have up to three Instincts.
- Granting a creature a Belief grants +2D to the reanimation ritual. A Death Artist may allow two Beliefs to resurface in the corpse's bound soul.

The GM writes the Instincts and Beliefs. Even so the creature may not act on his Beliefs until he either earns three Beliefs or is freed from the spiritual bonds that bind him. Creatures with Instincts may use them as they are triggered.

## **I Am Night**

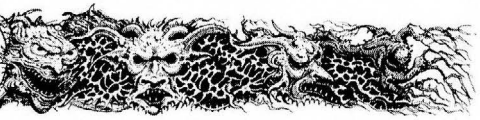
Applying the Night Blooded trait to a corpse—so it is only active at night—grants +2D to the Death Art test to reanimate.

## **Preserving a Trait From Life**

If a death artist wishes to preserve a trait the corpse held in life, he must make a separate Death Art test. The obstacle is 1 plus the trait point cost. You may preserve one trait.

## **Performing the Ritual**

Total the obstacle and bonus from the Ritual of Reanimation, Decomposition, Living Traits, Transmogrification, In Morti ad Vivo and I Am Night categories. Test Death Art plus advantage dice. This





test requires a Death Art workshop. Success indicates that the corpse rises from the ritual pit, reborn to serve its new master.

Failure indicates that either the spell has failed and the corpse is just rotting flesh, or that the death artist has called back something malevolent and destructive to inhabit the body. In this case, the GM may opt to have the corpse possessed by an imp or dæmon. Roll the Die of Fate if you don't have anything else in mind: 1–Lesser Imp, 2–Imp, 3–Greater Imp, 4–Lesser Dæmon, 5–Dæmon, 6–Greater Dæmon. The possessing spirit transfers the Lawbreaker trait and one other trait of the GM's choosing (except Spirit Nature) into the corpse. The corpse also retains any of the traits that the death artist was trying to impart.

## Ritually Reanimated Corpse Stat Blocks

| Ritually Reanimated Corpse |      |                                                                                                |      |    |    |          |     |                              |     |     |     |
|----------------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|----|----------|-----|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Wi                         | Pe   | Ag                                                                                             | Sp   | Po | Fo | He       | Re  | Ste                          | Mw  | Res | Cir |
| B9                         | B1   | B3                                                                                             | B3   | B5 | B5 | —        | B2  | B7                           | B11 | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier           |      |                                                                                                | x3.5 |    |    |          |     | Hesitation                   |     | 1   |     |
| PTGS                       |      | Su                                                                                             | Li   | Mi | Se | Tr       | Mo  | Base Reanimation Obstacle: 2 |     |     |     |
|                            |      | B3                                                                                             | B6   | B8 | B9 | B10      | B11 |                              |     |     |     |
| Traits                     | Char | Hungry Dead, Mute                                                                              |      |    |    |          |     |                              |     |     |     |
|                            | Die  | Reanimated Corpse, Hideous, Tough as Nails, Dead to Pain, Unfeeling, Clumsy Walker, Night Eyed |      |    |    |          |     |                              |     |     |     |
|                            | Call |                                                                                                |      |    |    |          |     |                              |     |     |     |
| Skills                     |      | Savage Attack B3                                                                               |      |    |    |          |     |                              |     |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage         |      | Type/Name                                                                                      | I    | M  | S  | Length   | VA  | Spd                          |     |     |     |
|                            |      | Nails/Bite                                                                                     | B3   | B5 | B7 | Shortest | —   | Slow                         |     |     |     |

| Soldier of the Damned |            |                                                                         |      |    |          |     |      |                              |     |     |     |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|----------|-----|------|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Wi                    | Pe         | Ag                                                                      | Sp   | Po | Fo       | He  | Re   | Ste                          | Mw  | Res | Cir |
| B6                    | B2         | B4                                                                      | B4   | B4 | B6       | —   | B3   | B7                           | B11 | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier      |            |                                                                         | x3.5 |    |          |     |      | Hesitation                   |     | 4/0 |     |
| PTGS                  |            | Su                                                                      | Li   | Mi | Se       | Tr  | Mo   | Base Reanimation Obstacle: 3 |     |     |     |
|                       |            | B4                                                                      | B7   | B8 | B9       | B10 | B11  |                              |     |     |     |
| Traits                | Char       | Hungry Dead, Mute                                                       |      |    |          |     |      |                              |     |     |     |
|                       | Die        | Reanimated Corpse, Hideous, Tough as Nails, Numb, Unfeeling, Night Eyed |      |    |          |     |      |                              |     |     |     |
|                       | Call       |                                                                         |      |    |          |     |      |                              |     |     |     |
| Skills                |            | Savage Attack B5                                                        |      |    |          |     |      |                              |     |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage    | Type/Name  | I                                                                       | M    | S  | Length   | VA  | Spd  |                              |     |     |     |
|                       | Nails/Bite | B2                                                                      | B4   | B6 | Shortest | —   | Slow |                              |     |     |     |





| Abomination        |      |                                                                                      |      |    |     |        |     |                              |      |     |     |
|--------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|--------|-----|------------------------------|------|-----|-----|
| Wi                 | Pe   | Ag                                                                                   | Sp   | Po | Fo  | He     | Re  | Ste                          | Mw   | Res | Cir |
| B4                 | B2   | B4                                                                                   | B4   | B6 | B6  | —      | B3  | B7                           | B12  | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier   |      |                                                                                      | x3.5 |    |     |        |     | Hesitation                   |      | 6/0 |     |
| PTGS               |      | Su                                                                                   | Li   | Mi | Se  | Tr     | Mo  | Base Reanimation Obstacle: 4 |      |     |     |
|                    |      | B4                                                                                   | B7   | B9 | B10 | B11    | B12 |                              |      |     |     |
| Traits             | Char | Hungry Dead, Mute                                                                    |      |    |     |        |     |                              |      |     |     |
|                    | Die  | Reanimated Corpse, Massive Stature, Hideous, Tough as Nails, Numb, Brute, Night Eyed |      |    |     |        |     |                              |      |     |     |
|                    | Call | Back-Breaking Labor, Lifting Heavy Things                                            |      |    |     |        |     |                              |      |     |     |
| Skills             |      | Savage Attack B4, Hauling B4                                                         |      |    |     |        |     |                              |      |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage |      | Type/Name                                                                            | I    | M  | S   | Length |     | VA                           | Spd  |     |     |
|                    |      | Nails/Bite                                                                           | B4   | B6 | B9  | Short  |     | —                            | Slow |     |     |

| Night Hunter       |                |                                                                                                                |    |    |    |        |    |                              |      |     |     |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|--------|----|------------------------------|------|-----|-----|
| Wi                 | Pe             | Ag                                                                                                             | Sp | Po | Fo | He     | Re | Ste                          | Mw   | Res | Cir |
| B3                 | B5             | B6                                                                                                             | B6 | B3 | B3 | —      | B2 | B7                           | B9   | —   | —   |
| Speed Multiplier   |                |                                                                                                                | x4 |    |    |        |    | Hesitation                   |      | 7/4 |     |
| PTGS               |                | Su                                                                                                             | Li | Mi | Se | Tr     | Mo | Base Reanimation Obstacle: 5 |      |     |     |
|                    |                | B2                                                                                                             | B4 | B6 | B7 | B8     | B9 |                              |      |     |     |
| Traits             | Char           | Hungry Dead, Mute                                                                                              |    |    |    |        |    |                              |      |     |     |
|                    | Die            | Reanimated Corpse, Hideous, Tough as Nails, Numb, Fearless, Slashing Claws, Nose of the Bloodhound, Night Eyed |    |    |    |        |    |                              |      |     |     |
|                    | Call           |                                                                                                                |    |    |    |        |    |                              |      |     |     |
| Skills             |                | Savage Attack B5, Stealthy B4, Climbing B4                                                                     |    |    |    |        |    |                              |      |     |     |
| Weapons and Damage | Type/Name      | I                                                                                                              |    | M  | S  | Length |    | VA                           | Spd  |     |     |
|                    | Slashing Claws | B2                                                                                                             |    | B4 | B6 | Short  |    | 1                            | Fast |     |     |

A three-day-old body can be turned into a Reanimated Corpse with an Ob 2 Death Art test. Increasing his Savage Attack skill from 3 to 4 adds +1 Ob. Giving him the Climbing skill adds +1 Ob. Adding Tearing Claws and a Fused Rib Cage are +1 Ob each. The total reanimation obstacle for this creature is then 6. If I give him the Night Blooded trait and an Instinct, I get +3D to the test.

## Re-Reanimation

Corpses that are dealt a Mortal Wound in play are once again freed from their mortal coil. They die again and may not receive treatment, recover or heal. They may, however, be rebound by Death Art. Oh hideous fate!



Rebinding a spirit to its corpse requires a Death Art ritual similar to the one that reanimated it in the first place. The death artist gains a +1D advantage to the test. The corpse creature also gains a Belief. It may have up to three Beliefs. If the creature to be brought back already has three Beliefs, the obstacle to control and maintain the creature as described under the Inevitable, Immortal Army is increased by +1.

## Death of the Spirit

There is another set of rituals contained in this art. Rather than take that which is dead and give it the semblance of life, the death artist may take the life slowly from the living and give them the semblance of death.

This process is undertaken in three steps—toxification, living death and evocation. The subject may be willing or unwilling. It does not matter. At the end of the process, they will either be dead or transformed into a powerful spirit of vengeance.

### Toxification

The first step in this process is to begin killing the body. The death artist must introduce toxins and poisons into the victim's system and slowly, but firmly, accelerate his path toward death.

As mentioned above, the victim does not have to be willing or even aware of the process. But he must ingest the concoctions the death artist presents to him—either willingly or by force.

#### *Death Toxins*

Special alcohol or drugs, or specially prepared meat, must be fed to the victim. Preparing the special, poisoned alcohol or drugs is an Ob 1 Death Art test. Preparing a meal of intoxicated meat is an Ob 2 test. They must be ingested. They may not be injected.

Once the poison is ingested, make a versus test between the victim's Forte and Death Art. If Death Art is successful, the process has begun. Apply the margin of success as described under the You Should Be Dying heading. If the Death Art test fails, the victim falls ill and suffers an injury equal to the exponent of the Death Art skill. But now, the victim may not be taken down this path—he is resistant. He may, of course, be killed and his corpse reanimated.



### ***You Should Be Dying***

Successful intoxication grants the victim the *Aggressive* trait. In addition, each additional success can be spent to grant the following traits: *Drunk*, *Addicted*, *Bottomless Stomach* or *Cannibal*. Each trait costs one success.

The victim is also now primed for further torment from the death artist.

## **The Living Death**

During the second stage of the process, the death artist begins to separate the victim's soul from his body, like prying back fingernails from their moorings.

This phase of the process requires a ritual involving candles, sacrifice and meditation. It must take place in the sorcerer's workshop and the victim must be present.

Test Death Art versus the victim's Will. If Death Art is successful, the victim earns the Silent call-on trait and the Necrophagic character trait. And he is now ready for the final step, evocation.

### ***Soul Twisting***

Extra successes may be used to apply additional traits to the victim from the following list: *Dissent Parasite*, *Blood Lust*, *Aura of Fear*, *Single-Minded*, *Ultra-Fast Reflexes*.

Extra successes may also be applied to eliminating the victim's Beliefs and Instincts. Two successes may be spent to remove an Instinct slot from the character sheet—he had three, now he has two. Three successes may be spent to remove a Belief slot. Multiple Instincts and Beliefs may be lost in one test. The target player may determine which Beliefs are lost.

The time for the test is hours equal to the obstacle of the test plus any extra successes applied for traits.

If the test is failed, something has gone wrong during the ritual. The victim wakes up and witnesses the horror around him. He may attempt to escape the death artist's lair with Speed, Stealth or by force, whichever is most appropriate to the situation. He may not be brought further down the path to evocation.



## Evocation

In the final stage of the ritual, the death artist rips the very soul from his victim and transforms it into a deadly servant. In order for the soul to be evoked, the victim must be tormented and then ritually murdered.

Make a Death Art test against an obstacle equal to *the victim's current Will exponent plus his current Forte exponent*. Describe your actions in terms of things metaphysical, religious and ritual. Describe how you're transforming your victim into this new monstrous form.

### Successful Evocation

If successful, the death artist rips the very soul from his victim and transforms it into a servant of his will, trapped in a living death. The victim earns the following traits: Slave to the Power of Death, Dual Natured, Luminescent, Stillness and Heartless.

Extra successes from the evocation test may be spent to add traits or to remove Beliefs and Instincts.

- It costs one extra success to remove a Belief or Instinct at this stage.
- The following traits cost one extra success each: Corpse-Bound, Mesmerizing Gaze, Horrific Aura.
- These traits cost two extra successes each: Amulet-Bound and Celestial Sight.
- Spirit Nature costs three extra successes.

The victim retains skills he had in life. Die and call-on traits are lost and replaced with those imparted by the Death of the Spirit process. Character traits are retained. The slave's stats are equal to his stats in life, minus any dice from injuries sustained at the time of this death.

*If a victim is evoked while suffering from a Traumatic Wound, all of his stats are reduced by four when he transforms from life to unlife.*

The victim may not learn new skills unless he has three Beliefs. If he has fewer than three Beliefs, he has no free will and must obey the commands of his creator without hesitation.

### Evocation Time

The evocation test takes days equal to the obstacle.

### Failed Evocation

If the test is failed, the victim dies.



## Slave to the Power of Death

Dt

This creature is now the servant of the sorcerer who evoked his soul. He is no longer alive, but neither is he dead. He will not age, grow sick, hunger or sleep. Use the skills the victim had in life. Die and call-on traits are lost and replaced with those imparted by the Death of the Spirit process. Character traits are retained. The slave's stats are equal to his stats in life, minus any dice from injuries sustained at the time of this death.

## Ghouls

Taking a subject through Toxification and the Living Death effectively transforms him into a ghoul. However, he is not under the sorcerer's direct control. Ghouls are still alive and may think and act as they please. Command and Intimidation tests may be used to motivate them and Duel of Wits used to sway them.

## The Liche

The death artist may perform the Death of the Spirit ritual upon himself.

## I Am in Command

A successful Death Art test to raise a corpse or spirit puts the sorcerer in command of the creature. Commands must be verbalized, but all implication and subtext is comprehended via the deep bond between the death artist and his creation.

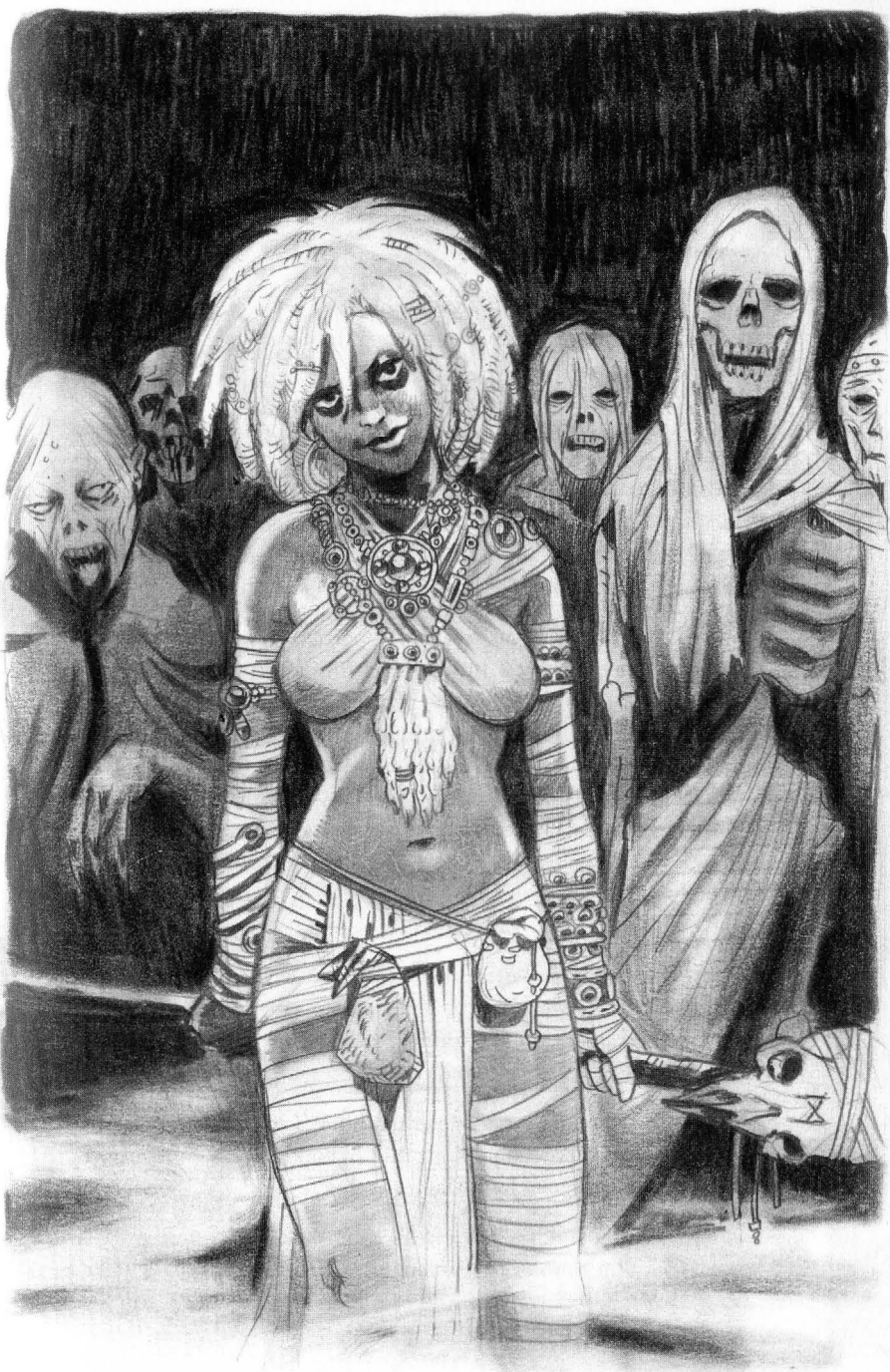
*For example, the sorcerer may shout, "Get him!" and the creature will know who "him" is.*

## Gathering the Materials

Death Art requires a few key ingredients, namely a victim (the soon-to-be corpse) and a laboratory or ritual chamber.

## Workshops

Death Art requires a workshop (20 rps) for the higher-end processes—Corpse Art and Death of the Spirit. This "workshop" is either a laboratory or a ritual religious space depending on the idiom of the art in your game. Acquiring the materials for such a thing is an Ob 6 Resources test in play. It's not cheap. It also puts the sorcerer's lifestyle maintenance test at Ob 4.





## Victims and Corpses

Victims are characters in your story. They can be relationships bought before play or characters encountered during the game. Victims may be brought into the game via Circles. If the sorcerer player wishes to do this use the *specific disposition* modifier—the player is specifically looking for a victim. Also, this Circles test brings in characters whom you've known in the past. No matter who the victim is, he and the sorcerer have crossed paths before.

Corpses can be acquired in a number of ways, none of them pleasant. I recommend calling for a test in order to find a corpse based on the following conditions:

### Murders

Murder scenes are an obvious site of fresh corpses. However, it's difficult to predict where they'll happen and thus they're notoriously difficult to exploit. Unless, of course, one arranges and performs the murder oneself. Then this can be a most reliable source of fresh meat. To arrange for a victim, use the Victim mechanics.

Murderous sorcerers are an excellent opportunity to bring in the local law enforcement figures. In medieval human kingdoms, bailiffs, constables and justiciars are the officers of the king's law. They'll usually be of a count or baron's rank and have with them a retinue of knights and squires. In a village, most likely the local sergeant will be the first to investigate a crime. And they will investigate—they'll interrogate witnesses and search for physical evidence. Bored officials love to investigate a good crime, especially when it means they'll get to crucify a skeezy necromancer.

### Graveyards

Finding a suitable graveyard calls for a Graveyard-wise test! The obstacle should be from 1 to 3, depending on the frequency of such places in your game. The wealthier an area, the more likely it is to have a graveyard.

There is the matter of the digging or tomb-breaking. Digging shouldn't be a test unless there's something else at stake, like a time crunch. Then, by all means, call for a Ditch Digging test.

Graveyards almost never have fresh corpses, however. Roll a die of fate to determine the state of decomposition of the corpses:



| Graveyard Corpse Ages |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1                     | 10 days dead    |
| 2                     | 20 days dead    |
| 3                     | 50 days dead    |
| 4                     | 1 year dead     |
| 5                     | 1 year dead     |
| 6                     | Many years gone |

### Gibbets

Gibbets are execution grounds, specifically, scaffolding on which criminals are hanged until they die. They're an excellent source of fresh bodies but suffer from being in rather public places.

Finding a gibbet can be done via a Roads-wise test in the country, or a Streetwise test in the city. Alternately, a Bandit-wise or Criminal-wise test could be used to get directions.

Stealing a body from a gibbet requires an Inconspicuous test (during daylight hours) or a Stealthy test (at night) against an Observation of B3 for small towns, B4 for large towns, B5 for cities. In some situations, an Ob 3 Resources test can be paid to bribe the hangman to look the other way. Success indicates the sorcerer gets away undetected. Just a family member come to collect the body, right? Failure indicates *someone* is up for a new reputation....

Roll the Die of Fate to determine how old the corpse on the gibbet is:

| Gibbet Corpse Ages |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                  | Less than 3 days dead |
| 2                  | Less than 3 days dead |
| 3                  | 10 days dead          |
| 4                  | 10 days dead          |
| 5                  | 50 days dead          |
| 6                  | 1 year dead           |

### Grave Pits

Grave pits are common in poor areas, or areas of the countryside with temporarily high mortality rates due to plague or war. Grave pits are open to the air, with the corpses simply wrapped and dropped in and then covered with a shovelful of quicklime. There is typically a grave digger present at the grave pits as a nominal guard, but otherwise these pits are perforce in remote locations.



Finding a grave pit requires a Graveyard-wise test for *details* (Ob 3), or a *simple facts* (Ob 2) Plague-wise test. Roll a Die of Fate to determine the state of decomposition of the corpses:

| Grave Pit Corpse Ages |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                     | Less than 3 days dead |
| 2                     | 10 days dead          |
| 3                     | 20 days dead          |
| 4                     | 20 days dead          |
| 5                     | 50 days dead          |
| 6                     | 1 year dead           |

### Battle Sites

Recent battle sites are an excellent source of fresh corpses. Unfortunately, most soldiers tend to be rather emotional about retrieving and burying their dead. Stealing a body from an active battle site requires a Stealthy test versus the force's scouts or, I suppose, an Inconspicuous test to walk into camp and pretend you're a surgeon. Getting caught inevitably involves arrows and swords, so do take care. The upside is that these bodies are always fresh!

Prospecting at an ancient battle site is usually a losing prospect. A successful Excavation test will turn up battlefield remains. Roll on the following table to determine the corpse's age:

| Battle Sites Corpse Ages |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1                        | 1 year dead     |
| 2                        | 1 year dead     |
| 3                        | Many years gone |
| 4                        | Many years gone |
| 5                        | Many years gone |
| 6                        | Many years gone |

## The Inevitable, Immortal Army

Using the Death Art, a sorcerer can accumulate quite a horde of dead followers. Maintaining a horde is difficult and dangerous, but very rewarding.

### Maintaining Your Horde

At the end of each session, before artha is doled out, the sorcerer must test his Will in order to keep his horde of creations in control. Test



the sorcerer's Will. Base obstacle is 0, +1 Ob for each risen or ritually reanimated corpse, +2 Ob for each creature with the Slave to the Power of Death trait and +1 Ob for each of these that has three Beliefs.

Success indicates that the sorcerer keeps his children in check. They will obey his commands unflinching for the next session.

### ***Go Forth and Stalk the Night, My Children***

Failing the maintenance test indicates that the death artist's hold over his dead minions is weakening. The sorcerer may do one of two things: He may release creatures from his service. These monsters become independent entities, acting on their own. The sorcerer may not regain control over them (except through Re-Reanimation). The sorcerer must release creatures whose maintenance obstacle penalty equals the margin of failure.

*If he failed by three, he's got to release three risen creatures, one spirit and one fleshy creature or one spirit with three Beliefs.*

### ***Tightening the Grip***

Alternately, the sorcerer can opt to exert his will and force the creatures to remain in his service. Doing so grants his creations a number of Beliefs equal to the margin of failure. The Beliefs must be assigned to the most valuable creation with the most Beliefs first, then to the next most valuable, etc.

### ***I Can Remember My Wife; You Killed Her, You Bastard!***

If a sorcerer fails a maintenance test and has a creature under his control with three Beliefs, he must set it free first before he can decide what else to do with the remainder of his margin of failure.

You may choose to mix releasing members of the horde and tightening the grip on others in order to satisfy the margin of failure for the maintenance test.

### ***Help Me, You Fool!***

The sorcerer may get help to maintain his horde from another death artist, so long as his friend has the Death Art skill and is not maintaining control over any reanimated corpses or evoked spirits of his own.

### ***Freedom***

Creatures who are set free or break free may act on their Beliefs. The GM takes control of them, and generally they are not happy. Their existence is one of torment and slavery. It's not uncommon for them



to break free from the sorcerer's control and simply throw themselves upon him in an attempt to take his wretched life. That rarely ends well.

The truly smart ones crawl off to the hills and barrows and plot their revenge. To die again in front of their former master only gives him power over them again!

The GM may choose the best course for these monsters guided by their Beliefs and Instincts.

### ***Belief Bookkeeping***

Don't keep a record of all of the creatures' Beliefs. Simply note how many Beliefs each monster has. When the creature is freed, write up the proper odes to revenge and murder that such Beliefs would encompass.

### ***Instincts Bookkeeping***

I do recommend tracking Instincts. They should be a mix of survival and revenge. For example:

*"Always use my Stealthy when on errands for my master."*

*And, "When the master falters, shove him off the cliff."*

## **Field Life of a Corpse**

The corpses do continue to decompose. Death Art does not inherently preserve them. This does not lessen their effectiveness, per se, but after a year or so of death, the creatures crumble to a useless pile of hair and bone. Generally, it's not going to be something you need to worry about. But it is something to keep in mind.

## **Live in Infamy**

Death artists are bad men. In every culture, tampering with the dead and calling souls back to serve you (as slaves) is a great taboo. It's ugly business. These taboos are typically written into civil and religious law. The penalties for breaking these laws are often as harsh as can be—imprisonment or corporal punishment are typical.

### **The Infamous Lives of Death Artists**

At any point in the game, if a death artist is caught performing his works, and news of this spreads, he earns an infamous reputation. If there are one or more surviving witnesses, word spreads. At the end of the session, review the death artist's candidacy for a reputation. The



group can vote him a new 1D infamous reputation, increase an extant infamous reputation by one or they may convert (pervert) one of his other more valuable reputations into an infamous one.

## Lay Your Fears to Rest

Death Art is an insidious and powerful art, but it is not without its vulnerabilities. Its base creations may be felled by fire and axe, whereas wraiths and spectres are vulnerable to Faith, Summoning and Folklore.

### Faith in Light, Life, Health and Purity

Priests of the religions who have power in spheres of light, life, health or purity have a special options for the blessing, hindrance, purification and intercession miracles. The blessing miracle may be used to turn a weapon to a *spirit weapon* against Death Art only or add the standard +1D advantage. Choose before saying the blessing. Ob 6 Hindrance stops a number of creatures equal to the priest's Faith exponent, rather than just three creatures. Purification unbinds body and spirit and causes a reanimated corpse to crumble before the priest.

Tormented spirits are another matter. These souls require an intercession. The priest must pray for them and God must reach out and set them free. Successful intercession destroys those under the duress of the Death of the Spirit.

### Summoning Against Death

Summoning may be used to call forth the souls who are bound into and fueling these creations. Reanimated corpses count as restless dead. Fully evoked spirits count as minor corporal spirits. If the test is successful, the creature will present itself to the summoner. It will not initially harm him when it is summoned. If the creature has Beliefs, it can enter into a pact. If it has none, it may not. The death artist's magic has it trapped. The summoner's magic is not capable of destroying spirits or countering the Death Art magic. The summoner must find another way to free the soul if he so desires.

However, the summoner may trap these spirit creatures in prison circles. See the rules for Circination in the Summoning chapter.

*If your uncle's corpse has been raised to serve a death artist and you summon your uncle's spirit, the walking corpse eventually shambles up and heeds your summons.*





## Folklore

The Folklore skill contains a wealth of knowledge and resources for combatting the creatures of the night. Often, remedies are specific to a particular culture. To allow for a range of possible cultures and game worlds, these expanded rules describe some overarching motifs for Folklore and how to use them to ward off the walking dead and track down evil sorcerers.

For the sake of simplicity, I've broken down this application of Folklore into three categories: charms, wards and remedies.

### Charms

Charms are small baubles, necklaces and bracelets worn by the superstitious. When created, a charm must be dedicated to protecting against a specific type of creature—either walking corpses, ghouls or fully evoked spirits. Also, a charm must be fragile and breakable—there must be the chance that they get ripped, torn, lost or broken. A charm imposes a +1 Ob to any activity of the target creature against the wearer.

### Wards

A ward is a place, object or symbol that keeps spirits, the living dead and reanimated corpses at bay. These creatures may not approach, attack or otherwise act against characters within the protection of a ward.

*Holy groves, churches, temples and running streams can act as wards.*

### Remedies

A “remedy” for the death artist’s constructs is something that hastens the creature’s destruction. Remedies for these abominations include things like holy water, silver swords and wooden stakes. A remedy can turn a regular weapon to a spirit weapon, grant an advantage die when fighting these creatures or increase the selected Power of a weapon by 1 when used against a specified product of Death Art.

### Creating Charms, Wards and Remedies with Folklore

Customs differ from place to place. What might be effective in one village might not work in the next. The Folklore skill is used to discover the proper charms, wards and remedies for various places.



In order to discover what's an effective solution to his current problem, the player makes a Folklore skill test. The obstacle is determined by combining a number of factors and conditions. The player and the GM work together to set the obstacle and thereby determine the folklore customs for this particular locale.

The more obscure and difficult to perform, the lower the obstacle for the Folklore. Look through the following list. Find a handful of conditions and criteria that appeal to you, and that make sense. The base Folklore obstacle is 10. Each condition that you choose from the list below reduces the obstacle by one.

*So if you choose Numbers, Gesture and Day-to-Day Rituals—three items from the list—the obstacle is reduced from 10 to 7.*

Before testing against the obstacle, decide if you're going to find a charm, ward or remedy. They're all the same obstacle to discover, but have different effects in play, and each has different conditions of acquisition. Once you've chosen your conditions and set your obstacle, decide how they fit together.



### ***Significant Numbers***

Certain numbers have mystical effects: 4 is bad luck in some cultures, 5 is a holy number in others. Choose a significant number.

### ***Significant Metals***

Certain metals are better at combatting the supernatural. Iron, silver, gold and lead all have unique properties.

### ***Significant Minerals***

Salt, diamonds, quartz and a variety of other minerals are noted for their protective powers against the dead.

### ***Significant Herbs or Plants***

Garlic, cloves, aniseed and adzuki beans are all renowned for creating potent wards and charms.

### ***Significant Animals or Parts Thereof***

A wolf's tooth, rabbit's foot, lamb's blood or honey can aid the knowledgeable in warding off the depredations of the dead.

### ***Significant Dates***

Holy days, birthdays of saints, equinoxes, solstices, full moons and eclipses all influence the power of supernaturals.

### ***Significant Geometry***

Certain symbols—stars, perfect circles, equilateral triangles—have mystical potential.

### ***Significant Architecture***

The manner in which a building is constructed can be so pure and powerful that it adversely affects the spells of a death artist.

### ***Significant Features***

A lone tree on a blasted heath, a swiftly running stream, consecrated ground or a mountain shaped like a jagged tooth can all act as powerful wards against the risen dead.

### ***Significant Gestures or Manners***

The sign to avert evil, averting the eyes, dancing in circles and reciting ritual phrases are all well-known sources of power against the dead risen.

### ***Significant Day-to-Day Rituals***

Even everyday rituals like sweeping the stoop with a broom, washing one's hands before a meal, or praying to the saints before bed can aid in keeping one's life free and clear of the death artist's dark servants.



*If you chose minerals, numbers, dates, architecture and day-to-day rituals, what does that mean? You've got to put it all together: On the morning of the day of the new moon, the stoop of the house must be swept clean and then three perfect piles of salt poured on the lintel. That'd be an Ob 5 Folklore test to bring this into the game. Difficult, but possible. Especially if you get help.*

## Find the Rare Thing

Knowing the Folklore of charms, wards and remedies doesn't necessarily mean these things are easily found. If items need to be acquired, they may be found via Resources, scavenging and wise tests. If some unique creation needs to be found—a silver-domed church ringed in quartz—the obstacle for the test is 10 minus the Folklore test obstacle. So if it was an Ob 1 Folklore test, it'd be an Ob 9 Resources test.

## Folkloric Restrictions

These rules are very broad and allow for the players to shape local color. If the GM feels that some of the categories break the mood of the setting, he may restrict them. The first level of restriction is requiring linked wise tests to discover these elements—to learn when a lunar eclipse will transpire, for example. The second level of restriction is to cut certain items from the game outright. The culture might not hold animals sacred or have no great architecture, for example.





# Abstraction and Distillation

Abstraction is a spell creation and spell-on-the-fly system designed to be used in combination with the traditional Burning Wheel Sorcery rules.

In this system, a spell is a combination of facets formed to produce a specific desired effect. Facets are the fundamental components of spells. Using facets to create new effects is called abstraction.

*For example, if a wizard knew the facets for Control and Fire, rather than just the spell for Pyrotechnics, he could conceivably create abstractions to make the fire grow, fall, dance, change hue or even smoke.*

However, abstraction is a difficult, dangerous and taxing art. The raw facets contain much hidden power and meaning. The wizard must focus that power into a desired effect.

## Abstraction Process

This system is a technical process. There's lots of adding and dividing. There's even a strange chart to consult.

There are two methods to abstract a spell. For the first method, conceive of a spell effect, choose your appropriate facets to match, factor the obstacle and action, then test Will+Sorcery.

The second method uses an extant spell to which you add a facet to alter the outcome of the spell. Declare your intent, add the facet's obstacle and actions to the spell's obstacle and actions and test Will+Sorcery against the obstacle.

## Element

The element of a spell is its central facet. It is the target of the spell or the vehicle by which the spell accomplishes the caster's intent.



## Air

Obstacle 2, Actions 4. Resource point cost: 10.

Air is the element of the wind.

## Anima

Obstacle variable, see below, Actions 5. Resource point cost: 12.

Anima is the element of the bodies and minds of creatures.

The casting obstacle of Anima depends on the target stat of the creature or character being affected. If it is ever used on its own, it's Ob 5. Anima cannot be used with the Create impetus. You cannot create life.

## Arcana

Obstacle 4, Actions 10. Resource point cost: 13.

Arcana is the sphere of arcane power—magic.

## Earth

Obstacle 1, Actions 6. Resource point cost: 8.

Earth is metal, stone, wood and dirt.

## Fire

Obstacle 2, Actions 5. Resource point cost: 10.

Fire encompasses the sphere of the tool most useful—heat and flame.

## Heaven

Obstacle 3, Actions 8. Resource point cost: 10.

Heaven invokes the sphere of light and darkness.

## Water

Obstacle 2, Actions 3. Resource point cost: 9.

Water commands rain, pools, rivers, seas, ponds and streams.

## White

Obstacle 4, Actions 7. Resource point cost: 11.

The white element is the dangerous sphere of heavenly fire, lightning and all her sisters.





## Impetus

The impetus of a spell determines how that spell affects its element.

### With or By?

What can Fire Destroyer mean? That is largely up to the player's concept for the spell. It can mean destroy with fire, but can it mean something else? Fire Destroyer could also be interpreted to mean *destroy fire*. The same goes for all elements and impeti.

### Control

Obstacle 5, Actions 16. Resource point cost: 5.

Using the Control impetus, a sorcerer may change the shape of, or forcibly move, his target element.

### Create

Obstacle 6, Actions 32. Resource point cost: 6.

The Create impetus involves fabrication of materials or substance.

### Destroy

Obstacle 2, Actions 2. Resource point cost: 3.

The Destroy facet allows the wizard to turn his magic into a weapon. The wizard's Will stat counts as the Power stat for the attack. The spell is the weapon. See the Spells as Weapons heading in this chapter for more.

Adding the majoris and minoris sigils can increase or reduce damage. See the Sigils section for details.

### Enhance

Obstacle 4, Actions 12. Resource point cost: 4.

The Enhance impetus grants a boon to its element. It fortifies and strengthens to an otherworldly degree. It adds dice to an ability or adds strength or quality to an extant material. It cannot add a material or ability that would not previously exist in the element. Also, in Anima abstractions, Enhance can extend senses into other viable realms—like the Magesense spell—instead of adding dice.

You may not Enhance the Sorcery skill or any tests related to the casting of spells.



Affecting stats is the standard Enhance effect. Single skill enhancements might be considered for the minoris sigil. You may not affect Reflexes, Mortal Wound or an emotional attribute directly. Health and Steel may be affected directly.

## Influence

Obstacle 3, Actions 4. Resource point cost: 3.

Think of a magnet and a compass—such is the effect of the Influence impetus. It can also change the colors, temperature and direction of its target. This impetus triggers a test in the element or with the element where there wouldn't be one before.

## Tax

Obstacle 1, Actions 1. Resource point cost: 2.

The Taxing impetus' role is to drain or weaken the strength of its target. This can be done *to* an element or *with* an element. The Tax element can be used to cause an element to add obstacle penalties (Thunderclap) or be used to directly decrease dice from a stat or skill (Emperor's Hand). Affecting skills is the standard effect. Targeting stats, Health and Steel is a majoris affect. Emotional attributes, Reflexes and Mortal Wound may not be directly affected.

## Transmute

Obstacle 3\*, Actions 25. Resource point cost: 7.

Transmutation is a difficult and obscure art. This facet allows the sorcerer to change one element to another.

\*Add the obstacle of this facet to the obstacle of the facet being changed into. The caster must know the element facet he is changing his target into.

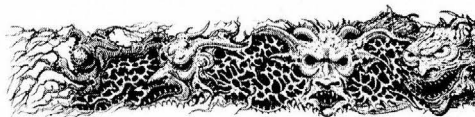
## Origin

Origin indicates where the spell can start—how far away from the caster the spell can be thrown and still have its intended effect. There are three Origins: Personal, Presence, Sight.

## Personal

Obstacle 0, Actions 1. Resource point cost: —.

Spells with Personal Origin start from or on the caster.



## Presence

Obstacle 2, Actions 2. Resource point cost: 2.

Presence Origin indicates the spell may be started anywhere within the caster's presence.

## Sight

Obstacle 4, Actions 4. Resource point cost: 4.

The spell may be started anywhere the caster can see. Even if the origin is remote and distant, the wizard may throw the spell there so long as he can see it. The sight range includes extrasensory sight extended by Magesense, Sight of the Eagle and such.

## Duration

There are four durations for spells in Burning Wheel: spells that have an immediate, instantaneous effect; spells that have a continuing effect and rely on the caster to sustain them; spells that are active for a set time; and spells that have a permanent effect.

### Instantaneous

Obstacle 0, Actions 1. Resource point cost: —.

These spells manifest immediately and then disappear. If an instantaneous effect spell causes a penalty or modifier to a character (like Lights of St. Andrew), that penalty fades at one step per volley.

*If a spell causes +4 Ob penalties to a character, the effect fades in four seconds/volleys/moments.*

If an instantaneous effect spell creates a solid object like a stone or a phenomenon like a gust of wind, these things come and go quite quickly, but any effects they had on the surroundings last as long as they naturally would.

### Sustained

Obstacle 2, Actions 2. Resource point cost: 2.

Sustained spells are maintained by the force of the caster's will. So long as the caster concentrates, the spell effects remain. See the Sustained Spells rules on page 216 of the Burning Wheel and the Sustaining Abstractions section of this chapter.



## Elapsed Time

### *Actions/Seconds*

Ob 1, Actions 2. Resource point cost: 2.

### *Exchanges*

Ob 2, Actions 6. Resource point cost: 4.

### *Minutes*

Ob 3, Actions 8. Resource point cost: 5.

### *Hours*

Ob 4, Actions 12. Resource point cost: 7.

### *Days*

Ob 5, Actions 24. Resource point cost: 8.

### *Months*

Ob 7, Actions 43. Resource point cost: 9.

### *Years*

Ob 9, Actions 81. Resource point cost: 10.

Successfully casting a spell with an elapsed time duration earns one increment of the time listed. Each extra success allocated to Duration adds another increment of time.

*If a spell has the hours duration, it lasts for one hour plus one hour per extra success allocated to Duration.*

## Permanent

Obstacle 10, Actions 500. Resource point cost: 100.

*The Permanent facet renders the magical effect of the spell permanent. Force of Will, for example, makes the wizard's desires and influence a permanent part of the victim's psyche.*

## Instantaneous Duration Creation

When using the Creation impetus, the element created only lasts as long as the duration of the abstraction. A rock instantaneously conjured instantly disappears. However, the impact of the rock on the soft earth, or the caster's toe, would remain just like any other natural phenomenon.



## Area of Effect

### **Caster**

Obstacle 0, Actions 1. Resource point cost: —.

This spell only affects the caster.

### **Single Target**

Obstacle 1, Actions 2. Resource point cost: 2.

This spell only affects one character or object (who is not the caster).

### **Presence**

Obstacle 2, Actions 3. Resource point cost: 3.

This spell affects everything within the presence of the caster.

### **Half Presence**

Obstacle 1, Actions 3. Resource point cost: 2.

### **Double Presence**

Obstacle 4, Actions 6. Resource point cost: 4.

### **Natural Effect**

Obstacle 3, Actions 4. Resource point cost: 4.

Natural Effect spells play themselves out according to the inclination of their element. They have no set or defined area aside from the intent and effect of the spell. A wind summoned in a house to blow open a door would also blow out all the candles and even shatter windows (or worse) if cast too powerfully. Natural Effect is powerful and capricious. When added to a spell, it drastically changes it from a controlled execution to something wild and unpredictable. If Natural Effect is added to a create, destroy, influence or enhance spell, use the Natural Effect Scale on page 214 of the Burning Wheel to judge its effect.

### **Double Natural Effect**

Obstacle 6, Actions 8. Resource point cost: 8.

If a sorcerer wishes to conjure natural phenomena of truly cataclysmic proportion, he calls upon the Double Natural Effect facet. Using this effect, a wind that would have struck down one house would strike down two, a wave conjured to knock over men standing in the surf would be large enough to capsize boats, and so on.



## Half Natural Effect

Obstacle 2, Actions 3. Resource point cost: 3.

If a wizard wishes to limit the effects of his magics, he may try to contain them with Half Natural Effect. This facet does not limit the immediate power of the spell but does stop it short of destroying the whole city. A gale force wind could be contained on a single street rather than ripping off the roofs of the entire neighborhood. Or a storm summoned would only rain on one house. Or a flood conjured would die before it washed out the entire mountain road—washing out only half of it.

## Measured Area (MA)

Measured Areas of Effect are used when the caster wants to affect a certain confined or predetermined area or wants the spell to travel a certain distance.

### *Paces*

Obstacle 2, Actions 4. Resource point cost: 3.

### *Tens of Paces*

Obstacle 4, Actions 6. Resource point cost: 5.

### *Hundreds of Paces*

Obstacle 6, Actions 8. Resource point cost: 6.

### *Miles*

Obstacle 8, Actions 10. Resource point cost: 8.

### *Tens of Miles*

Obstacle 9, Actions 15. Resource point cost: 9.

### *Hundreds of Miles*

Obstacle 10, Actions 20. Resource point cost: 10.

Measured Area spells affect the basic amount of area indicated in the description: Tens of paces affects a 10-pace diameter circle, or a 10-pace long stretch, for example. To increase that area, the caster must indicate his intended area of affect before the spell is cast. Each incremental increase of area (+1 pace, +10 paces, +1 mile, etc.) requires that the sorcerer increase his casting obstacle by one. This doesn't affect the tax obstacle. If you want a spell to level a courtyard, the sorcerer can't rely on luck; he's got to pay for the area of effect with increased obstacle.





## Abstraction Process

Using these powerful names for the natural elements, time, space and distance and combining them with the impeti, a sorcerer may form a new and unique spell.

### Spell Concept

Spell concept is of paramount importance when abstracting. It is the force of the sorcerer's will that shapes and governs the final outcome of the process of abstraction. Without will there can be no spellcraft.

*I want to create a spell that sends a blast of leaves and dirt into my enemy's face, distracting him.*

### Idiom

Sorcerer players must ensure that the elements of their spells are appropriate to the idiom of their game. Burning Wheel is a medieval fantasy roleplaying game. Modern science is not an acceptable venue for spellcraft. It is not cool to use the Water element to suck all the water from a person's cells. The medieval mind did not understand that such a relationship existed! The GM may veto a spell/abstraction that he feels violates the idiom of the setting.

### Choose Facets

After the concept of the abstraction has been described, the player and the GM determine the proper facets using the Wheel of Magic or the Spell Facets list.

*My leaf distracting spell would be Earth, Tax, Presence Origin, Instantaneous Duration, Single Target Area of Effect.*

### Build the Numbers

Once the facets have been determined, total the obstacle and actions. This is the casting obstacle and casting time for the abstraction.

*From the examples above: Earth (Ob 1, 6 actions), Tax (Ob 1, 1 action), Presence Origin (Ob 2, 2 actions), Instantaneous Duration (Ob 0, 1 action), Single Target Area of Effect (Ob 1, 2 actions). It's an Ob 5 spell and takes 12 actions.*

*This is a difficult spell to cast on the fly. It's much easier to add a facet to an existing spell and cast that. See the Abstracting from a Spell heading in this chapter.*



Abstraction and Distillation



## Speak the Abstraction

Cast abstractions using the normal spellcasting rules: Test Will+Sorcery; the time required is equal to the number of actions spoken; roll for tax after the spell has been released.

## Successful Abstraction

If the player meets the obstacle for the abstraction, his intent for the spell is carried through. Apply extra successes to effect and duration as appropriate.

## Failed by One to Five Successes

If the obstacle is missed, the effect of the spell varies from what was intended. The margin of failure determines how many facets vary from their original intent.

This could be something good, but is probably something bad. Abstraction is not a science. The sorcerer is experimenting with bits of power that he thinks will generate his desired effect and this often creates unexpected results. If the sorcerer is not careful, skilled and lucky, then the effects of the spell can vary from the initial concept and change into something quite different.

*If I fail to meet my obstacle, my spell might end up enhancing my opponent's perception rather than hindering it.*

## Abject Failure

There are special rules for abstractions that fail by six or more successes. Roll the Die of Fate and consult the table below:

| Abject Failure Results |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                      | Unwanted Summoning   |
| 2-5                    | Harmless Dissipation |
| 6                      | Outright Tax         |

### *Unwanted Summoning*

This is bad. Roll the Die of Fate again: 1: Greater Dæmon, 2: Dæmon, 3: Lesser Dæmon, 4: Lesser Seraph, 5: Seraph, 6: Greater Seraph.

### *Harmless Dissipation*

The abstraction has no effect whatsoever. There is no tax for this abstraction.



### Outright Tax

The spell caster has said something horribly wrong. Rather than be externalized, the spell effect is channeled internally. Test for tax; the sorcerer may not use patiently dice.

## Variance

The margin of failure for an abstraction determines how many rings shift on the Wheel of Magic. Roll on the table below to see precisely which rings vary.

### Ring Variance

Roll on this table for the margin of failure up to a maximum of five times.

| Ring Variance |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1             | Element         |
| 2             | Impetus         |
| 3             | Origin          |
| 4             | Duration        |
| 5             | Area of Effect  |
| 6             | Additional Ring |

An additional ring varies each time a 6 is rolled. If an additional ring varies, roll again on this table. If the same ring is rolled multiple times, add +1 to the variance distance for that ring.

*If a player fails by two, two rings vary. If a 6 is rolled for either of those rings, an additional ring varies.*

### Consult the Wheel of Magic

For each ring varied, find the facet of the abstraction being attempted on the Wheel of Magic on the next page. Roll two dice. The first represents direction—even is clockwise, odd is counterclockwise. The second die is the number of steps varied in that direction on that ring. The result will indicate a new facet. This facet replaces the one that varied and is used to interpret the final spell effect.

*Casting my distraction spell, I miss my obstacle by one success. I roll a D6 to see which ring varies. I roll a 4, Duration. Then I roll to see which direction. I roll a 3: Counter-clockwise. Next I roll for the number of steps.*

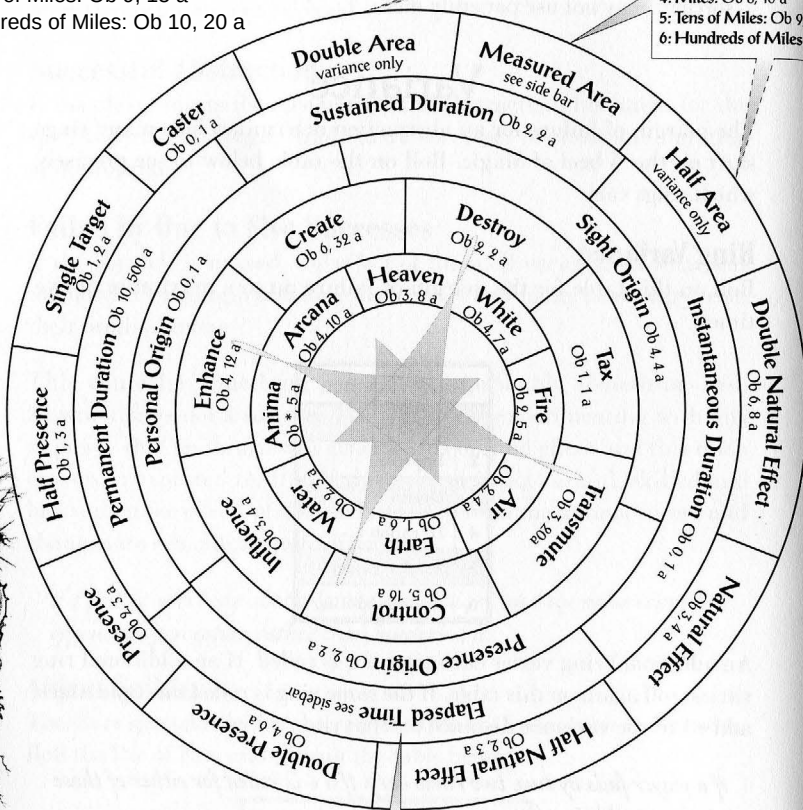


## Measured Area

1. Paces: Ob 2, 4 a
2. Tens of Paces: Ob 4, 6 a
3. Hundreds of Paces: Ob 6, +8 a
4. Miles: Ob 8, 10 a
5. Tens of Miles: Ob 9, 15 a
6. Hundreds of Miles: Ob 10, 20 a

## Measured Area

- 1: Paces: Ob 2, 4 a
- 2: Tens of Paces: Ob 4, 6 a
- 3: Hundreds of Paces: Ob 6, +8 a
- 4: Miles: Ob 8, 10 a
- 5: Tens of Miles: Ob 9, 15 a
- 6: Hundreds of Miles: Ob 10, 20 a



## Elapsed Time Obstacles

Actions/Seconds: Ob 1, 2 a. Exchanges: Ob 2, 6 a.  
 Minutes: Ob 3, 8 a. Hours: Ob 4, 12 a. Days: Ob 5, 24 a.  
 Months: Ob 7, 43 a. Years: Ob 9, 81 a.

## 2d6 for Variance

2: Years  
 3-4: Actions  
 5-6: Seconds  
 7-8: Exchanges  
 9: Minutes  
 10: Hours  
 11: Days  
 12: Months

\*Obstacle is equal to target stat or 5 if distilling or no stat is being targeted.

*I roll a 2. Two steps counter-clockwise from Instantaneous is Permanent!  
 My spell gives my target a permanent penalty to his Perception. Holy cow!*

## Carefully and Patiently

A player may cast his abstractions carefully and patiently as described in the Sorcery chapter of the Burning Wheel.



## Sustaining Abstractions

According to the *Power Still Flows Through Him* rules, Abstractions should be all but impossible to sustain due to their high obstacles. Not many sorcerers have a B9 or B10 Forte. Abstractions are a bit more mutable than distilled spells, however, so we can bend the rules a little bit.

### Reinforcing the Weak Flesh with a Strong Mind

It normally costs one Will die to sustain a spell, and a tax test must be made at an interval of the Forte exponent minus spell obstacle in hours (B6 Forte versus Ob 4 spell retests for tax in two hours). If the spell obstacle is equal to or greater than the Forte exponent, the spell can't be sustained.

In order to give himself a chance to sustain an abstraction, a sorcerer may put up extra Will dice to make up for the difference in his Forte versus the obstacle. The total of Forte plus Will sustaining dice must exceed the spell by at least one. This is called *reinforcing*.

The Will dice set to reinforcing count as being set aside just like a die set to sustain a spell. They may not be used for casting, sustaining, resisting or tests of any kind. Wounded dice subtract from the current Will of the character—so a character could be wounded, pass out, drop his spell and then regain consciousness as he recovers his reinforcing dice. Also, in case there was any question, the reinforcing dice are not added to Forte when testing for the *Power Still Flows Through Him*.

### The Strain

In addition to absorbing much of his concentration, reinforcing increases the risk to the caster. If the sorcerer encounters a May Not circumstance while reinforcing and the spell is forced down, he must immediately take a tax test with his current Forte exponent, unmodified by Will.

## Abstracting from a Spell

Abstractions are far more efficient when used to modify existing spells. Players may take a facet and add it to an existing spell in order to create a new spell on the fly.

*Chris wants to abstract Turn Aside the Blade to change it from Caster Area of Effect to Single Target Area of Effect so he can cast it on an ally.*



*Turn Aside the Blade is an Ob 4 spell and takes 11 actions. Adding Single Target increases that to Ob 5, 13 actions.*

When abstracting from extant spells, the player is always adding to the original intended effect. Nothing is subtracted or lost, though outcomes may change.

*Adding the Fire facet to the Breath of Wind spell means that the character will shoot forth a spell that uses the Natural Effect area of effect and the Destroy impetus. It will now destroy with fire and wind.*

Once a facet is added to an extant spell, the new formula becomes an abstraction. It uses the abstraction rules for spell failure, variance and reinforcing.

## Multiple Facets from the Same Ring

You may incorporate more than one facet from the same ring in a single abstraction.

*Turn Aside the Blade, for example, uses the Anima and Earth elements. Rather than just deflecting rocks and arrows, it protects against blows from the naked fist as well.*

Add the actions and obstacle to the rest as per the normal abstraction rules. Obviously this makes the spell a lot more difficult to cast, but it can be very rewarding!

You may use multiple facets on the same ring to set up either/or situations.

*For example, many spells use the Caster and Single Target area of effect to allow an either/or situation.*

If a spell is to have two different, simultaneous effects, like Death's Howl, for example, it is customary to divide the casting successes between the two elements/impeti—between Control and Destroy in this case.





## Eureka!

What the hell just happened, and can I do it again? Sometimes an abstraction will produce an unintended result via the Wheel of Magic. Occasionally this result is even beneficial!



Variance is a chance for the wizard to learn new facets. After the spell has been cast and all its effects played out, the sorcerer player may make a Sorcery test to tease out an unknown facet from the spell. The obstacle is 1, plus 1 per ring varied, plus the value of the facet to be identified.

If successful, the sorcerer now knows which facet was used in the variance. He may attempt to learn the facet and add it to his repertoire.

Use the rules for Learning New Spells on page 227 of the Burning Wheel. Use the facet's obstacle in place of the spell obstacle. Practicals are done by creating abstractions using this facet at double obstacle (just the facet, not the whole spell).

It is a difficult process, but using a combination of luck and experimentation, a sorcerer could possibly learn any facet!

## Starting Character Abstractions

This system is meant to be used in conjunction with Sorcery in the Burning Wheel. Starting characters with the Gifted trait may purchase spell facets during character burning. The costs of the facets are listed along with the actions and obstacles in this chapter.

When choosing spell facets, a caster may not start with the *Double Measured Area* or *Half Measured Area* facets. These steps are only used when rolling for variance on the Wheel of Magic.

And, of course, spells may be purchased at normal cost as per the rules in the Character Burner.

### Basic Facet Knowledge

The Sorcery skill includes the knowledge of the Personal Origin, Instantaneous Duration and Caster Area of Effect facets. These do not have to be purchased or learned—any character with a Sorcery skill is considered to know them.

## Learning Facets

If a book or scroll is found, facets may be learned in game play using the Learning New Spells rules detailed on page 227 of the Burning Wheel. Use the facet's obstacle in place of the spell obstacle.



## Distillation

Distillation is the process by which an abstraction is turned into a spell. The distillation process can be used by players during the game to create new spells, and it can be used by players and GMs outside of play to design and introduce new spells to your campaign.

### Formalizing from Abstractions

Once an abstraction is cast a number of times equal to the sorcerer's Perception Aptitude, it is considered formalized. Subsequent castings of a formalized abstraction have a reduced variance. Subtract two from the result of the d6 rolled for number of steps varied (but not from the die for the ring varied or direction). If this results in a zero or negative number, there's no variance.

### Distillation

Once an abstraction has been formalized, the distilling process may begin. Through distilling, the wizard reduces redundancies, cleans out errors, and clarifies the abstraction syntax. The final result is a runic image and syllabic structure quite different from the initial abstraction—it is a formal spell. This process must be recorded. Spellcraft being too complex to keep entirely in the head, the formulae must be written down.

In order to distill an abstraction, the wizard must test his Sorcery skill three times as described below.

### First Distillation

Choose two facets of the spell to be combined into a single new facet. Add together their individual obstacles. This is the obstacle of the first distillation. Test Sorcery skill (not skill+Will). If successful, average the obstacles and actions of these facets and replace the individual ones with the new distilled facet.

*Rich wants to distill a Fire Bolt spell (Fire Bolt: Ob 7, 12 actions: Fire, Destroyer, Presence, Instantaneous, Single Target). He chooses to distill Fire (Ob 2, 5 actions) and Destroyer (Ob 2, 2 actions). His Sorcery skill test obstacle is 4. If he is successful, his abstraction will become: Fire-Destroyer (now Ob 2, 3.5 actions), Presence (Ob 2, 2 a), Instantaneous (Ob 0, 1 actions), Single Target (Ob 1, 2 actions)—Ob 5, 9 (8.5 rounded up) actions.*



Always round mathematically when averaging the numbers in distillation. This test takes months equal to the obstacle minus 10 percent per extra success. This can be reduced by working quickly.

## Second Distillation

The second distillation is much the same as the first. The wizard chooses two (undistilled) facets of the spell, combines them, and then tests his Sorcery skill against this obstacle. A successful test means the two facets are “averaged” to create a new, unique facet.

*For second distillation, Rich merges the Presence and Single Target facets: Ob 2, 2 actions plus Ob 1, 2 actions is an Ob 3 Sorcery test. And it distills to Ob 1.5, 2 actions. The current casting obstacle for the spell would be Fire-Destroyer Ob 2, 3.5 actions, Presence-Single Target Ob 2, 2 actions plus Instantaneous Ob 0, 1 a: Ob 4, 7 actions.*

Second distillation takes weeks equal to the test obstacle. This can be reduced by working quickly.

## Finalization

After the spell has been reduced to three facets—two conglomerate and one raw—the sorcerer may make one last attempt to squeeze the spell down into a tighter, more efficient form. The process is the same as above, except the erstwhile sorcerer now combines the three remaining facets of the abstraction/distillation. Add together the base obstacles of the remaining facets. This is the obstacle of the Sorcery skill test. If the test is successful, divide the distillation obstacle and actions by two (do not average the three numbers). This is the new and final spell obstacle and time.

*To finalize his Fire Bolt spell, Rich combines all three remaining facets—Ob 2 + Ob 2 + Ob 0—an Ob 4 Sorcery test.*

*The test is successful, and the final product yields: Fire Bolt! (Fire-Destroyer-Presence-Instant-Single-Target)—Ob 2, 3 actions. Effect: Shoots forth a tiny spiralling dart of fire from the caster at a character of his choosing within his Presence. The character subsequently bursts into flames taking damage: Will exponent +2. That's the Mark result. If Rich's wizard has a Will of B5, the spell does Incidental B4, Mark B7, Superb B10.*

### Finalizing with More than Three Facets

If your spell includes more than five facets to start, you'll arrive at this stage with more than three facets. Add the obstacles of all the facets



together and divide by two. Same goes for the casting actions. Add the actions for all the remaining factions together and divide by two.

## Partial Distillation

A “partially” distilled abstraction may be cast by the wizard at its current level of actions and obstacle.

## Failed Distillation

If any one of the three distillation Sorcery tests is failed, the wizard has made a mistake in his formula. He’s put an accent where he shouldn’t, left out an important sigil, or just misdrawn one of the runes. This can lead to dangerous results, as the sorcerer is rarely aware of his mistake. See below for the effects:

### *Failed by One or Two Successes*

If the distillation sorcery test is failed by one or two successes, roll for variance on the Wheel of Magic. Use only the rings of the facets that the sorcerer was trying to distill. This variance is now written into the spell, and it isn’t discovered until the wizard attempts to cast his abstraction. When factoring the distilled obstacle and actions, use the numbers for the facet generated on the variance (“Hm, that was harder than it should have been. Oh well, back to work!”).

Once the results are discovered, the sorcerer may toss aside this variant and return to his original abstraction, or he may continue on with the distillation process using his new variant abstraction.

### *Failed by More than Two Successes—Unutterable Garbage*

This round of the distillation goes very badly. The wizard just makes a mess of what he had and produces a tangled mass of unutterable garbage. The time for this test is completely wasted. The sorcerer may return to the previous stage and start again.

## Anima Element Distillations

When distilling Anima abstractions for targets other than the caster, use Ob 5 as the factored obstacle for the averaging. When distilling Anima spells for use on the caster only, use the caster’s stat as the obstacle.

*Anima (Ob 5, 5 actions), Influence (Ob 3, 4 actions), Presence (Ob 2, 2 actions), Sustained (Ob 2, 2 actions), Single Target (Ob 1, 2 actions). This can be distilled like so:*

*First Distillation: Anima (Ob 5, 5 actions) + Presence (Ob 2, 2 actions)/2= Anima-Presence (Ob 3.5, 3.5 actions).*



*Second Distillation: Sustained (Ob 2, 2 actions) + Influence (Ob 3, 4 actions)/2= Instant-Influence! (Ob 2.5, 3 actions)*

*Finalization: Sustained-Influence (Ob 2.5, 3 actions) + Anima-Presence (Ob 3.5, 3.5 actions) + Single Target (Ob 1, 2 actions)/2= Ob 4 (3.5 rounded up) + Will of target, 4 actions (4.25 rounded down).*

*That's a high obstacle spell. I'm going to use Distillation Sigils to reduce it.*

The final obstacle for an Anima distillation is essentially an obstacle penalty that is added to the target stat when casting.

## Learning Another Wizard's Distilled Spell

The process for learning a finalized distillation is the same as learning a new spell and is described on page 227 of the Burning Wheel.

## Distillation Sigils

After a spell has reached the Final Distillation phase, but before the sorcerer has left the laboratory, he may add a number of sigils to the formalized abstraction in order to modify the obstacle or actions.

### Cap

All abstractions use their margin of success to increase the effectiveness of the spell by default. In the spell list, they'd be labeled with the “^.” Using the Cap sigil allows the player to remove the ^ and reduce the casting obstacle by one. Now, when the spell is cast, it has one level of effect. Extra successes over the obstacle do not count.

*The base Ob 4 for my distilled Persuasion spell is way too high. First, I'll set the cap on it. Since it's only got one effect that isn't related to extra successes on the dice, having the spell be open-ended is unnecessary. This drops the Ob from 4 to 3.*

### Minoris Sigil

If a spell has a minor effect given its facets—Delirium Tremens as opposed to Emperor's Hand, for example—reduce the casting obstacle by one.

*I decide to limit my influence using this spell. I can only “favorably dispose” a character toward something. I can't badmouth or command. That qualifies it for the minoris sigil. The obstacle drops from 3 to 2.*





Using multiple elements or impeti but taking only one effect qualifies the spell for the minoris sigil.

The minoris sigil may be applied multiple times, but the minimum obstacle is 1.

## Majoris Sigil

If the other players and/or the GM find that a spell has a huge, ridiculous or overblown effect, they may add up to +2 Ob and can multiply the casting actions from x10-x100.

*Storm of Lightning is a powerful spell. The GM thinks it's a pain in the ass. He applies a majoris sigil to it.*

The majoris sigil may only be applied as the GM and other, non-mage players see fit. It may be applied multiple times.

Taking a secondary effect beyond what is provided by the element/impetus requires the majoris sigil with at least +1 Ob.

## Extension

By lengthening the spell, the mage makes it easier to parse difficult magical sentences. Reduce the obstacle by one and increase the casting time by x5. Multiple extensions may reduce the spell obstacle up to half rounded up.

*For my Persuasion spell, I decide that I don't need to cast it quickly, so I add an extension sigil. That takes the actions from 4 to 20 (x5), but drops the obstacle down to 1.*

*The final obstacle is 1 + Will. Not bad!*

## Compression

By shortening the spell, the mage increases its difficulty—a sorcerer must intuit many parts of the incantation himself. Subtract -50% to actions for +1 Ob.

Always subtract the percentage from the current actions and round any fractions up. So, a 10 action spell could be reduced to 5 actions for +1 Ob, then to 3 actions for another +1 Ob. Then to 2 for another +1 Ob, then to 1 action for another +1 Ob—+4 Ob total. Compression may be applied multiple times, but the spell may not be reduced to less than one action.





## Spells as Weapons



When a wizard combines an element and the Destroy facet, his spell becomes a weapon. If the spell is successfully cast, the target may test his armor. If the armor is bypassed, the target takes damage. In mechanical terms, spells do damage like a thrown weapon. The wizard's Will acts as the base Power. The element facet acts as the weapon power. Add these together to determine the Mark damage result.

Divide by half rounded up for the Incidental damage result. Multiply by 1.5 rounded down to determine the Superb damage result. Use a Die of Fate like a bow to determine the IMS result for the target. Up to three extra successes may be spent to modify the Die of Fate as per the standard missile weapon rules.

Earth Weapon: +3 Power, VA 3, —

Fire Weapon: +2 Power, VA 2, —

White Weapon: +5 Power, VA 4, —

Water Weapon: +1 Power, VA 3, —

Anima Weapon: +4 Power, VA 1, -1 range die.

Air Weapon: +0 Power, VA 8, +1 range die.

Arcana Weapon: -1 Power, VA 1, +3 range dice.

Heaven Weapon: +0 Power, VA 2, +2 range dice.

These damage rules supersede the rules described in the Burning Wheel. All spells created with the Abstraction and Distillation rules use these damages. However, you may leave all spells in the Character Burner as they are or use revised versions.

### Spells Versus Armor

Extra successes over the spell obstacle may be spent to increase the VA of a spell. The base VA may be raised or lowered using the minoris or majoris distillation sigils.

### Positioning with Spells Revised

Use this table for positioning with spells in Fight! and Range and Cover. Don't use the madness in the Burning Wheel on pages 222 to 224.



| Spell Positioning and Weapon Length |               |            |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Area of Effect                      | Weapon Length | Range Dice |
| <i>Personal Origin Spells</i>       |               |            |
| Single Target                       | Shortest      | —          |
| Measured Area: Paces                | Long          | —          |
| Measured Area: 10s Paces            | Longest       | 1D         |
| Measured Area: 100s Paces           | Longest       | 2D         |
| Measured Area: Miles                | Longest       | 4D         |
| Measured Area: 10s Miles            | Longest       | 8D         |
| Measured Area: 100s Miles           | Longest       | 12D        |
| Natural Effect                      | Longer        | 4D         |
| Presence                            | Longer        | 1D         |
| <i>Presence Origin Spells</i>       |               |            |
| Single Target                       | Longer        | 1D         |
| Measured Area: Paces                | Longer        | 1D         |
| Measured Area: 10s Paces            | Longest       | 2D         |
| Measured Area: 100s Paces           | Longest       | 3D         |
| Measured Area: Miles                | Longest       | 5D         |
| Measured Area: 10s Miles            | Longest       | 9D         |
| Measured Area: 100s Miles           | Longest       | 13D        |
| Natural Effect                      | Longer        | 4D         |
| Presence                            | Longest       | 1D         |
| <i>Sight Origin Spells</i>          |               |            |
| Single Target                       | Longest       | 4D         |
| Measured Area: Paces                | Longest       | 5D         |
| Measured Area: 10s Paces            | Longest       | 7D         |
| Measured Area: 100s Paces           | Longest       | 9D         |
| Measured Area: Miles                | Longest       | 14D        |
| Measured Area: 10s Miles            | Longest       | 16D        |
| Measured Area: 100s Miles           | Longest       | 20D        |
| Natural Effect                      | Longest       | 8D         |
| Presence                            | Longest       | 6D         |



### ***Halves and Doubles***

If a half or double area of effect is used, halve or double the listed amount of dice. Round down.

### ***The Presence of a Sorcerer***

When two sorcerers are in a magical duel (using Fight!) and they are using spells with the same weapon length, use the following method to determine who has the longer weapon: Starting with the caster's Will as a base, add one for each of the following skills or traits that he possesses: Meditation, Conspicuous, Command, Aura of Fear, Aura of Determination, Aura of Malevolence, Commanding Aura, Aura of Holiness, Perfect Pitch, Sonorous Voice, Unctuous, Gift of Babel. Subtract one pace for each of the following: Inconspicuous, Stealthy, Misplaced Aura, Obscure Aura, Cipher or Entropic. The highest total gains the longest weapon advantage.

## **Peer Review**

Spells built for inclusion into your game should be reviewed by another player or the GM. If a player is distilling a spell to be used, the GM should check his concept and math. The GM can send the spell back for modification or veto it.

If the GM is introducing a spell into the game, he may submit it to a magic-savvy player for review or post it to our website, [www.burningwheel.com](http://www.burningwheel.com), in the Magic Burner forum.

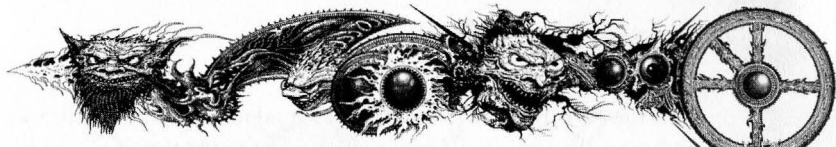
## **Resource Point Cost for New Spells**

You may distill new spells and make them available for purchase by wizard players. The resource point cost for each spell is 2 rps per obstacle point. If the spell is listed with a “^”, the cost is 4 rps per obstacle point. If the spell Obstacle is based on a stat, price the spell based on a stat of 5.

## **The Limits of this System**

There are a few popular spell effects that do not or cannot exist in the scope of these rules: Teleportation, Time Control and Life Creation. These phenomena are beyond the power of abstractions.





# Blood Magic

Using pain, torture and murder, the sorcerer may gain bonus dice to cast his bloody magics!

Blood Magic is not a complete magic system like Art Magic or Death Art. It's an add-on system meant to be combined with other arts. It can be combined with Sorcery, Art Magic, Death Art, Orc Rituals, Enchanting, Faith, Summoning and Spirit Binding.

If combined with Sorcery or Orc Rituals, use it in place of the Spell Weaver (Will+Skill, Hatred+Skill) rule. Instead, test the skill plus bonus dice from Blood Magic. If used in conjunction with Art Magic, use Blood Magic as a school of magic. It doesn't have a value per se; its rating is variable according to how many torture and murder dice you generate. If used with Enchanting, Blood Magic dice are added to the caster's skill. If used with Summoning or Spirit Binding, I recommend replacing the Reputations and Spirit Marks with the Blood Magic rules. For Faith or Death Art, use them in place of the helping rules and prepare for some bloody miracles.

There are two overall methods to this madness: torture and sacrifice. Torture uses the victim's pain and suffering for small gains meted out over a longer period of time. Sacrifice uses the victim's death as a one-time, powerful boost to the spell.

When a player seeks a boost from a blood magic ritual, he must declare before he starts whether he is using torture or sacrifice. Torture requires the Torture skill. Sacrifice requires Rituals or Rituals of Blood.

## Torture

If a sorcerer can capture a victim, he may torture him to fuel his spells. The goal is to inflict injury—to draw blood—but not to incapacitate or kill the victim. It's the pain, suffering and blood that grant the sorcerer power.



Test the Torture skill. The obstacle is equal to the victim's Will. Success indicates the victim suffers a wound equal to the torturer's shade and exponent. Extra successes can be used to reduce or increase the damage, one pip on the PTGS per extra success. If the damage would inflict at least -1D of wound penalties, the torturer gains a +1D advantage to the next spell he casts. For each -1D of wound penalty inflicted on the victim, the sorcerer gains an additional +1D advantage. Thus a Light wound is worth +1D, a Severe is worth +3D, etc.

If the sorcerer finds his victim's Will too high, he may simply beat him before the actual torture session begins.

## **The Beatings**

Beating a character into submission entails doing injury to him in order to inflict wound penalties to reduce the obstacle for Torture (or any social skill).

Before beginning the torture itself, the sorcerer may dispatch his thugs to beat the piss out of his victim or undertake the task himself. Test Brawling against an obstacle of 1. Success indicates an Incidental hit for the character. Each success over the obstacle increases damage one step, Incidental to Mark, Mark to Superb.

The torturing player may make beating tests as often as he likes, but the results of a test stand: Damage from a beating cannot be reduced or spent. If a victim is killed or becomes too broken to be tortured, that's the sorcerer's problem.

## **The Victim Must Remain Conscious and Alive**

If the victim falls unconscious or is killed during the torture, all bonuses are lost. Swooning from a failed Steel test result does not count as incapacitation in this case. If a stat is reduced to zero or lower, the victim counts as incapacitated.

## **Victims Must Recover**

A victim recovers from his wounds as per the standard rules for recovery. The GM must be sure to track the injuries. A victim of a Midi wound will bleed to Severe if untreated. A victim of a Severe wound will bleed to death.



### Small, Bite-Sized Chunks

It's usually best to just take small chunks out of your victims and let them recover. By maintaining a dungeon full of victims, a sorcerer can keep a rotating stock of healthy chattel. Gruesome, eh?





## **The Power Remains Until Used**

The advantage dice earned through torture remain with the sorcerer until spent. They may be spent individually, *en masse* or in whatever combination the player desires.

## **Sacrifice**

Torture pays out small benefits over time to the sorcerer, whereas ritual murder grants a large one-time boost in power.

To make a sacrifice, the sorcerer must have either the Ritual or Rituals of Blood skill. Make a versus test between the sorcerer's skill and the victim's Forte. This test must be made in a relatively secure environment and definitely requires tools—ritual implements, candles, cups, etc. You may not ritually murder your opponent in a fight.

### **Altar of Sacrifice, Curse of the Damned**

If the sorcerer wins the test, he ritually slaughters his victim and gains a pool of advantage dice equal to the victim's Will. These advantage dice may be used for casting or resisting the tax of a spell. You may allocate them as needed.

### **The Power Fades**

Any advantage dice conferred from ritual murder fade over time. The sorcerer player loses one die for each test that he makes that is not casting a spell. When casting a spell, the dice are expended as he chooses. The dice may all be used or used in part and saved for additional spells.

### **Destruction**

A character who is ritually murdered may not be treated for his injuries and may not make a recovery test. He's gone. Only a major miracle can bring him back.

## **The Blood of Innocents**

Certain qualities enhance the effectiveness of Blood Magic. Traits of purity, holiness or power lend the ritual more power, which is then transferred to the sorcerer. Bad news for the victims.



## +1D Victims

Child Prodigy, Aura of Innocence, Faithful, Fey Blood, Gifted, Immortal (in any capacity) or Tainted Legacy traits add +1D to the sorcerer's bonus for murder or torture.

## Martyrs and the Holy

Victims with the Chosen One, Aura of Martyrdom or Aura of Holiness traits *double* any die benefits conferred from torturing or murdering them.

## Bad Victims

Characters who are an Eldritch Sink, Atravieso or Entropic are useless for blood sacrifice. They provide no bonus for murder or torture. In fact, involving them in the ritual at all increases the obstacles for the spell to be cast by +2.





# Alternate Readings and Practicals

This is a slight variant of the process for learning spells for Sorcery described on pages 227 and 228 of the Burning Wheel. In this version, the wizard learns the spell whether or not he passes the test. Success or failure in the Sorcery test modifies the obstacle and casting time of the spell.

## First Reading

If the player fails the first reading test by a margin of up to three, he increases the obstacle of the spell he is learning by the margin of failure. He may proceed to practicals with this spell and its new obstacle. This effect is permanent for casting this spell.

*Chris is trying to learn Breath of Wind (Ob 4) for his sorcerer Han. He fails the test by one. The Breath of Wind spell that he learns is Ob 5 to cast and resist tax.*

If the player fails by more than three successes, the spell cannot be learned. Move on.

## Practicals

Practical mechanics remain fundamentally the same. If the first reading was failed, practicals obstacles are doubled from the new modified spell obstacle.

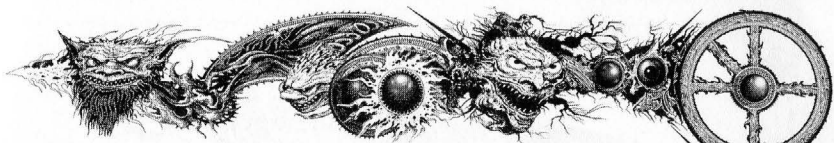
*During practicals, Han casts Breath of Wind at Ob 5 doubled to Ob 10. This is a very scary, very dangerous spell for him to learn. If he manages to survive the practicals, he'll be able to cast the spell at Ob 5.*

## Second Reading

If the player fails the Second Reading, he learns a sloppy, meandering version of the spell. He learns the spell, but his casting time is modified. His margin of failure for the test is added to the casting time of the spell in actions.

If the casting obstacle for the spell was modified by the First Reading, be sure to use that obstacle for the Second Reading.





# The Arsenal Method

The Arsenal Method limits the amount of spells a sorcerer can have on hand at any one time, but allows him to return to home base and change his current line-up, switching out spells for more useful options.

This is an optional add-on for standard Sorcery as described in the Burning Wheel. Using this method, spells are supernatural creatures fighting for space in the wizard's consciousness. A wizard only has so much room to work with before the spells just blot each other out and he can't remember anything.

## Memories

A wizard may hold in his mind a number of spells equal to his Perception minus one. These spells may be cast according to the standard rules for Burning Wheel Sorcery.

*If my character has a Perception B6, I can keep five spells on tap.*

## Spell Books

If a wizard character possesses more spells than he can hold in his crowded memory at one time, the extra spells are kept written in his precious, really-too-big-to-carry-around spell book or similar, campaign-appropriate edifice.

*My spell book contains Eldritch Shield, Philosopher's Perch, Magesense, Wyrd Light, Shards, Binding and Blessed Hands.*

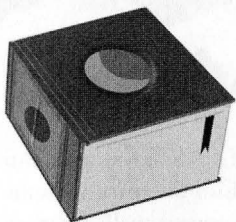
### Starting Spell Book

The wizard's starting selection of spells is purchased according to the standard rules as described in the Character Burner.

### Idiomatic Spell Books

The spell book rule is not designed to cut a mage off from the source of his power. It exists only to limit what he has access to right now. Feel free to change the spell book to some other campaign-appropriate format—a temple, a grove of trees, tattoos, a gaggle of imps, the spirit of your dead father. The rules for accessing it are always the same as those described below under the Change Spells rules.





## Changing Spells

A wizard may trade out spells from his current line-up for ones in his reserve either at the beginning of a session or during significant in-game downtime: while other characters are healing, working or practicing, for example.

*My wizard has a Perception of B6; I can keep five spells in his head at once. My must-haves are Eldritch Shield and Mage Sense. They always come with me. We'll be dungeoneering, so I also choose Wyrd Light, Shards and Blessed Hands. I want to be able to light the way, heal my friends and hurt my enemies. I leave Philosopher's Perch and Binding in the book for now. It's a difficult choice, because I see how useful those spells can be in a dungeon, too.*

### Spell Changing Options

If you'd like, you may also limit the number of spells that can be changed at one time. I suggest limiting the wizard to one spell changed per night of study. Set this limit with your group before starting play.

## The Universal Library Option

Instead of learning spells individually, you may decide that, since spells are creepy, living things, all wizards have access to them. They simply need to call them to mind.

Pick any spell from the spell list and say, "I summon thee!" Using this optional rule, a wizard adds to his arsenal by making a Sorcery test equal to the spell's obstacle. Add +1 Ob if the spell has a ^ . Use Ob 5 if the spell uses a target's stat. If the spell uses stat plus obstacle, use 5 plus the obstacle.

If he passes, he may added the spell to his spell book. If he fails, he may never learn that spell. Spells may be learned during downtime or at the start of a session. Only one spell may be called forth per session.



# Artifacts







# Magical Artifacts

This section describes 28 magical artifacts for use in your Burning Wheel game. The list contains items of varying power, from small items like the Golden Tooth to powerful artifacts like the Burning Wheel itself.

Each item is described in terms of a *hook*, the item's *powers*, the *limits* on the item's powers and the *antecedent* used to create the enchantment.

The hook recounts a bit of the item's history and offers suggestions for placing it in your game. The powers and limits were all built using the Enchanting rules provided in this book. The antecedent described is not a specific trait but a suggestive piece of a monster or character. The antecedent entry is meant to spark the imagination with ideas about the labors and quests necessary to create such an item.

## Acquiring Artifacts

A list of magical artifacts in a fantasy roleplaying game is a license for gleeful gift giving. Don't do that in Burning Wheel. Magic is more powerful and more constant in this game than nearly any other. Game masters must restrain their generous impulses. In fact, they must be downright stingy.

There are a number of ways to acquire magical bits in the game. I'll walk you through the top four: the Family Heirloom trait, spending Resource Points, Resources tests and finding one lying around in play.

### *Family Heirloom*

The Family Heirloom trait is an excellent way to begin the game with a nice juicy magical artifact. Certain items are appropriate for the trait; certain others are not. Belt of Flying, Boots of the Hunter, Circle of Wisdom, the Dropping Ring, the Giant's Tunic, the Golden Tooth, the Helm of Protection, the Ivory Shield, Band of Fortitude, Red Spectacles, Ring of Dexterity, Ring of the Prophet, Rod of Iron, Serpent's Spear, Staff of Light and the Wand of Ages are appropriate.



The other items are either not powerful enough for the trait, or much too powerful. For example, Distortion Dust is expendable and therefore not a good candidate for a generational heirloom. And don't even think of taking the Burning Wheel or the Ring of Power as your family heirloom.

### *Resource Points in Character Burning*

Some items can be purchased during character burning: Distortion Dust (20 rps), Golden Tooth (20 rps), Ebon Shunt (10 rps), Eldritch Channeler (15 rps), Jade Amulet (10 rps), Silk Armor (60 rps) and a Wizard's Staff (10 rps). Talisman of the Orders: 10x the order obstacle. Talisman of Protection: 5 rps for +1 Ob, 10 rps for +2 Ob or 15 rps for +3 Ob, multiplied by the order obstacle from the Summoning chapter.

If you've made enchanted items and want to make them available for purchase in your game, the simplest way to price them is to compare their abilities with one of our magic items. Find a comparable item and use its price. In general, items that provide a minor effect like a +1D or +1 Ob should be priced from 10 to 20 resource points, depending on how expansive the ability is. The more broad it is, the more expensive. For weapons and armor, pricing should start at 40 rps and climb from there. See examples in the Blossoms Are Falling supplement. Any potent item, like the Belt of Flying or the Giant's Tunic, should be priced at 100 rps and up. More truly powerful items simply shouldn't be available through resource points in character burning.

### *Resource Tests in Game*

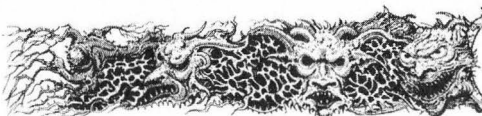
Certain items could conceivably be purchased on the open market using Resources during the game: Distortion Dust (Ob 6), Ebon Shunt (Ob 4), Eldritch Channeler (Ob 5), Jade Amulet (Ob 5), Serpent's Spear (Ob 7), Silk Armor (Ob 7) and a Wizard's Staff (Ob 6).

This is not a shopping list. It's a list of suggested prices to use should one of the items be available in your game.

### *Found During Play*

All of these items can be found worn by NPCs and in monsters' hoards. And they're always more precious if won in a hard-fought battle or clever gambit.

It is acceptable to give artifacts to the players' adversaries and allies. But note well that anything you give to an NPC is going to end up in the players' possession at some point. It's a law of fantasy gaming: All magic items flow playerward.



Without further ado, here's the hoard of magic stuff!

## Band of Fortitude



### Hook

The Band of Fortitude was said to have been formed by a fair girl whose husband had been falsely accused of a crime. He was to be forced to fight for his life in the gladiatorial pits. Knowing she could not aid him with a weapon or armor, she fashioned this beautiful piece of jewelry to sustain him through his brutal labors.

### Powers

When worn on the arm, the Band of Fortitude grants +1D to Forte for any and all tests. If the Forte increase bumps up the average of Power and Forte, increase the Mortal Wound tolerance. The band also increases Health by +1D for tests resisting fatigue, weakness or disorientation.

### Antecedent

The heart of a red ox.

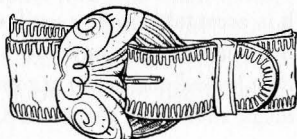
## Belt of Flying

### Hook

This, broad, ornate belt tightens in the front through a beautiful, silver hoop. Its maker is unknown, but rumors speak of a mad wizard who raised an island out at sea to act as his laboratory. He used this belt to shuttle back and forth between his refuge and the mainland.

### Powers

The Belt of Flying grants the wearer the power to fly on command.





Mechanically, this grants a x14 movement multiplier and all of the abilities that flight implies—being able to traverse obstacles, for example.

### Limits

The belt is activated and used by verbal command—up, down, forward, back, left, right, circle left, circle right.

The belt has the Multiple Uses internal duration. It may be recharged after it fails by receiving a blessing from the God of Wind.

### Antecedent

The pinion feather of a Great Eagle.

## Boots of the Hunter



### Hook

The Boots of the Hunter were the product of a losing bet made after a long night of gambling between an enchanter and a savvy strider. Unfortunately for the strider, his windfall that night didn't curb his appetite for future bets. The boots have since made their way from owner to owner, used in back room wagers all across the land.

### Powers

These beautiful, high soft leather boots grant +1D to Speed and increase the Speed Multiplier of the character by 1 when chasing, stalking or pursuing another character or monster.

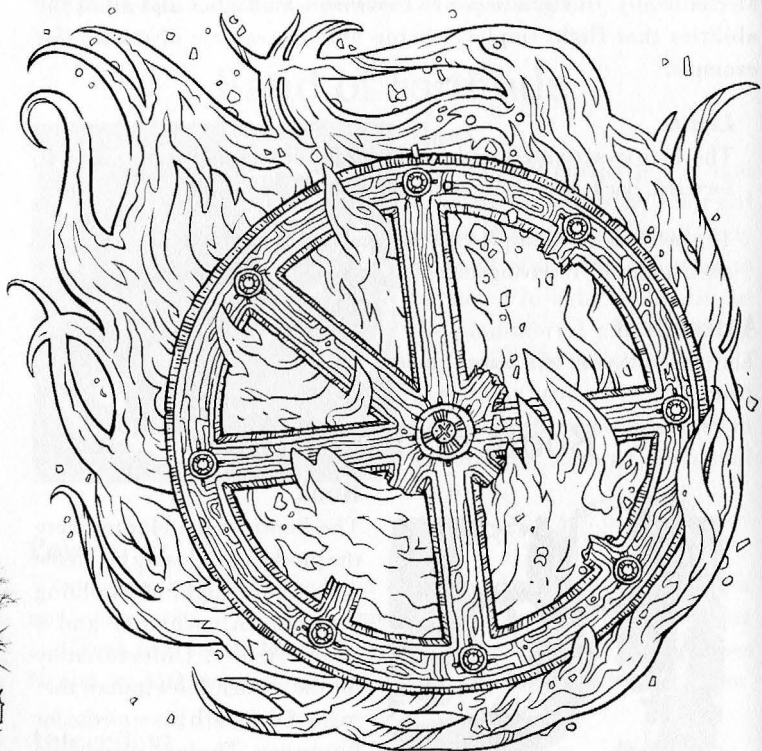
### Limits

Multiple Uses duration: The power lasts so long as the soles of the boots are intact. Each pursuit after the first, roll a die of fate. On a 1, the boots' soles are worn through and the power gone. They may be restored by an Ob 3 Cobbler test.

### Antecedent

The hide of a Martikhora.





## The Burning Wheel

### Hook

The Burning Wheel or, more formally, the Wheel of Fire, is one of a set of four god wheels. These wheels were given to the high priests of the great religions by their patron deities to ensure their faiths' primacy. Across the ages, the wheels were lost or locked away, their powers forgotten or feared.

Prophecy states clearly that the Wheel of Fire will come forth once more during a time of epochal change. It will be the light that guides us into the darkness. And, when the Lord of Fire sleeps, the wheel will gutter low, ebbing in power, but ready to be called forth to ignite the hearts of its followers.



## Powers

The Burning Wheel is a wood and metal wheel, approximately two hands in diameter. It has five irregular spokes emanating from a central hub out into a hard rim. Blue-orange flames dance across its surface.

The Wheel may douse any burning fire short of the sun, the stars and earth's blood. No test is required. The fire rushes in a gout back into the wheel. If there's ever a question, this counts as a physical action.

The Wheel may be used to ignite fires, from candles up to campfires anywhere in the bearer's presence. This requires only a thought and counts as a tandem speech action in Fight!

In addition, the Wheel contributes +5D to any Faith test or Sorcery spell when conjuring or manipulating fire. It also adds +5D to any Faith test or spell that affects human blood.

When held aloft, the Wheel grants +2D to Conspicuous tests.

## Limits

In order to use the Wheel, the artifact must be in contact with its bearer. It must burn him. The Wheel causes a B5 injury every time it is touched, unless the supplicant possesses the Resistant to Fire trait or is protected by a minor miracle or similar spell. If the Wheel is held by one who is not immune to its burning, the pain and heat increases periodically by one damage pip until it is released (applied at intervals as the GM sees fit)—B5, then B6, then B7, etc.

When gripped, it is said that the supplicant feels not only his own flesh burning but the pain of all the souls tormented in hell. As such, holding the Wheel, whether or not you are injured, causes a +1 Ob penalty to all actions requiring calm and concentration—like spellcasting and prayer. This penalty can be permanently negated by passing an Ob 5 Meditation test while holding the wheel—the +1 Ob penalty has been factored into that number.

The Wheel was set alight by the God of Fire, touched off with a sliver of the sun. So long as the God of Fire is ascendent, the Wheel thrives and is powerful beyond compare. If the God of Fire has been slain or forced from power, using the Wheel brings a great cost. Invoking the advantage dice to Faith and Sorcery causes a tax test. For Faith, the tax is Ob 5. For Sorcery, the tax obstacle is increased by 5.





The Wheel burns. Anyone bearing this burning symbol suffers a +2 Ob penalty to Inconspicuous, Disguise, Stealthy or similar tests. It's fucking on fire.

### **Antecedent**

A piece of the heart of the god of the sun.



## **Circle of Wisdom**

### **Hook**

The story of the Circle of Wisdom states that an elder advisor to a young king knew that he would not live long into the boy's reign. Therefore, he collected all of his wisdom and that of the sages of the land. He imbued this golden circlet with that understanding and bequeathed it upon his young charge. Now the Circle of Wisdom is passed from ruler to

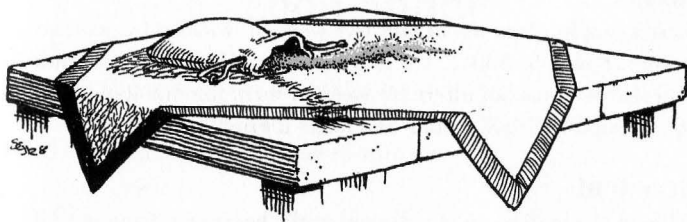
ruler, a sign of the ruling line's dedication to discernment.

### **Powers**

When worn, this golden circlet opens the bearer's mind to the wise teachings of a thousand scholars and sages. It grants +1D to all Will tests (including spell weaver tests for Sorcery). It increases the body of argument for a Duel of Wits by one.

### **Antecedent**

The beard of the greatest scholar of the age.



## Distortion Dust

### Hook

Distortion Dust is a common accoutrement of sorcerers who must cast their spells far and wide. It's a deadly favorite of wizards of war, and a quintessential element of those who communicate with whispers on the wind.

### Powers

Distortion dust is a sorcerous powder that acts as an area of effect multiplier for a spell. When spread before a spell is cast, the dust increases the area of effect or breadth of the spell by one increment as per the multiplier effect described in the Enchanting chapter.

### Limits

The dust must be tossed above the sorcerer as he casts the spell. This adds two actions to the casting time. There is a finite amount of dust. Use the Multiple Uses internal duration.

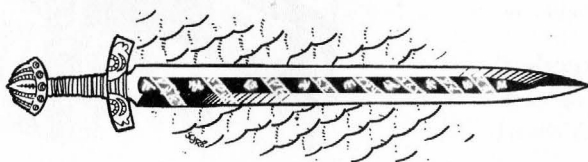
### Antecedent

The eyes of an eagle, dried and ground into a fine powder.

## Dragon Slaying Sword

### Hook

It boggles the mind how easy it is for a young boy to wander into a field, a pond or a cave and find one of these things lying around. When a skilled warrior needs one to take on a rampaging dragon, the only one that can be found is, of course, in the dragon's hoard.



## **Powers**

This is a simple, elegant and effective weapon, wielded by generations of heroes: Power 3, Add 2, VA 1, Long, Slow, Heroic (gray) shade. It is acceptable to use an alternate weapon form for this item. Use the weapon's superior quality stats and make it gray shade.

## **Antecedent**

The blood of a god, tooth of a dragon or the heart of a dæmon.

# **The Dropping Ring**

## **Hook**

The Dropping Ring was made by Dwarven artificers in a wager with the trickster god. The artificers won the wager. Since then, due to its odd limitations, it has been passed from owner to owner down the ages. It has been seen on the arm of a wealthy king, and once it was found by lucky adventurers in the riches of a lost tomb.

## **Powers**

When worn, every nine days, this golden arm ring produces eight gold replicas of itself. This grants the wearer a 2D fund for his Resources. The fund is permanent and may not be taxed or lost until the Dropping Ring itself is lost.

## **Limits**

If the owner of this wondrous arm ring ever loses a son, he must lay the ring on his death bed or funeral pyre. If he does not, the ring loses its magic. If he does, the ring retains its magic, but it may never be owned by that character again. Another character may take up the ring and benefit from it.

## **Antecedent**

A drop of blood from a greedy Dwarf.





## Ebon Shunt

### Hook

An Ebon Shunt is a piece of jewelry for sorcerers. It is not difficult to make and is useful—a shunt can mean the difference between life and death if something should go awry with a spell.

### Powers

The Ebon Shunt is an irregular chunk of ebony, hung on a rough leather cord. When worn around the neck, the shunt adds +1D to a sorcerer's Forte when resisting tax.

### Limits

Should the sorcerer ever be taxed to unconsciousness, the ebony shard bursts from the strain, and its power is lost.

### Antecedent

The tongue of a black troll.

## Eldritch Channeler

### Hook

Eldritch Channelers are another accessory for wealthy wizards. They are simple, useful devices, and pretty, too.

### Powers

This silver bracer is engraved with arcane symbols. When worn on the left forearm, it grants +1D to Sorcery (or another appropriate spellcasting skill). The silver bracer also acts as chainmail armor (+4D) for the left arm.

### Limits

If the armor dice fail—come up a 1—then the power of the Eldritch Channeler is broken and lost.

### Antecedent

The scale of an Ophidian witch.



## Giant's Tunic

### Hook

Once, the land was plagued with tyrannical giants. A great hero went forth to the giant's hall and, through guile and bravery, slew the giant king. The hero's friend and companion, an enchanter of some merit, skinned the fallen king and made this tunic. The hero in turn became lord of his domain and, legend says, never refused hospitality to anyone who crossed his threshold.

### Powers

The Giant's Tunic grants its wearer strength and toughness beyond compare! While worn, it adds +2D to the user's Power. This is

factored into weapon damages and Mortal Wound. It also counts as leather armor for the chest and arms.

### Limits

Should the owner ever fail to show hospitality when asked, the power of the Giant's Tunic fades.

### Antecedent

The skin of a giant.





## Golden Tooth

### Hook

Back alley enchanters in grimy citadels churn out trinkets and baubles such as these so that they can pay their rent and soothe their failing minds with rotgut.

### Powers

Once installed in the character's mouth, the Golden Tooth opens previously closed doors! The tooth increases the character's Circles by +1D. This does not count as a reputation or affiliation.



### Limits

The tooth must be implanted in the character's mouth by a surgeon or barber for its powers to take root.

### Antecedent

The tooth of a man with a familiar face.

## Helm of Protection

### Hook

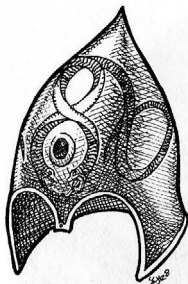
A powerful warlord commissioned his enchanter to forge him a mighty helm to aid him in battle. The farsighted enchanter thought carefully about what would preserve his lord. In the end, he created what he called a Helm of Protection. The warlord asked, "What are its powers?"

"Should you be wounded while wearing it, you will recover quickly."

"Fool! This is useless. No man is a match for me in battle. I have only ever been wounded once, by my fencing master. It was the last lesson he ever gave me!" With that, he tossed the helm back at the enchanter and stormed out of the tent.







When the battle was finally joined, the warlord was indeed triumphant, but he was not unwounded. His own generals turned on him at the moment of victory. He bled to death from the injuries inflicted by their knives.

### **Powers**

The Helm of Protection adds +2D to the warrior's Health when recovering from or shrugging off a wound he received in battle (while wearing the helmet). The helmet counts as a superior quality bascinet (4D) and imposes a reduced +1 Ob clumsy weight penalty to Observation and Perception tests.

### **Limits**

Should the helmet be destroyed by armor failure, the powers are lost. Also, should the warrior ever show cowardice in battle—fleeing due to a failed Steel test result—the helmet's protection is lost to him. Another character may take up the helm and be granted its benefits, though.

### **Antecedent**

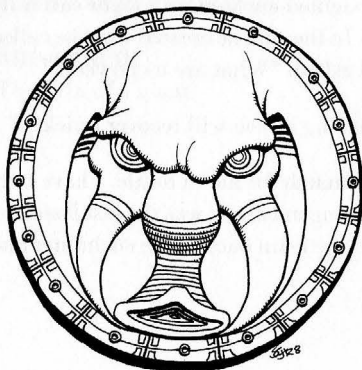
The bone of a scarred, long-lived hero (with the Healthy trait).

## **Ivory Shield**

### **Hook**

Desperate in the build-up before a great war, a young captain went on his knees to his estranged mother, begging for aid in the coming battles. She was a great enchantress. She agreed to help him and sent

him on a quest to retrieve an elephant's bones. Upon his successful return, she carved him this beautiful shield. As she presented it to him, she inveighed her curse, "Never again will you disobey me. If you do, the power of this mighty shield will be lost!"





## Powers

This great shield is made of ivory, imported from exotic lands, carved with scenes of victory, and enchanted by impossible magics. When worn, the shield grants +1D to Command, Oratory and Steel. It grants +1D to Push actions in Fight! It counts as a Power 3, Add 2, VA -, Unwieldy, Short weapon when used to shield bash. The shield itself is a great shield (5D) and counts as superior quality.

### Limits

Should the owner of this mighty device ever fail to obey his parents' wishes, the shield becomes too heavy for him to bear. Another, more filial son or daughter may come and carry it to battle.

## Antecedent

The bones of an elephant.

# Jade Amulet

## Hook

Jade Amulets are prized artifacts. Found in tombs and graves in certain cultures in the East, these innocuous devices ward off the effects of hurtful magics.



## Powers

This graven amulet is worn around the neck. It protects the user against destruction by sorcery. Add +1 Ob to any damaging, harming or hurting spells cast at the character. It does not affect the obstacle of influencing-, controlling- or enhancing-type spells. The Jade Amulet does not affect spirits.

### Limits

The amulet protects the character, so long as he never eats animal flesh. He may eat fish and honey, but not meat, milk, eggs or cheese.

## Antecedent

The fingernail of a saint.



## Red Spectacles

### Hook

The Red Spectacles were created by an ambitious enchanter trying to spread his reputation at court. The rumor is that they worked. He is now the court's own enchanter.

### Powers

These fashionable spectacles increase the wearer's Perception by +1D. This does affect Reflexes but does not affect skill roots.

### Limits

The glasses fall off at the slightest jolt or jump. Any failed physical skill or stat test causes the glasses to plummet earthward. The GM may roll a die of fate if he's feeling particularly cruel. On a roll of 1, the glasses are broken and their power lost.

### Antecedent

The brains of a designer of games.

## Ring of Dexterity

### Hook

Swordsmen, archers, craftsmen and pickpockets alike all covet this precious ring. It is said it will make a master of any man who wears it, but that it will also rob him of his friends.





## Powers

When worn on the index finger of the right hand, this ring grants the bearer amazing Agility. Add +2D to any Agility test taken. This bonus affects skill roots for skills learned when wearing the ring, aptitude for Agility-based skills and Reflexes.

### Limits

If the character clasps right hands with another character, the ring loses its power.

## Antecedent

The finger of a master juggler missing his right hand.

# Ring of Power

## Hook

This is a simple band of gold that contains a reservoir of power. It is seductively potent, but also cursed and corrupt.

The Ring of Power is the final piece in a set of 20. The other rings each contain portions of this ring's power, but none of them contain all of its might.

## Powers

The Ring of Power has many, varied abilities. When worn, it grants:

- +3D to Health tests
- The Second Sight trait
- +1D to Resources tests
- +1D to Persuasion, Oratory, Falsehood, Seduction and Ugly Truth when used against another character with a lower Will exponent
- +2D to all Sorcery and Enchanting tests
- Access to the thoughts of those who wear other rings of power created by the same evil that created this ring
- +4 successes to the bearer's body of argument in a Duel of Wits against a character who bears another, lesser ring of power

Lastly, the ring contains a spell matrix for the Elven spell song Threne of the Chameleon. When the ring is worn, the spell is cast with 5 successes over the obstacle.



Otherwise indestructible, the ring can only be unmade in the fires of the forge in which it was created.

### **Limits**

The Ring of Power is a cursed item, as described in the Enchanting rules.

Also, any use of the item requires a Will test of an obstacle equal to the bearer's own Will. If the test is failed, the character earns the Corrupted trait and Corruption emotional attribute. Each subsequent Will test counts as a test for advancement of the Corruption attribute. The maker of the ring knows when it is used. When it is used, he may make an Aura Reading test at Obstacle 10 minus the user's Corruption exponent to locate the user.

### **Antecedent**

The soul of a dark god.

## **Ring of the Prophet**

### **Hook**

Nothing amazes the locals like the ability to walk on water.

### **Powers**

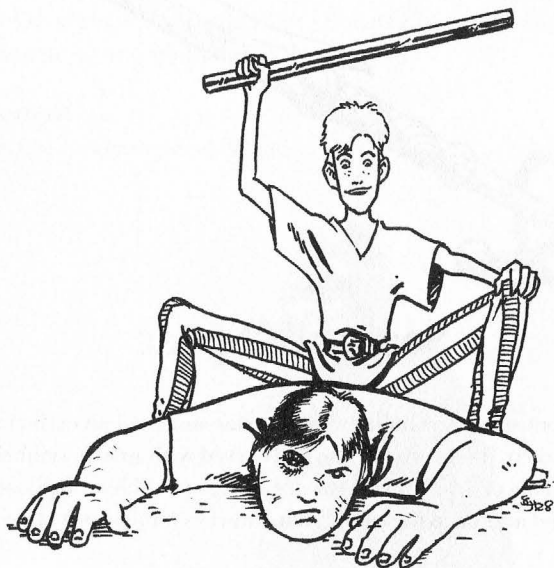
When worn, this ring grants the miraculous ability to walk on water as if it were solid. The ring bearer will not sink, and if submerged, he'll bob to the surface like a cork.

Water, even when solid, is far from stable. Consider smooth water like ice. Rough or wavy water is uneven and difficult ground. Speed tests under these conditions suffer a +1 Ob or greater disadvantage.

### **Antecedent**

The bladder of a Deep One.





## Rod of Iron

### Hook

There was once a young man who was bullied badly by his fellow students. He was beaten often, and his lunch money taken. He vowed revenge. In secret, he labored over this blunt device.

When it was complete, he carried it with him. The bullies, seeing that he was carrying a crude weapon and ready for a fight, mocked him. They attempted to snatch the rod away. Instead, they were given lumps and found their teeth missing. The rod leapt lightly, avoiding the clutching boys' grasping hands, and pummeled the bullies into unconsciousness.

It was perhaps the most satisfying day in that young boy's life.

### Powers

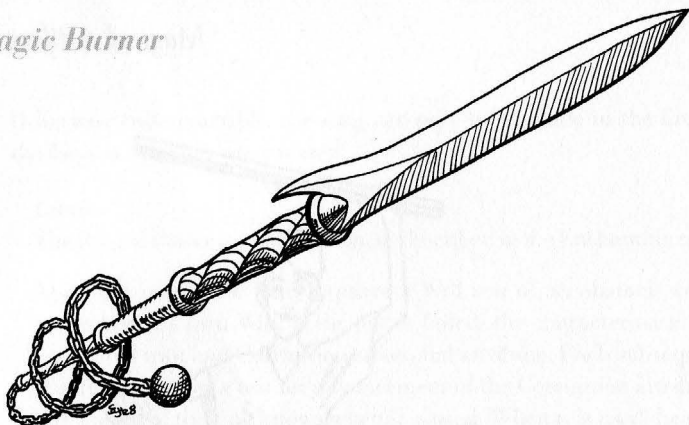
The Rod of Iron grants its bearer the power and force to strike down his enemies. It possesses and bestows a B5 Brawling skill. It counts as a weapon—Power 2, Add 2, VA 1, Fast, Short—and as a +1D shield.

### Antecedent

A flake of B'hemah flesh.







## Serpent's Spear

### Hook

This ancient spear was built by the warrior-smiths of an extinct race of Ophidian men. It is bronze in hue and carved with sinewy symbols. The spear is made of a metal that no metallurgist is able to replicate. It is said to bend and warp in combat, but it always returns to its true shape.

### Powers

The Serpent's Spear has the following stats: Power 2, Add 2, VA 2, Fast, Longer. It grants +1D to Strike against Block or Counterstrike. It contains a concealed hook—a viper's tooth, if you will—that grants +1D to Push. It also contains a concealed whip-chain that may be used to Lock another character from optimal striking distance at no penalty. Lastly, the Serpent's Spear may be thrown as a javelin.

### Antecedent

The spine of a snake-man.

## Silk Armor

### Hook

Silk armor appears to be run of the mill chainmail, but upon closer examination, one can see that all of the links are forged of lighter gauge wire and are interwoven with thick threads of scarlet silk.

### Powers

The silk armor counts as superior quality chainmail for all locations except the head. Clumsy weight penalties for Stealthy and Swimming are negated. Throwing and missile weapon skill penalties are reduced





to +1 Ob for full sleeves. There's no penalty for half sleeves. The Speed penalty for leggings is reduced to +1 Ob for full leggings and reduced to nothing for half leggings.

### **Antecedent**

The silk from a Hunter-Seeker spider.



## Spirit Weapons

### Hook

The demon hunter's sword was a deceptively simple device. It looked like a blade of plain manufacture, but for the single rune carved into the blade. Yet when wielded against a demon, no magic could deflect its stroke.

### Powers

A spirit weapon is a material weapon of any type—knife, sword, axe—that has been imbued with special power so that it not only affects flesh and bone, but spirits and magical creatures as well.

Specifically, spirit weapons can harm creatures with the Spirit Nature trait, and they are not deflected by the Turn Aside the Blade spell or any other spell that controls or deflects metal. Spirit weapons are considered to be arcana or spirit devices, not material ones.

The spirit weapon doesn't do extra damage or provide bonus dice. Aside from its spirit-harming capability, it counts as a normal weapon.

A spirit weapon can be made using Enchanting, Art Magic's sorcerous weapon effect, a minor miracle in Faith or the Elven spell song Song of the Sword.

### Antecedent

Enchanters need the blood, bone or scales of a creature who possesses the Spirit Nature trait in order to create spirit weapons.

## Staff of Light

### Hook

The Staff of Light is an otherwise normal cedar staff. It may be used as an aid to walking or as a cudgel, if a weapon is needed. The first Staff of Light was reputedly made by an old mage who was tired of casting Mage Light at the behest of his less magically inclined friends.

### Powers

This powerful staff contains the Mage Light spell (at campfire level). The light is triggered by striking the butt of the staff on the ground. Once struck, it slowly wells up to full brightness, so as not to blind the bearer.



The powers of the staff are inexhaustible, so long as it remains unbroken. The light itself will flow brightly, provided that the bearer grasps the staff in his hand.

#### Limits

Only characters with the Gifted trait may use this item. If the bearer loses his grip on the staff, the light winks out. If the staff is broken, the magic is lost.

#### Antecedent

The tail of a firefly.

## Talismans

#### Hook

The old man spent his life collecting trinkets, baubles and curios. He wore them around his neck on chains. And though he walked alone through the haunted forest, and dwelt in the ghost-plagued ruins, he was never molested by the spirits.

#### Powers

There are two types of talismans used by summoners: *Talismans of the Orders* and *Talismans of Protection*.

##### *Talismans of the Orders*

Talismans of the Orders grant +1D to summon an entity of a specific spirit order. Each talisman is specific to one type of spirit order (see the Summoning chapter for spirit orders).

##### *Talismans of Protection*

Talismans of Protection are also specific to an order of spirits. These devices increase the obstacle of tests made by spirits of that order



against the summoner. In a Duel of Wits, this only applies to the Body of Argument roll.

Talismans of Protection are rated from +1 Ob to +3 Ob.

## Antecedent

Talismanic antecedents must come from a being of the approximate power of the spirit in question. A Querub's tongue can protect against anything less than or equal to it in power. Odin's eye is sufficient to compel even other chief deities.

# Thor's Hammer

## Hook

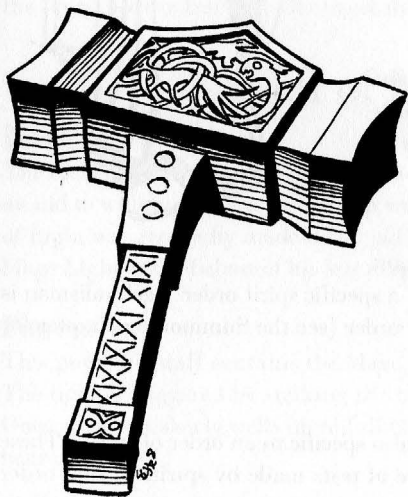
Thor's hammer, Mjolnir, is a fabled work of great power. Every so often, it goes missing or is stolen by the giants. Once Thor sobers up, he goes and fetches it and the thieves get a good thrashing.

It is also provided in this list as an example of a powerful, legendary artifact. The only thing Thor can't reliably take on with Mjolnir is a god. Dragons, giants and demons are merely stalks of grain to reap.

## Powers

Power 1-4, Add 2, VA 2, Slow, Short. +3D advantage for Hammer and Throwing skills. Mjolnir is a heroic (gray shade) weapon, but the bearer of this awesome power may opt to do mundane (black shade) damage if he so chooses. The wielder may also choose the weapon power for the weapon before he strikes. This requires no time or action on the part of the character. The player may simply state the power and the shade of his strike.

Also, Mjolnir may be thrown. It counts as a great bow for range and positioning. It does damage as a thrown weapon. Once thrown, Mjolnir only requires one





action to recover in Fight!, no matter the distance it was thrown. The wielder simply reaches down to pick up the weapon and it appears in his hand.

Lastly, the hammer may be slipped inside the bearer's jacket and be concealed. When held inside a jacket, against the chest, the hammer is no bigger than a pendant placed in a pocket. But why would you hide such a magnificent thing?

### Limits

There is a flaw in the design, however. Mjolnir may not be used to Great Strike. It is a one-handed weapon. The short, angular haft is too small for both hands.

### Antecedent

Blood, sweat and breath from a Master of Forges.

## Wand of Ages

### Hook

The Wand of Ages is an irregularly shaped, polished switch of yew. Rumors say it was created by an enchanter who was envious of the Elves' ability to commune with trees.

### Powers

This wand, when placed against the trunk or branch of a tree, allows the bearer to speak to the ancient spirit and gather its wisdom. When so used, the bearer gains a G5 Forest-wise.

### Antecedent

Ancient Seneschal's sap.





## Wizard's Staff

### Hook

In some cultures, a young neophyte must make his own staff before he is officially given the mantle of wizard. A wizard's staff is no mean thing. It is a magical device that aids in concentration. Making one requires a sturdy sample of good wood, and a curious donation from the young apprentice's master.

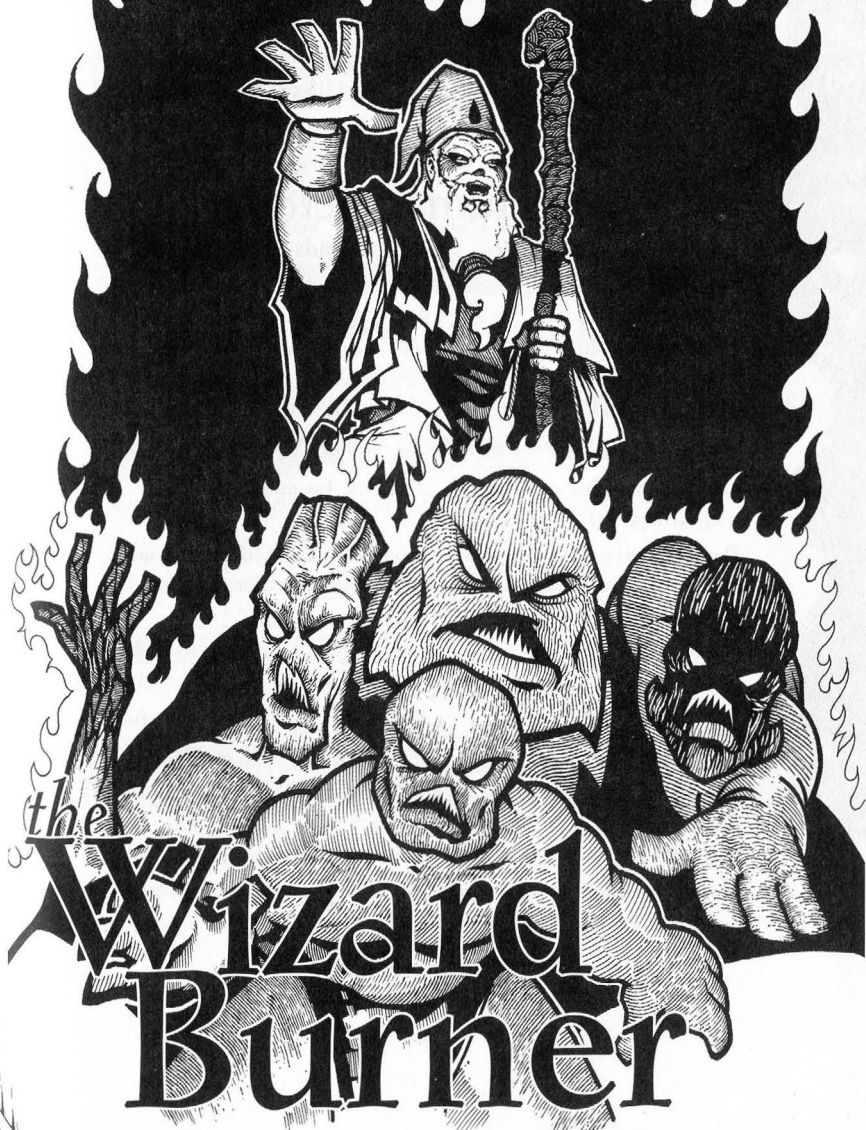
### Powers

This rugged oak staff acts as a *sustainer* for one spell of the owner's choice. Once a spell is sustained in the staff, the device may only sustain that particular spell.

### Antecedent

The blood of a patient wizard.







# Wizard Burner

The Wizard Burner contains new lifepaths, traits and skills for wizards and other magically-inclined characters. You do not have to include everything you see here in your game. Pick and choose what is appropriate and effective. For example, you could choose to include the College of Magic and not the Death Cult. Or you might decide to only add the Gifted Child lifepath and exclude all others.

## Any Human Setting

| Name         | Time   | Res | Stat | Leads                     |
|--------------|--------|-----|------|---------------------------|
| Gifted Child | 10 yrs | 4   | —    | Outcast, Court, Religious |

**Skills:** 2 pts: General

**Traits:** 2 pts: Misunderstood, Gifted, Abused

**Requirements:** This counts as a Born lifepath. It may replace any extant human Born lifepath for any setting.

|           |       |   |   |                             |
|-----------|-------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Apt Pupil | 4 yrs | 8 | — | Outcast, Soldier, Servitude |
|-----------|-------|---|---|-----------------------------|

**Skills:** 3 pts: Obscure History, Ugly Truth, Intimidation

**Traits:** 1 pt: Believer, Gifted

**Requirements:** Must be character's second or third lifepath. It may not be taken twice. It counts as Neophyte Sorcerer for the purposes of requirements in the Lifepaths of Man.

## Peasant Setting

| Name             | Time  | Res | Stat | Leads                     |
|------------------|-------|-----|------|---------------------------|
| Speaker of Names | 7 yrs | 20  | +1 M | Outcast, Peasant, Village |

**Skills:** 6 pts: Spirit Binding, Circination, Paths-wise, Spirit-wise, Domain-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Well-Traveled, Brook No Fools, Fey Blood

**Requirements:** Augur, Crazy Witch, Neophyte Sorcerer or Elder.



## Villager Setting

| Name                | Time  | Res | Stat | Leads                                    |
|---------------------|-------|-----|------|------------------------------------------|
| Wizard's Apprentice | 7 yrs | 10  | +1 M | <i>Peasant, City, Outcast, Servitude</i> |

**Skills:** 6 pts: Reading, Foraging, Symbology, Circination, Pig-wise, Bone Headed-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Always in the Way, Atravieso, Gifted, Assistant Pig-Keeper

**Requirements:** For the purposes of other requirements, this lifepath counts as Neophyte Sorcerer.

|              |       |    |         |                                       |
|--------------|-------|----|---------|---------------------------------------|
| Hedge Wizard | 8 yrs | 24 | +1 M, P | <i>Peasant, City Dweller, Outcast</i> |
|--------------|-------|----|---------|---------------------------------------|

**Skills:** 7 pts: Sorcery, Enchanting, Alchemy, Obscure History, Pest-wise, Fool-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Low Born, Impressive Hat, Never a Moment of Peace

**Requirements:** Requires Wizard's Apprentice, Neophyte Sorcerer, Apt Pupil or Junior Student. This character may not have the Mark of Privilege.

## City Dweller Setting

| Name       | Time  | Res | Stat   | Leads                            |
|------------|-------|-----|--------|----------------------------------|
| Evangelist | 3 yrs | 6   | +1 M/P | <i>Outcast, Court, Religious</i> |

**Skills:** 5 pts: Empyrealia, Demonology, Oratory, Cultist-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Believer, Fiery

**Requirements:** Dilettante, or any summoner or religious lifepath.

## Court Setting

| Name            | Time  | Res | Stat | Leads                        |
|-----------------|-------|-----|------|------------------------------|
| Court Enchanter | 8 yrs | 20  | +1 M | <i>Outcast, City Dweller</i> |

**Skills:** 5 pts: Etiquette, Astrology, Alchemy, Enchanting, Excuses-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Late, Harried

**Requirements:** Senior Student, Apt Pupil or Wizard's Apprentice.

|                |       |    |        |                                   |
|----------------|-------|----|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Court Summoner | 8 yrs | 30 | +1 M/P | <i>Outcast, Peasant, Villager</i> |
|----------------|-------|----|--------|-----------------------------------|

**Skills:** 6 pts: Etiquette, Astrology, Summoning, Circination, Bargaining, Inane Request-wise, Promise-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Dismissive, Polite, Arrogant, Frustrated, Faust

**Requirements:** Senior Student, Mad Summoner, Apt Pupil or Wizard's Apprentice.



## Outcast Setting

| Name              | Time  | Res | Stat | Leads             |
|-------------------|-------|-----|------|-------------------|
| Demented Inventor | 7 yrs | 15  | +1 M | Peasant, Villager |

**Skills:** 6 pts: Mad Invention-wise, Mending, Enchanting, Blacksmith, Whitesmith

**Traits:** 2 pts: Demented, Tinkerer

**Requirements:** Rogue Wizard, Apt Pupil or Wizard's Apprentice.

|                  |        |    |         |   |
|------------------|--------|----|---------|---|
| Evil Necromancer | 10 yrs | 20 | +1 M, P | — |
|------------------|--------|----|---------|---|

**Skills:** 4 pts: Death Art, Anatomy, Graveyard-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Corrupted, Evil

**Requirements:** Coroner, Death Cultist, Cultist or Apt Pupil.

## College of Magic

Some cultures are so rife with magic, schools have grown to cull and refine all of the wayward magelings running about. Inevitably, these schools grow into powerful institutions, staffed by a cadre of the most potent men in the land.

If using the standard Sorcery rules, pick an element and impetus that the school does not teach. Spells of this nature may not be taken in character burning.

### Schools of Magic

For games using Art Magic or Practical Magic, the College of Magic should have a set repertoire of schools it teaches its students—two or three. Players may only choose from those options when purchasing schools during character burning.

### Leads to and From

In order to make this easy, and to avoid rewriting the entirety of the Lifepaths of Man, use the requirements on each College of Magic lifepath as the indication of leads to this setting. For example, Senior Student requires Junior Student or Sorcerer. Therefore, Sorcerer can lead to College of Magic.

Born Peasant, Born Villager, Born City Dweller, Born Noble and Son of a Gun can all have leads to the College of Magic. You may limit this list based on what is appropriate to your campaign. For example, the nobility might not practice magic in your setting, in which case Born Noble would not lead to this setting.



| Name                                                                                                                                   | Time  | Res | Stat    | Leads                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|---------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Supplicant</b>                                                                                                                      | 1 yr  | 3   | —       | <i>Peasant, Soldier, Servitude</i>       |
| <i>Skills:</i> 2 pts: Animal Husbandry, Firebuilding                                                                                   |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Traits:</i> 2 pts: Back-Breaking Labor, Gifted, Second Sight, Fey Blood                                                             |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Must be second lifepath. May not be taken twice.                                                                  |       |     |         |                                          |
| <b>Junior Student</b>                                                                                                                  | 2 yrs | 5   | +1 P    | <i>Court, City Dweller, Outcast</i>      |
| <i>Skills:</i> 8 pts: Read, Write, Ancient History, Circination, Illuminations, Astrology, Geometry Training <sup>†</sup>              |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Traits:</i> 1 pt: Hazed                                                                                                             |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Supplicant, Arcane Devotee, Apt Pupil or Neophyte Sorcerer. May not be taken twice.                               |       |     |         |                                          |
| <b>Senior Student</b>                                                                                                                  | 2 yrs | 10  | +1 M    | <i>Court, City Dweller, Outcast</i>      |
| <i>Skills:</i> 7 pts: Calligraphy, Rhetoric, Aura Reading, Empyrealia, Demonology, Doctrine, School of Magic-wise, Junior Student-wise |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Traits:</i> 2 pts: Graduate, Bully                                                                                                  |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Junior Student or Sorcerer. May not be taken twice.                                                               |       |     |         |                                          |
| <b>Adjunct</b>                                                                                                                         | 6 yrs | 10  | +1 M    | <i>Religious, Outcast, City Dweller</i>  |
| <i>Skills:</i> 6 pts: Research, Folklore, Alchemy, Taxidermy, Library-wise                                                             |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Traits:</i> 1 pt: Overworked, Familiar Face                                                                                         |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Senior Student.                                                                                                   |       |     |         |                                          |
| <b>Master Sorcerer</b>                                                                                                                 | 8 yrs | 30  | +1 M, P | <i>Court, City Dweller, Outcast, Sea</i> |
| <i>Skills:</i> 5 pts: Sorcery, Instructor, Facet-wise, Aura-wise                                                                       |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Traits:</i> 1 pt: Versatile, Sixth Sense                                                                                            |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Adjunct or Court Sorcerer.                                                                                        |       |     |         |                                          |
| <b>Master Enchanter</b>                                                                                                                | 8 yrs | 20  | +1 M, P | <i>Court, City Dweller, Outcast</i>      |
| <i>Skills:</i> 6 pts: Enchanting, Instructor, Carving, Etching, Herbalism, Jeweler, Vessel-wise                                        |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Traits:</i> 1 pt: Nimble, Practiced Precision                                                                                       |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Adjunct or Court Enchanter.                                                                                       |       |     |         |                                          |
| <b>Master Summoner</b>                                                                                                                 | 8 yrs | 20  | +1 M, P | <i>Court, City Dweller, Outcast</i>      |
| <i>Skills:</i> 8 pts: Summoning, Instructor, Bargaining, Ugly Truth, Soothing Platitudes, Rule of Law, Philosophy, Scheme-wise         |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Traits:</i> 1 pt: Extrovert, Fearless, Obscure Aura                                                                                 |       |     |         |                                          |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Adjunct or Court Summoner.                                                                                        |       |     |         |                                          |

<sup>†</sup> This is a training skill. It costs 2 skill points to open in character burning, but has no exponent.





**Researcher**      10 yrs      15      —      *Court, Religious, Outcast*

**Skills:** 12 pts: Composition, Cartography, Cryptography, Doctrine, Apothecary, Rituals, Death Art, Foreign Languages, Dark Arts-wise, Elven Songs-wise, Orc Rituals-wise, Dwarven Art-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Myopic, Bookworm, Speaker of the Secret Language

**Requirements:** Adjunct or Scholar. May only be taken once.

**Councillor**      5 yrs      40      +1 M      *Court, City Dweller*

**Skills:** 6 pts: Administration, Rhetoric, Wine Tasting, Troubled Student-wise

**Traits:** 1 pt: Council of Mages, Imperious Demeanor

**Requirements:** Master Sorcerer, Master Enchanter or Master Summoner.

**Headmaster**      12 yrs      50      —      *Court, Religious*

**Skills:** 7 pts: Oratory, Etiquette, Poetry, Strategy Games, Vintner, Dark Secret-wise. 1 pt: General

**Traits:** 3 pts: Stoic, Master of Mages, Domineering Presence

**Requirements:** Councillor.

## Death Cult Setting

In the forlorn reaches of the world, castoffs, wastrels, vermin and renegades flock to dark callings that promise the downfall of all who have spurned them.

### Leads to and From

Use the requirements on the Death Cult lifepaths as the indication of leads to this setting. For example, Spy requires Cultist. Therefore, Cultist can lead to the Death Cult.

Also, Harem Slave, Captive of War, Gaol, Grave Digger, Pillager, Cripple, Deranged, Leper and Insurrectionist all lead to this setting.

| Name | Time | Res | Stat | Leads |
|------|------|-----|------|-------|
|------|------|-----|------|-------|

|             |       |   |   |                           |
|-------------|-------|---|---|---------------------------|
| Harem Slave | 3 yrs | 3 | — | <i>Outcast, Servitude</i> |
|-------------|-------|---|---|---------------------------|

**Skills:** 4 pts: Creepy Priest-wise, Disgusting Necromancer-wise, Death Cult-wise, Escape Artist

**Traits:** 2 pts: Numb

**Requirements:** None.

|               |       |   |   |                                    |
|---------------|-------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Death Cultist | 2 yrs | 5 | — | <i>Outcast, Soldier, Servitude</i> |
|---------------|-------|---|---|------------------------------------|

**Skills:** 3 pts: Death-wise, Riot-wise, Secret Cult Worship-wise

**Traits:** 2 pts: Zealot, Suicidal

**Requirements:** None.



**Grave Robber**    3 yrs    7    —    *Outcast, Soldier, Servitude*  
*Skills:* 4 pts: Ditch Digging, Graveyard-wise, Night Watch-wise, Shovel-wise  
*Traits:* 2 pts: Lunatic  
*Requirements:* None.

**Spy**    4 yrs    10    +1 M    *Outcast, Soldier, City Dweller*  
*Skills:* 7 pts: Inconspicuous, Stealthy, Falsehood, Forgery, Observation, Righteous Priest-wise  
*Traits:* 1 pt: Furtive, Manhunter  
*Requirements:* Cultist.

**Tomb Guard**    4 yrs    10    +1 P    *Outcast, Soldier, Servitude*  
*Skills:* 5 pts: Spear, Knives, Brawling, Walking Corpse-wise  
*Traits:* 1 pt: Scarred, Loyal  
*Requirements:* Cultist or any soldier lifepath.

**Death Priest**    6 yrs    25    +1 M    *Outcast, Soldier, Religious*  
*Skills:* 6 pts: Command, Ritual, God of Death-wise, Death Cult-wise  
*Traits:* 2 pts: Creepy, Invocations of the Damned, Iron Will, Cult Leader  
*Requirements:* Venal Priest or Heretic Priest.

**Death Artist**    10 yrs    20    +1 M/P    *Outcast, Servitude*  
*Skills:* 8 pts: Death Art, Tomb-wise, Orc Servant-wise, Evil Necromancer-wise, Death Cult-wise  
*Traits:* 3 pts: Cynical, Mind Over Matter, Missing Limb, Paranoid Ear, Meticulous  
*Requirements:* Evil Necromancer, Apt Pupil or Rogue Wizard.

## Servant of the Dark Blood Setting

| Name                                                                          | Time  | Res | Stat   | Leads |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-------|
| Master of the Weak                                                            | 7 yrs | 8   | +1 M/P | —     |
| <i>Skills:</i> 5 pts: Death Art, Apocalypse-wise, Graveyard-wise, Murder-wise |       |     |        |       |
| <i>Traits:</i> 1 pts: Feared                                                  |       |     |        |       |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Knower of Secrets.                                       |       |     |        |       |

## Roden Below Setting

| Name                                                                                                                  | Time   | Res | Stat    | Leads |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|---------|-------|
| The Pope                                                                                                              | 11 yrs | 75  | +1 M, P | —     |
| <i>Skills:</i> 9 pts: Read, Write, Composition, Extortion, Intimidation, Church-wise, Papal Bull-wise, Pope Joke-wise |        |     |         |       |
| <i>Traits:</i> 1 pt: Most Holy, Faithful                                                                              |        |     |         |       |
| <i>Requirements:</i> Father/Mother or Visionary.                                                                      |        |     |         |       |



## Revised Starting Sorcery Skill Exponents

Sorcerous skill exponents may not start the game with an exponent greater than 5 unless all members of the group are playing sorcerer-type characters.

### Magical Traits

**Abused** *Character Trait* 1 pt

**Always in the Way** *Character Trait* 1 pt

**Arrogant** *Character Trait* 1 pt

**Assistant Pig-Keeper** *Character Trait* 1 pt

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#### **Atravieso**

Character Burner page 270.

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#### **Believer**

Character Burner page 151.

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#### **Bookworm**

Character Burner page 271.

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**Brook No Fools** *Dt* 7 pts

The spirit binder's art is not something to be trifled with! His secrets are well kept because meddling fools will only cause irreparable harm to themselves and the domains with which they tamper. A summoner with this trait receives a fate point every time he rebuffs an offer of help from a potential student (so that character does not earn a test toward learning the skill). He receives a persona point when he actively thwarts another character from learning the secrets of Spirit Binding, Summoning or Circination.



I burn wizards



## Bully

*Dt*

3 pts

This character is a classic bully. He gains an extra fate point when he picks a character weaker than him and consistently makes his life miserable. He gains a persona point when he buckles before another, obviously more powerful character. There should be tears and grovelling.

## Corrupted

*Dt*

3 pts

This character has opened his body and soul to the dark powers. He must open the Corrupted emotional attribute. Increase his starting rank by one.

## Council of Mages

*Dt*

6 pts

The Council of Mages is a small, secretive, yet powerful entity. This trait grants a 1D reputation and a 1D affiliation with this organization. This combines with other appropriate reputations and affiliations.



## Creepy

*Character Trait* 1 pt

## Cult Leader

*Dt* 8 pts

Cult Leaders are charismatic and eccentric. This trait grants a 1D reputation and 1D affiliation with the Death Cult. This combines with other appropriate reputations and affiliations.

## Cynical

*Character Trait* 1 pt

## Demented

*Character Trait* 1 pt

## Dismissive

*Character Trait* 1 pt

## Domineering Presence

Character Burner page 153.

## Evil

*Character Trait* 1 pt

## Extrovert

Character Burner page 276.

## Familiar Face

Character Burner page 276.

## Faust

*Dt* 3 pts

Nestled in the recesses of this character's soul is a coal of optimism. He believes that men are good, that happiness is possible and that someday he will encounter a genuinely good man. This meeting will grant him a moment of happiness in another otherwise cynical life. A player whose character possesses this trait gains a persona point whenever he enters a bargain that relies on trust or the goodness of another.

## Fearless

Character Burner page 276.

## Fey Blood

Character Burner page 276.



**Fiery**

*Character Trait* 1 pt

**Frustrated**

*Character Trait* 1 pt

**Furtive**

*Character Trait* 1 pt

**Gifted**

Character Burner page 161.

**Graduate**

*Dt* 3 pts

This trait grants a 1D affiliation with a College of Magic. This combines with other appropriate and applicable affiliations.

**Harried**

*Character Trait* 1 pt

**Hazed**

*Dt* 2 pts

This character may take a free inimical relationship with another character who was his senior in the College of Magic.

**Imperious Demeanor**

Character Burner page 153.

**Impressive Hat**

*Dt* 3 pts

This character's hat is mightily impressive. It can be seen for miles! It's so impressive that people often remember the hat more than the person. This gives a 1D Reputation among the people of a given locale as the wearer of the really impressive hat, so long as the hat is being worn, of course. Wearing the hat also gives a +2 Ob to any Disguise or Inconspicuous test.

**Invocations of the Damned**

*C-O* 4 pts

The Dark Priest swears his soul to fell powers. Like other priests, he must have a Belief that ties to his Faith in order to maintain the emotional attribute. If the player writes a second Belief tied to his faith in the dark gods and his service to them, he may use this trait as a call-on for Faith when that Belief comes into question.

**Iron Will**

Character Burner page 278.





**Late***Dt*

1 pt

This character suffers a +1 Ob to any test that requires him to meet a deadline.

**Low Born***Dt*

2 pts

Low Born characters are born of unremarkable parents. They cannot trace their lineage to any nobility or to any historic or notable characters. They have a 1D infamous reputation in noble or elite circles due to their obviously lacking heritage. It also adds a +1 Ob disadvantage to any Inconspicuous tests in noble or courtly settings.

**Loyal**

Character Burner page 281.

**Lunatic**

Character Burner page 281.

**Manhunter**

Character Burner page 281.

**Master of Mages***Dt*

6 pts

The Headmaster of a College of Magic attained his position by rigorous pursuit of excellence and expertise in sorcery and magic. This trait grants a 2D reputation among mages and the halls of power as a Master of Mages.

**Meticulous**

Character Burner page 281.

**Mind Over Matter**

Character Burner page 281.

**Missing Limb**

Character Burner page 282.

**Misunderstood***Dt*

2 pts

The powers of a Gifted child are rarely understood by his parents or the authority figures in his town. This trait reduces by one the body of argument for any Duel of Wits in which the character is trying to explain magic, his own magical nature or any other supernatural phenomena to otherwise mundane characters.



## Most Holy

*Dt*

6 pts

This character is the living embodiment of the power divine. He gains +3s to his body of argument in a Duel of Wits involving matters spiritual. However, he has no temporal power. Any other character arguing with him about earthly matters, philosophy, women or money benefits from the Enmity Clause—+4s to his body of argument against Most Holy.

## Myopic

Character Burner page 155.

## Never a Moment of Peace

*Dt*

3 pts

This trait grants the character a 5 rps relationship. This relationship must be with a character who is always bothering or interrupting him. If that character is forced out of his life, someone new will come along. This character just attracts these sort of people!

## Nimble

Character Burner page 282.

## Numb

Character Burner page 156.

## Obscure Aura

Character Burner page 282.

## Overworked

*Dt*

3 pts

This trait reduces the character's available practice time by half.

## Paranoid Ear

Character Burner page 282.

## Polite

*Character Trait* 1 pt

## Practiced Precision

Character Burner page 283.

## Scarred

*Dt*

3 pts

This character has led a life of hardship and pain. He's been cut up, broken and beaten down. This trait grants +1D to shrug off or grit teeth for any injury.



## Second Sight

Dt

4 pts

With Second Sight, the character can peer vaguely into the shifting shadows of the spirit world. It is a powerful, multifaceted ability. Through an act of concentration, he can push through the veil of reality to see the other side. This costs one action in Fight!, but otherwise can be done at will. The Second Sight grants the ability to discern if something is magical or not. Test Perception: high power magic (major miracles, Mjolnir, the Burning Wheel, Ob 10 spells, Strength 10 spirits, etc.), Ob 1; moderately-powered magic (minor miracles, Ob 5 spells, a *risen* corpse, the Belt of Flying, Dragon Slaying Sword, Spirit Weapons, Strength 5 spirits), Ob 5; low power magic (Red Spectacles, Bless/Curse, Ob 2 spells, Strength 2 spirits etc.), Ob 8. If successful, the character knows the item, person or effect is magical. He doesn't know exactly what the magic does. Second Sight is one of the abilities that allows a character to use the Aura Reading skill. See the Aura Reading skill in this book for obstacles. Second Sight allows the mage to FoRK Aura Reading into Sorcery or Summoning (so long as he is using his sight). Second Sight turns Perception into Observation for detecting Stealthy or Inconspicuous characters. Any physical actions taken (running, jumping, fighting, etc.) while using Second Sight suffer a +1 Ob penalty.

## Sixth Sense

Dt

3 pts

This is a revised version of the Sixth Sense trait in the Character Burner. It allows the player to add a fourth Instinct to his character. The Instinct must be about detecting danger or detecting when something is amiss. It's not restricted to combat or fighting situations. It can be about people, animals, magic or whatever.

## Slave to the Power of Death

Dt

12 pts

This creature is now the servant of the sorcerer who evoked his soul. He is no longer alive, but neither is he dead. He will not age, grow sick, hunger or sleep. Use the skills the victim had in life. Die and call-on traits are lost and replaced with those imparted by the Death of the Spirit process. Character traits are retained. The slave's stats are equal to his stats in life, minus any dice from injuries sustained at the time of this death.

## Speaker of the Secret Language

Character Trait 1 pt



## Spirit Familiar

*Dt*

5 pts

This character has a familiar whose spirit is linked to his own. He can see through the familiar's eyes (using the familiar's Perception attribute and any applicable traits, like Keen Sight). However, when using his familiar's eyes, a character with this trait cannot look through his own (though other senses may still be employed). It takes two actions of concentration to engage his familiar's eyes, and two more actions to return his sight to his own eyes. This trait *does not* grant Low Speech. However, the creature does understand its companion's wishes and will go where its master directs it to go, look at what its master directs it to look at, etc. A character with this trait feels the pain of his familiar. If the familiar suffers a Light or greater wound, the master suffers a Light Wound.

If the familiar is ever killed, the master suffers a Traumatic Wound. In the game, the character is physically unharmed, but mentally traumatized. Recovery and Treatment are as per a standard Traumatic Wound. This wound does not bleed out.

The familiar uses the stats of the Imp on page 300 of the Monster Burner. However, the GM chooses an appropriate animal form for the creature. He may pick a few identifying traits from an appropriate animal body in Pete's Farm or Pete's Wild World of Discovery. The animal should be small and innocuous. Dogs, cats, pigs, ravens, rabbits, foxes and such are okay. No horse, bear or wolf imps.

## Stoic

Character Burner page 287.

## Suicidal

*Dt*

5 pts

This character (instantly) earns a persona point every time he takes a Mortal Wound.

## Tinkerer

Character Burner page 54.

## Versatile

*Dt*

3 pts

The Master Sorcerer places his confidence in the art of sorcery. It is a versatile and potent art, and he knows it intimately. If using Art Magic, reduce by one the number of tests required for Weaving Magic into the Fiber of my Being. If using the standard Sorcery rules, reduce his practicals aptitude by one. If using Practical Magic, he may take an



additional category of magic. In addition, the player earns a persona point for pushing his character's magic in a dangerous or untried direction.

## Well-Traveled

*Dt*

4 pts

The Speaker of Names wanders the lands and seas, communing with the spirits. This trait allows the player to take a new domain when his character travels to a new locale in play. The player may describe a memory his character has of this place or a place like it. He may describe when he was here before. The player then adds a new domain to his spirit binder at its base level (0). Once used, this trait becomes a character trait. To be clear, the domain is added during play at a time of the player's choosing, not during character burning.

## Zealot

Character Burner page 160.

# Magical Skills

This section presents the new skills offered in this book and revisions of the sorcerous skills in the Character Burner. Skills not listed here are either wises or are described in the Character Burner.

## Alchemy

*Perception*

This entry is an update of Alchemy that incorporates all of the new applications presented in this book. Alchemy is the distillation of materials in order to divine their essence. Alchemists may also create mixtures of arcane substances to generate a specific effect.

**Obstacles:** Distilling components of earth, Ob 1. Components of water or liquid, Ob 2. Components of metal, Ob 3. Components of blood, Ob 4. Identifying traits from organic samples: Character traits, Ob 1. Call-ons, Ob 2. Die traits, Ob 3. Creating a homunculus: Mandrake method, Ob 3. Black Hen Egg method, Ob 4. Bones and Hair method, Ob 5.

**ForKs:** Enchanting, Herbalism, Apothecary, Munitions, Poisons

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** Yes.

## Aura Reading

*Perception*

This is an updated skill list entry that includes revised skill obstacles for the elements of this book. Aura Reading grants the ability to interpret auras. Aura readers can decipher the gossamer veils of emotion, deception and intent. Sorcerers can also discern the nature



and purpose of magic. This skill does not grant the character the ability to *see* auras. That ability must be acquired through a trait, prayer or spell like minor miracle, Second Sight or Magesense.

**Obstacles:** Detecting if the subject is alive, dead, from this plane or another, Ob 1. Reading an aura trait (like Aura of Fear), Ob 1. Reading mood (angry, calm, etc.), Ob 2. Seeing a character trait, Ob 3. Seeing a die or call-on trait, Ob 4. Sensing a person's intent (to deceive, for example), Ob 4. Seeing an Instinct, Ob 6. Seeing a Belief, Ob 7. Seeing a character's past, Ob 8. Seeing a character's future, Ob 9. Reading an object to see if it is magical or mundane, Ob 1. Reading a school of magic, Ob 2. Deciphering a facet of a spell or enchantment (impetus, trigger, effect, breadth, duration etc.), Ob 3. Naming a spell as it is being cast, Ob 6. Detecting the presence and nature of a spirit, Ob is 10 minus spirit's Strength.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** No.

## Bargaining

Will/Perception

Immortal spirits know the value of ephemeral things like life and a soul. They bring this knowledge to bear against those who wish to strike bargains with them and form pacts. The Bargaining skill is a special social skill designed solely to negotiate pacts between summoner and summoned. It may be used for the bargaining steps described in the Summoning chapter or in a Duel of Wits with an otherworldly entity or summoner surrounding the price or nature of a pact.

**Suggested FoRKs:** Rhetoric, Ugly Truth

**Obstacles:** Bargaining uses the rules described in the Summoning chapter and the Duel of Wits chapter.

**Skill Type:** Special

**Tools:** No.

## Circination

Per/Ag

Circination is the art of drawing circles and sigils that aid the spirit binder and summoner. There are three types of circles that may be drawn: the summoning circle, the fortress circle and the prison circle. The summoning circle aids in conjuring and binding spirits. The fortress protects the summoner from spirits. The prison circle traps unruly spirits. Circination is tested like a regular skill: It is not open-ended and does not get combined with anything special (except help or FoRKs) when tested. Circination is used to aid Spirit Binding and Summoning. Please consult those chapters for further nuances of the skill. If a circle is physically damaged—erased, marred, smudged—then it loses its powers.





**Obstacles:** *Summoning Circle or Gate:* The player sets his obstacle according to how many advantage dice he hopes to earn. If successful, the test grants advantage dice for Spirit Binding or Summoning equal to the obstacle. *The Fortress:* For Spirit Binding, the obstacle is equal to the spirit Strength to be deflected. For Summoning, the obstacle is 1 plus the obstacle penalty the sorcerer wishes to impose on the spirit. *The Prison:* For Spirit Binding, the obstacle is twice the spirit strength. For Summoning, the obstacle is equal to the Will exponent of the creature to be imprisoned (plus any penalties for shade differences).

**ForKs:** Illumination, Cartography plus appropriate wises.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** No.

## Death Art

Will/Forte

Death Art is a black practice that teaches the sorcerer how to animate corpses and turn them into walking abominations.

**Obstacles:** See the Death Art chapter.

**ForKs:** None, linked tests are appropriate.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** Yes and no. See the chapter.

## Enchanting

Per/Ag

Enchanting is a school of sorcery that focuses on imparting magic to inert, physical things. There are two sides to Enchanting: imbuing and full-blown enchanting. Imbuing allows the mage to temporarily infuse an item with a small amount of power. Enchanting allows the mage to create powerful, enduring artifacts.

**Obstacles:** See the Enchanting chapter.

**ForKs:** A craft skill appropriate to what's being created. Linked tests are appropriate.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** Yes and no. See the chapter.

## Sorcery

Perception

This is not a revision of Sorcery, but an expansion. In your game, the Sorcery skill can count for the standard version of the Sorcery skill described in the Burning Wheel or count for Art Magic or Practical Magic described in this book. Pick one form that the skill represents in your game. All iterations of the Sorcery skill, no matter what lifepath they are earned from, count as this form.

**Obstacles:** See the Art Magic or Practical Magic chapters in this book or the Sorcery chapter in the Burning Wheel.

**ForKs:** None, linked tests are appropriate.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** No.



## Spirit Binding

Will

Spirits abound. They infuse the world around us, and those who know their secrets may call them forth and bind them into service. Using this skill, a summoner may call forth a spirit and set it to a task.

To summon and bind, the player totals his dice from Spirit Binding, a domain binding, a spirit mark, summoning circles and any offerings. He tests those dice against an obstacle that combines the spirit's Strength, the task, the summoner's own Immanence, the immediate need for the spirit and the scope of the domain affected. If successful, the summoner can name his task and reduce the amount of retribution the spirit will visit upon him. If failed, the summoner has angered the spirit and will suffer the consequences in either retribution or enmity.

**Obstacles:** See the Spirit Binding chapter.

**FoRKs:** Astrology. Linked tests are appropriate.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** No.

## Summoning

Perception

This is a revision of the Summoning skill found in the Character Burner. The Summoning skill allows the character to call spirits of dead men, demons, angels and gods before him to discuss matters of faith, life and philosophy, and perhaps to reach a bargain for service. This skill uses the rules found in the Summoning chapter of this book.

**Obstacles:** See the Summoning chapter.

**FoRKs:** Spirit Binding. Linked tests are appropriate.

**Skill Type:** Sorcerous

**Tools:** No.

## Sorcery Spell Updates

If you're using traditional Sorcery and incorporating the Magic Burner into your game, use these revised spells. They incorporate weapon lengths, range dice and revised damages. Using these rules, extra successes over the spell obstacle may be spent to increase the VA of a spell and modify the Die of Fate. Extra successes over the spell obstacle do not increase the Power of the spell.

## Magesense

Ob 4<sup>+</sup>

300 Actions

This spell has been updated to incorporate the information contained in this book.



Magesense is a powerful spell that extends the sorcerer's senses from the realm of the mundane into that of the arcane. When this spell is erected, the mage sees, hears and smells magic. When a spell is cast within or an active spell enters his Magesense area of effect, the mage may make a Perception test using the following obstacles: high power magic (major miracles, Mjolnir, the Burning Wheel, Ob 10 spells, Strength 10 spirits etc.), Ob 1; moderately-powered magic (minor miracles, Ob 5 spells, a *risen* corpse, the Belt of Flying, Dragon Slaying Sword, Spirit Weapons, Strength 5 spirits), Ob 5; low power magic (Red Spectacles, Bless/Curse, Ob 2 spells, Strength 2 spirits), Ob 8. If successful, he can pinpoint the location of the magical effect—he does not instantly know the nature of the magic.

If a mage can *see* the source of a spell, he may add extra successes from the Magesense casting to his Perception test to detect the spell. Magesense is one of the abilities that allows a sorcerer to use Aura Reading. Therefore, once magic is detected, Aura Reading may be used to determine the exact nature of the ability.

Lastly, while the Magesense is being sustained, the sorcerer's Perception counts as Observation for detecting Stealthy and Inconspicuous characters; and the sorcerer suffers a +1 Ob penalty to all physical activities like fighting, running and jumping.

**Origin:** Personal

**Area of Effect:** Tens of Paces

**Element:** Anima/Arcana

**Impetus:** Enhance

**Duration:** Sustained

**Resource Points:** 16

### Fire Breath

Ob 3^

3 Actions

*A tongue of fire lashes out from the caster's gaping maw and bathes his enemies in flames.* Damaging effect spell: Power = Will +2, VA: 2. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Long. Range Dice: none.

**Origin:** Personal

**Area of Effect:** Paces

**Element:** Fire

**Impetus:** Destroy

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Resource Points:** 12

### Fire Fan

Ob 3^

1 Action

*Flickering flames flare out from the caster's fingertips and scorch his enemies.* Damaging effect: Power = 1/2 Will +2, VA 2. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Longer. Range Dice: 1D.

**Origin:** Personal

**Area of Effect:** Presence

**Element:** Fire

**Impetus:** Destroy

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Resource Points:** 12



## Havoc's Hand

Ob 3^

4 Actions

*The sorcerer's hand becomes a venomous blade. The merest touch wreaks havoc upon his victim.* The sorcerer's hand is a weapon. He must simply touch his opponent to deliver his retribution. The damage done is according to the spell, not the successes of the hit. The touch has a damaging effect Power = Will +4. VA 1. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Shortest. Range Dice: -1D.

Origin: Personal

Area of Effect: Single Target

Element: Anima

Impetus: Destroy

Duration: Sustained

Resource Points: 12

## Rain of Fire

Ob 5^

7 Actions

*The sky turns a smoky red and streams of fire erupt on the wind, annihilating the wizard's enemies.* Damaging effect spell: Power = Will +2, VA 5. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Longest. Range Dice: 8D.

Origin: Sight

Area of Effect: Tens of Paces

Element: Fire/Air

Impetus: Destroy

Duration: Instantaneous

Resource Points: 20

## Shards

Ob 2^

1 Actions

*With a gesture, the sorcerer gouges massive splinters from nearby wood and stone and flings them with great velocity into the unwary.* The spell leaves deep grooves in the material used as its source. Damaging effect spell: Power = 1/2 Will +3, VA 3. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Longer. Range Dice: 1D.

Origin: Presence

Area of Effect: Paces

Element: Earth

Impetus: Destroy

Duration: Instantaneous

Resource Points: 8

## Sparkshower

Ob 2^

1 Actions

*Fire leaps and spits sparks at the sorcerer's call.* Anyone sitting around the targeted fire suffers. Must be cast into a fire source. Will douse torches when cast, but will not unduly affect campfires or larger blazes. Damaging effect spell: Base Power = 1/2 Will +2, VA 2. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Longer. Range Dice: 1D.

Origin: Presence

Area of Effect: Single Target

Element: Fire

Impetus: Destroy

Duration: Instantaneous

Resource Points: 8



## Storm of Lightning

Ob 6^

20 Actions

*The sky chokes into a purple rage and voices its displeasure with searing thunderbolts.* Damaging effect spell: Power = Will +5, VA 6. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Longest. Range Dice: 8D.

Origin: Sight

Area of Effect: Tens of Paces

Element: White/Air

Impetus: Destroy

Duration: Instantaneous

Resource Points: 24

## White Fire

Ob 4^

3 Actions

*A crashing bolt of lightning arcs from the caster's brow, obliterating his enemies.* Damaging effect spell: Power = Will +5, VA 4. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Weapon Length: Longest. Range Dice: 1D.

Origin: Personal

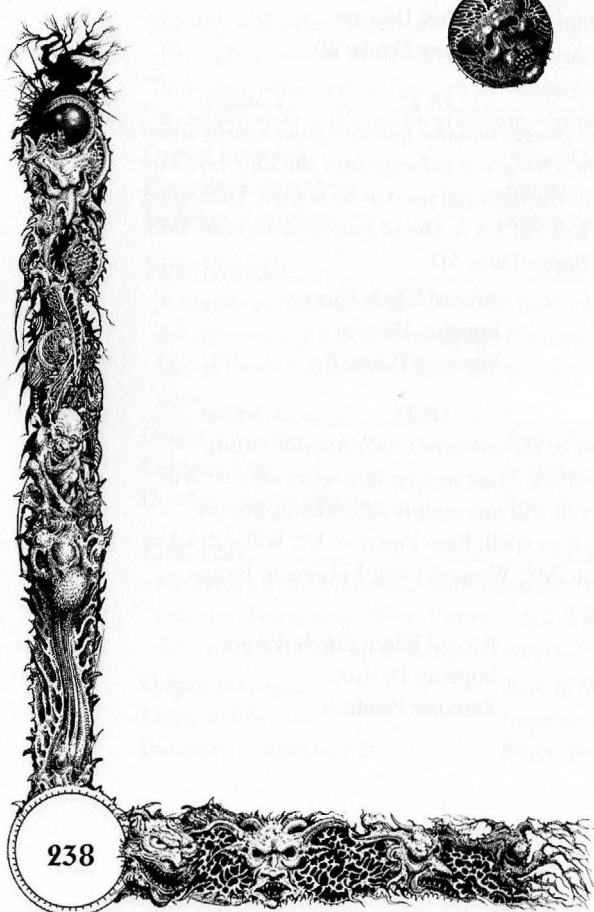
Area of Effect: Tens of Paces

Element: White

Impetus: Destroy

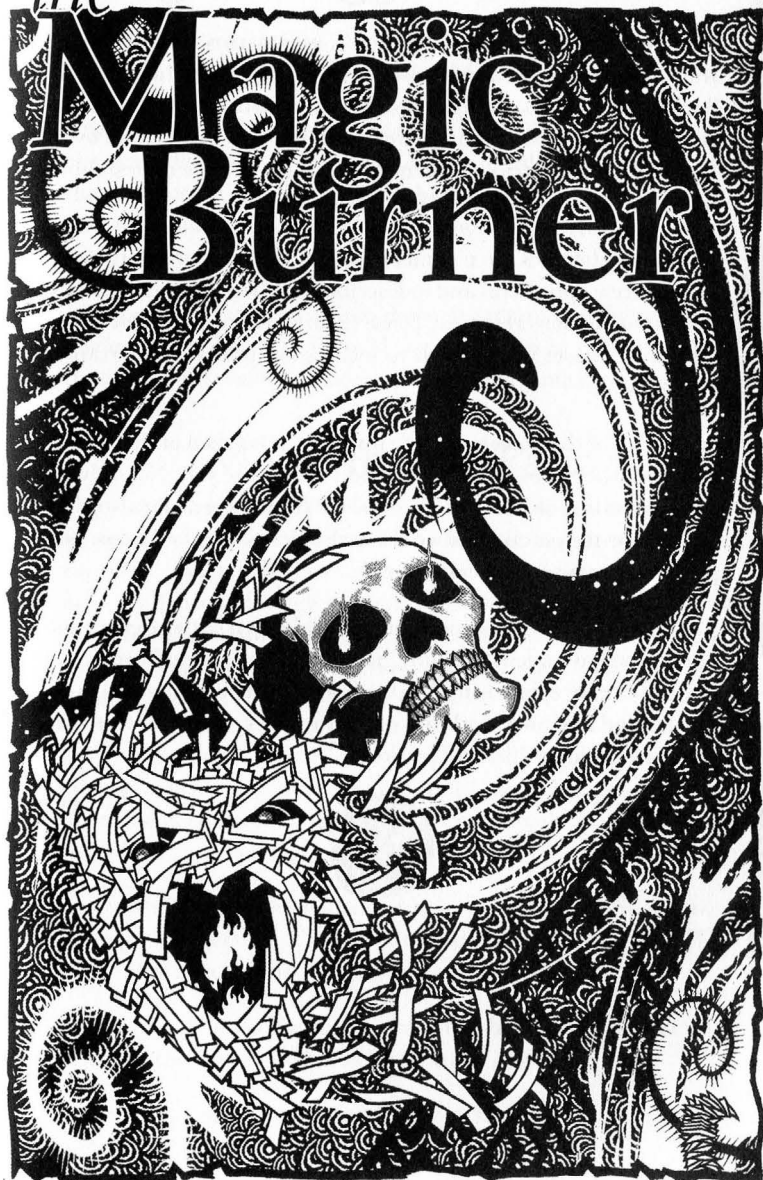
Duration: Instantaneous

Resource Points: 16



*the*

# Magic Burner







# Dissecting Magic

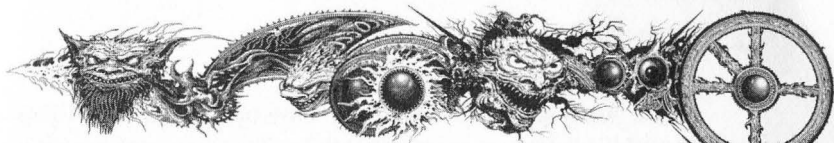
This section of the Magic Burner contains two chapters, *The Magic Burner* and the *Emotional Attribute Burner*. The Magic Burner breaks down magic systems into their component parts and lays them out so that you can use them to build your own. The Emotional Attribute Burner reveals the secrets of designing emotional attributes in Burning Wheel.

These two chapters are technical and dry. Magic and emotion are by definition ephemeral and indescribable. These chapters capture these diaphanous creatures, douse them in ether, pin them to the table and dissect them for all to see. It's not pretty and certainly not magical.

At the end of the process, a huge investment is asked of the reader. You have the pieces of the puzzle laid out before you. Not only do you have to decide how you want them to fit together, you also have to describe the picture formed when the pieces are assembled. You paint the magic onto the mechanics.

As you read through the mechanical breakdown of these elements, I hope you have a few "ah hah!" moments. The Magic Burner was used to create everything in this book. Ideally, you will better understand the inner workings of the various systems presented as you read through this final section.





# The Magic Burner

Like the Monster Burner, the Magic Burner's heart is a system to create and customize your own ideas for Burning Wheel.

The Monster Burner breaks the game mechanics down into basic chunks—die pools and probabilities—in order to show you why the numbers of the game should be what they are. It shows you how to translate those numbers into stats, skills, traits, attributes and even lifepaths.

The goal here is to break things down in a manner so that you, dear reader, can tinker with these ideas and return to your game with the right conditions to create some awesome fantastic fiction.

## Magic in Five Parts

Magic systems are hard to design. Damn hard. It may seem easy to say, "Well, I just want my Elf to be able to cast spells!" But experience has taught me that nothing will ruin a game faster than a poorly conceived magic system. There are numerous ephemeral qualities of good magic systems that hold them together and keep them an interesting and functional part of the whole tapestry of fantasy gaming.

I've broken down magic in Burning Wheel into five categories: concept, technique, price, effect and limits. I'm going to talk about them each briefly here and more in depth in the following sections.

*Concept:* The prime element of a good system is the starting concept. You need an idea in your head before you can start. The clearer the idea, the better your end result.

*Technique:* How is the magic accomplished by the characters? What do they have to do in order to make it work?

*Price:* All magic has a price of some sort. It can be physical, mental or even narrative!



*Effect:* What effect does the magic have upon its intended targets? Harmful or beneficial, overt or subtle?

*Limits:* All magic has rules and laws by which it must abide. What are the strictures of this type of magic?

## Magical Terms

There are two terms I use throughout this section. I want to make certain that my meanings are clear:

*Magic* is any supernatural force, power or set of rules. This can be faith, sorcery or an inherent quality like a trait.

A *spell* is any discernible, discrete magical effect. Any time you do something with magic, it's a spell.

## Concept

The first step on this path is to devise the concept of your magic system. What do you want this magic to feel like? What do you want it to emulate? What does it do? Where does it spring from? What are its side effects, problems or limits?

*When I was designing Elven songs, I knew that I wanted to emulate the feel of the Elves' magic in the Silmarillion. The book is rife with snippets of poetry, and the Elves are forever singing tales both somber and joyful. Song just felt like the right idiom for Elven magic. In Tolkien's work, Elven magic is part of everything they do, but it only rarely produces any grand effect. Therefore, it had to be a subtle art. On the other hand, it didn't seem too difficult for the Elves to master, and aside from the obvious limitation that it had to be sung, there aren't any other side effects or problems. However, there was one limit that Elven songs had to have in the game design: They had to be distinct and different from Dwarven Arts and Orc Rituals. In order to make the game interesting, I knew that I had to make sure that each of those character stocks had an individual magical feel.*

*Sorcery, the original magic system for Burning Wheel, has a different concept. I wanted to create something that felt like traditional Dungeons & Dragons spellcasting but had the fluidity of the Shadowrun magic system.*



## Conceptual Sources

Often these ideas for magic do not spring from our minds whole cloth. Even if we think we have a new idea, we often draw on literary sources to bolster it or flesh it out. Those sources are vital. Not only do they help form the idea, but they also give clues to how the magic should work.

As you read comics and fiction, and watch movies for inspiration, be sure to look carefully for the telling details. Search for the internal logic behind seemingly insignificant events. Look for supporting evidence in the text. Take notes as you read and watch!

*In A Wizard of Earthsea, it's clear that magic has consequences. The wizard characters talk about them all the time! But what are they? Are they fixed or variable? Are they particularly harsh or tame? Well, the first spell that Ged casts—to conceal his village from the Kargish raiders—knocks him flat on his back and puts him into a coma. There is evidence of other consequences, too. Ged overreaches himself while on Roke and unleashes his shadow, a gebbeth, which haunts him for the rest of the story. These examples are a clear indicator that magic is not to be trifled with in this world!*

## Technique

How do the characters in the game accomplish their art? What process do they have to undertake to utilize their magic? Describe the process in detail. Talk about the physicality of the magic and any speech required. Does the magic require other external elements like blood, fire or a wizard's staff?

A technique is part of the whole magic system. It is uniform and doesn't change from spell to spell.

*I wanted the technique for the Burning Wheel Sorcery system to involve speech and gesture. I love that stuff! I didn't want the material components found in De&D-style games, though. And it had to be more complex than just "thinking it."*

*For Elves, the technique seemed obvious—the Elves sang. But once I looked a little deeper, there was a bit of a problem. Fëanor seemed to have some magic in his crafting of the Silmarils. So not only did his magic involve singing, but the act of making as well. And that, according to Burning Wheel paradigms, would require skills and tools. But his half-brother, Fingolfin, goes to confront Morgoth singing of wrath and*



*rage. Nothing more to it than that. So there'd have to be two variants of Elven magic, skill and spell. Skill magic, or Skill Songs, would have to act like skills and require tools and materials and stuff, but still be magical. Spells, or "Spell Songs" to be more precise, would just require that the Elf sing.*

Technique is a descriptive element that helps us frame the magic and better describe it. It also helps us break the magic down into game usable abilities—stats, attributes and skills.

How is the magic utilized? And how is the magic taught or passed on? Magic and the ability to cast spells is almost universally a secret art. It is also inevitably difficult to learn and even harder to master. This can be represented with a variety of techniques in the game.

## **Master Skill**

A master skill combines all of the powers of the art under one skill. You only need one skill to access all of the spells or powers of the art. This concentrates the power of magic into the few people who know that skill.

### **Obstacles**

Obstacles for master skill magic are often represented as individual spells. Each spell has a different obstacle and effect.

*Traditional Burning Wheel Sorcery is an example of a master skill system containing a variety of obstacles and effects. Essentially, each spell is an obstacle and effect for the Sorcery skill. However, each obstacle/effect must be learned by the player separately, and spells can't be accessed until learned.*

Master skills must be broad in application, but they can't do everything. There must be areas or techniques outside of their power.

*As a master skill, Sorcery is broad, but it doesn't cover Summoning and Enchanting. We made those two areas into their own arts with their own master skills.*

## **Many Skills**

Instead of using a single master skill to describe the magical art, power may be dispersed across many skills. This has the effect of making the entire art very difficult to learn, and thus making the individual power of users lower than characters who practice a master skill art. However,



spreading the art across many skills usually increases the overall power of the art. A skilled user with many magic skills is versatile and dangerous.

*Elven Song is an example of a magical technique that uses many skills. Most Elves know a little magic in the form of a song or two. A few Elves know many songs and are therefore quite potent.*

## Attribute-Driven

Attributes act like a master skill. They concentrate the power of the art into one area. To increase the power of the art, the attribute is advanced. All power is focused on that one point. Also, attributes are common to groups of characters—sects, cults, cultures, stocks. This makes the magic ability more common. While this does dilute the specialness of it, it has the effect of raising the power level of that group enormously. Imagine a whole cult of Faithful. They can all help one another with a variety of miracles, probably effecting some major results.

*Faith is an example of a pure, attribute-based magical technique. It's designed to be simple, all-encompassing—the powers the character gains through the ability could be attributed to any religion. The point is to grant the faithful access to limited, but potent, miracles.*

Often, attribute and skill requirements are combined to form limits. That process is described in the Limits section. As you'll see, since it's so powerful, Attribute-Driven magic has the heaviest prices to pay.

## Magic Stats

Using a raw stat—Will, Perception, Agility, Speed, Power or Forte—as a magic-casting ability is a bad idea. It puts too much weight on one ability that is likely already useful in the game. Much better to filter magical technique through the lens of a skill or attribute.

## Easy Sorcery!

The above techniques outline systems that are difficult to master. Sometimes difficulty isn't what you're after. Sometimes magic is easy to learn and prominent in the setting.

Design the system with a broad, accessible technique and use a single skill with far-reaching, universal obstacles.

*Art Magic fits into this category. The character can learn just one skill and thereby gain access to a staggering variety of effects. These*





*effects allow a high degree of potency and versatility. That they are all concentrated under one skill means the ability will advance rapidly, accentuating mastery.*

## Price

The keystone of every magic system is its price. Technique, effect and limits describe how magic is cast, what it does and the scope of that effect. Price describes what it costs a sorcerer to evoke such power. *All magic has a price.* Sorcerers learn what they must pay for their power, and they learn to live with it. But if they don't fear it as well, then the system isn't doing its job.

*The price of magic comes in many forms, some direct, some oblique. The price of Sorcery is tax—potential loss of Forte, potential death. The price of Faith is failure. Failure puts your fate (and your God's will) into the hands of the GM. Never a good thing!*

*What about Elven Songs and Dwarven Arts? They don't seem to have a direct price attached to them. The price of the Elven magic is Grief. The price for Dwarves is Greed. These are indirect prices. They don't affect the character every time he uses his power, but they do describe a tragic long-term arc for the use of such power.*

*Orcs, of course, have it the worst. The price they pay for their hideous arts is threefold—they pay it in tax, in fear of failure in the face of a dark god and through their Hatred.*

Mechanically, there are a number of possible prices for use of magic in Burning Wheel: forced tests, obstacle penalties, turning a relationship, infamy, traits, side effects, emotional attributes and detrimental advancement tests.

Prices are usually invoked after the spell is cast or magic used. Prices are often the most severe when a test is failed, but they can and should be brought to bear regardless of success and failure. Prices can be universal to the magic system or vary by the spell.

## Failure

Failure is the simplest, most basic price to pay. It is also the loosest and most open to interpretation. As per the standard failure rules on page 34 of the Burning Wheel, the GM has license to interpret failure and send the story in a new direction.



Most magic systems have substantial prices attached to failure. In this case, the *failure results* are deemphasized. The consequences of failure are magnified into *price*. This is done so as not to double-penalize a player with a GM's interpretation of failure plus an additional heavy price.

However, when failure is the sole price for a magic system, it must be amplified and made the centerpiece.

*Failure in a Faith test allows the GM license to introduce enemy gods, unintended miraculous effects or visions and mandates from the player's guiding divinity.*

## Forced Test

A forced test indicates that after casting his spell, the sorcerer must make a follow-up test on another ability to stave off a detrimental physical or mental side effect of the use of magic. The detrimental effects can be either a margin of failure die subtraction or an obstacle penalty.

### Tax

The sorcerous tax falls into this category. After casting a spell, whether he is successful or not, a sorcerer must test his Forte against an obstacle equal to the spell. Forte is temporarily reduced by margin of failure. This is a simple and effective price.

### Steel

Steel tests are another valid forced test price for magic. This isn't in place for any magic system yet, but it's a simple and obvious choice. After casting a spell, the sorcerer must test his Steel against his hesitation. Margin of failure from the spell adds to his hesitation obstacle. Margin of failure for the Steel test indicates lost actions in Fight! Whereas in Range and Cover or the Duel of Wits, failure indicates a lost volley of action. Outside of a conflict, don't count hesitation actions. Instead, the player should miss out on an important test or suffer an obvious narrative setback. Don't hesitate while trying to climb that cliff wall or while trying to hurriedly pick the lock before the guards come. Could be bad!

## Obstacle Penalty

The GM may apply margin of failure as an obstacle penalty to one of the character's abilities. Obstacle penalties last for the duration of the spell, or at least a scene.



## Turn a Relationship

Turning a relationship is a particularly brutal price for magic in games that focus on intercharacter play. This price allows the GM to choose a relationship or named Circle on the sorcerer character's sheet and change it from favorable to hateful or rivalrous. This in turn invokes the Enmity Clause conditions for Duel of Wits! If no relationship is present, the GM may assign one, too! Failure by one success indicates a minor relationship. Failure by two or three successes indicates an important relationship. Failure by four or more indicates a powerful relationship.

Turned relationships remain hateful or rivalrous until convinced otherwise in the course of the game.

*Spirit Binding uses a form of turned relationships as a price. The relationships in this case are with the spirits who, rather than actively hating the character, apply a series of negative effects at their whim. Their enmity is fleeting, however, and only lasts for a single test.*

## Infamy

Gain an infamous reputation. If a spell is failed by one to three successes, the GM may assign the character an infamous reputation of a value equal to or less than the margin of failure in a sphere appropriate to the game (a group of people, a domain of spirits or a type of animal, etc.).

## Traits

The price for using magic can come in the form of traits. The more the character uses the magic, the more traits are applied, or the more powerful the trait. Traits don't have to be negative or detrimental, but they must change the character. They must reshape him and make him into something unworldly or supernatural.

The easiest conversion for traits is to apply a trait as the sorcerous ability advances—character traits for an ability at exponents 1-4, and progressively more powerful die and call-ons for exponents 5 and up.

Alternately, the margin of failure can be used. Traits costing up to the margin of failure may be applied. This rapidly transforms the character, usually into something hideous and inhuman. Fun!

*For Corruption, I built a special table that generates random traits. These traits are applied to the character as he advances his corruption. Some*



*are beneficial, most are not. It adds to the cruel and whimsical nature of the dark gods who grant the corrupt power.*

## Magical Side Effects

A side effect refers to a secondary spell let loose by an errant casting.

There are two ways to apply a side effect. First, every time the primary spell is cast, the secondary spell is involuntarily cast along with it. I don't recommend this—a system like this punishes success—but it is a possibility if the game is about magic gone wild.

The less catastrophic version uses side effects evoked by failed spellcasting. You fail the test and the secondary spell is cast instead. In this case, the casting obstacle of the side effect spell is limited to 1 plus the margin of failure.

You can choose side effects from other magic systems than the one you're using. When designing a system, choose one or two related, plausible systems from which the side effects could emerge.

*In canon Burning Wheel, Sorcery uses two distinct side effects: alternate spellcasting and summoned creatures.*

## Emotional Attributes

Use of magic often gives rise to emotional attributes. These emotional attributes reflect the toll the magic takes on the body and soul of the character. This price is by far the most evocative and lyrical of all the options. Emotional attributes imply a fate or destiny for the character. They track a clear progression from the beginning to the end. Since all emotional attributes are capped at 10, reaching that cap signifies the end of the character's life in play. See the Emotional Attribute Burner for more on this.

*Grief, Greed, Taint and Corruption are all prices that Elves, Dwarves, Great Wolves and foul sorcerers pay for their power.*

## Detrimental Advancement Tests

Use of magic can also cause a situational test for advancement for another related ability, typically an emotional attribute. The level of the test is either equal to the obstacle of the spell cast or the margin of failure. Alternately, the casting of certain types of spells can count for situational tests for advancement for an emotional attribute.



*The Corruption attribute uses this mechanic. If you murder or do other unsavory acts with your magic, you earn a test toward advancing Corruption. And that's very bad.*

## Effect

Effect is the fancy technical game design term for “spell.” We know how our sorcerers cast their magic and we know what price they pay for that power, but what do their spells do? This section details every single mechanical effect that I’ve come up with for Burning Wheel so far.

Your magic can’t do it all. You’ve got to pick and choose from the effects. Each effect that you choose will be a different spell for your system. Magic systems can have a handful of spells or dozens. That depends on your concept.

Break down what your magic does. Break it down into discrete results—shoot lightning from fingertips, bind the wind, change into a bird, and so on. Each of those is an effect and thus a spell. Read over the following list to determine how your spell effects translate into the Burning Wheel.

## Color

The prime element of magic is the colorful, vivid description of the spell working. The description does not have to be all pop and flash. It can be subtle or ostentatious, but without an attendant description of the magic at work, magic is boring.

All magic has this effect by default. Color includes a good, interesting name for your spell. Names make spells special. Also, when you write the description of the spell, illustrate the cool magical effects—the sparks, the lights, the fog, the strange noises, etc.

*Enchanting has an effect called Make Magic. It is solely for the purposes of creating color in the game. Using Make Magic, the enchanter can make his items glow and shimmer. There's no other mechanical effect.*

## Tests

Tests are the basic building block of Burning Wheel. We use tests to establish elements of the setting, story and our characters. Does your character know an important detail? Does your character leap a gap? Does he keep his nerve? These are all answered with a roll of the dice. Success indicates one thing, failure another. *So one of the simplest elements of any magic system is to force a test.* This test is separate



from the one required to cast the spell—it's a test as the *result* of the spell. The test might be to grant the target some benefit or to hinder or harm them.

*A spell that causes a test might force a Steel test, a Speed test to stay on your feet or a Power test to keep your grip.*

In Burning Wheel, stats, skills and most attributes may be tested by a spell. By default, spells must target a single ability or tightly linked grouping of abilities.

## Bonus Dice

Another simple and common effect in Burning Wheel is to grant advantage dice to a particular type of test. Advantage dice bonuses range from one to three. One is a nice bonus to a roll. Two dice are a serious boon. Three dice are a rare and powerful gift.

*Wisdom of the Ancients grants +2D to Will. Strength of the Ox grants +2D to Power.*

## Obstacle Penalties

Hitting another character with an obstacle penalty is another common effect. Obstacle penalties are usually broad in application—they can apply to all physical actions, all social actions, all actions while on the ground, etc. This is a very powerful effect, more so than bonus dice or even tests. Why? Because they set a character up to fail a test, and this often has significant consequences.

Obstacle penalties range from 1-4. +1 Ob is a common penalty and, while irritating, it's easily overcome by most characters. +2 Ob is also fairly common, but it's harsh. +3 and +4 Ob penalties are rare and debilitating. Significant consideration must be undertaken before applying such a penalty. Why? Because it's likely with a blanket penalty like this, most characters won't have any chance of success. Failure is a feature of the game, not a bug, but we also can't have characters failing at everything they do. It's bad for the players' self-esteem!

*The Sorcery spell Turn Aside the Blade adds an obstacle penalty equal to the margin of success to attacks against the sorcerer.*

## To Cause Injury

The cause injury effect uses a game element as a weapon to injure a character. This method uses the Weapon Mechanics chapter in the Burning Wheel. You can refer to that chapter for the elements of





Burning Wheel weaponry. When designing an effect of this type, the player must decide whether he's recreating a melee weapon, a missile weapon or a thrown weapon.

Melee weapons use the wielder's Power combined with the weapon power. They use Add to shift between the Incidental, Mark and Superb stages of damage. They are used according to the Fight! rules.

Missile weapons use a set Power/IMS rating for damage. They use a Die of Fate roll to generate the IMS level of damage for a hit. They are used according to the Range and Cover and Fight! rules.

Thrown weapons combine elements from melee and missile weapons. They use the wielder's Power plus weapon Power to determine the IMS levels of the weapon, but they use a Die of Fate to travel between those stages when the weapon hits its target. They are used according to the Range and Cover and Fight! rules.

Those are the basic breakdowns of damage in Burning Wheel. Everything does damage based on one of those models. There are some variations for things magical, though.

### *Spells as Weapons*

When you create a spell that is to act as a weapon, you've got to make the spell abide by the weapon rules; this includes using it in fighty situations and applying damage from hits.

The simplest method of doing this is to have the spell effect generate a magical equivalent of an extant weapon—bow, knife, sword, bomb or whatever. The spells then take on all of the aspects of the weapon—power, Add, Die of Fate, VA, weapon length, etc.

Knives are the easiest to recreate magically. Swords and axes and maces are the next easiest. Then spears and thrown weapons, then bows and crossbows.

*Art Magic uses this effect for the Burning Spear of Arcane Fury spell.*

### *Positioning with Spells*

Wherever possible, map a spell effect to an equivalent weapon when determining positioning for spells. For grander effects, use the Spell Positioning and Weapon Length table in the Abstraction and Distillation chapter of this book as a guide.



### Targeting and Hitting with Spells

The easiest way to use a spell is to have the spellcasting ability act as a weapon skill, like Sword or Bow. The casting of the spell then uses the same process for whacking someone in Fight! or Range and Cover. It's simple in execution, but it does present some challenges when applying Limits and Price.

The other way to use spells as weapons is to apply a special casting procedure to them and then exempt them from much of the rest of process of targeting and hitting.

*Sorcery spells like Fire Breath and White Fire act as weapons, but they don't use the full weapon mechanics. You roll to cast. If successful, you've hit. You don't have worry about action interaction. Then you roll the Die of Fate for damage. The IMS is modified by the power of the spell and the margin of success, rather than your Power and an Add number.*

### Substitution for Power

Sometimes the Power stat just doesn't feel right as a basis for damage for a magic weapon. Many magical effects replace Power with Will. This is to represent the strength of the magic as based on the sorcerer's own mental energies. It's simple and it works. However, you can replace Power with just about any other stat (or even a skill) as part of a magical weapon effect.

### Successes Over Obstacle to Increase Damage

Another way to represent the overwhelming destructive force of magic is to allow the sorcerer to add extra successes from his casting test to the damage result. This replaces the fixed weapon Power that most weapons use. Usually, one success equals +1 Power, but the formula can be altered to produce different results. Two successes for +1 Power limits damage nicely, but still allows for killer results. Whereas one success for +2 Power (or more) allows for blowout-killer-destructo-none-can-stand-against-me results.

These results are always added to the Mark result of the weapon's IMS. The new IMS is then calculated using this modified Mark result.

*In Art Magic, Destroy with Sorcerous White Fire inflicts a Mark result equal to the sorcerer's Will plus one per extra success. If his Will is 6 and two successes over the obstacle are generated, the IMS is: Incidental B4, Mark B8, Superb B12.*



### **Successes Over Obstacle to Increase VA**

Successes over the obstacle may be used to increase the VA of an attack. I recommend you keep a tight rein on this and use two successes over to gain a VA 1, three over for a VA 2 and five over for a VA 3.

### **Dice Subtraction**

One powerful effect of magic is to subtract dice directly from a stat or skill. This is perhaps the most powerful “damaging” effect of magic since it bypasses the injury and maneuvers mechanics. Use this effect cautiously (or not at all). It’s abusively powerful in most circumstances.

*Emperor’s Hand is an example of a spell that uses the Dice Subtraction effect. The spell temporarily reduces the Forte exponent.*

### **Armor**

Magic can be used to recreate the effects of armor—a pool of dice per location that deflects incoming attack. The better the quality of the armor, the higher the obstacle of the spell. Magic armor should not carry clumsy weight penalties with it. It is magic after all. It is subject to armor damage. Otherwise, it’s too powerful.

### **Substitution**

Magic can be used to substitute a stat or skill for another ability. This can take the form of the magic technique substituting for a needed ability, or of allowing Will to act as Power under certain circumstances, or Perception as Observation, etc.

*Call of Iron substitutes the wizard’s Power for his Will.*

### **Mundane Effect**

Magic can also be used to recreate simple, mundane effects like light, fire, warmth, tools, utensils, shelter or even sound. The obstacles for these effects should be low.

*The spells Minor Maker, Thunderclap and Voice Caster are all mundane effect magics.*



## Traits

Magical techniques can be used to apply traits to a target. These traits come from the various lists in the Character Burner, Monster Burner and this book. The difficulty of the effect is based on the trait point cost of the trait to be applied and willing targets are easier to affect than unwilling ones.

This effect is the easiest way to recreate transformative magics and allow the target access to all sorts of fantastic powers.

### *Don't Call-On*

You may not apply call-ons with this effect. That type of trait is too powerful to use as often as needed. It has a specific per-session use. Allowing call-ons to be added as needed breaks that once-per-session currency of the game.

## Make Magic

Spells can be cast on characters or objects to make them magical. This effect makes stats or skills open-ended. It gives objects the properties of a spirit weapon (or something similar).

*The Elven Song of the Sword can be used to make skill rolls open-ended. Also, any effect used for the spell has the additional effect of rendering the sword a spirit weapon.*

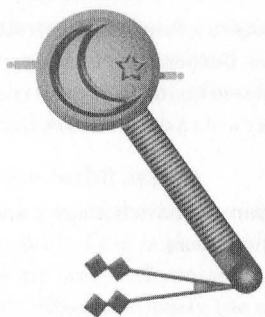
## Big Magic

Magic is often seen as a creator of huge extranormal effects. Stuff that can't be explained by any other means—night during day, day during night, fire from the sky, earthquakes, freak storms, etc. These are all possible to produce using magic, but the difficulty of these effects is high.

Big magic derives its results from the Natural Effect scale described on pages 214 and 215 of the Burning Wheel. Feel free to embellish on the descriptions provided; they are only examples. Use the descriptions in the successes over obstacle list or replace “successes over the obstacle” with an equivalent flat obstacle—from 1 to 10—for systems that use fewer dice than traditional Sorcery.

These effects change the setting of the game or force tests or impose obstacles across swaths of characters. Shoot the moon with big magic, but be sure to impose juicy limits and prices.





## Rule Breaker

Some magic lets players skip a test and declare a result, or temporarily ignore a rule or tamper with another player's Beliefs or Instincts. Force of Will, Doom Sayer, Rune Casting and even Sarch's Glare all fall into this category.

Unsurprisingly, these effects must be kept rare and difficult to perform. Otherwise, magic becomes overwhelming and mundane effects are useless in the face of it.

### Artha-Based Effects

There are magical effects in the game that focus on how the player spends artha, not on how his character casts a spell or sings a song. These rule-breaking effects may *never* be combined into a spell that forces a player to spend artha. Artha expenditures are always voluntary. A player must be inspired to spend, not threatened or forced.

These rules allow a player to spend artha outside of the standard expenditures in order to maximize his character's effectiveness in the game. While it's not a spell, or even necessarily magic, artha certainly has a magical effect on the game—allowing characters to exceed their normal limitations and accomplish goals they would be unable to otherwise.

Fate points can be tweaked so that they add an extra die or two.

Persona points can be spent to draw on extra bonus dice.

*Using Ancestry from Burning Sands, a player gains +1D per Belief related to his character's ancestry. In Greed, persona points allow the player to tap a reservoir of dice equal to his Greed. Persona points spent on Honor and Shame, from the Blossoms Are Falling, allow the player to substitute his relevant emotional attribute for the stat or skill test. Of course, all of these have a price that forces a test for the attribute.*

Deeds points also generate bonus dice. They allow a player to add a whole pile of dice, though.

*Ancestry allows a player who spends a Deeds point to add his Ancestry attribute to the roll instead of doubling his dice. This is very potent for*



*skills 5 and under; Ancestry will often be rated at 6 or higher, making its addition more valuable than doubling. Grief, Hatred, Honor and Shame all follow these same guidelines for Deeds points.*

Also, it should be noted that artha cannot be earned directly through a spell effect, nor can it be stolen, donated or traded.

## Limits

All magic in Burning Wheel has limits. Without limits, the effects described in the preceding section are not only too potent, they're bland. Individually, powerful or bland effects can hurt a game. Together, they'll *ruin* a game. Limits make the effects interesting. They grant the players handles by which they can grasp the effects and manipulate them.

Limits describe how long it takes to activate the magic, how long it takes to learn the magic, how long the magic lasts, and *what* the magic affects.

Limits are fluid and dynamic. While each technique contains a few overarching principles, limits can often vary from spell to spell. Limits are implied by the concept, the technique and the price. There are eight categories of limits: Restrictions to Learn, Activation Time, Duration, Targets, Specificity, Concomitant Penalty, Advancement Limits and Consent.

### Restrictions to Learn

A restriction to learn the magic is a traditional limit. This restriction comes in two forms: necessary quality and time.

#### *Necessary Quality*

Often, there is some necessary quality a character must possess before he may learn magic at all. In Burning Wheel, this necessary quality is usually described as a trait or an emotional attribute that must be possessed before one can engage the magic system. This is the case for most magic systems in Burning Wheel. Sorcery, Faith, Elven Songs, Dwarven Arts and Orc Rituals all require a trait—Gifted, Faithful, First Born, Shaped from Earth and Stone and Blasphemous Hatred, respectively.

Elves, Dwarves and Orcs have additional magic systems—Grief, Greed and Hatred—that grant them a variety of special abilities.





The necessary quality for these special abilities is the presence of the emotional attribute itself. That emotional attribute its own limit.

Other systems may invoke different types of qualities, like a particular Belief or Instinct. The Faith magic system uses the Faithful trait and Beliefs. Dwarven Rune Casting and Elven Doom Saying also rely on Beliefs as necessary qualities. In this case, the spellcasting player must change one of his own Beliefs for the magic to be effective.

### ***Time to Learn***

The effort and time required to learn the craft is a common limit. Magic is often difficult and time-consuming to study, requiring significant portions of the character's life.

Time to learn is a significant limitation. It is featured prominently in Sorcery. Not only must the skill be learned, each spell must be learned separately through an arduous and failure-prone process. What's more, learning the skill is restricted: Sorcerous skills must be taught directly; they can't be attempted and learned like other skills. And to further drive the point home, Burning Wheel puts a year premium on each test for practice. Few characters can afford taking a few years off in the middle of their careers, no matter how beneficial the outcome.

Elven Spell Songs approach this from a different, but no less difficult standpoint. Each spell is a separate sorcerous skill that must be acquired, learned and advanced. Since they are sorcerous skills, they can't be attempted without instruction. And, like Sorcery, practice comes in increments of a year. Elves don't have individual spells to learn, per se, but their magic is spread across many difficult-to-master skills that are known by a few rare character types. This is a significant limitation! If every Elf was walking around with the Ballad of Rage, singing it and teaching it, there would be little use to the limitation, but the entire Elven stock is built to reinforce this dispersal of knowledge and its inherent benefits and problems.

### **Activation Time**

Assume, if you will, the perfect magic system in which the effect happens exactly at the moment you want it to. No delay, no casting. It just happens. Pretty nifty, eh? However, it's not how most magic is described in fiction. There's often a gesture to be made, a phrase to be spoken, a ritual to be performed or a condition that must be met. In game terms, these constraints restrict when the magic can be activated and effectively used. The time required to activate a magical effect is a conventional limit on the use of magic in roleplaying games.



Sorcery, Rituals, Wolf Howls, Wyrd Webs and Spell Songs use spells that require actions to cast. In these systems, there are fast spells and there are long spells. And the length of time required to activate the spell governs when the spell may be effectively used—general play, in Fight!, in Range and Cover, etc.

Skill Songs, Dwarven Arts and Faith all have lighter constraints on their activation time. Skill Songs and Dwarven Arts obey standard skill test times. While this is a constraint in and of itself, it's minor compared with tracking actions. Faith lies somewhere in the middle—it's not mapped directly to actions, but neither is it tied to skill times. Faith magic activation is largely up to the group and what they feel is appropriate for their religion, so it's not really a limit at all for that type of magic!

## Duration

How long does the effect last? Does it last forever, or for as long as you want it to? Does it have a duration that affects the player's choices about the spell? Does it last for just a moment? One scene? One session?

Duration of effects is all but mandatory for magic. Without a duration, magic effects would be permanent boosts to stats, skills and attributes. A handful of magicians would turn the world upside down—they'd be able to improve or hinder characters to the point where dice didn't matter anymore. They'd just keep piling on the endless effects!

In the Burning Wheel core rules, I talk about time in terms of actions, minutes, hours, days, months and years. Makes sense, no? That's how time passes, right? True, but game time is very different than real time. What's important in real time is not the same as what's important in game time.

*Game* time is factored in chunks of tests, conflicts, scenes, sessions, adventures and campaigns. As you look through the new magic systems designed for these books, you'll see that I favor these new durations, rather than the traditional time durations. Why? Because these game time durations are much easier to manage as an in-game resource than real time. Burning Wheel doesn't have very good time management rules, but it has excellent game resource management rules. That said, both sets of rules have their place.



### ***Real Time in the Game***

There are five instances in which real time measurements are useful in the game: Fight!, Range and Cover, when practicing, when working and when recovering. These are mechanics in the game that let you use real time measurements—seconds, minutes, hours, days—and have them mean something.

If your magic has applications in Fight!, Range and Cover or Duel of Wits, duration can be applied as a limitation in the form of actions. Fight actions are equal to a heartbeat or two. Actions in Range and Cover and Duel of Wits are equal to a minute or two.

When characters are practicing their skills, they are using real time increments—months and years. Working to recover taxed Resources uses real time increments—months, seasons and years. Recovering from an injury uses days, weeks and months as time increments. Because all three of these activities use the same time scale, they are all intimately tied together. Recovery, practice and Resources cycles all work together to form a particular part of the game, the part outside of day-to-day life and the immediate actions of heroes. This is the downtime, the between time. Spells that affect this cycle work very well with real time durations.

Outside of that cycle, real time doesn't have much of a meaning. What's an hour in the game? How much adventuring can you accomplish in an hour? How many tests? How many Duels of Wits? At best it's an arbitrary determination made by the GM. There are no rules for it. It's completely up to the players to decide. Sometimes that's cool, but other times, we need another set of limits to help us define magical effects.

### ***Game Time Resources***

Game time increments are tests, conflicts, scenes, sessions, adventures and campaigns.

*A wizard is studying a tome in a cavernous, forgotten library. A single test of his Research skill could encompass days of game time. Does this mean he should roll every hour to sustain his Mage Light spell so he can continue to read? Should he roll 24 or 48 times? Doesn't that break the Let It Ride convention? Yes, it does. That's exactly why we have durations in game time as well as real time. Sometimes, real time just doesn't make sense!*



Since action, time and life in Burning Wheel are most often governed by a roll of the dice, attaching duration to a number of die rolls or a period of play makes sense.

A *test* duration indicates the effect lasts for a single roll or a series of rolls—anything short of a conflict like Fight!, Range and Cover or Duel of Wits. This is pretty short, in fact, the shortest game time duration possible—one roll of the dice.

A *conflict* duration indicates the effect lasts for one Fight!, Range and Cover, Duel of Wits, Pursuit or Chase. This is a nice hefty duration, because those mechanics indicate that the character is doing something important. An effect that lasts through one of those mechanics has some weight to it.

A *scene* duration is a bit more elastic and fluid than a test or a conflict. While both of those elements could constitute a scene, a scene generally covers a bit more territory. In Burning Wheel, a scene encompasses the build up to a particular action and a bit of the aftermath.

*A scene effect could be used for tests linked to a conflict, for the conflict itself and then for some follow-up rolls after the conflict is over.*

The duration of a scene is entirely up to the group's GM. But the guidelines for a scene are: one goal, no change of venue, no introduction of new problems. A new situation is introduced at the end of a scene.

A *session* duration is the simplest to measure, and probably my favorite of this whole set. The effect lasts until the end of the session. That's it. On occasion, the session duration may seem to break our suspension of disbelief—if the session picks up right where it left off, for example—but in my experience, it's a small price to pay. Session durations are so clear and easy to use, a break in the imagination is worth glossing over.

*Adventure* durations are similar to scenes. This duration lasts until the group has completed some agreed-upon goal. It's easy to track if you map the duration of the adventure to the completion of a Belief. However, the group must be on track to accomplish the goal set out in that Belief. Adventure duration effects are not an excuse for infinite durations due to vague wording.

*Campaign* duration usually lasts until the group has accomplished that great big goal and then drifts off into retirement. It's not much of a limit at all, since typically the game's over at the end of the campaign,



but it does have a cool flavor, especially if you end up coming back to the game later and pulling those characters out of retirement.

## Targets

Ideally, a spell would be universally applicable. It would work on whatever and whomever the mage needed. A spell like that clearly lacks limits and is very powerful! In Burning Wheel, magic always has a target. It never affects everyone everywhere. There is always a limit on the scope and breadth of what it can do.

Magic can target a stat, a skill, an attribute, a character, a group of characters, an object in the game, a group of objects or an area in the game (and possibly groups of characters and objects). The more specific the target, the greater the limitation. There's no brain science there.

### Target Limits Suggestions

Obstacle penalties, advantage dice and dice subtractions nearly always affect a specific stat, skill or attribute. They are not applied universally to all of a character's abilities. Not unless it's a really powerful spell, that is.

Tests and Substitution are self-limiting—they affect a particular ability.

Mundane effects affect objects, characters and occasionally groups—a spell that grants light, for example, affects all of the characters in the area.

Big Magic, by its nature, affects groups of characters, groups of objects and broad areas.

These targets may be narrowed to increase the limitation of the spell, or broadened to widen its scope. Such broadening of scope is very costly, as I'll describe in the next section, Burning Magic Systems.

## Specificity

A spell may be assigned a special condition to further limit its effect on its chosen target. Specific conditions involve environmental conditions, additional party participation (like help), ultra-specific targets or other weirdness.

*For example, armor can be tweaked in a couple of ways. It can be limited to only protect against magic and not mundane attacks, or limited to deflect only spirit weapons, or it can have clumsy weight penalties added back in to reduce the spellcasting obstacle.*



## Concomitant Penalty

A rather unpleasant limit for magic is the old temporary penalty. Under this condition, when a spell is cast, it causes a concomitant penalty to the caster. This penalty remains so long as the spell is in effect.

Penalties are usually obstacle penalties, but they can be traits or die subtraction as well.

The penalty must be limited in some respect. Applying a total obstacle penalty to all actions is more of a punishment than a limit.

*Using Magesense, a character can see into the spectral realm and discern auras. This powerful magical effect also incurs a concomitant penalty of +1 Ob to physical actions while it's in use.*

## Advancement Limits

Another limit on the use of magic in Burning Wheel is the advancement of emotional attributes. 10 is the traditional maximum for such abilities. Once the maximum is reached, the character is removed from play.

Traditionally, this creates a very long play arc for the character but also generates pressure on the player. As he uses his magic, he gets closer to being removed from play.

This is also a delicate subject. Removing a character from play nearly always sucks. It should never be undertaken as a punitive act—the player must agree to it. Which is why the capped advancement on emotional attributes works so well. It's not a sudden thing. The player has a lot of game time to come to terms with it.

## Consent

Group consent can be used as a limit on magic. It's a simple process. The magic-using player asks the group if they think his use of magic is appropriate. If so, he may use his abilities. If the group disagrees, he may not use his magic at that juncture.

*The Shame and Honor emotional attributes use consent as a limit. If the group feels a player's actions are not in line with his Honor or Shame, they may deny him access to that ability for that action. This particular evocation of the mechanic serves to reinforce the rigid societal structure represented in the Blossoms Are Falling.*





Consent is problematic because it's not consistent. It's subject to the moods and vagaries of the group. A group can be too lenient, always agreeing, which makes for a boring game. A group can be too stringent, always shutting the sorcerer player down, which makes for a frustrating game. It's best to use this mechanic sparingly and with clear guidelines.

## Burning Magic Systems

Building a magic system requires a bit of work—an evening of brainstorming and note-taking, and a few hours of playtesting and revising. These rules are not intended to be used on the fly during a session.

Creating a magic system is worth the effort. These systems are used repeatedly in games, not for one-off play, and thus require balance and restriction. A broken magic system can sour an entire game.

I've broken down all the elements of a magic system in the previous sections—Concept, Technique, Effect, Limits and Price. In the following section, I'll break down my process for building a system. Hopefully, this will inspire you and help you to build your own.

Now we're going to go through those five elements again and try to form our ideas about magic into serviceable game mechanics.

### Conceptualize

Think of a cool concept for your magic system. Is magic common or rare? Who casts the spells? Why? What are those spells? How would you describe them?

*My initial concept for Death Art involved raising the dead and casting curses. As I delved into possible game mechanics for those aspects, I quickly realized that Death Art needed to focus on one aspect and not the other. I felt that Art Magic covered curses and black magic of that sort well enough, so I turned the concept of Death Art to focus solely on raising, modifying and controlling walking corpses.*

### Technique

How is the magic invoked? What action does a character have to take to cast a spell? Is it speech, gesture, thought, ritual? More importantly, what abilities are used to cast the magic? Is it from an emotional attribute, like Faith? Is it a skill like Summoning? Is it one technique



spread over many skills like Elven Songs? Are there a variety of techniques spread over a handful of deep skills, like Sorcery, Enchanting and Death Art?

### Default “Sorcerous” Skills

One final note on technique: By default, any magic skill or ability counts as the *sorcerous* skill type for purposes of practice and learning. This can be changed, but do so explicitly and recognize that you’re tweaking a core system element.



## What Price Does the Magic Exact?

All magic has a price. Magic without a price commits the egregious and cardinal sin of being *boring*. There can be no boring magic in your games. However, if the price is too steep, the system will be frustrating to use. It’s vital to choose an interesting price so you have interesting magic.

When building your magic system, you want to strike a balance between the power granted to the sorcerer and what that power costs him. You want sorcerer players to think about casting a spell before they do it and then you want them to feel it after they do. This decision makes the magic meaningful in the game. Without it, the power simply becomes a super-tool to fire up and carve through problems, diminishing any sense of challenge or accomplishment.

Price is tied to the game world. What is the natural cost of the magic in this world? How does magic affect those around it? Price helps magic obey the “natural laws” of your world. Since magic invariably breaks these laws, the price brings the magic back into balance.

Think for a moment. What’s a good price for your system? Look through the Price section in this chapter. Choose a method you feel is appropriate. Don’t be timid. Think of something that’s really going to hurt.



*One of Sorcery's prices is tax. Why is this appropriate? Because using the Sorcery rules, the characters become powerhouses. They output serious wattage. A price that robs them of their vitality (but that also lets them slowly recharge) seems perfectly applicable.*

*Personally, I like tax. It's a versatile price. It's simple to use and doesn't impede the actual power output of the character. It does, however, require players to meter their output and take risks when casting spells. There is always a chance that you'll fail the Forte test and knock yourself out, only to find out that your friends need you for an even more important spell.*

### Applying Basic Dice Mechanics to Effects

We've looked at a host of effects, but how do we get them into the game? There are some standard mechanical methods in Burning Wheel that can be applied to generate bonus dice, obstacle penalties, etc.

#### Set Result

Many spell effects have a simple *set result*—cast the spell, meet the obstacle and apply the result. A set result works particularly well when used with the following effects: tests, armor, substitution, mundane effects and traits.

*Nearly all Art Magic spell effects are set results. There is little manipulation of margin of success or failure. For example, the Art Magic spell Burning Spear of Arcane Fury summons a weapon if the obstacle is met. Extra successes don't make it a better weapon.*

#### Margin of Failure

If an effect forces a test, the margin of failure may be used to apply an obstacle penalty, advantage die bonus or die subtraction effect. For each success below the obstacle, a portion of the effect is applied.

#### Margin of Success

In this case, the margin of success is applied to the spell effect in some way. Frequently, I combine this with advantage dice or obstacle penalties, but it works well with nearly any effect application. Successes can be manipulated to “buy” effects with the spell—one strong effect could be gained, or successes could be divided into multiple smaller effects.

*Using the Weather Worker spell, the player can spend his margin of success on a Natural Effect and on the spell's duration. If he has six successes and puts two into duration, the other four are applied to the Natural Effect scale.*



### 10 Minus Stat

10 is the cap for stats in Burning Wheel. By subtracting a stat exponent from 10, a number is generated that favors high stats and punishes low stats. This is an excellent device for generating obstacle penalties and bonus dice.

### Fixed Bonus

Spells can apply a predetermined, fixed bonus upon successful casting—+1D, +2D, etc. This number is the same each time the spell is cast, regardless of the degree of success. The bonus usually comes in the form of advantage dice. In the basic currency of the game, generating one advantage die is usually an Ob 3 test.

*The Faith spell Bless applies a fixed bonus of +1D to its target.*

### Fixed Penalty

Spells can apply a predetermined penalty upon successful casting. This number is the same each time the spell is cast, regardless of the degree of success. The penalty usually comes in the form of obstacle penalties but can also include dice subtraction or a detrimental substitution. Fixed penalties are often a simple +1 or +2 Ob, but can also be equal to one of the sorcerer's stat or skill exponents.

*The Sorcery spell Bilious Smoke applies a +3 Ob penalty to all Observation tests made in the smoke.*

## Magic Dice

This section describes some qualities for magic dice pools. If you have other questions about building dice pools in the game, refer to the Monstrous Mechanics, Stat Burner and Shade Burner sections in the Monster Burner, which describe how to build a pool of dice in Burning Wheel.

### Building the Range of Dice

Building a pool of dice for a magic system is easy. Stop and think a moment. In your ideal game, how many dice do you want your magicians to roll? 3, 4, 5, 10?

If you're stumped, grab a handful of dice and shake 'em around. What feels right to you? If you're conservative or tentative about magic, you grabbed four dice or less. If you are moderate in your taste, you grabbed between five and seven dice. If you're a two-fister, you grabbed ten dice or more.



If you grabbed four or fewer dice, you probably want magic to be subtle. Consider using an emotional attribute-style system with artha effects like Grief or Greed. Or for even more subtle effect, consider using Skill Songs, Dwarven Arts, Practical Magic or Faith with the abilities capped at exponent 5.

If you grabbed five to seven dice, you may want to use a natural magic-style system. Spells are learned and used like skills. Their effects have obstacles ranging from 1 to 6.

If you grabbed 10 or more dice, you probably want to use a Sorcery or Enchanting style system. You want to roll lots of dice, hit higher obstacles—4 and up—and get lots of extra successes to spend on cool effects. Each spell effect should be a discrete obstacle and a discrete spell.

### **Open-Ended Tests**

Stat, skill or attribute tests for magic systems are open-ended. Why? Because they're magic, that's why.

## **Magic Obstacles**

Flaming blasts of sorcerous fire, invulnerability and mental domination; speaking to the dead, binding demons and beseeching gods; potions, magic swords and strange amulets—each power in your magic system requires a separate obstacle. Powers are individually rated either as fully fleshed-out spells or as iterations under one spell.

*In other words, the Sorcery spell Fire Breath does one thing. It allows the caster to destroy stuff by breathing fire—you do damage with the spell, that's it. The Elven Song of the Sword, on the other hand, allows the caster to tap a range of effects with which he can modify his sword.*

Check out the table on the next page. It describes relative obstacles for effects for the three ranges of dice. When you pick an effect for your dice range, the bolded (higher) number indicates your starting obstacle. The lower number denotes the range and how far downward the obstacle can be reduced with limits and price.





| Dice Range            | Obstacle Range | Appropriate Effects                                            |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4 dice or less</b> | Low            | 1-2 Make Magic, Mundane Effect, Traits                         |
|                       | Medium         | 2-3 Advantage, Tests, Substitution, Traits                     |
|                       | High           | 4-5 Obstacle Penalties, Cause Injury, Traits                   |
| <b>5-7 dice</b>       | Low            | 1-2 Substitution, Tests                                        |
|                       | Medium         | 3-5 Advantage, Armor, Obstacle Penalties, Cause Injury, Traits |
|                       | High           | 6-8 Dice Subtraction, Big Magic                                |
| <b>10 dice and up</b> | Low            | 3-4 Obstacle Penalties, Substitution, Armor                    |
|                       | Medium         | 5-8 Cause Injury, Traits, Dice Subtraction, Big Magic          |
|                       | High           | 9-12 Rule Breaker, Traits                                      |

### *Prices and Obstacles*

Magic's price doesn't reduce the difficulty. It's just part of the process. If you opt to take a particularly harsh price, or a second or third price on top of your base price, then you may reduce the casting obstacle by 1.

## How to Limit Spells

What does it take to cast a spell? How can spellcasting be interrupted or hindered? Those are limits. Whom or what does the spell affect? How long does the spell last?

Each effect must be pared down to a specific spell or ritual that at least has an activation time, duration and target limit.

A spell that rolls lots of dice for a powerful effect should have equally strong limits—it should be difficult to learn, have a substantial activation time, limited targets and possibly even group consent or a concomitant penalty.

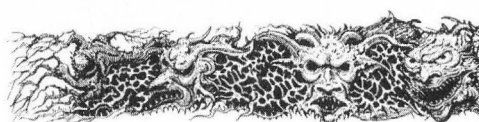
### *Limits by Dice Range*

Here are the dice ranges again, but this time with recommended limits for the magic system:

4 dice or less— Time to Learn, Consent

5-7 dice— Time to Learn, Activation Time, Duration, Targets, Concomitant Penalty, Advancement Limit

10 dice and up— Necessary Quality, Time to Learn, Activation Time, Duration, Specificity, Consent





### Limits by Effect

After imposing some general limits on the entire magic system, look to the individual spells and their limits.

| Effect             | Obstacle | Recommended Limits             | Optional                                            |
|--------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Make Magic         | Low      | Duration, Targets, Specificity |                                                     |
| Tests              | Low      | Duration, Targets              |                                                     |
| Substitution       | Low      | Duration, Targets              | Specificity                                         |
| Mundane Effect     | Low      | Duration                       |                                                     |
| Advantage          | Low      | Duration, Targets              |                                                     |
| Obstacle Penalties | Low      | Duration, Targets              |                                                     |
| Traits             | Low      | Duration, Targets              |                                                     |
| Traits             | Medium   | Duration, Targets              |                                                     |
| Armor              | Medium   | Duration, Targets, Specificity |                                                     |
| Cause Injury       | Medium   | Duration, Targets              |                                                     |
| Dice Subtraction   | Medium   | Duration, Targets              |                                                     |
| Big Magic          | High     | Activation Time                | Duration, Targets                                   |
| Rule Breaker       | High     | Duration, Targets              | Concomitant Penalty, Specificity, Advancement Limit |
| Traits             | High     | Duration, Targets              | Concomitant Penalty, Specificity, Advancement Limit |

### Strongly Recommended Limits

These limits are strongly recommended. You've got to have those in the spell or system in one form or another. If you take an additional or optional limit, then you can reduce the casting obstacle of the spell by one. You may not reduce an obstacle out of its low/medium/high range.

*For example, in the 10 dice and up category, low obstacles may not be reduced below Ob 3.*



## Peer Review

After devising a magic system, submit it to your GM for review. If it is to be included in a game, he may suggest modifications to the system or may reject the system outright as a poor fit for the atmosphere of the game.

If the GM is devising new magical systems to be included in his campaign, he must either submit a draft of the system to another player in the current group or post the system to the Magic Burner forum on our website: [www.burningwheel.com](http://www.burningwheel.com). The reviewing player may suggest changes to tighten the system or he may inform the GM that he feels this form of magic doesn't fit with the current group.

If the system is rejected, the case should be taken to the group as a whole. The group can approve the system for play with suggested modifications or they can reject it wholesale.

## Example Magic Systems

### Elven Songs

#### *Concept*

Elven songs are designed to mimic the power and character of Elven magic as portrayed in the works of J. R. R. Tolkien.

#### *Technique*

Elven song techniques are divided into two main camps: speech and song on one hand, and skill tests (and all their attendant requirements) on the other. Underneath those two paradigms, each spell is broken out into its own separate magic skill.

#### *Effects*

The effects for Elven magic are very broad. The skill songs have little to no magical effect at all. They are simply designated as magic and therefore benefit from being open-ended. Elven songs are individual spells with a range of effects in each. Many Elven songs are simply for color effects. They help make the Elves feel more Elvish. Another substantial group of Elven songs are rule breakers. They introduce conditions into the game without recourse to the target—Laments, Doom Sayer and Air of Gates are good examples. There are also a handful of advantage dice, make magic and substitution spells.

All Elven spell songs also have a base effect—force test. When properly sung for a particular length of time, these spells force a Steel test on all non-Elven characters in their presence. It's a subtle and powerful effect.



### **Limits**

Elven skill songs are limited by their application as skills. They have all of the same requirements as standard skills—time, tools, conditions. Elven songs' main limit is that they must be performed as songs in a set number of actions. And while one song is in effect, it is assumed it's being sung; therefore a character may not invoke a second song at the same time.

Aside from those general limits, Elven spell songs bear similar limits to standard Sorcery spells. They have limited duration, limited targets, specific rules on help and FoRKs and a hefty restriction on learning.

### **Price**

The core price for Elven songs is that they are attached to the Grief emotional attribute. Grief is only directly related to a couple of songs. It's more of an overall limit for Elven characters than a limit on each song. The forced tests for advancing Grief generally don't come from the spell songs. Those tests are part of the conditions for the Grief emotional attribute.

Application of songs in play implies a behavior that then reflects into Grief.

The Grief emotional attribute has a high price—advancing it to exponent 10 removes the Elf character from play. However, it's also the most forgiving of all of the emotional attributes. It's difficult to advance. Why? Because Elven songs have mild effects and strict limits. They don't need to be further impeded with a severe price. A steep price would tip Elves from interesting to burdensome.

## **Sorcery**

### **Concept**

The traditional Burning Wheel Sorcery system was designed to present the feel of old-school Dungeons & Dragons spells using new-school Shadowrun style spell-mastery and casting rules.

### **Technique**

The technique for Sorcery uses individual spells cast from a master Sorcery skill. Spellcasting requires speech and gesture. Spellcasting combines the skill and Will of the character into a special condition called Spell Weaver. This is done to allow a greater range of obstacles and a fluid range of margins of success for the various effects.



### Effects

Effects range from advantage dice and obstacles to armageddon-style destruction. The most effective spells are those that use a margin of success mechanic. The dice pools are large enough that margin of success mechanics pay extreme dividends.

### Limits

The limits on Sorcery are manifold. Spellcasting requires the Gifted trait and the Sorcery skill. The Sorcery skill can only be acquired by being taught. It cannot be started *sui generis* through Beginner's Luck like other skills. The character must be able to enact his spellcasting idiom—speech or gesture—in the game. Muzzling a sorcerer can restrict his ability to project power, for example.

Each effect must be learned individually in the form of a spell. Learning a spell is an arduous and dangerous process. Each spell, in turn, is limited in scope—it selects specific targets for a specific duration.

### Price

After casting a spell, the sorcerer must make a tax test. This test potentially reduces the ability to withstand further spellcasting and is also potentially fatal. Failed casting tests can result in side effects. Side effects include errant spells and the summoning of demons or seraphim.

## Faith

### Concept

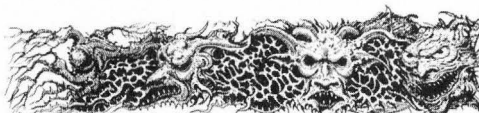
Faith is designed to provide a simple, universal magic system for priestly magic. The system's obstacles are high compared to the typical exponent range because the effects are applicable to a very broad range of situations.

### Technique

Faith is born of fervent prayer. The players make up the prayers on the fly as needed. The Faith emotional attribute is tested against the obstacle to determine success. There's no skill or stat directly involved in the test, though appropriate linked tests are possible.

### Effects

There are 11 Faith effects. The most basic involve a range of advantage dice. Others involve forced tests, making magic, and generally breaking the rules of the game. The effects of the Faith-based spells were designed to be open to interpretation.



In addition, Faith has explicit rules for color.

## Limits

The activation time of a Faith-based spell is based on the time it takes a player to think of and recite a prayer. It's highly variable and definitely subject to group consent. The prayers of the faithful must seem legitimate; otherwise the group can reject the prayer effect. There are no spells to learn. The effects have durations lasting from a few actions to permanent. The targets of Faith-based magic are mostly limited to problems right in front of the faithful character. Some of the prayer effects have targets listed, some do not. Faith also has a fixed advancement limit. It can't advance beyond exponent 10. This isn't much of a limit, but since it is an emotional attribute, advancement to 10 does pull the character out of play.

## Price

Faith has two prices. It is tied to an emotional attribute that causes characters to exhibit certain traits as they advance. The traits are minor. Their primary purpose is to clearly identify the character as one who wields Faith-based magic. The second price is that of failure. This may seem self-evident, but in a system as open as Faith, it's vital for the GM to apply the failure rules described on page 231 of the Burning Wheel. Without adequate failure conditions for Faith, the power becomes a cow the player incessantly milks. The cheese becomes pretty bland after a while.





# Emotional Attribute Burner

Emotional attributes are powerful special abilities. Each attribute is unique to a specific group or type of character. These abilities are not universal. To date, there are 14 published emotional attributes: Grief, Greed, Hate and Faith from the *Character Burner*; Taint in the *Monster Burner*; Spite from the *Paths of Spite*; Ancestry and Fanaticism from *Burning Sands: Jihad*; Despair and Need from *Under a Serpent Sun*; and Shame, Honor, Authority and Arahitogami from *The Blossoms Are Falling*. This book, the *Magic Burner*, adds a 15th emotional attribute to the list, Corruption. In the following section, Corruption serves as the example for designing such an ability.

Emotional attributes are evocative. They simultaneously tie the character into a larger scheme while also implying an individual narrative arc for the character. It's a neat trick.

This doesn't mean that all characters should have an emotional attribute. In fact, most shouldn't. The emotional attribute creates an air of the other for the character. He is more than human. His concerns and needs stretch across a larger plain. We will live our lives as we can; he will live as he must.

## Identify a Need

Not every character should have an emotional attribute, so when should you introduce one into your game? Review the following questions to identify the need for an emotional attribute.

Are the characters more than human? Is there something special about them that sets them apart? Are they dogged by a fate, destiny or a higher power? Does that fate or higher power grant them aid while damning them at the same time?

If you've answered Yes to all of the above, there *might* be an emotional attribute at play.



Examine the source or inspirational material for the character type. Is there a theme in the source material that applies to all of the characters of this type? Is there a common set of behaviors?

If the answer to the source material questions is an unalloyed Yes, then there *might* be cause for an emotional attribute.

The final question is the most important: Can these quirks and behaviors be attributed to other, standard Burning Wheel mechanics? Can you ascribe a trait to the character that would encompass his quirks or nature? Are the themes of the character just evocations of skills or Circles or Resources? If the answer to any of these questions is Yes, then there's no need to design a new emotional attribute or pick from an extant one. There's no emotional attribute at play.

However, if the quirks and abilities are thematic, speak of an inexorable fate and fall outside the standard Burning Wheel mechanics, then there's probably an emotional attribute at play. As I mentioned above, they're rare.

*In a broad cross-section of literature, sorcerers are distorted and punished for using their unnatural powers. The nature of the punishment is never uniform, but it is always a corruption of the outward form that reflects the disease of the soul within.*

## Grief, Greed, Hate

Once you've identified a need for an emotional attribute for your characters, you've got to quantify it. The simplest way to do that is to name it. Give it a short, sharp, one-word name.

*For example: Grief, Greed, Hate, Faith, Honor, Shame, Spite, Fanaticism or Corruption.*

After naming the attribute, you need to describe it in brief. In a single sentence, describe what it represents. Grief represents the burden of immortality on the Elven soul. Hatred describes the Orc's self-loathing for being twisted and corrupted by their rejection of their Grief. Greed illustrates the tragedy of Dwarven life—they create masterful works of beauty but cannot bear to part with them.

*Corruption represents the unnatural effect magic has on those who wield it. The effect is subtle to start, but it rapidly grows more pronounced.*



## The End Is in Sight

All emotional attributes have one thing in common: They cap at exponent 10. Once 10 is reached, the character is removed from play. This creates the narrative arc that I mentioned above. At some point, this character is going to have an end to his story.

Even so, these arcs are not short. Emotional attributes describe an epic, tragic arc. They will not bring about ruin in a day, but they could ruin a life's work.

## Emotional Effects

The effects of an emotional attribute are straightforward. It is either used as a raw ability to produce a range of its own effects, or it is tapped to augment other abilities, but it's rarely, if ever, tested on its own like Power or Will.

*In other words, you don't make Grief tests to grieve. You use Grief to allow the emotion to affect other rolls or as a barometer of growth and change for the character.*

*Corruption shows how evil and unlucky the mage is.*

### Raw Attributes

The simplest way to use an emotional attribute is to use the raw attribute as an ability to generate magical effects.

*Faith is tested on its own to generate a series of magical effects—blessings, miracles, revelations. Obstacles for the ability range from 3 to 10.*

### Tap the Attribute

Emotional attributes can be used to gain bonus dice or special artha effects.

*The Honor and Shame attributes allow the player to spend fate and persona points to tap the attribute to gain access to more dice. Fate points allow the attribute to help a test using the standard helping rules. Persona points give the ability to use the attribute as a dice pool that can be drawn from.*

*Ancestry allows the player to substitute the attribute for one of his stats. He may also use artha to draw on the ability, but in this case indirectly.*



*It acts more like a trait. He gets +1D for each Belief that relates to his character's ancestry.*

*Corruption allows the player to pay a fate point to use his emotional attribute to help another skill or stat test. A persona point grants the momentary ability to substitute Corruption for another skill or stat test. And if a deeds point is spent, the Corruption exponent may be added to the test rather than doubling the dice.*

## Other Magic

Emotional attributes can also use any of the effects described in the previous chapter, the Magic Burner. If you choose to go this route, be sure to develop a strong concept for what the magical effect is. Develop an interesting technique, price and limit.

## Range of Experience

Emotional attributes use a special condition for advancement in the game called *situational tests*. In addition to earning tests for advancement via the standard mechanics, emotional attributes earn tests for advancement based on the roleplaying content of a scene. A description of some horror or wonder in the course of a game may be enough to trigger a test for advancement.

You must build a range of experience for the emotional attribute that describes the whole of its narrative arc, from the first pin-prick to the final, world-shattering event. This process is fun. Take a moment to think about how it all starts. Think about the innocent remarks or unknowing actions that set one down the path. Then imagine the ultimate end for the characters. How does the world come crashing down? Once you have those two signposts, you can fill in the details in the middle with an escalating series of conditions and events.

The events must be thematically appropriate to the emotional attribute. What might be mundane to some could be soul-shattering to a character with a particular emotional attribute.

### Obstacles 1 to 3

Obstacles 1 to 3 should encompass simple, everyday events and actions. Cleanliness, appreciation of beauty and news of a tragedy are examples of simple triggers.



*Lying or committing a willful falsehood. Casting a spell. Learning a new spell. Summoning an imp for any purpose. Physically causing harm to another person. Casting a spell that affects another person. Learning a new facet or school of magic. Summoning a greater imp for any purpose. Paying tribute to a demon. Discovering a marked item.*

## Obstacles 4 to 6

Obstacles 4 through 6 describe events that do happen in life, but they're rare and certainly don't happen to everyone. Murder, theft and other tragedies fall into this category. Also, learning secrets about the attribute or the mysteries of the setting fall into this range.

*Mutilating an animal, human, Elf, Orc, Dwarf, etc. Casting a spell with harmful intent. Summoning a lesser demon for any purpose. Commanding a demon to perform a social service (as per Summoning). Owning a marked item (as per Enchanting). Murder, by any means. Summoning a demon for any purpose. Commanding a demon to perform a physical service that leads to the injury of a person (as per Summoning). Being Marked by a demon (as per Summoning). Torture—to cause physical and emotional pain to a subject so as to extract information or derive pleasure from them. Summoning a greater demon for any purpose. Commanding a demon to perform a physical service that leads to the death of a person (as per Summoning). Paying a physical price for a service (as per Summoning).*

## Obstacles 7 to 9

This range of obstacles is reserved for the outlandish and otherworldly. For these events to transpire, the character must be looking for trouble. He's in harm's way, risking his very soul, and this is how he is affected by it.

*When Dwarves murder out of Greed, they fall into this range of situations. What are common crimes for Men are soul-crushing moments for Dwarves. For Orcs, these tragic events encompass slaughter in massive battles and the loss of precious heirlooms.*

*For Corruption: Necrophilia. Commanding a spirit service from a demon (as per Summoning). Owning many marked items (as per Enchanting). Necrophagia. Selling the soul of another to a demon. Being possessed by a demon.*



## Obstacle 10

This is the final act. Obstacle 10 events must be world-shattering, not just for the character, but for the very game itself.

*Dwarves must act in the most selfish and destructive manner to reach this state. They must destroy the happiness and livelihood of others so that they might own that very happiness. It's an impossible trap for the Dwarves, but their Greed drives them to such irrational and evil lengths.*

*Orcs hit this point with a burst of self-reflection—when they realize they will never escape their Hatred and they give up all hope of any reprieve from their doomed existence.*

*For Corruption, the ultimate condition is selling your own soul to a demon.*

## Building the Range

Each obstacle must have at least one event tied to it. The lower ranges should have two or three events per obstacle point. The higher ranges, 7 and up, might only have one condition each, but they can have as many as the designer desires.

Spread your conditions around. What you're doing is building a relative moral scale. You're indicating which events or situations have more weight than others. When doing this, be flexible. Think not only about what you want to encourage and discourage, but also about which obstacles lack descriptions and which have too many. Don't be afraid to shift the items around a bit until you have a nice range.

In general, good, moral or ethical acts should be difficult. Evil, destructive or malicious acts should be easy.

## Game Mechanical Events

When building the range, in addition to narrative-driven effects, you may insert game mechanical events. These events may include testing certain abilities, advancing certain abilities, casting certain types of spells, or using game abilities against specific targets. These particular events are easier to put on the scale. Their obstacle for advancement should be equivalent to their testing obstacle.



## Testing the Ability

And, of course, testing the ability in play is also a fine way to earn tests for advancement.





## Starting Questions

“Starting questions” are another engaging aspect of emotional attributes. In order to generate the starting shade and exponent for the ability, the player is asked a series of questions. The intent is for the player to answer them as if he were in the role of his character. These help give the character a sense of history and personality. They also let the player make a firm statement about how tied he is to this attribute.

Ask tough questions about the character’s past, his moral grounds and his relationships. Force the player to think about who his character is.

*+1 if the character has ever prayed alone at night to remote, unholy gods to aid him.*

*+1 if the character has ever entered a pact with a demon.*

Tie your questions to the Health, Steel and Faith questions. If the answers all intertwine, the decisions have more depth. Link the questions to lifepath choices as well. This has the effect of binding the character to his fate. He could have chosen another path, but he chose this one instead.

## Advancement for Emotional Attributes

The upper limit for all emotional attributes is 10. Once exponent 10 is reached, however, the character is removed from play. Therefore, the practical playable limit is exponent 9.

Exponents 9 and 10 are very hard to achieve in game, but far from impossible. Therefore, each test against an emotional attribute is a significant event. It brings the character one step closer to leaving this world.

### Ascend, Descend or Transcend Again

When designing an emotional attribute, consider what happens when a character reaches his limit. What changes in the character? What titanic shift causes him to leave this life behind? Does the emotion overcome him and kill him? Or does it cause him to lock himself away? Does he physically change form? Does he transcend and go forth to join his god? Do his demons burst forth and drag him to hell?



Decide the fate of those with this ability. Think of a handful of evocative and indicative character traits that hint toward the final fate. Sprinkle them along the journey. As the emotional attribute exponent advances, the traits are earned.

*Corruption inflicts a series of egregious traits on its host. Ultimately, the corrupt are transformed and then taken by the dark powers.*

*Characters with Faith bear stigmata, speak in tongues, weep uncontrollably, bear sigils or signs on their flesh, have their bodies warped and manifest halos. When exponent 10 Faith is reached, the character ascends (or descends) to join his god.*

## Routines Always Count

Dwarven Greed uses the Routines Always Count rules tweak. This indicates that, for advancement, routine tests count no matter what the exponent. Routine tests usually stop mattering once you hit exponent 5, but in this case, the routine category remains open. The player can fill any two of the three categories—routine, difficult or challenging—to advance the exponent from 1 to 10.

This is, essentially, a limit on emotional attributes. It should be used for particularly powerful specimens that have very ugly fates waiting at exponent 10.

## Emotional Attributes and Artha

Emotional attributes, more than any other aspect of the game, use the Artha Effects tweak from the Magic Burner. Artha Effects opens up additional feats on which artha may be spent.

## Fate

Fate points can be used with emotional attributes to add dice to rolls, rather than make rolls open-ended. This is a powerful ability. Not every emotional attribute should allow this.

*Authority, Honor and Shame tap into this power.*

*Corruption allows the player to pay a fate point to use his emotional attribute to help another skill or stat test.*



## Persona

Persona points can be used to tap into emotional attributes. A persona point is typically worth one die. When spent on an emotional attribute, it allows the player to access the exponent as a die pool from which he can draw dice as needed for the test. Doing so must always count as a test for advancement for the emotional attribute relative to the amount of dice drawn out. Again, this is a powerful ability and should not come stock with every emotional attribute.

*Ancestry, Fanaticism and Greed use this power.*

*A persona point grants the momentary ability to substitute Corruption for another skill or stat test.*

## Deeds

Deeds points spent on emotional attributes allow a player to add the attribute dice to his roll, rather than doubling his dice. I strongly recommend that this also incur a test for advancement for the emotional attribute. This ability is not overwhelmingly powerful, but it offers a nice perk. I recommend giving it to most emotional attributes.

*Hate and Grief, two of my favorites, both tap into this.*

*If a deeds point is spent, the Corruption exponent may be added to the test rather than doubling the dice.*

## Epiphany

Artha spent tapping an emotional attribute counts toward the epiphany for the attribute, not toward the stat or skill being tested.

## Peer Review

After designing an emotional attribute, submit it to your play group for review. Encourage them to make suggestions and modifications. If the group feels the emotional attribute is unfinished or overpowered, they may decline to include it in their current game.



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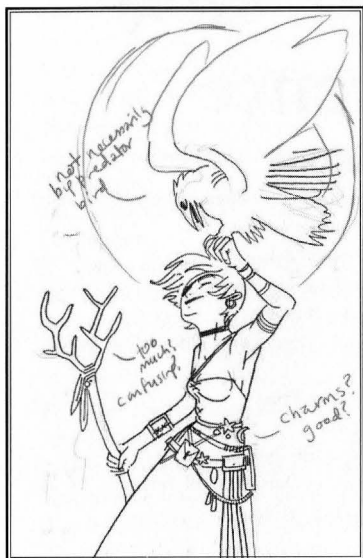


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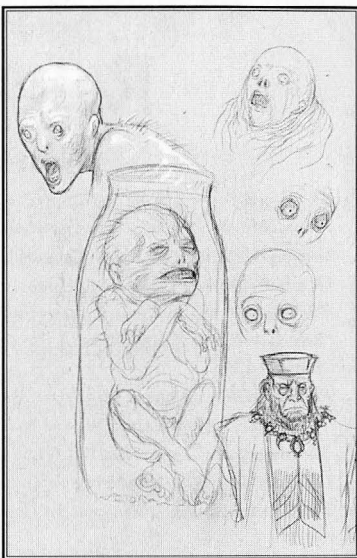


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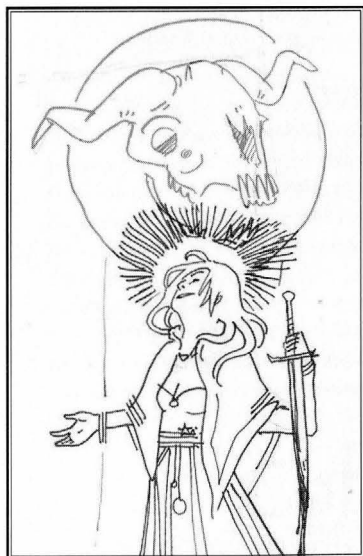




Sketch for adept by Rebecca Bennington



Sketches for humunculus and necromancer  
by Kurt Komoda



Sketch for summoner by Rebecca Bennington



Sketch for alternate version of the summoned  
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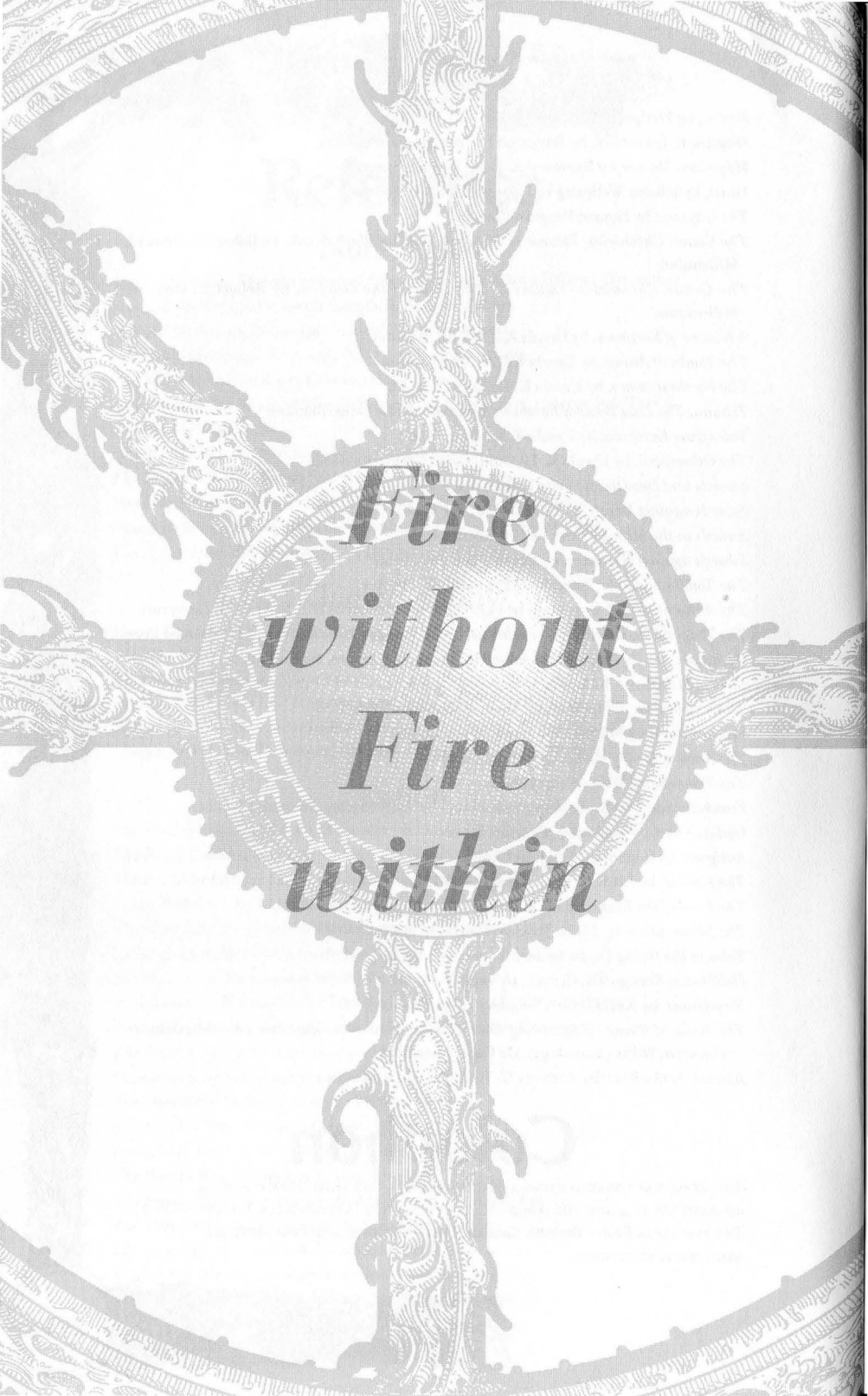
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# Colophon

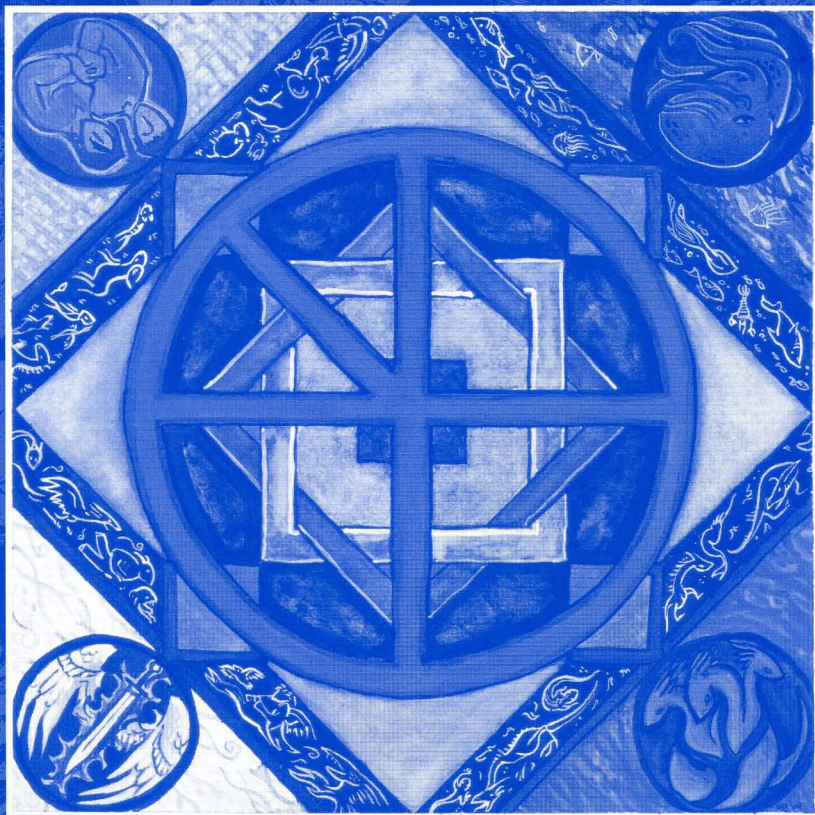
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