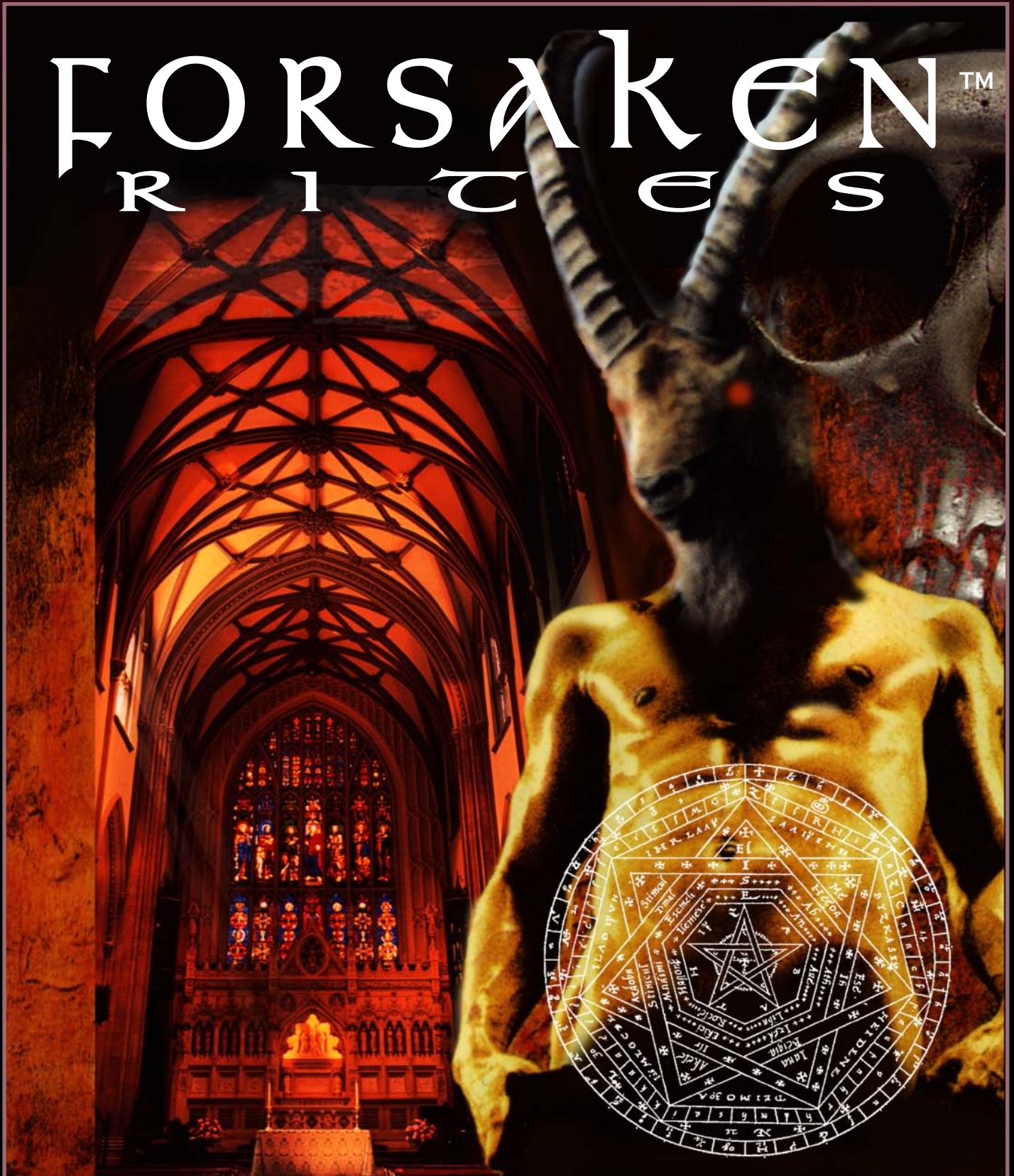


CONSPIRACY



FORSAKENTM

RITUES



THE SUPERNATURAL SOURCEBOOK

Thousands have felt the touch of the supernatural.

For most, arcane events are unexpected, created by seemingly mindless manifestations.

Some fondly remember these blessed events. Some do not survive the encounter.

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They are out there. . .immortal and obsessed.

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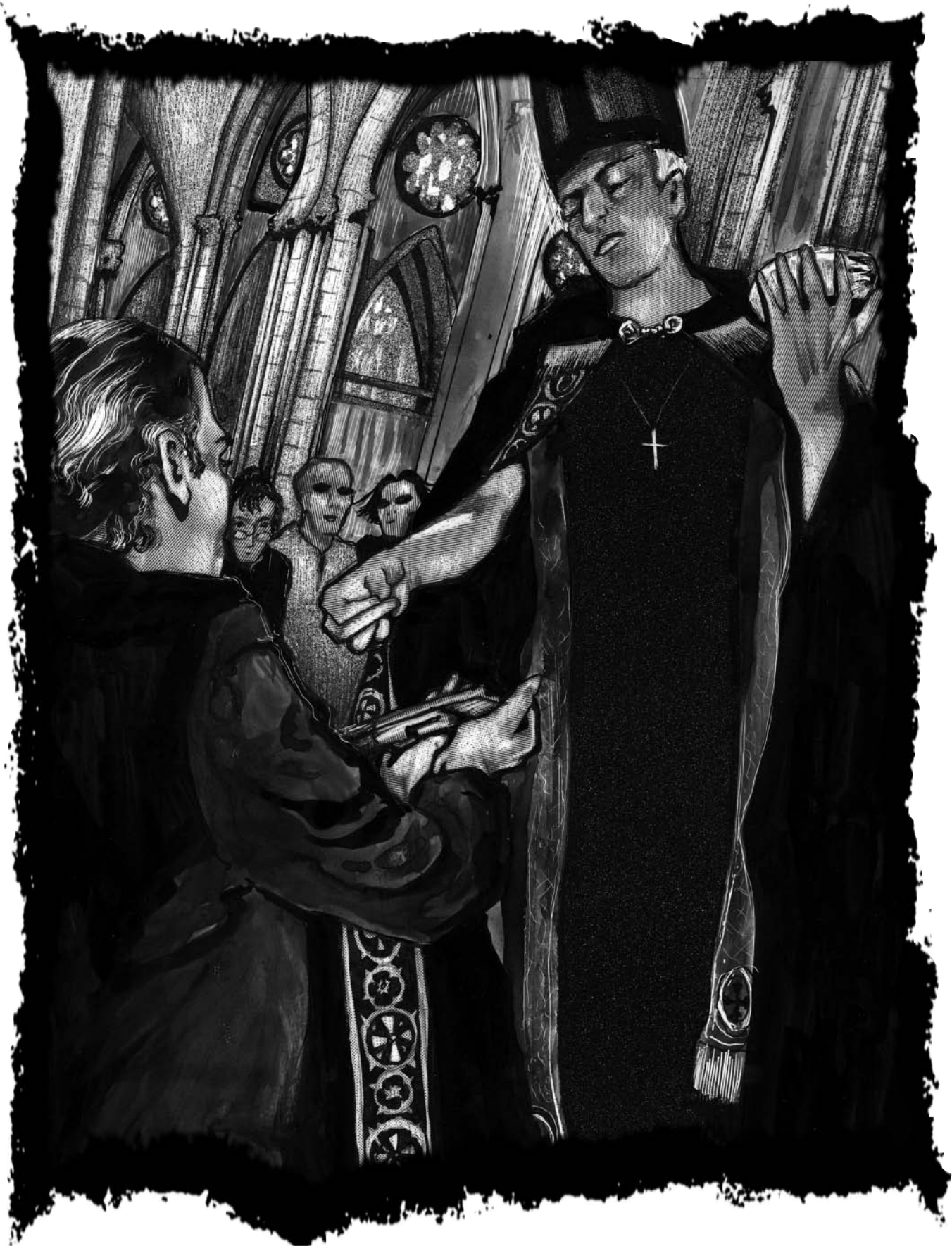
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F O R S A K E N R I T E S



CHAPTER 1

INITIATION

To: Cardinal X

From: Father Defalco S

Subject: Ordasement

Date: March 3, 1995

The study of magic and the occult is the study of good and evil. Mystic capacity almost certainly relates to some remnant of the Fall. Man has great power and great knowledge, but the question is how it should be used. The Church has recognized both Black and White magic for centuries. Magic is not evil, yet some people do magic when they are scared, upset, or even in their dreams. Sin cannot happen without some conscious choice. Magic is a part all of us, and while we are fallen, we are not Evil.

For as long as humanity has possessed reason and free will people have used magic. For most of this time, magic was used, like any of our other gifts, to make life a bit easier. For many thousands of years, few knew that the price of magic is somewhat higher than that asked of most actions.

When you walk the path of magic you must choose, White or Black, Salvation or Damnation. Most of the first rude witch doctors who donned primitive masks and cast their rituals sought to help the crops grow and to heal the sick. They choose the White path. However, I am sure others sought to use magic to oppress the weak and to feed their greed, avarice, and lust. They welcomed Satan into their hearts and turned their backs upon God.

When anyone walks the path of magic, they risk their life and their sanity. The madness caused by magic, which secret Church scripture calls Ordasement, appears to arise from the faulty use of any magic. However, true Corruption, the damnation of the soul, comes from the choice of what magic to perform. We know techniques that can heal the first; the second can only be healed by sincere and deep repentance. There is one truly terrible thing about the madness caused by magic. It can remove the chance for repentance for those who enter into it in a state of mortal sin.

Many will tell you that magic is inherently evil and that the madness it can bring is a sickness of the soul. Such talk is foolishness. Magic can save lives and drive away Evil as easily as it can bring suffering and madness. Is nuclear power or electricity evil because working with it can cause injury or death? The mystical is just as natural as the flow of electrons or the dance of the atom.

The act of consciously working magic is something else again. Working magic is working with the very essence of humanity. It is an inherently sacred act. Magicians do not play God, but they do work with the world on a more fundamental level. When performing a ritual, a magician is able to see and feel a bit more of the true structure of God's eternal plan. This is quite disturbing for all involved, and maddening for a few. In the Church, we talk of some concepts being Mysteries. This is not mere deception and sophistry. Our limited minds are simply incapable of understanding or accepting some concepts. Working magic makes one aware of such concepts. When something goes wrong, one can be exposed to more of this plan than any human mind can safely handle. The resulting revelations can create a Saint or a monster. The practice of magic is an act at the very limits of our comprehension. It is not forbidden by God, but it is far enough from our ordinary ways that the comfortable moral grayness with which we normally live is replaced by a stark world of Good and Evil.

I'm a magician, but I use my knowledge only in the service of God. I have dispelled ghosts, banished demons, healed the sick and cured the mad. Mine is a holy calling, and I am well aware that failure on my part could bring madness to myself and those around me. Anyone who refuses to acknowledge and guard against the price magic imposes is a fool.

One fact escapes many practitioners. God protects those who seek to aid others with magic and punishes those who use it for evil purposes. When performing magic in a state of grace, the chance of succumbing to Ordasement is decreased. Contrawise, the slightest misstep when working black magic often leads to a twisting of both body and mind. Equally as important, when someone in a state of grace faces the madness, he may become a Saint or may simply become deluded. When someone steeped in the evil faces the same madness, he will likely emerge as a horrific monster.



INTRODUCTION

Since the first humans began telling stories in caves lit by rude fires, talk has arisen about magic, ghosts, and strange beasts that haunt the night. Magicians from all over the world have been practicing rituals for many centuries and devoted occult scholars have been studying magic and the supernatural for almost as long. Yet very few know the true nature of the forces they seek to control. Even Aegis, with its great resources of secret knowledge, only understands a portion of the truth behind the Seepage and the many phenomena it spawns.

This sourcebook provides information on the Seepage, magic and supernatural creatures as well as providing a grimoire of rituals. New skills and training are presented for players interesting in playing magicians. In addition, a complete history of magic and a write-up of three supernatural organizations should provide inspiration for numerous characters, plots, and conspiracies involving the supernatural.

Those reading this book are reminded that the magic theories and concepts presented in this book are purely fictional. In the real world, a great many faiths, including Wicca, Voodoo, and Roman Catholicism include the practice of magic as part of their faith, and a great many sane and sincere people practice magic as a part of their daily lives. Nothing in this book is intended as a slight to any of these beliefs. We hope that, when using magic in gaming, players try to avoid denigrating the sincere beliefs of any faith.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter One: Initiation includes these introductory remarks.

Chapter Two: Doctrine presents a series of articles about magic readily available to any player. One piece reviews the history of magic from the Neolithic to the modern day. Four commonly practiced magical traditions are detailed in another. Finally, some information is included about the theory of magic as understood by the magicians who practice it.

Chapter Three: Secrets discusses new and expanded game rules. This chapter details various supernatural phenomena, revises the Ritual skill, and focuses on learning and performing magical rituals.

Chapter Four: The Grimoire provides an extensive list of rituals that may be learned by Aegis agents, their allies and even their opponents.

Chapter Five: Cabals catalogues several general groups of supernatural organizations, and provides detailed, ready-to-use examples.

Chapter Six: Enlightenment describes the true history of magic and the various mysterious forces that have influenced the development of magic and the course of human history. This chapter also includes a timeline that highlights important supernatural events.

Chapter Seven: The Bestiary presents a wide variety of supernatural creatures, including the Incarnate, Forsaken, ghosts, demons and a variety of other spirits.

Chapter Eight: The Summoning is an adventure immersing an Aegis Cell into the world of the supernatural.

HOW TO USE FORSAKEN RITES

Forsaken Rites is essentially two books in one. The first chapter is this introduction. The next three chapters are written for players. All the information in Chapter Two is available to all players. Chapter Three and Four should be revealed to any who wish to play magicians. Chapter Five is something of a hybrid. It contains information about magical organizations which magician characters may know about, or even belong to, as well as information for the Game Master in running NPC groups. The last three chapters are GM material almost exclusively. Chapter Six presents a good number of the "official" occult secrets of the Conspiracy X mythos. These should be revealed to players over time, and as the result of adventuring, if at all. Some portions of Chapter Seven should be available to players if the GM decides to allow Incarnate, ghost or other unusual player characters. The rest may be learned by players if they encounter the various supernatural creatures that walk the earth. Obviously, the Chapter Eight adventure is intended entirely for the GM and will be ruined by player perusal.

CONVENTIONS

At various points in the course of this sourcebook, the reader will notice symbols highlighting certain paragraphs. These icons are explained below.



This symbol precedes a paragraph or more of text which presents an illustrative example. These examples should flesh out and help to explain rules or points made in the regular text. The example icon will only appear for substantial examples. From time to time, small one-sentence examples will be given. These examples are not highlighted by an example icon.



This symbol is placed in front of paragraphs which primarily contain game rules. They are intended to help a reader who is browsing through a chapter or section for rules particular to a situation that has arisen in a game session. Where rules and regular descriptive text are inseparable, no rules icon will be inserted. Further, where rules are short and sweet or repetitive, the rules icon is not used.





chapter 2

DOCTRINE

A Brief History of Magic

Transcript of a Speech by Seraph at the 24th Annual Conference

Reprinted in Sacred Knot: The Newsletter of the Children of Isis

March 1997

Many who dabble in the mystic arts ask where does our modern magical practice come from? Well, I don't know much about prehistory and the further you go back in the old records the more lies you run into, so I'll try to start with some truths I know. I remind everyone that my background is Western Ceremonial magic. I claim little expertise in other traditions and areas of the world, and my comments will be somewhat limited in that respect.

The Beginning

Magic has always been with us. Ever since we developed language and thought, and likely well before that, we've been surrounded by vast mystic energies. As we all know, where there is a resource, some fool will start using it. We've also been making magic at least as long as we've been making stories. Take a look at some of the old cave paintings. Early shamans and mages went out into the night, beyond the protective circle of the fire, and cast spells to bring game or good weather, to heal the sick, to speak with their ancestors, and to slay the enemies of their tribe. While most of these folks were likely deformed, handicapped, or just plain crazy, shamans were considered as essential to the tribe as the hunters, the gatherers, and the toolmakers. Being a shaman was risky business in those early days, but so was almost every occupation.

Gods and Cities

Time went on and some folks discovered that agriculture was a great way to concentrate wealth in the hands of those that owned the land. Soon we had towns, cities, wars, and all the fun stuff we call civilization. Of course, when people moved into towns and cities, their shamans came with them. These mages organized themselves into temples and became priests. At first, the priests worked with the same spirits their forefathers had. However, with lots of people living together, simple spirits began to seem inadequate. In the relatively open competition for faith that large towns created, priests began to speak about enormously powerful spirits. Thus, the first gods were born. That's right, the gods didn't create us; we created them. Religion is magic and magic is religion. It's just two ways of looking at the same thing.

The Birth of Ceremonial Magic

Anyway, magic in the Western world started in Alexandria around the 1st century BCE. Greek philosophers, Persian Magi, Egyptian priests, and Jewish scholars all lived in one city, discussing and practicing magic. Central to this exchange, of course, was the Great Library. Theories evolved, moving in and out of favor, and knowledge was shared like never before. The short-term results can be easily predicted. Prophets wandered around as common as cordwood and mystery cults were a dime a dozen. In the long-term, we owe the beginnings of Kabbalism, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, and alchemy to this singular place and time.

This era, which ended around the 3rd century CE, was the last era of free, open, magical exchange for some time to come. For the next thousand years, we know little of the history of magical practice in Europe and the Near East except for a few reports of its destruction. Things were pretty tough on magi during this time, but the mystic arts refused to disappear entirely. It was not until the 13th century that magic became somewhat "legitimate" again, when some of the books written in Alexandria started getting translated, talked about, and traded around. By the time nobles and rich folks got around to reading and thinking more than fighting, the cleverest of the magi had found a new home -- at court.

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

The Secret Societies

If you have to hide, crawling into a hut in the middle of a forest may work, but the company sucks and the food's no better. Once civilization settled down to being a little more civilized again, practitioners of the mystic arts realized that they were a whole lot less likely to be burned or chased out of their home if they did favors for the king. Also, minor nobles, the younger children of the major nobles, and courtiers of all sorts proved more than willing to employ someone who promised to supply them power. In time, the nobles and courtiers often decided to cut out the middleman and began studying magic themselves. As always, most were fools, and many wound up dead or worse. A few, however, did learn something.

I honestly have no idea if the rich folks of Persian Empire studied magic and employed lots of magicians, but I suspect that they did. Folks in Europe sure did. This situation continued for several centuries. Of course, the specifics varied. One century everyone was hot to find alchemists who could make gold; in another, everyone wanted to summon a demon to do their bidding. Like all things, even magic has its fads. In any case, as cities and civilization continued to grow, the magicians started to get organized.

By the early 16th century, magicians like Ficino and Agrippa were publishing books and hanging out at the courts of the Medicis. The witch-hunts were at their worst around this time, but the favorites of kings and princes rarely had to worry about such things. By the early 17th century, while the less powerful still risked burning if they practiced magic, the wealthy magical elite of France and Germany sat down to the serious business of large scale organization. Their first attempt came to be called the Rosicrucians.

The Rosicrucians claimed to be a brotherhood of sacred alchemists dedicated to righting wrongs and saving humanity. If they made a little gold on the side, all the better. Maybe such folks existed, but I have my doubts. In any case, using the name, a few rich dabblers started getting together in secret meetings and talking magic and power. They decided to broaden their appeal and formed a new club, known as Freemasonry. By the beginning of the 18th century, the cult was in full swing. Everyone who was anyone in any of the cities of Europe was a Freemason. Most of these folks simply belonged to a fun social club, but to a select few, it was much, much more.

Like any good initiatory system, members of the Freemasons advanced in degrees, with each degree letting the holder in on more of the secrets. At the uppermost levels, the secrets actually contained real power. All of the highest rank Masons were magicians. Their knowledge came straight from the occult tomes preserved from ancient Alexandria -- good old, western, Hermetic magic. To make matters even more fun, these same magicians were in charge of initiating some of the richest, most powerful people in Europe into the lesser ranks of Masonry. As you can imagine, this provided a great opportunity to cast some simple, but effective, spells ensuring the loyalty of the powers that be.

In the end, nearly everyone from European royalty to George Washington was a Freemason. The magician/masters of that order wielded great mystic and temporal power. As is usual in the affairs of mankind, within a relatively short time, the masters could no longer work together. The original Masonic organization fragmented into dozens of new Rites, Knights-Masons, Martinists. A bewildering confusion of competing secret societies arose. Some of these societies were simply social clubs with no magical aims, others merely played at magic, lacking both the knowledge and the discipline to raise enough power to light a match. The leaders of a few of these groups, however, were serious players.

By the mid-18th century, almost anybody worthy of notice belonged to at least one secret society. The magically active ones were engaged in full-scale mage wars. We'll never know just how much these folks changed history. I once saw a fragment of a document that claimed that the only reason all thirteen of the colonies agreed to sign the U.S. Constitution was magic. Almost half of the delegates were subject to a consent ritual. No doubt other factors were at work, but these can be studied in the history book. The magic angle has never been explored. My guess is that by the end of the 18th century there were so many groups with so many conflicting agendas that the only thing most of these secret societies ever managed to do was to interfere with each other's plans.

As the mage wars raged on through the 19th century, the cleverest occultists slipped back into the shadows and started more mundane-seeming gentlemen's clubs. These clubs remained very exclusive, and gathered members by invitation only. This was a common trick of the early British industrialists and some of the first American "robber-barons." These gentlemen's clubs often did a whole lot more than just sip port together on the verandah. The members of these clubs were the middle-aged, white males who truly ran the show, especially in the mid- and late-19th century. These "mundane" clubs shunned magical discussion or conflict, at least on an overt level. I think it safe to say that magic was not ignored. It simply went underground, at least for those who did not rely on it for recruitment or power.

By 1890, a number of new groups were in vogue. Between the Spiritualists, the Theosophists, and the Golden Dawn, almost everyone was talking about the occult and many people were joining up. Most of the visible groups were innocuous. Others, however, were fatally flawed. Many knew nothing of the dangers of magic, and almost none of them could tell a possessed killer from a handsaw. Madame Blavatsky and a number of the other more famous leaders were players who carefully controlled their magic. Others gave themselves to black magic and what they gained in power, they lost in control and sanity. By this time, however, the rich folks in London, New York, and Chicago had their eye on the real troublemakers. In those circles, if you succumbed to magic's taint they found out early, and they either cured you or arranged for you to die of "natural causes." Of course, they missed a few now and again. Jack the Ripper is no doubt the most famous, but they dealt with him in the end.

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

Once we get to the 20th century, the real fun starts. Lots of magic was happening by this time. Of course, not much changed for the folks in the clubs. After the 1950s, formal clubs became less popular, but the "old boys networks" continued. I bet you're wondering when they died out. Well, guess what, they didn't. The Fortune 500 is lousy with magicians. I'm naming no names here. First I'd be sued for libel, then I'd have a heart attack -- no thanks.

In any case, almost all these folks know each other, and the only thing keeping them from totally running the show is that they are a fairly conservative and factious bunch. Each one of them wants to be in charge of their own little bailiwick, and none of them want to rock the boat too much. If guess we can be thankful for small favors.

As a nod to the politically correct set, a number of the overt and covert magical groups were aware of the mystic power within the "fairer" sex. Some of the hotshot's wives or sisters were among the most powerful of mages. Indeed, a few of the most famous magicians were mere puppets for the women in their lives. More recently, of course, a few more women have gained access to the upper ranks of the secret societies. Some of these women no longer hide from view, at least in the closed circle of magicians.

The Great Wars

Unlike in the previous several centuries, mystic history in this century is not dominated by international secret and not-so-secret societies. Other than old Aleister romping around Europe showing off, the first couple of decades of the century were fairly quiet. A good horrific war will do that. There's a lot of speculation about magic and WWI, but other than some nut-cases doing a few rituals which may have exacerbated matters, an aging leadership's greed, pride and inhumanity were mostly responsible. The greatest exception was some really disturbed folks in Germany. The first of the modern Nazi occult groups was the New Templars, started in 1909 by Adolf Lanz. In 1912, the same guy helped found the Germanen Order. This was your typical blood, runes, and anti-Semitic nut cult. The problem was the power they managed to accumulate.

So, why did all these psychotic magicians go after the Jews. Many of these loons claimed to be fighting to overthrow the international Jewish conspiracy of evil Kabbalist magicians. Granted, there have been powerful Kabbalists for a long time, but they no more ran the show than any of the other mystical types.

In my view, it was a venal, little plan that reached horrific proportions once Hitler took over. A number of the industrialists, and other money and magic types, hated the Jews, especially the rich Jews. Much of their desire to get rid of the Jews was anti-Semitism, the rest of it was simple greed. The magical elite decided to make a grab for the wealth the Jews had. They decided that a bunch of blood and Wagner types with more hate than sense were perfect stalking-horses. Feed these folks ideas, money and a few useful spells. If they screw up and go feral, no great loss. If they cast some righteous spells, you win. So began the Secret Doctrine. They must have been delighted to bring Hitler into their ranks. Some may have had some qualms when Hitler turned them into his pet occult power base, but no sense attributing human motivations to this crew. Of course, the ultimate result -- six million dead humans -- may not have been part of the plan. Then again, who knows how much of their souls these maniacs had discarded. What's worse, after all that, when Hitler went down, the rest of the group vanished back into the woodwork. A good portion have been hunted down by the Mosad's Kabbalists. The rest deserve the same fate.

In case you're wondering, I have no idea whether Hitler was a victim of black magic, a demon or worse, or just plain evil. I am guessing the latter. It is just a bit too convenient to blame all the worst folks in history on mystic forces. Some people are just evil and they don't need reasons.

In any case, Europe was awash in the occult during WWII. I don't need to go into details about the Nazi party and the occult. It's pretty common knowledge that most of their leaders were up to their ears in this stuff. Not as well known but no less important were the Allied mystic war types. I have even heard of one group that was jointly organized and funded by the U.S. and the U.K. Other occult groups of the day had some idea about the Nazi's plans. A few joined ranks with the Nazi, but I am glad to report that most sided with the Allies. Now, most of these groups were trivial. At best, the small fry were a couple of skilled mages with a few students; at worst, they consisted of an elderly couple and their allegedly psychic cats. The point is that the history books will never adequately reveal the triumphs and failures of WWII's mystic warriors. I will do my part, however, and relate a few.

Many of you have heard of the Lammas Night incident after Dunkirk. Well, on that cool August evening at midnight, several hundred British magicians of all types got together and did one hell of a ritual. In my view, this single night's work was primarily responsible for turning the tide of the war, and halting Hitler's invasion plans. Several of these folks gave their lives during the ritual to ensure it would work. I am sure the joint U.S./U.K. force did its share, but let's not forget the others. Some of the best and most organized of the folks were Dion Fortune and her Society of Inner Light. Good folks too, Dion's long gone, but the Society is still around. I know other groups who may have more occult knowledge and power, but the Society's heart is in the right place.

Aleister "The Beast" Crowley even got involved in the war effort. It seems that during the war the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence hired Aleister, who was a Brit, to investigate a number of suspicious cults. I guess, as the head of several suspicious cults, Aleister would know one when he saw one. Well, Crowley sent his disciples to infiltrate lots of these cults and likely only told the Navy what he wanted them to know. You have got to love that guy.

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

The Post-War Years

After the war, lots of folks went public in Britain and mages started sprouting up like weeds in the U.S., especially in California. It must be the climate or something. Keep in mind that most public magicians are frauds and many of the rest are crazies. Of course, some of the crazies are players and a few are real masters. The serious magicians, those who are in it for the long haul, don't advertise or go on talk shows. A few, like Dion Fortune's people and some Wiccans, feel it is their duty to be public, open, and helpful. Most of us value our hides and our privacy more than that.

Now, our government's mystic activities did not end with the war, but they did decrease substantially. I have heard about the CIA's psychics and all that, but magicians are another story. Most of the good ones keep it under wraps. The only ones crazy enough to volunteer for government work were pretty dubious folks. Sure, a few of them could actually do what they claimed, but the ones who are too cocky always end up forfeiting their souls. I have heard that back in the '60s and early '70s there were some pretty wild times among the spooks. A few things went wrong, some folks had to be put down and a number of projects got shut down. Now they're sticking to remote viewers and similar stuff and leaving magic to the professionals.

There is precious little evidence that China and Russia worked with magic on an official basis. Now that may be due to good cover, but my guess is that it looked too much like religion to them. I did hear that the Russians used some Tibetan monks to put the whammy on the Chinese once, but I've no idea if that story is true. Always check your sources, there are a whole lot of liars in these parts.

The Third World

As I said, my expertise lies in the First World. I am not blind to the rest of the globe, however. Most rich, white folks don't much care about what happens in the poorer parts of the world, but we have lots to learn from them. There's also a whole lot of myth, legend, prejudice and outright lies going around, so don't believe everything you hear about magic in the Third World.

The Chinese Boxer Rebellion and the Amer-Indian Ghost Dance are two occasions when Third World folks attempted to use magic to fight back. Both attempts failed overall, but lots of reports indicate that some of the Native American Ghost Dancers and the Chinese Boxers actually managed to make themselves immune to firearms. Unfortunately, magical techniques have never been suitable for mass usage. Too many half-trained followers, unaware of the nature of the rituals they were performing, desparately went through the motions. Most of those poor bastards got shot and died. However, a number of the people involved in these rebellions were skilled magical practitioners who were capable of working actual magic. While magic could not change history in these rebellions, in another, equally terrible rebellion, magic did rule the day.

In Haiti, the story gets really ugly. The native religion Voodoo evolved as a home-grown blend of Catholicism and African beliefs. The Haitian rebellion of 1791 was largely successful because of the magics used by Voodoo Houngans and mambos involved. Good old Napoleon's attempt to crush the ongoing rebellion in 1802 encountered the kind of ill luck and disaster which indicate magical interference.

The tiny Himalayan nation Bhutan, just North of India, was never successfully conquered by the British. It was a tiny bit of mountain land, and the entire British army could not take it. According to local legend, in the late 19th century, hundreds of Bhutanese monks enacted a grand ritual to ensure the safety of their land. To this day, Bhutan remains secure from outside interference. In Europe, Switzerland remains similarly insulated. It certainly gives one pause.

In any case, the lessons of the Third World are pretty clear. Small groups can use magic to defeat a larger enemy. If the place or the numbers of people involved are too large, however, sufficient magical energy is impossible to coordinate and control, and the attempt is likely doomed to failure.

Today

These days the occult is all over the place. How-to books on being a magician, witch or a shaman nearly outnumber those on how to fix your car or your plumbing. Alleged Satanists are going on talk shows, and anthropologists are studying the modern magical revival. As in any age, most of these folks are posers. There is about as much risk of their rituals doing anything as there is of Mickey Mouse being elected President. No one ever learned to do real magic from a mass-market book. Most alleged magicians these days, and there are more than you'd think, got everything they know from a few books written by frauds.

Even with all the fakes, more real magicians exist today than even before. Unfortunately, not all of them have the best training. You want to know why there are so many serial killers, crazed cult leaders and similar folks out there? Well, more than one of these folks started off as a magician who wasn't quite careful enough. As I'm sure you've heard before, it's a dangerous world out there, and your magic will turn around and bite you if you're not careful. Measure twice, cast once.

You will never meet the real players out there unless you know someone who knows someone, or they find you. Most mages like to talk shop. Magicians borrow, trade and copy rituals, ideas and techniques all the time. If you sound like you have a clue, or if you have something they want, they will seek you out. No one has any hard figures, but my best estimate is that between 5-20,000 real mystics inhabit the U.S. This covers everyone from minor Voodoo Houngans, to the members of the magical elite, to the serious occult scholars.

This is a pretty small group of people, and except for folks like the Secret Doctrine elite types and the paranoid crazies, most of us know each other by name or reputation. The Internet has been a great help in this. You'd be rather surprised to find what goes on in some of the more exclusive private chat rooms and mailing lists.

From: Daniel Orpheus

Subject: Re: A View From the Fringe

NewsGroup: alt.magick

Date: 4/30/95

The histories of individual occultists, the stories of their lives and their spells are unimportant. The most important lesson in occult history is that of the patterns of magic which flow through our world. Before time or consciousness evolved, we were one with the Ain Soph, the Godhead. Pure spirit basking in unending glory. Then the One dared question its own existence and One became Two. From there the pattern was inevitable. A portion of the One became many souls, each separate and alone, but longing for unity. To protect itself from the chaos and clamor of the many, the One shut these souls off in prisons of base matter. Thus was our world and all life upon it formed. Still the souls of the life upon it yearn for unity with the One. In humanity, the first real chance for this reunion arose. Suddenly the souls were again aware of what they had lost and became more than dull non-sentient spirits.

At first, humans were few and isolated. Even then, a few scholars realized that to achieve our true and deepest desires we must reach beyond mere matter and embrace spirit. Thus was magic born. In these early days, all magics were small and local. However, some of these early scholars realized that magic drew its power from the yearnings of all of humanity, the same yearnings which made dreams, myths, and monsters. The problem was that each individual scholar or group of scholars could only harness a tiny portion of this yearning. The desires of those near the scholars were easy to reach, but the desires of those far away were still unattainable. With enough desire focused together, these scholars believed that the limits of flesh and matter might be transcended and then we could once more join with the One.

Since even non-living matter contains some vestige of spirit, all matter is capable of containing desire. Certain features of the landscape and certain places where people have lived for a long time collect these desires and dreams. Here, they concentrate and become easy to reach. These pools of desire were still only local in scope, but occasionally they would join with other pools along lines of influence. These lines are rare and usually temporary, and the early scholars sought ways to create such lines at will.

This is the origin of the Ley Lines, the stone circles which were built over the face of primitive Europe and the causeways and paths which connected many of them. On certain special days, peoples all over Europe, and possibly beyond, gathered in these places and celebrate rituals to bring themselves closer with the One. Sadly, there were too few people and the networks were far from complete. All of these efforts failed. In time, even the reasons behind these efforts were lost and simple people believed that the celebrations were merely magics to ripen the corn and call good weather.

A very few preserved the true meaning of these magics, first by word of mouth, then through books. However, the fearful and the blind hindered such efforts and there was still no way to link enough pools of desire together to have a chance of breaking out of their matter prisons.

Recently this has all changed. The old blinders are falling away, and more people are embracing the path of magic. Most do so for foolish or selfish reasons, but once they start their quest, many find the true goal of magic waiting for them. Also, with telephones and modern communications, we can discuss these matters like never before. Scholars continents away can work magic at the same time. We can forge lines of connection across the entire face of the globe. If done correctly, with the proper level of coordination and at the proper time, we could all work together to break these bonds which imprison us and open a passage back to the One.

We need more desire than has ever been used in a single ritual. This will demand teamwork from scholars all over the world. We will also need to perform it at a time when desire is at its height. Such a time approaches in a bit over 4 years. The year 2000 A.D. has no innate special meaning, but millions think that it does. They are expecting a dramatic, revelatory change on the stroke of midnight of December 31, 1999. We can deliver this revelation. We can harness this desire and mold it to our purpose. Such an opportunity cannot be mere coincidence, it must be either destiny, or a last chance offered by the One. In either case, we must not fail. We have 4 years to prepare.

2:00 Using the laws of magic, the caster then enacts a simulated version of
 2:08 the desired result. If the point of the ritual is to harm someone, the cast-
 2:17 er will break or destroy a doll or figurine representing the person to be
 2:34 harmed, or perhaps draw an ancient sigil representing the destructive
 2:49 power of the God Mars. Similarly, if the caster wants luck or money, the
 2:58 ritual may involve creating a charm covered with symbols representing
 luck or money, which the caster will carry around. The pattern is used
 to direct the Seepage in the manner desired.

3:03 Most ceremonial magic involves specially made or at least specially
 3:15 blessed tools. Ritual knives are used only for certain purposes, and are
 3:30 otherwise kept wrapped in silk or stored in special boxes. Incenses and
 3:42 elaborate paraphernalia are very common in the practice of ceremonial
 3:51 magic. The ritual space should ideally be a specially prepared and dec-
 3:55 orated room, which is used for nothing else. It would appear that such
 preparations imbue the items with a seeming purity, perhaps in an effort
 to ward off corruption.

4:00 Ceremonial magicians usually view magic almost akin to science. Magic
 4:05 is believed to work according to strict, invariant laws, and magical ritu-
 4:16 als make use of these laws to change the world in the desired manner.
 4:26 For some, the spirits and gods called upon in the rituals are beings of
 4:33 vast power who aid the magician because they are asked in the proper
 4:46 manner. For others, the spirits are merely temporary manifestations of
 4:50 the magician's own power. A number of rituals of ceremonial magic can
 be performed by a single magician, but many others require the pres-
 ence of several magicians and assistants. It is important to note that, in
 the United States and Western Europe, most magic that Aegis agents
 will encounter will be some variant of ceremonial magic.

5:00 As the Queens Tome details, much of the patterns and capacities of
 5:08 Seepage are subject to "natural laws." In this sense, Ceremonial magic
 appears to have a relatively solid basis.

Shamanism

Shamanism appears to be the first form of magic that humans learned.
 It was developed by and for people who were already doing magic.
 Shamanism focuses on channeling a person's already existing gifts, and
 learning to navigate the netherworld.

Shamanism is a largely solitary practice. In general, magicians leave
 their body and interact directly with the local supernatural forces.
 Shamanic magic generally requires that the ritual area be blessed with
 drawings, drumming, and chanting. After this initial blessing, the magi-
 cian enters a deep trance and shapes mystic forces with their imagina-
 tion and their desire. Some shamans use drumming, ecstatic dancing or
 deep meditation to enter their trances. Others use a wide variety of
 strong psychedelic drugs to induce the desired state of altered con-
 sciousness. Once in this state, shamans believe that their "souls" jour-
 ney out of their bodies and interact with a multitude of spirits. Some are
 spirits of the living and the dead, others are spirits of places or natural
 phenomena like storms, plagues or volcanoes. Manipulation of these
 spirits, though coercion or bargains, creates the desired changes in the
 mundane world. The subjective and internal nature of shamanic prac-
 tice means that almost all shamanic rituals are performed alone, or
 involve a single shaman working with one or more passive subjects.



Today, most shamanic cultures are found in the far north -- Alaska, Lapland, Siberia, and Mongolia. However, shamans are also found in Korea, among various Native American tribes, and among the native peoples of the Amazon jungle. Recently, many people involved in the New Age movement have begun investigating shamanic practice. A few of these people have become powerful magicians. Shamanism is also the only tradition of magic that is sometimes learned without a teacher. Some shamans, mostly likely those who are also Supernatural Foci, are taught magic by a ghost or other spirit which takes an interest in them.

Shamanic rituals are often similar in appearance regardless of the exact form or the specific purpose of the ritual. When shamans attempt to affect distant people or places, they project their consciousness out into the semi-conscious realm, and shape the energy around that person or place. If the shaman is working with a subject who is actually present within the ritual space, the shaman will perform a variety of symbolic actions upon the subject. The subject may be fed exotic herbs, painted with elaborate designs, massaged, or simply told a story. During the entire ritual the shaman will be in a deep trance and will be aware of little except the ritual and the subject. Most shamanic rituals require little paraphernalia, but some shamans use special masks and costumes to more closely align themselves with the forces they are trying to contact.

My research suggests that shamanism recognizes the entity/place outside all of us that the Queens Tome labels the Seepage, and each person's link to those energies. They also appear to seek a closer relationship with the semi-conscious energies of the Seepage by altering their own mental state to match that of the Seepage. This would appear a highly dangerous activity, but the incident of corruption among shamans appears no higher than in other traditions. Perhaps a higher percentage of shamans are Seepage-sensitive, or Foci. Perhaps they have other protections that have not been identified.

Taoist Magic

As I have classified traditions, Taoist magic is in some ways a blend of strict martial arts discipline, shamanism and ceremonial magic. Taoist magicians use many trapping and techniques similar to ceremonial magic. However, they combine these rituals with precise movements, deep meditation and occasionally specially prepared psychedelic potions, powders, and incense. Taoism is generally regarded as a religion of contemplation and repose, but the purpose of this contemplation is to understand the mysteries of the universe. Taoist magicians use the understanding of the universe they have gained to subtly affect the world around them.

Taoist magicians can work both alone and in groups. They appear to have no specific preference as is the case with shamans and ceremonial magi. Taoists are very conscious of their environment. Initial studies of the geomantic practices of Feng Shui suggest that it is more than just a comforting psychology. It appears to actually redirect the flows of Seepage energy, and may be used to transform malevolent Pools or Loci into neutral or even benevolent ones.

Most Taoist practices designed to affect the magician or other living subjects involve physical motion. The rituals strongly resemble elaborate martial arts exercises. The magician uses these forms to charge his or her body with directed Qi (Chi) energy and then release it towards the target. Summonings and rituals designed to affect the physical world usually involve elaborate paraphernalia, as the magician will brew up a storm in a special teapot, or perform a divination by gazing into a mirror whose frame has been decorated with the appropriate symbols. Tiny gateways made of silver are used to bar the passage of spirits, and swords made of coins are used to drive off demons and to break magical bindings.

Taoist magic is primarily practiced by secluded monks and by extremely dedicated martial artists who have fully grasped the mysticism inherent in all martial arts practice. It is largely practiced in the Orient, but many centers of Taoist learning have arisen in North America. Of course, legends of ancient hermits or wizened old monks with superhuman powers in the mountainous regions of the Asian continent abound. No doubt these are Taoist magicians, to the extent they exist at all.

Once again, this tradition seems to have a firm grasp of what we call Seepage, and the means to manipulate it. It is interesting to note the varying ways Seepage lends itself to control by a human. From science-like experimentation, to conscious alteration, to physical motion, the methods vary significantly. The "magic item" concentration of the Taoists bears further study. The Queens Tome speaks precious little along those lines.

Caribbean Magic

Caribbean magic, as I have classified it, appears to be a syncretism of various African religions, Christianity, and a few elements of ceremonial magic. Caribbean magic is intimately tied into several Caribbean and South American religions. Voodoo, Santareia, and Candombley are the three most widespread of these religions. Each of these faiths exists independently of the practice of magic, and the vast majority of those who practice these religions are not involved in the supernatural. However, the magic is used as a part of some religious practice, and Caribbean magical rituals share many elements with Caribbean religious ceremonies.

While there are significant differences between these different faiths, the heart of Caribbean magical practice is similar. Caribbean mages view their practice as summoning and compelling the spirits of the living and the dead, and making deals with those spirits too powerful to bind. Performing a ritual involves preparing and purifying the ritual space by drawing special symbols, burning incense and other ritual cleansings. After these preparations, the desired spirits are called and tempted with offerings ranging from food and drink to animal sacrifices. Sometimes, the ritual is actually enacted as the magician sets out the offerings and then performs various dances and chants to summon the spirit. This frequent traffic in spirits appears to condition the Caribbean mages to view them just as humans. Some are good, some bad, but most just want to get through the day without suffering.

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F O R S A K E N R I T E S

The Theory of Magic



by Riya Kymenka

excerpted from *The Mystic Arts Today*

February 1994

Disparate traditions of magic perform widely different rituals, many of which appear to accomplish the same results. As a result, a number of scholars and occultists have wondered if a set of magical theorems may be discerned, or if it is in some way essentially random. Obviously, magic does not obey rigid, unwavering laws like those which govern motion or electricity. Nonetheless, careful investigation has revealed that magic is far from random.

All magical rituals involve manipulating mystic energy and directing it to perform specific goals. Only humans can perform magic. Thus, it appears that magic follows from sentience. Indeed, the supernatural has been closely associated with humanity's subconscious, non-logical nature. When psychologist Carl Jung wrote about the connection between the collective unconscious and certain unexplainable coincidences that he termed synchronicity, he began to glimpse the essential nature of magic. Some occultists believe that Jung eventually learned these secrets and became a powerful magician.

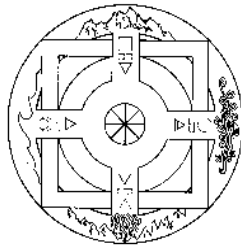
In any case, it appears beyond dispute that humans are linked to magic through the subconscious. The rules and logic of magic appear to be the rules and logic of dreams and madness. Many young children have minor experiences with magic because they have not yet abandoned their non-logical, intuitive side, and replaced it with the conscious, and limited, logic used by sane adults from all human cultures. Children, schizo-

phrenics, and people who are under the influence of strong psychedelic drugs are less separated from their own subconscious, and thus may be more closely tied to magic. Such people can sometimes accidentally produce various magical affects simply by slipping into the correct mental state and performing the correct actions.

Regardless of who is doing it, performing magical rituals is primarily a process of attaining the proper mental state on conscious and unconscious levels so that the magician's subconscious can act to produce magical effects. At its heart, magic is the process of focusing the mind on one particular result in such a controlled and directed fashion that the magician's entire being is bent toward a certain result.

The easiest rituals in almost any tradition involve efforts to alter the thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of another human. Using mystical power to affect the physical world is usually more difficult and requires more energy and more concentration. For the easier rituals, a simple process of focusing for a few minutes is often all that is necessary to produce the desired result. For more difficult rituals, more mystic energy must be directed by the magician's will. There are several ways of raising the required energy. The magician can simply concentrate for a longer time, focusing only on the desired goal for several hours at a time. Alternately, more participants can be involved. The power of three or four minds concentrating exclusively on the same goal can create mystical effects impossible for one mind alone.

For the reasons discussed, the laws of magic are effectively the laws of the unconscious or subconscious. In a very real sense, ritual magic is a particular variety of applied psychology.



The Laws of Magic

An exhaustive review of magic practices suggests that three primary laws of magic exist. Simple rituals may make use of only one law, while long and difficult rituals combine all three laws into a single complex whole. Given the peculiar nature of mystic energies, the practices associated with these laws usually make no rational sense whatsoever. There is no rational connection between burning a doll which has someone's hair attached to it and the person dying in house fire. However, the magician's unconscious perceives there to be such a connection, and so burning the doll actually does create an effect on "reality." The universal laws of magic may be termed the law of similarity, the law of contagion, and the law of names.

The Law of Similarity

This law states that things that appear to be the same are connected in a magical sense. A sculpture of a person or a model of a particular house are magically connected to the person and the house depicted. This law is manifest in those rituals seeking to bring prosperity that use real money. Invariably, the magician picks up and pockets the money, or in some other manner signifies his taking possession of the money. The law of similarity applies to actions as well as physical representations. Not only will using a model car help the magician affect a real car, but breaking or otherwise destroying the model car in the ritual will aid in efforts to harm or destroy the car. Combining similar objects with similar actions is by far the best method of using this law.

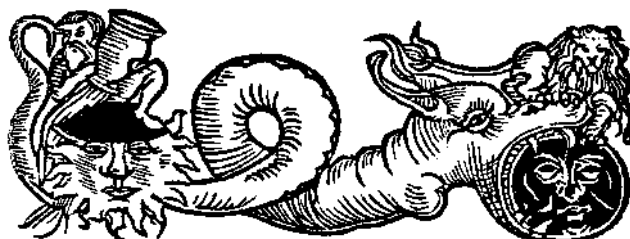
The Law of Contagion

This law states that objects once connected retain a magical connection long after they are physically separated. A lock of a person's hair is connected to the person from which it comes; a car's spark plug is connected to that car; a clod of dirt is connected to the field from which it was taken. The law of contagion is used in every ritual that requires some connection between the ritual and the target.

The law of similarity may be viewed as one built upon the foundations of human psychology. A number of occultists claim that the law of contagion is evidence that a psychic residues adheres to all objects. Some psychics can read these traces directly, while clairvoyants and other magicians use these traces to contact or affect the objects or people that left these traces. So far no one has discovered scientific proof of the existence of these traces, but some recent developments in quantum physics suggest that some type of physical connection may, in fact, exist.

The Law of Names

The law of names simply states that to name something is to have power over it. If a person's or a spirit's true name is known, that being may be influenced. While often presented as an arcane magical principle, this law is in many ways fairly obvious. Unless the subject of the ritual can be clearly identified in the minds of all the participants, it will be impossible to produce the focus and concentration necessary to empower the ritual. A descriptive or unique name ideally creates such identification. Because of the importance of names, many powerful spirits, who wish to avoid being summoned, will attempt to guard their names carefully. Occultists who summon numerous such beings, and keep extensive journals of the names and abilities of the beings they have summoned, often lose control at some point. Horrid deaths and burned libraries are the usual result of these interactions.






 A central title card for Chapter 3: Secrets. The text 'CHAPTER 3' is in a large, white, serif font, and 'SECRETS' is in a smaller, white, serif font below it. The background is a dark, textured image of a person's hands. The card is flanked by two black and white symbols that resemble a stylized 'Y' or a similar character.

CHAPTER 3

SECRETS

ORICHALCUM

Orichalcum is an ultra-rare mystical metal discovered by the Pilosi. When smelted and fashioned correctly, orichalcum artifacts significantly enhance ritual abilities. By its very presence, orichalcum increases the Seepage Level of its immediate area by one. At least a gram is necessary to achieve this affect. Thus, a normal SL1 area becomes SL2 within 3-5 meters of the orichalcum.

When consumed by the magician, orichalcum is even more powerful. The metal is consumed in milligram units. The time necessary to perform any ritual is divided by the number of milligrams consumed. For example, if 60 milligrams of orichalcum is consumed to perform the Cause Wound ritual, the ritual takes one minute, instead of an hour. Further, if any amount of orichalcum is consumed, no link or charm is necessary. The magician may affect anyone within line of sight.

To fashion or consume orichalcum, a magician must have the proper Orichalcum training. Orichalcum: Fashioning is necessary to manufacture orichalcum items, and Orichalcum: Consuming is necessary for consuming the metal. Each of these trainings cost 5CPs (professional) or 10CPs (non-professional), and may not be purchased during character creation. Finding a teacher for this training should be an adventure in itself.

POOLS AND LOCI

Loci and Pools are areas where Seepage is concentrated more strongly than normal. Some such places are ancient holy sites; others are "haunted" areas where no one lingers, especially at night. Everyone except Voids and Psinks can feel the power of such places and most will respond to this power on an emotional level. Places that have been temples and churches for centuries, a millennium or even longer will feel holy and peaceful to almost everyone. Similarly, sites of horrific murders or foul magics will cause a shiver to go up the spine of all but the least sensitive. The occult community is currently engaged in a vigorous debate over such sites. Some claim that human activities like worship or murder actually create Loci and Pools. Others argue that some unknown feature of the landscape creates such regions, and humans simply respond to such places in certain ways, building churches on some, and committing atrocities on others.

In any case, Loci and Pools vary considerably in the type of supernatural effects that they are likely to produce. A peaceful holy site is unlikely to produce dangerous fires, and a malevolent cemetery is unlikely to produce visions of angels.

Determining the character of a particular Locus or Pool can be essential, especially if the characters are planning on performing magic on that site. Often local legends or stories can give useful clues to the character of such places. In the absence of legends and stories, anyone who succeeds in a Basic ESP Hunch test will immediately understand the character and the rough power level of any Locus she is currently occupying. Similarly, Lesser Clairvoyance (R2) allows a psychic to determine the character and power level of such a site. Finally, anyone with the Sensitive trait will perceive the character and rough power level of any Locus or Pool if she can succeed in a Df3 Perception test. Sensitive who spend a few minutes concentrating on such a site and succeed in a Df4 test will also perceive vivid images of some of the more impressive supernatural incidents that have occurred in this place. The nature and content of these visions is entirely out of the Sensitive's control. Highly useful information relating to a recent supernatural incident may be revealed, or the Sensitive may simply experience glimpses of an obscure event that occurred 500 years ago.

SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA AT NEUTRAL SITES

Sites that are neither especially benevolent nor malevolent use the normal Focus Invocation Table found in Chapter Six: Supernatural in the Conspiracy X main rulebook. However, the exact nature of the site should be taken into account when determining the nature of any spontaneous or uncontrolled supernatural phenomena that occur there. The site of an antique structure may have spontaneous apparitions of ancient events, while a haunted old growth forest is more likely to produce mirages of huge predators with glowing eyes or spectral herds of extinct animals like Irish deer or mammoths.

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA AT BENEVOLENT SITES

The Benevolent Site Manifestation Table is used at supernatural sites that have traditionally been of a holy or benevolent nature. Holy wells, ancient churches or temples, and the sites of miracles are all examples of such places. The catacombs under Rome and the temple at Delphi are both examples of such sites. While supernatural events at such sites may be odd and even frightening, unless controlled by a Focus, they will never directly harm anyone except to prevent him from harming someone else.

Benevolent Site Manifestation Table

2 Circle	7 Apparition	12 Astral Conjunction!
3 Teleportation	8 Healing+	Roll twice on this table
4 Levitation	9 Thrall (Calm)@	and generate twice the
5 Vision*	10 Mirage	usual SP for the manifes-
6 Vortex	11 Ball Lightning	tation.

For the most part, the manifestations listed are identical to those described in Chapter Six: Supernatural of the Conspiracy X main rulebook. The exceptions are detailed below.

- * A character at the site receives a vision of some past, present or future event tied to the site. 1SP spent reveals one fact about the site, 2SPs reveals three facts about the site. The GM should decide whether these visions are past, present or future, and the facts revealed.
- + One or more injured or ill people at the site will be healed. This manifestation can heal wounds, diseases, and, in rare cases, long-standing, but non-genetic, physical handicaps (blindness). Healing can stabilize a wound for no SP, and reduce a single Damage Level of any Wound Level for each SP spent.
- @ Everyone within the area of the Pool or Locus becomes filled with a sense of peace and calm. Anyone affected by this emotion will cease all conflict unless attacked, or unless a Willpower test is successful. 1SP spent requires a Wil3 test, 2SP requires a Wil4 test, and 3SP requires a Wil5 test.

SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA AT MALEVOLENT SITES

The Malevolent Site Manifestation Table is used at supernatural sites with particularly horrific natures. Such sites may be found at the locations of bloody battles or mass suffering, as well as temples to dark gods and sites of demon worship. Dachau, the infamous Nazi death camp, and mass murderer Charles Manson's ranch are examples of malevolent supernatural sites. Unless controlled by a Focus, supernatural events in such a location will always be terrifying and will often be harmful.

Malevolent Site Manifestation Table

2 Circle	7 Apparition	12 Astral Conjunction!
3 Teleportation	8 Mirage	Roll twice on this table
4 Frenzy*	9 Flame@	and generate twice the
5 Thrall (Terror)+	10 Harm#	usual SP for the
6 Vortex	11 Ball Lightning	manifestation.

For the most part, the manifestations listed are identical to those described in Chapter Six: Supernatural of the Conspiracy X main rulebook. The exceptions are detailed below.

- * A single individual at the site becomes enraged and will experience a supernatural adrenaline response. The person's Strength, Agility and Willpower increase to 5, and any damage taken during the frenzy will be ignored (no usage penalties, stun or KO rolls). Once the frenzy abates, all damage effects are immediately applied. 1SP spent grants 2D combat rounds of frenzy, 2SP grants 3D combat rounds, and 3SP grants 4D combat rounds.
- + Everyone within the area of the Pool or Locus becomes filled with terror unless a Willpower test is successful. 1SP spent requires a Wil3 test, 2SP requires Wil4, and 3SP requires Wil5.
- @ Flammable and nonflammable objects begin burning. 1SP spent ignites one flammable object, 2SP ignites one non flammable object, or 1D flammable objects, 3SP ignites 1D nonflammable objects, or 2D flammable objects. Characters are nonflammable and are considered On Fire (Wn2 per round, 1 in 6 chance per round of becoming Engulfed in Flame) if subject to a Flame manifestation. Characters' cloths are flammable and, when burning, subject the character to a Fw2 per combat round, with a chance to catch On Fire on a roll of 1 on 1D. See the Burning rules in Chapter Four: Tradecraft of the Conspiracy X main rulebook.
- # Some or possibly all of the people at the site (a Focus can control who is affected) will be wracked with severe pain as the Seepage energy courses through their bodies. Unless they succeed in a Willpower test everyone affected will take a Tw(1D) wound. 1SP spent requires a Wil3 test, 2SP requires a Wil4 test, and 3SP requires a Wil5 test.



CHANGING THE NATURE OF SUPERNATURAL SITES

Many mystic traditions include practices for adjusting the nature of Pools and Loci. Over the years, these traditions have found that such adjustments aid in the practice of magic, or simply further certain goals or worldviews.

Changing supernatural sites is neither easy nor quick. The task involves a series of long-term Ritual research tests with a number of breakthroughs that varies depending on the modification desired. Further, a minimum number of participants must be engaged in the task at some point. These participants need not be magicians, although if they are, the normal teamwork bonuses apply for the Ritual skill tests. Supernatural site adjustment often requires moving walls, structures, or terrain, or changing the composition or landscaping of the area. Most often, the majority of the participants work to make these structural or physical changes while the magus, or magi, perform the ceremonies and rituals. Not all the participants need to be at the site at the same time. Each, however, must invest some time or effort into the activity. Also, the primary magician and other mystical helpers need not be at the site at all times, but must visit and perform certain rites for several hours each week.

The requirements for modifying Pools and Loci are presented below. If the primary magician is skilled in Ritual: Taoist the numbers in parenthesis are applicable instead.

Supernatural Site Modification Table		
Modification Desires	Breakthroughs	Participants
Malevolent - Normal	7 (4)	88 (44)
Normal - Malevolent	13 (6)	66 (33)
Benevolent - Normal	13 (6)	66 (33)
Normal - Benevolent	7 (4)	88 (44)

The number of participants listed assumes that all are unskilled in both Occult or Ritual. A participant with the Occult skill, or with a Ritual sub-skill other than that of the primary magician, counts as a number of participants equal to half his skill level (round up). A participant with the same Ritual sub-skill as the primary magician counts as a number of participants equal to her skill level. Only the highest of these skills apply; one participant may not provide multiple bonuses.



Rich Rodriguez is a Ritual: Ceremonial 3 magician. He is the primary magician engaged in modifying the nature of a malevolent site. He is also treated as three participants for purposes of the participant requirement. His two assistants, Joe Passo (Ritual: Ceremonial 3, Occult 2) and Randy Nika (Ritual: Taoist 1, Occult 3) are with him. Joe counts as 3 participants (due to his Ritual level) and Randy counts as 2 (Occult level/2, round up). Note that Joe's lesser Occult skill, and Randy's lesser Ritual skill do not influence the number of participants. In sum, Rich's core group is worth 8 participants. Rich needs only 80 more untrained participants. Obviously, this is no easy task.

SENSITIVES

Sensitives are able to perceive Seepage and its manifestations more deeply and more closely than those around them. In addition to being able to sense the character of Loci and Pools, Sensitives can perceive magic and the presence of supernatural beings. Sensitives automatically notice the presence of ghosts, demons and other incorporeal beings, which are within the same room or are otherwise nearby. This detection is possible even if the creature is not using any of its special powers. To locate the being precisely, the Sensitive must succeed at a Df3 Perception test.

Sensitives automatically notice magical rituals, Focus invocations, or involuntary summonings that occur within 100-200 meters. They also know whether any site has been used for numerous magical rituals over the course of many years, and the general nature (harmful or not) of those rituals, if any. A Df3 Perception test allows the Sensitive to perceive that magic was performed once in a given location, or the category of magic (Somatic Ritual, Divination, Illusion, etc.) currently being performed. Succeeding in a Df4 Perception test allows the Sensitive to determine the category of the most recent ritual performed at a site, or the details about any magic currently being performed. Sensitives can detect and gain information about Enchanted Items created by Mad Scientists in a similar manner.

The description of the Sensitive trait replaces that presented in the Aegis Handbook. The CP cost remains the same.

SUPERNATURAL FOCI

The safest method of performing magic is through invocation by a Supernatural Focus. Invocation simply involves the Focus consciously or unconsciously calling upon her connection to the Seepage. Most invocations are unconscious acts which occur when the Focus is experiencing strong emotions. Unconscious invocations are handled as described in Chapter Six: Supernatural of the Conspiracy X main rulebook. The same process is used if the Focus is simply calling upon something to happen.

Foci who are aware of their abilities have another option. All Foci have a deep unconscious connection to the Seepage. When used in a largely unconscious manner, the results can be very erratic and uncontrolled. However, with careful concentration and training, it is possible to manipulate the local Seepage energy in a slightly more controlled fashion.

This type of control is very different from the exact discipline of a magical ritual. Magical rituals shape the local Seepage energy to a specific need. Controlled invocation simply attempts to nudge the Seepage energy in a certain direction. As a reflection of its less predictable nature, many Foci believe that controlled invocation involves contacting the "spirit" of the Locus or Pool and asking it to aid them.

CONTROLLED INVOCATIONS

Foci who wish to perform a controlled invocation must be aware of their abilities and must possess the Mediation skill. To actually perform a controlled invocation, the Focus must remain stationary for at least two minutes and must succeed at a Df2 Meditation test. Like any other invocation, the player must roll equal to or less than the local Seepage Level on 1D. If unsuccessful, nothing at all happens. If successful, the player rolls on the appropriate Focus Invocation Table or Site Manifestation Table to see what actually occurs. Since the Focus is actually helping to shape the supernatural manifestation, the player may modify the number rolled by up to +/- 1.

The player and GM then roll for control as normal. However, the player gains a +1 to his roll, and as with other invocations, the player wins any ties.

The actually mechanics of such an invocation are otherwise identical to an ordinary invocation. The only other difference occurs if the Focus loses control of the manifestation. Ordinary invocations are largely unconscious and so protect the Focus from the worst consequences of failure. If a Focus fails to control an ordinary Invocation, the uncontrolled supernatural manifestation may cause great property damage and may harm the Foci's companions, but the Focus will never be directly harmed by the manifestation. Thrown object will miss them, ball lightning will avoid them, and nothing dangerous will teleport on top of them. By taking conscious control of this process, Foci abandon such protections. A Focus who loses control of a controlled Invocation is in just as much danger as anyone else present. Flying knives are just as likely to hit the Focus, and supernaturally generated fires may appear directly under her feet.

SUPERNATURAL FOCI & SEEPAGE POINTS

Foci increase the number of Seepage Points present in any region by one. They also increase, by one, the number of SPs regained in an hour in whatever area they are located. Note that this is an expansion of the rule in the Conspiracy X main book, which limited Foci influence on SPs to Pools and Loci.



RESISTING CORRUPTION

Corruption is dangerous and insidious, but it is not irresistible. There are a variety of methods for resisting corruption when a ritual fails. Almost all competent and knowledgeable occultists will know that these techniques exist, and most who have mastered them will choose to use them. None of the three methods of protection described below are compatible with each other. If more than one is used together, none of the methods will work.

NEW TRAININGS

Each of the three methods of protecting against corruption requires special training to use. Learning to use each technique requires either spending the requisite amount of CP during character creation, or during Downtime. The CP costs listed are divided between professional and nonprofessional.

BLOOD CHARM 10CP PROFESSIONAL/15CP NON-PROFESSIONAL

Certain vile magicians are willing to sacrifice others to ensure their own protection. These magicians wear a charm containing bits of hair and blood from at least three other participants in the ritual. If anything goes wrong in the ritual, and the participants must make a Willpower test to resist corruption, the magician who wears the charm receives a -2Df bonus to her Willpower test. Everyone whose hair and blood is in the charm, however, receives a +1Df penalty to this Willpower test.

It is common practice for powerful, unscrupulous magicians to make such charms using the hair and blood of their neophytes. In the event of a ritual failure, the neophytes are either imprisoned to see if they succumb to corruption or are simply killed. The neophytes are rarely told why they are donating blood and hair. Such donations are general passed off as a rite of initiation.

SAAAMAAA AMULET 10CP PROFESSIONAL/15CP NON-PROFESSIONAL

A few extremely altruistic magicians make amulets from their own hair and blood and give them to everyone else involved in the ritual. If the ritual fails, everyone wearing one of these amulets receives a -1Df bonus to his test of resist corruption. The magician who donated the blood and hair receives a +2Df penalty to resist corruption. A few selfless and holy magicians give such charms to all of their disciples and neophytes. Only the one who donates the hair and blood can make the amulet. Up to a dozen effective amulets can be made using the blood and hair of one person. These amulets only function if both the maker and the wearers are all present at the ritual and if the amulets are willingly given to the wearers.

THE PROTECTIVE CIRCLE 5CP PROFESSIONAL/10CP NON-PROFESSIONAL

Before the ritual is started, the participants draw a special protective circle around the ritual space and ward by writing special protective symbols around the inside of the circle. Preparing such a circle takes approximately 5 minutes. If such a circle is used, everyone involved in the ritual receives a +2t bonus to the Willpower test to resist corruption of the ritual fails.

RITUAL SKILL REVISED

The following rules revise those presented in Conspiracy X main rulebook. Ritual is a meta-skill covering knowledge of the different magical traditions. When taking this skill, one particular sub-skill of ritual must be selected although the skill may be taken multiple times to represent a knowledge of different traditions. Ceremonial magic, Taoist magic, Shamanism, and Caribbean magic are the Ritual sub-skills discussed in this book, although more such sub-skills may be presented in later supplements or devised by Game Masters. Unlike other meta-skills, Ritual tests outside the character's particular sub-skill may not be attempted.

Each Ritual sub-skill enjoys certain advantages over other sub-skills. They also have their own list of professional ritual trainings, which are cheaper to purchase during character creation, and take less time to learn during Downtime. The benefits of each tradition covered by this book are presented below.

TRADITION-SPECIFIC RULES

CEREMONIAL TRADITION: Ceremonial magic is essentially the default tradition. It provides fewer bonuses, but imposes less restrictions. Ceremonial magicians also have the largest selection of professional ritual trainings.

Ceremonial magicians specialize in group magic. When a ritual is cast upon more than one subject, the first group included does not incur any Difficulty Level penalties. For example, to cast Basic Blessing on two, three or four subjects, the Df of the ritual is normally increased by one. This penalty is not applicable when the primary magician is from the Ceremonial tradition. Further penalties are decreased by one Difficulty Level. Thus, casting Basic Blessing on five, six or seven subjects incurs a +1Df penalty, instead of a +2Df penalty, for Ceremonial magicians.

The Ceremonial magician's group focus also applies to SP bonuses for ritual participants. Even those who are necessary to meet the minimum participant level of a ritual may contribute +1SP per person. Thus, any ritual performed by a Ceremonial magician that requires 3 participants will receive a +2SP bonus in meeting the required Threshold. Similarly, those rituals requiring 5 participants will receive a +4SP bonus.

Professional ritual trainings: Blessing of Protection, Dispel Magic, Emotional Aura, Oath-Binding, Protection from Magic, Reading the Past, Vortex, Warding Circle.

SHAMANIC TRADITION: Shamans are particularly attuned to the ambient energies of the Seepage, and have a special affinity for what some call the astral plane. All Shamanic magicians must purchase the Sensitive or Supernatural Focus traits. Further, primary magicians from the Shamanic tradition receive a +2t bonus when casting Scrying and Visitation rituals.

All shamans require some aid to enter the altered state of consciousness necessary to cast rituals. This altered state is necessary for both single and multi-participant rituals. For rituals of Df3 or less, the shaman may use some form of meditation. Shamans who meditate must have a Meditation skill at least equal to the unmodified Difficulty Level of the ritual being performed. After an hour of meditation, the shaman tests his Mediation skill. If the test fails, the ritual cannot be performed unless the mediation is repeated. Since it is performed before the Ritual skill test is attempted, failing the Meditation test does not risk corruption.

Some shamans use hallucinogenic drugs or other non-meditational techniques to achieve the proper state of altered consciousness. All shamans who wish to cast Df4 rituals or higher must use such means to focus their minds. A hour after the drugs take effect, or other techniques are started, the ritual may be commenced. Note that most of these drugs last for at least 4 to 6 hours and leave the user quite fatigued and disoriented until they have both eaten and slept.

All Shamanic rituals may be enacted alone, even if the description specifies that multiple participants are needed. Shamanic magicians specialize in creating charms. They do not incur the +1Df penalty when using rituals to create charms.

Professional ritual trainings: Call Weather, Reading the Past, Scrying, Spirit Bottle, Visitation.

TAOIST TRADITION: Taoists blend physical training and movement with their mystic arts. All Taoists add Martial Arts to their professional skill list, and must purchase that skill to at least level three.

All Taoist rituals must be cast after a certain period of meditation, although that meditation may involve physical movement and exertion. Thus, the Taoist must concentrate for at least a minute, and test his Meditation skill against the Difficulty Level of the ritual, or Df4, whichever is lower. If the Meditation test fails, the ritual cannot be performed unless the initial preparations are repeated. Since it is performed at the beginning of the ritual, failing the Meditation test does not cause possible corruption.

All Taoist rituals may be enacted by the primary magician alone, even if the description requires multiple participants. Due to the long centuries of practice in the art of Feng Shui, Taoists gain certain bonuses to attempts to change the nature of supernatural sites. These bonuses are specified in the Supernatural Site Modification Table earlier in this chapter.

Professional ritual trainings: Speed Healing, Basic Blessing, Enhance Body, Blessing of Skill.

CARIBBEAN TRADITION: Caribbean magicians have special affinity to spirits. All Ritual skill tests to summon, bind or banish ghosts or ascended ghosts receive a +2t bonus. When dealing with nonhostile spirits, Caribbean magicians will frequently attempt to coax or cajole them when seeking their aid. Spirits are aware of Caribbean magicians' facility with binding rituals. Since most spirits prefer to avoid being bound, they are generally receptive to entreaties by such ritualists.

The close relationship between most ghosts and Caribbean magicians means that during a Ghost Possession ritual, the ghost need make no test to stay in possession of its host unless the host wills it. Finally, Caribbean magicians do not have to test for corruption should a Summon Ghost or Ghost Possession ritual fail.

Professional ritual trainings: Banish Spirit, Bind Spirit, Emotional Aura, Ghost Possession, Spirit Bottle, Summon Ghost.

RITUAL TRAININGS

Knowledge of a Ritual sub-skill is only the first step in learning how to perform magical rituals. Once this knowledge has been acquired, the magician must also learn the individual rituals specific to that tradition. Training in an individual ritual allows the character to attempt to perform or assist in the ritual as long as she possesses at least one level of the appropriate Ritual sub-skill. Without some level of the appropriate Ritual sub-skill, knowledge of a ritual training is meaningless. Further, knowledge of a specific Ritual sub-skill is irrelevant for purposes of casting a ritual training specific to another tradition. For example, a Caribbean Dispel Magic ritual training may not be used by a magician skilled in Taoist magic.

Rituals can only be bought with CPs during character creation. The Ritual Cost Table on the next page details the ritual trainings professional and nonprofessional costs. After the game begins, ritual trainings may only be learned through research projects as described in Learning New Rituals below.

LEARNING NEW RITUALS

To completely master a new ritual training in the proper tradition, the magician must devise his own version of that ritual. Each magician is unique and thus each ritual must be specifically tailored for that magician. Access to a teacher who knows the ritual, or a grimoire that explains it, will aid the learning process but the student must still internalize the ritual largely on his own.

Without a teacher or grimoire, a magician must have both the Occult skill, and the proper Ritual sub-skill at a level equal to the ritual training's Difficulty Level. Even with a teacher or a grimoire, the student's Occult and Ritual sub-skill can be no lower than one level below the ritual training's Difficulty Level. If this requirement is met, the magician must conduct a long-term Ritual research project, with a number of breakthroughs equal to twice the Difficulty Level of the ritual to be learned. Access to a teacher or grimoire will halve the number of breakthroughs required. If the ritual learned has a variable Df, the number of breakthroughs are calculated as if the Df were 5.

CREATING NEW RITUALS

New rituals may also be created by skilled occultists. As no teacher or grimoire is available (otherwise the ritual would not need to be created, only learned), the inventor must have both the Occult and a Ritual sub-skill equal to the final Difficulty Level of the ritual. Creating the ritual is a long-term Ritual research project, with a number of breakthroughs equal to twice the Difficulty Level of the ritual to be created. If the ritual learned has a variable Df, the number of breakthroughs are calculated as if the Df were 5.

For a completely new ritual, the GM and player should discuss the ritual's effects and requirements. The GM should then set the particular stats of the ritual. A simpler method is to start with one of the rituals detailed in this book, and vary its stats. If this method is chosen, modifiers to the Ritual research skill test, the PV for purposes of testing breakthrough, and the number of breakthroughs required are dependent on the stat varied. The research modifiers are summarized in the Ritual Research Modifier Table. Modified rituals may also be purchased during character creation. The CP cost of such trainings are modified to reflect these adjustments. The professional/non-professional CP changes are also listed in the Ritual Research Modifier Table.

Ritual Research Modifier Table

The change in effect is listed first. "Test" is the modifier applied to the Ritual research test Df. "PV" is the number added or subtracted to the PV for purposes of testing for a breakthrough. "Breakthroughs" is the number added or subtracted to the total breakthroughs necessary to finalize the ritual. Under no circumstances may breakthrough be decreased below one. "CP" is the modification to the CP cost of the ritual if purchased at character creation.

Effect	Test	PV	Breakthroughs	CP(Prof/Non-P)
Df: 1 Higher	-1Df		-1	-2/-4
Df: 1 Lower	+1Df		+1	+2/+4
Thrd: 5 Lower	+1Df	-1PV	+2	+2/+4
Thrd: 3 Lower	+1Df	-1PV	+1	+1/+2
Thrd: 1 Lower	+1Df			+5/+1
Thrd: 1 Higher	-1Df			-5/-1
Thrd: 3 Higher	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-1/-2
Thrd: 5 Higher	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-2/-4
Dur: Ritual to Day	+1Df		+1	+1/-2
Dur: Day to Moon	+1Df	-1PV	+1	+1/-2
Dur: Moon to Day	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-1/-2
Dur: Day to Ritual	-1Df		-1	-1/-2
Area: Target to Ritual	+1Df		+1	+5/+1
Area: Ritual to Place	+1Df	-1PV	+1	+1/+2
Area: Place to Boundary	+1Df	-1PV	+2	+1/+2
Area: Boundary to Place	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-1/-2
Area: Place to Ritual	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-1/-2
Area: Ritual to Target	-1Df		-1	-5/-1
Time: Half	+1Df	-1PV	+1	+1/+2
Time: Double	-1Df		-1	-1/-2
Time: Quadruple	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-2/-4
Par: -1 (to a min of 1)	+1Df		+1	+1/+2
Par: -3 (to a min of 1)	+1Df	-1PV	+2	+1/+2
Par: -5 (to a min of 1)	+1Df	-1PV	+3	+2/+4
Par: +5	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-2/-4
Par: +3	-1Df	+1PV	-1	-1/-2
Par: +1	-1Df		-1	-1/-2

To design a ritual that does not suffer the +1Df for producing a charm, increase the Ritual research Df by one (+1Df), increase the breakthroughs by two (+2). The CPs modifications are +2/+4.



Peotr Ussov is redesigning the Blessing of Protection. He wishes to reduce the Df of the ritual, and increase its duration. Reducing the Df, from three to two, increases the Df of the Ritual research test by one, and adds one more breakthrough to those necessary. Increasing the duration from Day to Moon also increases the Df of the Ritual research test by one, decreases the PV for testing breakthroughs, and adds another breakthrough. With no other changes, Peotr tests his Ritual skill against the PV+2 and his breakthroughs at PV-1, and needs seven breakthroughs. If he also decides to increase the time required by double, his Ritual skill is tested against the PV+1 and his breakthroughs at PV-1, and he needs six breakthroughs.

PERFORMING RITUALS

CHARMS

All rituals must have a well defined target. In many cases, subject of the ritual is present at the ritual. However, especially when using curses or other harmful magic, the target is not present. To affect a distant target, a charm may be used. The magician must cast the ritual to create the charm (incurring a +1Df penalty to the Ritual skill test), and the charm must be physically given or touched to the target. A charm must be large enough to be easily held; nothing smaller than a dime or a postage stamp can be made into a charm because it is simply too small to be comfortably used. However, charms need not be solid objects. Potions that the target drinks or powders that are blown onto the target are both common charms. Such disposable charms affect the first target they contact. Permanent charms like coins affect everyone who carries them, for the entire duration of the ritual. If desired, charms may also be used with spells that affect places or objects. The charm is simply placed in or on the desired place or object.

PSYCHIC LINKS

Other than a charm, the only other way to affect distant targets is through a psychic link. This link must either be a piece of an object, something from a certain place, or some object which has a direct personal connection to a living target. Bits of hair or fingernails are traditionally used, but favored clothing, jewelry or other items close to the target will all work.

Psychic link do not last forever. Most rituals involve destruction or transformation of the links. Even if the link is not physically destroyed, the act of using it in a ritual will render it a psychic link to the site of the ritual rather than to the place or individual. When collecting psychic links for use in a ritual, it is best to gather as many as possible, since each item may only be used once. For example, the hair from one hairbrush should be enough to perform numerous rituals, as long as the hairbrush has not been used by multiple parties. If a psychic link to someone other than the intended target is accidentally used, the ritual will work as desired, but the target will be the source of the link, not the desired target.

Using a wide variety of different psychic links to one target like photographs, bits of hair, and a favorite watch will give the magician a +2t modifier to the Ritual skill test. However, if any of the links used in the ritual are actually connections to someone or something else, the resulting conflict will cause the ritual to fail and will require everyone involved to resist corruption.

REDUCING THE TIME TO CAST A RITUAL

To reduce the time taken to perform the ritual, additional participants beyond those required to meet minimum participant levels must be present. Either disciples of groups of three neophytes may help in reducing the time needed to perform the ritual. Simply add together the number of additional disciples, or groups of three neophytes, and divide the time taken to perform the ritual by that number. For example, if there are two additional disciples, and three additional neophytes, the time necessary to perform the ritual is divided by three. A three hour ritual will take only one hour to perform.

Because of the different nature of the assistance involved, a single participant may not decrease the time necessary if he is assigned any other task, such as meeting the minimum participant level, decreasing the Difficulty Level of a ritual, or focusing Seepage.



RITUAL TEAMWORK

Many rituals require multiple magicians to work together. In any ritual, one of the most skilled magicians is chosen as the leader of the ritual, and is called the primary magician. While any character with a Ritual skill may assist in performing the ritual, those characters whose Ritual skill is equal to, or one less, than the primary magician's skill grant the most benefit to performing the ritual. These assistants are called disciples. If at least one extra disciple is present, reduce the Difficulty Level of the task by one. For each additional disciple, add a +1t bonus to the Ritual test. In certain cases, others may help. Assistants with at least Ritual 1 in the primary magician's tradition are called neophytes. Neophytes may be employed in numbers to aid the ritual casting. Three neophytes may be used instead of one disciple. Also, for every three extra neophytes aiding the primary magician, a +1t bonus is added to the Ritual test. Note that no extra amount of neophytes will give a -1Df bonus.

The rules regarding ritual teamwork do not apply to any participants who are required simply to perform the ritual. For example, the ritual Possession requires three participants. Unless certain exceptions apply due to the tradition practiced, three characters with the proper Ritual sub-skill must be active to perform the ritual. None of these participants' efforts decrease the Difficulty Level of the ritual. Only the aid of a fourth, fifth or more magicians will trigger the teamwork benefits. Further, the number of required participants assumes the helpers are disciples. These disciples may be replaced by three neophytes each. Thus, if three participants are required, the primary magician may be aided by two disciples, one disciple and three neophytes, or six neophytes.

Additional participants also may be used to concentration of Seepage Points for purposes of the Threshold requirement of the ritual. Each additional disciple, or each additional three neophytes, add one SP to those present at the ritual location. Again, for these purposes, those contributing to achieve the minimum participant level are not counted.

Finally, if a number of participants are present, the primary magician must designate which ones are aiding in the casting for purposes of the minimum participant requirements, which ones are influencing the skill test, and which ones are concentrating on focusing Seepage. A single participant may not be assigned to more than one task.



Percy Ribbenwood, a level 3 Ritual: Ceremonial magus, seeks to create a Major Illusion (Df4, Threshold 6, Participants 3). Percy has four disciples and six neophytes to aid him. He assigns two disciples to work directly with him, meeting the minimum participants requirement. These disciples do not influence the Df of the ritual, and normally do not affect the Seepage Points available. Given that they are Ceremonial magicians, however, they do generate one SP a piece. Percy assigns another disciple to aid in the ritual performance, thus lowering the Df of the Major Illusion to 3. Three neophytes are also tasked with aiding the casting, granting a +1t benefit. The final disciple is set on focusing the Seepage and increases the ambient SPs by one. The last three neophytes work with this final disciple and also provide +1SP. In the end, the Df of the ritual is 3, which matched against Percy's skill, creates a Normal test with a Target Number of 7. The first group of neophytes increases this Target Number to 8. The "minimum participant" disciples, the additional disciple and the neophytes working on Seepage add +4 SPs. Percy's skill test has a good chance of succeeding, and he has a very good chance of having the Threshold level of SPs available, even in a normal Seepage Level 1 area.

NEW TRAITS

Trait	Value	Cost
Ally	---	5CP
Connection	---	see list
Faith	---	25CP
Infiltrator	---	varies
Instructor	---	15CP
Pulling Strings	---	see list
Supplier	---	20CP
Wealthy	---	10CP

ALLY: A character may choose a Credential during character creation, but be assigned to work closely with a different Credential. Such a character gains some benefits and incurs some disadvantages from this working arrangement as detailed below.

Pulling Strings (Original Credential): The agent may still use pulling strings from her own Credential, but suffers a +1Df penalty due to the fact that she is not present day-to-day, and is not keeping up with office politics.

Pulling Strings (Allied Credential): The agent has access to the pulling strings of the allied Credential. Use of these also incurs a +1Df for she is still considered an outsider. Where a Credential is part of a larger Department, only the Credential-specific pulling strings are gained.

CONNECTION: The Connection trait list presented in the Aegis Handbook is expanded as listed nearby.

Connection	Cost
Lodge of the World Tree	22
Montague Club (no Wealthy, Influence)	12
Children of Ragnarok	NA

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

FAITH: Individuals with the Faith trait have a solid set of beliefs and convictions that influence all aspects of their life, including their connection to the Seepage. People with Faith always act in accordance with their chosen set of beliefs, regardless of circumstances. These convictions protect them from most of the dangers of corruption. Characters with Faith automatically succeed at all tests necessary to avoid being corrupted toward a Predator, Adept, or Prophet archetype with a different belief system. However, such characters are especially vulnerable to corruption toward Prophets for their own beliefs, or Incarnate beholden to such beliefs. If that situation arises, the faithful must add +1Df to all Willpower tests to avoid becoming corrupted, or gain another stage of corruption. Rituals to cure their corruption receive a +1Df modifier. The faithful gain -1Df to all Fear tests.

INFILTRATOR: In an Aegis-based campaign, all player characters are part of the Aegis conspiracy. Their true loyalties, however, may vary. Either the character is loyal to Aegis, but works for as an Infiltrator in another conspiracy, or the character is part of an Aegis Cell but is loyal to an outside conspiracy. The Infiltrator trait reflects these two possibilities.

When choosing the Infiltrator trait, the player must decide both the conspiracy to which the character is loyal (the loyal conspiracy), and the conspiracy that the character has infiltrated (the infiltrated conspiracy). One of these conspiracies must be Aegis. The other may be the Black Book, the Titanidae, the Royal Cryptozoological Society, the Forgotten, the Blues, the Lodge of the World Tree, the Knights of Mona, the Montague Club, or the Children of Ragnarok.

Next, the type of infiltration desired must be specified. A character may be either a spy Infiltrator or a traitor Infiltrator. A spy has infiltrated a conspiracy other than the original one he joined. The agent chooses a profession that is recruited into the original, loyal conspiracy to create his character, and a profession that is recruited into the new, infiltrated conspiracy, which he portrays. The spy has access to both professions skills and trainings. On the rare occasions when the portrayed profession has a different Influence Icon type, the new Icon type is used. A spy Infiltrator has full access to the infiltrated profession's pulling strings, and no access to his original profession's pulling strings.

A traitor Infiltrator remains with his original profession and conspiracy, but has been swayed to the "other side." The player creates a character as normal, but the character's true allegiance runs with another conspiracy.

Once the type of infiltration is picked, the player must choose the reason for the character's infiltration. Infiltrator missions include intelligence, being a mole or a martyr, or sabotage. Those involved in intelligence need only collect information about the infiltrated conspiracy. They are to avoid risking their cover, but are required to submit reports every 3 months to the loyal conspiracy detailing movements, records, and other activities of the infiltrated group. Moles have no set mission. They are to bury themselves in the infiltrated conspiracy and wait. Someday, a message will come from the loyal conspiracy assigning them a mission. A martyr is tasked with significantly disrupting or destroying the infiltrated organization, usually within a year from the time the order to act is given. If he is infiltrating a small section of a bigger organization (like a Cell in Aegis), he may try to frame one of the other members, which would allow him to be relocated to another Cell where he repeat his mission. All martyrs know that death is most likely the end result of their actions, but they are willing to pay that price for the conspiracy that holds their loyalty. A saboteur's primary purpose is to cause mayhem and chaos in the infiltrated conspiracy. Without revealing or endangering himself, the saboteur is to undermine missions, waste resources and compromise members of the infiltrated organization.

The value in CPs of the Infiltrator trait depends on the choices made in designing it. The nearby table details those values.

Type of Infiltration	Value
Spy	0CP
Traitor	3CP
Reason for Infiltration	
Intelligence	2CP
Saboteur	5CP
Mole	0CP
Martyr	10CP
Infiltrated Agency	
Aegis	7CP
Black Book	7CP
Children of Ragnarok	4CP
Forgotten	8CP
Lodge of the World Tree	1CP
Montague Club	6CP
RCS	1CP
Titanidae	5CP
Other	+GM's Discretion



Tim Baker is a character with the Infiltrator trait. His player decides that the loyal conspiracy is the Montague Club, and the infiltrated conspiracy is Aegis, in particular the CAPS Credential. The character is a spy, and the mission is sabotage. Tim chooses professional skills and trainings from both the Montague Club Player list, and the CAPS Occultists list. He takes the Science and Research Influence Icon from CAPS. Tim gains 7CPs for infiltrating Aegis, 5CPs for being a saboteur, and 0CPs for being a spy. Thus, the final CP value of this trait is 12CPs.

INSTRUCTOR: The character has access to a competent instructor who can teach her during Downtime. No Luck test is required to gain the instructor's help. Two types of Instructors exist, mentors and teachers. One must be chosen when this trait is purchased.

A mentor is a senior ritualist who has taken a liking to the character. The magician will help the agent in his Ritual research tests. The mentor is trained in all of one magical Credential's professional ritual trainings, and 2D others as determined by the GM.

A teacher is someone inside the character's Credential who will aid him with skills and trainings other than ritual trainings. He will instruct the agent whenever possible (usually during Downtime). The teacher has all the professional skills and trainings (other than ritual trainings) listed under the character's profession. Access to this teacher grants the character +1CP per week of Downtime spent learning those skills and trainings. No Luck roll is necessary or possible to gain a teaching bonus.

PULLING STRINGS: The Pulling Strings trait list presented in the Aegis Handbook is expanded as listed nearby.

SUPPLIER: The character knows a contact who specializes in obtaining rare, illegal or expensive items. The contact provides the character with 1RP of resources in a specific category each month. The RPs can be pooled from month to month to purchase more expensive items. Each supplier is specialized. When this trait is purchased a category of assets must be specified. A list of assets and what they include is detailed below. GMs may add items to these categories, and create new categories, as they wish.

Arcane Items: These items include ritual tomes, scrolls or databases such as those described in the Tomes Credential Specific Resource. Orichalcum may also be purchased through this supplier, similar to the Credential Specific Resource by the same name.

Drugs: This includes recreational and other illegal drugs, and any drug that may be purchased with a pharmaceutical, medical or other regulatory license. This category also includes psi-drugs, mind control drugs and other experimental drugs.

Electronics: This includes any item from the Electronics Resource Lists.

Espionage: This includes any item from the Espionage Resource Lists.

Science: This includes any item from the Science Resource Lists.

Special Vehicles: This includes any vehicle from the Special Vehicle List.

Standard Vehicle: This includes any vehicle from the Standard Vehicle List.

Weapons: Any item from the Weapons Resource List may be purchased.

The Resource Lists indicated may be found in Chapter Three: Ops Center of the Conspiracy X main rulebook, or Chapter Four: Anatomy of the Aegis Handbook.

This steady supply of RPs does not come entirely free. As desired, GMs should use these suppliers to assign missions to characters with this trait. These requests should not be frequent or suicidal, but may be outside an Aegis agent's usual assignments.

WEALTHY: Characters with this trait are personally rich. Such characters generate an additional +1RP during Downtime spent accumulating resources. Further, Wealthy characters add +2t to funding tests.

CAPS OCCULTIST

The modification in the rules involving rituals forces some adjustment in the CAPS Credential. All CAPS professionals gain a -1CP cost per level to the Ritual skill. The following professional trainings list replaces that presented for the CAPS Occultist in the Conspiracy X main rulebook, and in the Aegis Handbook.

PROFESSIONAL TRAININGS: Awareness, Ritual: Amnesia, Ritual: Dispel Magic, Ritual: Domination, Ritual: Invisibility, Ritual: Prophecy, Ritual: Scrying, Ritual: Vortex, Saaamaaa Amulet, The Protective Circle

CREDENTIAL SPECIFIC RESOURCES

Resources	Cost	Organization
Tomes	5RP	CAPS, Lodge of the World Tree, Montague Club
Orichalcum	6RP	CAPS, Children of Ragnarok, Lodge of the World Tree, Montague Club

Tomes: This resource represents a collection of scrolls, a book, or even a computer database. Each "tome" focuses on one ritual training from one tradition and details its history, how to cast it, possible uses, and known variations. Any magician of the proper tradition using this "tome" to master the ritual halves the number of breakthroughs (round up) normally required (i.e., breakthroughs equal the Df of the ritual). Only one ritual is detailed per "tome" purchased.

Orichalcum: This mystical metal can dramatically decrease ritual casting times, or make them easier to cast by increasing available SPs. Each purchase is 100 milligrams. To purchase fashioned items of at least one gram, double the RP cost.

Pulling String	Cost
Libraries (Lodge)	6
Lodge Assistance (Lodge)	5
Occult Knowledge (Lodge)	5
Ritual Assistance (Lodge)	5
Ritual Support (Lodge)	7
Ritual Training (Lodge)	6
Libraries (MC)	6
Wealthy (MC)	NA
Club Assistance (MC)	10
Influence (MC)	NA
Contact with Supernatural (CoR)	10
Criminal Allies (CoR)	NA
Local Law Enforcement (CoR)	NA
Teaching (CoR)	NA




 chapter 4
GRIMOIRE

We needed to have someone at the Black Book airfield when their new plane arrived. We had Reynolds, their new flight control officer, on ice. Davis and Avilar had worked her over so we knew everything she did. We had her papers, and I know as much about radar operations as she does. If I were female and Asian, a bit of fancy make-up would do the trick. I could sneak in disguised as her and get the job done. Unfortunately, I'm not.

So, we pretty much decided to go for a raid, and hoped they didn't scatter too fast. It was a bad idea and we all knew it. Then Vance suggested another way -- using magic. He reminded us of the gal he contacted when Avilar was captured by terrorists. We knew this witch (as he called her) could do her stuff. She also seemed interested in helping out. Guess she and Vance had some serious history. Even so, I had never been part of one of these things before. From what I did know, I didn't want to be around when one of those ritual things went bad. Still, the raid was guaranteed to kill at least one of us. The ritual only might kill me, or worse.

We had to hurry, so Vance set it up with Jessie, the witch, that night. We got full photos of Reynolds in her uniform. She was too stoned to struggle much so they look pretty good. I had no idea why Vance wanted a lock of her hair for Jessie. Vance kept reassuring me that we were in no danger, but he and Jessie seemed plenty worried. They spent a good two hours prepping each other, and me. Didn't seem so simple to me. Not for the first time, I thought, magicians are nuts.

Jessie explained what I needed to do. I stand still in the center of the circle, she does the rest. Okay, I could handle that. Of course, she also explained exactly how I was to stand still, and what might happen if I didn't. Let's say I wasn't brimming with confidence. Jessie said it would only take an hour.

We used her basement temple while Davis stood guard outside the locked door. The room was very plain. The white walls were lit only by four candles, each one mounted in the middle of one of the four walls. The altar sat in the center of the room. Otherwise, there was no furniture. Jessie placed an incense burner, the photographs, some face paint, and the hair on the altar. She and Vance dressed in hooded black robes. I was in the uniform I would wear to the airfield.

Jessie motioned me to stand behind the altar. She began to chant some gibberish. She circled the room, drawing geometric patterns in the air. I could almost see the shapes glowing out of the corner of my eye. Jessie and Vance alternated chanting in front of each of the four candles. The room got quite cold and the light seemed dimmer. I knew the room was sealed yet I could see the candle flames flickering. The smoke from the incense became notably thicker, enough that I could hardly see the two ritualists. Jessie stood in the center of the room. Vance positioned himself at my side. Jessie touched the photographs to my face and then tied the lock of hair into my own. Vance repeated the steps, double-knotting the hair.

I wondered what they would have done if I had a crew cut? Just before I smiled slightly, I remembered Jessie's warnings. I sobered up quick. Jessie noticed my thoughts weren't on the job at hand, and glanced at me sternly. Great, the witch was a mind-reader too.

After a few moments, Jessie must have felt things were more settled. She painted my face slowly and heavily. There was no way that stuff wouldn't show. Also, the paint smelled herbal and very pungent. Who were we supposed to be fooling here, blind people with no sense of smell?

Suddenly, I couldn't see at all. I froze in place, my mind bordered on panic. Then I heard Vance shout. I glanced down as something flashed in front of my face. I saw a sword strike the floor, raising a blue spark. The light burned into my eyes for a time. Jessie said it was over, and I could see clearly again.

I didn't feel any different, and I was pretty sure I was still human. I guessed that nothing went too badly wrong. Davis came in and stared at me for a long time. "Jim, is that you? Damn . . ." He gazed at my neck, as if I was shorter.

Vance showed me a mirror. I was stunned. I was also a mildly attractive, very small, mid-20s Chinese woman. Vance told me it should last until sunset. In an hour or so, I'll drive to the base and see what I can get on their new plane. As I left, I heard Jessie and Vance talking about Voids. I wondered why that was important.



RITUALS

This chapter presents a number of rituals that may be purchased initially during character creation, or learned later during Downtime. These rituals replace those presented in the Conspiracy X main rulebook. This list is not exhaustive. Players and GMs should feel free to modify them, or create entirely new ones, using the ritual design rules presented in Chapter Three: Secrets.

Versions of each of the rituals presented below may be found in each of the four traditions discussed in this book. In general, these basic rituals are part of any mystic tradition and practice. Of course, certain traditions may have more expertise in certain areas, and certain magical organizations have concentrated on certain rituals.

RITUAL DESCRIPTION FORMAT

DIFFICULTY (DF): The base Difficulty Level of the ritual. Some ritual have a variable Df (V).

THRESHOLD (THRD): The number of Seepage Points that must be present to perform the ritual.

RANGE (RNG): In general, the descriptions assume that the target is actually present at the ritual. Such a range is listed as Ritual (R). If the target is not present, the ritual may still be performed. In this case, the caster must embed the ritual in a charm, or possess a psychic link to the target. Either creating a charm, or using a psychic link, raises the Difficulty Level of the ritual by one (+1Df). A few rituals have a range of Charm (C) or Link (L). These rituals are specifically designed to work with charms or links, and do not incur the +1Df penalty. Some rituals have special rules for range (S).

DURATION (DUR): A duration of Ritual (R) means that the effects last only during the performance of the ritual. A duration of Day (D) means that the ritual lasts until the next sunrise or sunset. Rituals with a duration of Moon (M) last until the next full moon at the place the ritual was cast. Other rituals are Permanent (P), Instantaneous (I), or have special rules (S).

AREA: This is the maximum area or number of targets that the ritual affects. A One Target (1T) area is limited to a single individual or object. Ritual (R) means that the ritual affects everyone participating in the ritual. Place (P) means that the ritual affects the interior of a single house, small office building, large mansion or other small- or moderate-sized building. Huge skyscrapers and sports arenas are too large to affect with this area. If the ritual is listed as having an area of Boundary (B), everyone and everything within an obvious natural or artificial boundary, such as a sports arena, a city, a town, or a forest, is affected by the ritual.

LENGTH (LNG): The time, in minutes (m) or hours (h), to perform the ritual. As with other tasks, extra care may be taken in preparing and performing the ritual. If the length of time spent on the ritual is at least doubled, the Difficulty Level of the ritual is reduced by one (-1Df). Some rituals have a variable (V) length.

PARTICIPANTS (PAR): In general, unless this required number of people are involved, the ritual may not be performed. Shamanic and Taoist magicians may avoid these requirements by putting themselves into a deep trance through the use of meditation or psychedelic drugs (see Chapter Three: Secrets). In most rituals involving multiple participants, one magician is designated as the leader or "primary magician." Unless specifically stated in the ritual, the primary magician may also be the subject of the ritual without penalty.

COST: Each ritual training has a professional (Prf) and non-professional cost in CPs when purchased during character creation.

EFFECT: A short description of the purpose of the ritual and any rules involved. Unless the ritual specifies otherwise, all have extremely subtle effects. Magic manipulates luck and coincidence. It does not create glowing spheres of force, or balls of fire that engulf a room. In the vast majority of cases, the results of magical rituals appear to have easily explainable natural causes.

DESCRIPTION: A brief description of how most versions of this ritual are performed. While much variation is possible, all rituals of the same type have certain similarities, regardless of the tradition of magic used. GMs and players may use these descriptions when describing the actions of the participants, or they may devise their own.

RITUAL CATEGORIES

The rituals listed in this book are grouped according to general categories. The ritual types are General Rituals, Divinations, Somatic Rituals, Physical Rituals, Blessings and Curses, Psyche Rituals, Illusions, and Spirit Rituals.

RITUAL LIST

General Rituals	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prf	NonP
Cure Corruption	V	3	R	I	1T	2h	3	5	7
Hasten Corruption	3	3	R	I	1T	1h	3	8	12
Dispel Magic	V	Df	R	I	R	1h	1	6	9
Defuse Seepage	2	1	R	I	R	2m	1	4	6
Sacrifice	2	0	R	R	1T	20m	1	5	7

F O R S A K E N R I T U E S

Divinations	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prof	NonP
Questioning	2	1	R	I	1T	10m	1	4	6
Scrying	2	3	L	R	1T	1h	1	5	7
Reading The Past	2	4	R	R	1T	2h	1	6	9
Prophecy	2	5	L	R	1T	2h	1	7	10
Visitation	3	6	L	R	1T	V	3	7	10

Somatic Rituals	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prof	NonP
Stabilize Wound	2	2	R	P	1T	10m	1	5	7
Induce Adrenaline Surge	2	4	L	1h	1T	20m	1	6	9
Enhance or Diminish Body	2	4	R	D	1T	1h	1	6	9
Cause Wound	3	6	L	P	1T	1h	1	8	12
Induce Cardiac Arrest	4	12	L	P	1T	3h	3	9	13
Immortality	5	15	R	P	1T	12h	5	10	15

Physical Rituals	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prof	NonP
Malfunction	V	6	L	P	1T	30m	1	8	12
Repair	3	7	R	P	1T	1h	1	9	13
Strengthen	2	4	R	D	1T	20m	1	5	7
Spontaneous Combustion	4	10	L	P	1T	3h	3	8	12
Call Weather	4	12	S	S	B	2h	5	9	13
Teleport	4	12	R	I	1T	3h	5	10	15
Natural Disaster	5	15	S	P	B	8h	13	8	12

Blessings and Curses	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prof	NonP
Basic Blessing	2	1	R	D	1T	1m	1	4	6
Basic Curse	2	1	R	D	1T	1m	1	4	6
Blessing of Prosperity	3	5	R	S	1T	20m	1	7	10
Curse of Poverty	3	6	L	M	1T	20m	1	8	12
Blessing of Skill	3	5	R	D	1T	10m	1	7	10
Curse of Ineptitude	3	6	L	M	1T	20m	1	8	12
Protection from Magic	V	Df	R	M	1T	20m	1	6	9
Blessing of Protection	3	5	R	D	1T	20m	1	7	10
Curse of Vulnerability	3	7	L	D	1T	20m	1	8	12

Psyche Rituals	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prof	NonP
Mind Riding	3	4	L	R	1T	3h	1	7	10
Possession	3	10	L	R	1T	3h	3	8	12
Oath-Binding	3	4	R	M/P	1T	1h	1	7	10
Send Emotion	2	4	L	S	1T	5m	1	6	9
Amnesia	3	6	L	P	1T	1h	1	8	12
Insanity	4	10	L	M	1T	2h	3	8	12
Domination	5	15	L	P	1T	3h	5	10	15
Infection	2	3	R	P	1T	10m	1	5	7
Emotional Aura	3	4	R	D	1T	20m	1	7	10

Illusions	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prof	NonP
Disguise	2	3	R	D	1T	1h	1	5	7
Invisibility	2	4	R	D	1T	1h	1	6	9
Vortex	4	6	L/C	D	P	2h	3	8	12
Major Illusion	4	6	L/C	M	P	2h	3	8	12

Spirit Rituals	Df	Thrd	Rng	Dur	Area	Lng	Par	Prof	NonP
Summon Human	3	5	L	D	R	30m	1	7	10
Summon Ghost	3	7	R	P	R	3h	1	8	12
Ghost Possession	4	6	R	D	R	1h	1	9	13
Summon Demon	5	15	R	P	R	8h	5	10	15
Bind Spirit	3	2	R	D	R	30m	1	6	9
Warding Circle	2	3	R	D	R	5m	1	5	7
Banish Spirit	3	2	R	P	1T	1h	1	6	9
Spirit Bottle	3	7	C	P	1T	1h	1	8	12
Bind Zombie	3	6	R	S	1T	4h	1	8	12



Curing Corruption

Once an individual has become corrupted, alternatives to Incarnate, Forsaken or death do exist. Certain rituals may be performed to remove the taint of corruption from a subject's body and mind. None of these rituals are guaranteed, and they usually have other adverse affects on the subject. Nonetheless, these rituals were developed, and continue to be used, because even the chance to be freed from corruption is highly coveted. Fear of corruption is a powerful motivator. As long as the victim has not yet joined the ranks of the Incarnate or the Forsaken, curing corruption is only moderately difficult. However, once the person has snapped, the options become much more limited. Forsaken can not be cured by any known ritual. Further, even if the ritual is successful, the only way to cure an Incarnate is to destroy its connection to the Seepage. Incarnate who are cured of their corruption by this ritual always become Voids.

Ritual to Cure Corruption Difficulty Level Table

Stages of Corruption Completed	Difficulty of Ritual
0-1	Df3
2-5	Df4
Incarnate	Df5

GENERAL RITUALS

RITUAL TO CURE CORRUPTION

EFFECT: This ritual purifies the mind and body of the subject from the adverse affects of Seepage corruption. To benefit from the ritual, the subject must be present and conscious. In many cases, it is advisable to forcibly restrain subjects who have been significantly corrupted.

The Difficulty Level of the ritual depends on the level of corruption of the subject (see the table above).

If the ritual is performed successful, the subject receives a Tw(1D) wound from the strain involved. The subject must then test Willpower at a Difficulty Level equal to that of the ritual. If successful, the subject rolls on the following table to determine the effects of the ritual. If the subject fails, the ritual succeeds but the subject's connection to the Seepage is entirely destroyed. They become a Void, immediately losing all psychic powers including Basic ESP, as well as traits such as Sensitive and Supernatural Focus. Voids are also incapable of performing rituals. If the subject was already Incarnate, they automatically become a Void.

Ritual to Cure Corruption Effects Table (Roll 2D)

- 2-3: Subject is totally cured with no ill effects. The corruption, and all its stages, is removed.
 - 4-5: Subject remains corrupted, and keeps the first stage of corruption they attained. All other stages are removed.
 - 6-8: If the subject was a Focus, this ability is lost. Otherwise, the subject is fully cured with no ill effects.
 - 9-10: Subject remains corrupted, and keeps the first two stages of corruption they attained. All other stages are removed.
 - 11-12: The subject develops an adverse reaction to the Seepage and becomes a Psink instead of a Void. The corruption, and all its stages, is removed.
- If the Ritual skill test fails after the Threshold has been reached, the subject automatically gains one stage of corruption, and immediately tests to see if he snaps. Incarnate become instantly enraged and have access to Seepage Points equal to their Willpower attribute plus the Threshold level of the ritual. In addition, everyone else involved in the ritual must test to see if they have been corrupted as usual.

RITUAL TO HASTEN CORRUPTION

EFFECT: The most terrifying thing about the process of corruption is the slow mental deterioration before the final change occurs, and the chance of becoming Forsaken. This ritual can help with both problems. If the Ritual skill test is successful, the subject must immediately make a Hard Willpower test. If she fails this test, she snaps and must immediately test to see if she becomes Incarnate or Forsaken. In addition, when rolling that Willpower test, subtract 2 from the number of stages held when calculating the Difficulty Level. If the subject succeeds in the Hard Willpower test, she must succeed in another Hard Willpower test to avoid completing another stage of corruption.

DISPEL MAGIC

EFFECT: This ritual dispels the effects of a single magical ritual that has been cast upon one or more participants in this ritual. To be used successfully, this ritual must be cast to remove the effects of a specific ritual. Divination rituals may be needed to determine the exact nature of the ritual affecting the subject or subjects. While this ritual affects everyone involved, it has no affect upon anyone who is not under the influence of the ritual being dispelled. This ritual can be performed in a more or less elaborate and difficult fashion depending upon the power of the ritual being dispelled.

The primary magician chooses the Df of the Dispel Magic ritual. If the Ritual skill test is successful, the magician must conduct a Variable test. The Df of the Dispel Magic ritual is added to the Target Number of the Variable test, and the Df of the ritual to be dispelled is subtracted. If successful, the target ritual is dispelled. If the Variable test is failed, the subject must test for corruption.

DESCRIPTION: All subjects of this ritual are touched and manipulated by the magician. They may be massaged, chanted over, or spun around. Alternatively, subjects may have smoke blown over them or be asked to jump over a small fire. In some versions, the subjects must immerse themselves in a specially prepared bath designed to “wash the magic away.”

DEFUSE SEEPAGE

EFFECT: This ritual is performed during the course of another ritual to safely drain its power and cancel its effect. If performed successfully, the energy necessary to perform the ritual being countered will not be available, and the ritual that is the target of this effect will fail without any dangerous release of Seepage energy or any chance of corruption. The Defuse Seepage ritual must be performed within the actual area of the ritual it is intended to stop, while the target ritual is actually being performed.

It is impossible to make a charm based on the Defuse Seepage ritual. The ritual may be performed at a distance if the primary caster possesses a psychic link to the primary caster of the target ritual. However, both rituals must still be performed simultaneously. If the Defuse Seepage ritual fails, the other ritual is not stopped, but everyone present must make a test to resist corruption. If performed using a psychic link, only those people actually present at the Defuse Seepage ritual must make a test to resist corruption.

DESCRIPTION: This is by necessity an extremely simple and quick ritual. The magician usually says a few words and burns a small object collected at the site of the ritual. Generally the ritual is performed in whispered tones and the object is burned with a small cigarette lighter.

RITUAL OF SACRIFICE

EFFECT: Unlike other rituals, this ritual does not use Seepage energy, it actually produces it. The amount of Seepage energy produced depends upon the type of sacrifice. Killing a small animal or bird, such as a chicken or a goat, produces D3 (1D/2) Seepage Points. Domestic animals are preferred for these sacrifices, since they have the closest connection with humans. If the primary magician inflicts a Fw2 wound on herself with a knife and collects the blood, 1D Seepage Points are produced. If the primary magician actually kills a human being during this ritual, 2D Seepage Points are produced. This Seepage energy is available for use in any ritual performed immediately after this ritual is completed. These SPs are added to those normally present due to the Seepage Level of the surrounding area.

DESCRIPTION: All versions of this ritual involve a specially prepared knife, sword or other blade. Animal and self sacrifice are fairly common some traditions of magic, especially among Caribbean magicians and shamans. Human sacrifice is only considered a viable option by the most evil and depraved.

DIVINATIONS

When a psychic link is used in a divination ritual, it is usually burned, ingested, or otherwise consumed.

QUESTIONING

EFFECT: This basic divination ritual allows the magician to gain insight into his present situation. In game play, this ritual allows the magician to ask one “yes or no” question about a present event or situation. If a more open-ended system is desired, the magician receives a vision that gives hints about the event or situation in question.

DESCRIPTION: Shamanic versions of the ritual involve the magician simply meditating on the subject. Most other versions use some form of traditional divination including Tarot cards, the I Ching, pendulums, or even playing cards or dice.

SCRYING

EFFECT: A successful scrying grants the occultist a detailed vision of a distant person or place. The magician may ask three “yes or no” questions about such person or place. If a less restrictive result is desired, the magician receives a detailed vision of the desired person or location. This vision takes the form of a full sensory hallucination during which the magician actually seems to visit the desired person or place. The vision is extremely vivid, but the magician cannot affect the person or location visited in any way. Since this vision does not involve any physical perception, the person or location can be perceived clearly, even in the absence or light or in weather that would otherwise make observation extremely difficult. The magician may move around and observe the person or location for the duration of the ritual.

As with all other subjective phenomena, reality and metaphor may become somewhat mixed. A vision of the interior of a safe that contains valuables may be perceived to hold objects that the occultist regards as valuable, even if they are not actually present. Such metaphorical images always reflect real items or events occurring at the scene of the vision, but the information received in such visions is often useful without being exact. These visions always give an accurate impression of the desired location, but detailed facts may occasionally be replaced by suggestive metaphors. People or places more than about 5 to 10 meters from the person or location being visited cannot be observed using this ritual.

DESCRIPTION: In some version of this ritual, the magician sinks into a deep trance and has visions. In others, usually Ceremonial and Taoist rituals, the magician is awake and alert and merely gazes into a polished bowl, a pool of pure water, or a complex mandala where the visions are seen.

READING THE PAST

EFFECT: A successful reading grants the occultist information about the past of a specific place or object. The occultist may ask three “yes or no” questions about such past events. If a more free-form result is desired, the occultist experiences a vivid, fully sensory hallucination of past events in the vicinity of the object or place being “read.” This vision is so vivid that the magician actually appears to be present at the event pictured in the vision -- sounds can be heard, odors smelled, and objects touched. However, the scene is only a vision and the psychic is totally separate from the events in the vision and is wholly unable to affect the outcome of these events.

The events perceived by the occultist usually represent the most emotionally charged incidents associated with the object or place. If no such incidents apply, the objects only reveal fairly pedestrian scenes to the magician. These visions usually portray no more than 30 minutes’ to an hour’s worth of time. However, more than one scene can appear in a single vision, especially if the scenes are in some way closely related, such as a murder and the later disposal of the body.

DESCRIPTION: This ritual involves the magician holding the object and concentrating. Sometimes the magician places himself in a deep trance. In other versions, the magician chants, dances or simply relaxes.

PROPHECY

EFFECT: A successful prophecy grants the occultist a precognitive vision about a chosen target. The occultist may ask three “yes or no” questions about the future of some person or place. If a more open-ended result is desired, the occultist may instead gain vivid, but usually incomplete sensory impressions about the future of any given plan or endeavor. As always, this information is only valid if no further changes are made in the plans due to the information gained in this fashion. Also, the visions gained using this ritual need not reveal the success or failure of the endeavor, and are often merely images of some of the notable events that will occur in the course of the endeavor.

DESCRIPTION: Like the Scrying ritual, the magician either enters a deep trance, or focuses on some object like a crystal ball or a mandala before seeing the visions.

VISITATION

EFFECT: This is an extended version of the Scrying ritual. In addition to all of the affects of that ritual, the primary magician can actually affect the person or location visited. The magician may ask about the target’s present state of mind, and near-future intentions. Visions of the target’s surface thoughts will appear in the magician’s mind. This “telepathic” link with the target lasts for the duration of the ritual. In addition, the magician may use the Seepage energies at the target location to move small items. Such items (Size 1 or less) may be moved slowly for three combat rounds per attempt. However, moving objects in this fashion is quite tiring. The magician must make a Normal Willpower test each time he attempts to move objects. If the test is failed, the attempt fails and the ritual ends. Rituals that end in this fashion are not considered to have failed, and the participants do not risk corruption.

The first hour of the ritual is spent in preparation. After that, the primary magician is visiting the target. For the first three hours, the magician is safe. After that, he may become lost. If the magician visits beyond three hours but less than six hours, he must make a Df3 Ritual test. If he visits beyond six hours but less than nine hours, a Df4 Ritual test is required. Visiting beyond nine hours but less than 12 hours requires a Df5 test. Staying beyond 12 hours results in the death of the magician. If any of these tests are failed, the magician becomes lost in the Seepage energies for 1D hours. At the end of that time, the magician may test his Ritual skill again at the Df appropriate for the length of time he has been away from his body.



Rosanna Grace casts Visitation and visits for four hours. When she is ready to return to her body, she must make a Df3 Ritual test. She fails and rolls 1D, which results in a 4. Four hours later, Rosanna may test again, but now she has been away from her body for eight hours, and the test is Df4.

DESCRIPTION: The primary magician goes into a deep trance and remains motionless once the ritual has begun. Until the ritual is over, any attempt to disturb the primary magician’s body causes the ritual to fail. The other magicians involved simply chant and protect the primary magician’s body for the length of the ritual, and call the primary magician’s spirit back when the ritual is ending.

SOMATIC RITUALS

STABILIZE WOUND

EFFECT: This ritual allows the occultist to give the subject’s body a sudden influx of healing energy. If successful, a subject with lethal damage automatically succeeds at her next stabilization test. This ritual is usually performed by the occultist on another. It may also be used by the occultist on his own body without penalty.

DESCRIPTION: This is usually a very simple ritual. Often it consists of little more than that magician laying hands upon the subject for a few minutes.

INDUCE ADRENALINE SURGE

EFFECT: Traditionally, this ritual was used before battles. The subject's body is filled with magical energy and temporarily brought to the peak of efficiency. If successful, this ritual increases the target's Strength and Willpower by one level each. Further, the target ignores all damage (no usage penalties, stun or KO tests). Once the ritual duration ends, the subject immediately suffers all damage effects. Also, while the ritual is in effect, the subject must make a Hard Willpower test to avoid rushing any task.

This ritual is usually performed by the occultist on another. It may be performed by the magician on herself, but doing so increases the Difficulty Level of the ritual by one (+1Df). Also, this ritual may be performed on a group of individuals. For every three subjects or less past the first, the Difficulty Level is increased by one (+1Df). Finally, the attributes may be increased further. If the primary magicians wants to raise the subject's Strength and Willpower by two each, the Difficulty Level of the ritual is increased by one (+1Df).

DESCRIPTION: This is almost always a very loud and active ritual. Weapons, uniforms, and loud noises are common props.

ENHANCE OR DIMINISH BODY

EFFECT: This ritual allows the magician to enhance or diminish either the target's Strength, Agility or Reflexes attribute, by one point. The Size attribute may not be affected using this ritual. Further, only one attribute may be altered at a time. If this ritual is cast on an individual who is already under the influence of a previous Enhance or Diminish Body ritual, the second ritual automatically fails as the Seepage energies become muddled and twisted. Subjects of this ritual do not physically change, they simply become capable of greater or lesser feats for the duration of the effect. When this ritual is used to lower a subject's attribute, it is usually cast using a charm or psychic link. If the magician attempts to use this ritual to enhance one of his own attributes, add one to the Difficulty Level (+1Df).

DESCRIPTION: Usually the target, or a figurine representing the target, is inscribed with symbols and words representing the attribute being affected. Alternatively, the subject is given special herbs to eat or drink, or a special amulet to wear.

CAUSE WOUND

EFFECT: This ritual causes the target's body to injure itself. The target suffers a Wound Level injury with a Damage Level equal to the Willpower of the primary magician. For example, a magician with Willpower 3 imposes a Wn3 injury. This wound seems to have natural causes. Indeed, the most precise medical examination will fail to detect any evidence that the wound was caused through supernatural means. Spontaneous hemorrhages, hernias, mysterious sprains, and injuries due to sudden falls, which occur while the ritual is being cast, are all examples of the types of injury inflicted by this ritual.

DESCRIPTION: A statue, photograph, or other object representing the target is usually broken or damaged in some way. In many versions of the ritual, the type of damage inflicted on the object influences the type of injury the target suffers.

INDUCE CARDIAC ARREST

EFFECT: This is one of the most powerful attack rituals known. The magician directs hostile energy at the target's body and, if the ritual is successful, the target's heart stops. In game terms, the target immediately sustains a Sp2 wound (no staging). The greatest advantage of this ritual is that it is almost entirely untraceable. All medical evidence will show that the victim suffered an ordinary heart attack. Only Sensitives and psychics have a chance of determining that this heart attack was caused by magic (a Per test at a Df equal to the Ritual skill of the primary magician).

DESCRIPTION: This is a very violent ritual. Some object representing the target, usually a statue or photograph, is attached to the psychic link, and then destroyed in the course of the ritual. Many versions include a small wax figurine that is stabbed through the heart. Shouts and violent actions are also frequently a part of this ritual.

IMMORTALITY

EFFECT: This ritual is one of the most difficult and rarest of all magics. It actually increases the target's lifespan. Every time the ritual is performed, the subject becomes younger by 2D years. Due to the strain involved, this ritual may only be performed once a year upon a given subject. Also, after the ritual has been completed, the subject will be unconscious for the next full day. If the Ritual test is failed after the Threshold is met, the subject ages 1D years in addition to risking corruption.

DESCRIPTION: This is an intensely demanding ritual that involves sustained chanting, drumming or other, similar activity, as well as either deep meditation or exotic exercises performed by the subject. All versions of this ritual involve the subject consuming unusual substances such as powdered gemstones, unusual herbs or odd chemicals. If the ritual is successful, the substances consumed by the subject will not cause any poisoning or other harm. If the ritual fails, the subject incurs a Wn(1D) injury.

PHYSICAL RITUALS

In order to repair or enhance an object, some understanding of the processes necessary for such a repair is required. Straightening a dented fender, or reattaching a broken handle would require no specific knowledge. Fixing a circuit board, however, would require that the primary magician or another participant have some level of Build/Repair: Electronics, or Engineering: Electronics skill. The skill level need not be high, even level one (or a default from a meta-skill) should be sufficient for the Seepage to take care of matters. Mystically repairing or enhancing a Grey Amnesia lens would require some highly specialized knowledge not available to many humans. Further, if the item to be repaired is large, such as a truck, some diagnostic efforts would be in order to discover the precise part or system that is broken (e.g., a Df1 Repair/Build test). Such diagnosis may be performed through divination, however.

Malfunction rituals, on the other hand, usually involve simple destruction. Thus, no particular knowledge about the device or object is necessary.

MALFUNCTION

EFFECT: When this ritual is successfully cast upon a single complex device like a car, a computer, or even a watch, the device malfunctions. The magician focuses the energy of the Seepage into disrupting the normal functioning of the target. This ritual only affects a single device. Cars, locks, computers, tanks and even passenger jets are all single devices. Power grids, computer networks, and the security systems of large installations are all composed of a number of discrete devices and may not be affected as a whole using this ritual. If this ritual is successful, roll on the Equipment Damage and Malfunction Table and apply the result to the device. The Df chosen for the ritual affects the modifier applied to that roll. A Df2 decreases the roll by 2, Df3 leaves the roll unmodified, Df4 increases the roll by 2, and Df5 increases the roll by 4. All damage caused by this ritual appears to be the result of wear, shoddy maintenance and other, similarly natural causes.

If successfully cast on a subject with nanotech internals or nanotech devices, the GM determines a random nanotech system. Roll on the Nanotech Damage and Malfunction Table (Atlantis Rising, Chapter Six: Artifacts) or the Smart Tools Damage and Malfunction Table (Atlantis Rising, Chapter Six: Artifacts), and apply the result to the device. The same modifiers for the Df of the ritual apply.

DESCRIPTION: In all versions of this ritual, some image or figure representing the device or object is burned, broken, or otherwise destroyed.

REPAIR

EFFECT: This ritual uses the energy of the Seepage to repair broken mechanical and electronic devices. Devices that have been totally destroyed, or that have significant missing pieces cannot be repaired by this ritual. Also, devices repaired in this fashion still look quite worn and beaten up; the ritual does not make a device look as good as new. The caster should first note the entry on the Equipment Damage and Malfunction Table that corresponds to the current condition of the subject device. If the ritual is cast successfully, roll 1D and subtract this number from the number corresponding to the appropriate entry on the table. The final result on this Table cannot be reduced below 2. This ritual cannot be applied multiple times to a device in an attempt to repair the same damage. When used on a broken object like a vase or a painting, this ritual mends and repairs broken pieces, but does not replace missing pieces.

DESCRIPTION: The magician touches and manipulates the device during the ritual. Designs may be drawn on it, parts may be moved around, or the magician may simply hold the device and meditate. In many ways, this ritual resembles a Somatic ritual. If performed using a psychic link, an image or model of the device is manipulated.

STRENGTHEN

EFFECT: This ritual allows the magician to protect an inanimate object from harm. Objects protected by this ritual receive a -4 to all rolls on their respective Equipment Damage and Malfunction Tables. Rolls below 2 mean that device does not even receive superficial damage. This ritual also adds one to any Armor Rating the object might have (but does not give an unarmored object an AR), and divides the substance's strength rating multiplier by 3 for purposes of explosive breaches.



Markus casts a Strengthen ritual on the Cell's Security Sedan. The vehicle's Ar increases from 5 to 6. Further, the strength rating multiplier for the car's steel exterior decreases from 0.1 to 0.033.

DESCRIPTION: The object being protected is inscribed with special symbols, washed with exotic herbal teas, or simply touched and chanted over by the magician.

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

EFFECT: This ritual starts large fires, and is especially good at causing living targets to be consumed in flames. Both flammable and nonflammable objects may be ignited. Characters are consider nonflammable, and if subject to this ritual, catch On Fire. Further, the chance to become Engulfed in Flames is 2 in 6. Fires started in this manner may be put out by any normal means (i.e., smothering, fire extinguishers, etc.).

DESCRIPTION: Usually, the magician ignites the psychic link in a large fire or brazier. In Shamanic and Taoist versions, the magician simply holds or gazes at the psychic link, which spontaneously bursts into flame.

CALL WEATHER

EFFECT: No ritual can make snow in the middle of a heat-wave or create a hurricane in the desert, but this ritual can cause any type of weather that is reasonable to both the location and the time of year. If the ritual is successful, the desired type of weather gradually forms over the next few hours, or in more extreme cases, over the next few days. After that, the weather lasts as long as is reasonable for a condition of that type. A storm may last for several hours, a tornado may last an hour or less, and a hurricane or a heat wave may last for many days. Once created, the magicians who created the effect have no control over the weather conditions. This ritual directly affects weather conditions over several dozen to several hundred square miles. Using a psychic link to another location, it is possible to affect the weather of a distant region.

DESCRIPTION: Different versions of this ritual are performed in very different ways. Some involve performing actions reminiscent of the desired weather conditions, turning on a fan and throwing buckets of water around for a storm, for example. Other versions require the magicians to paint or sketch a picture of the desired weather. Most Shamanic versions simply require those involved to hold objects associated with the desired weather conditions and envision such weather.

TELEPORT

EFFECT: This ritual instantly teleports a single individual from the location of the ritual to any location that the primary magician is psychically connected. In most version of this ritual, the actual teleportation is entirely silent; the subject simply vanishes and instantly reappears elsewhere. The Seepage removes any gases from the target area, and the subject is placed on top of any solid objects. Teleporting more than one individual is possible, but for every three or less people beyond the first targeted, add one to the Difficulty Level (+1Df). Using a psychic link to teleport a distant person from her present location to the location of the ritual is also possible, but also adds +1Df. Again, for each additional three people or less teleported to the ritual location, another +1Df is imposed. Only living targets may be transported using this ritual, although anything carried or worn by the subject is teleported as well.



Abigail Hitchcock and four associates seek to teleport Hans Rolf to a hidden base. That Df is 4. If Rolf is joined by up to three other people, teleporting the group would be Df5. If Rolf is joined by more than three but less than seven people, the Df rises to 6. If Rolf is to be teleported from the base to the ritual area, the Df is 5. If Rolf and two other people are to be teleported from the base, the Df would be 6.

DESCRIPTION: All versions of the ritual involve the subject passing through a doorway or across some specially designated boundary. The subject instantly vanishes when she passes this boundary.

NATURAL DISASTER

EFFECT: This ritual causes a natural disaster to occur. In an area with numerous fault-lines, the ritual could trigger an earthquake. In the vicinity of a dormant, but not an extinct, volcano, the ritual can trigger an eruption. On the seacoast, the ritual could summon a hurricane or a tidal wave. The exact nature of the disaster is determined by a combination of local conditions and chance. Some regions have very little potential for natural disasters and the ritual produces nothing more than an extremely severe draught or a damaging hailstorm. In other areas, the ritual creates a violent disaster that results in thousands or millions of dollars of property damage, and a significant loss of life. This is an extremely destructive ritual, but is somewhat limited because it can only be used to affect the region surrounding the site of the ritual. This ritual may not be cast using a charm or a psychic link. While the actual disaster may take up to a full day to occur, it can happen anytime during that day, leaving those who performed the ritual as much at risk as everyone else.

DESCRIPTION: This is a very loud and flashy ritual. The participants chant and scream for the destruction of the area. Maps and models of the region may be burned or destroyed, or perhaps the primary magician carves sigils representing destruction in his own body. If the destruction performed during the ritual is particularly lavish and large-scale, the primary magician receives a +2t modifier to the Ritual test.

BLESSINGS AND CURSES

BASIC BLESSING

EFFECT: A successful blessing bestows a bonus to luck rolls on the subject of the ritual. While this blessing is active the character may add the Seepage Level of the area to any Luck tests he needs or chooses to make. This ritual is designed to affect only a single subject. It can be used to affect multiple targets, but each three persons or less after the first targeted increases the Difficulty Level of the ritual by one (+1Df).



The Silver Fox blesses his wife with a Df2 Basic Blessing. He can add up to three additional targets and only increase the Df by one to Df3. A fifth target bumps the Df to 4.

DESCRIPTION: This is an exceptionally simple ritual. The magician touches the subject and either draws something on his skin or gives him something to carry.

BASIC CURSE

EFFECT: This basic curse has exactly the opposite effect of the basic blessing ritual. For the duration of the ritual, the target suffers a penalty equal to the Seepage Level of the area to any Luck tests she attempts. For obvious reason, this ritual is generally performed on a subject who is not present, using a psychic link, or is embedded in a charm. Like the Basic Blessing ritual, this ritual can also be used to affect multiple targets.

DESCRIPTION: This is another extremely simple ritual. The magician need only touch the subject or the link representing the subject.





BLESSING OF PROSPERITY

EFFECT: This ritual aids the subject in obtaining desired material possessions. The ritual subtly manipulates a multitude of factors to insure that the subject of the ritual will receive, or be able to afford, the next object they wish to requisition or purchase. The ritual allows the subject to add one level to her Influence attribute for the next Influence or funding test the subject makes. The apparent source of this temporary boost in Influence and wealth seems perfectly natural. The character suddenly comes across some additional money, a superior decides that the character deserves some additional help as a reward for past services, or some similar boon results.

DESCRIPTION: Acts relating to the acquisition of the desired money or object are performed in the ritual. The magician may write himself a fake check for the appropriate amount, or create a model of the desired object.

CURSE OF POVERTY

EFFECT: This ritual is the reverse of the Blessing of Prosperity. Subjects of this ritual become temporarily poor and out of favor with their employers. Until the next full moon, subjects of this ritual have their Influence attribute lowered by one level. All funding and Influence tests become temporarily harder as a multitude of factors work against the subject. Once again, all such problems appear to have a natural explanation. Lost checks, bureaucratic errors and grudges by superiors all conspire against the subject for the duration of the ritual.

DESCRIPTION: In format, this ritual is often the reverse of the Blessing of Prosperity. Models of objects are destroyed, and money or images representing money are burned.

BLESSING OF SKILL

EFFECT: This ritual makes the subject temporarily better at a given skill. For the duration of the ritual, a single skill (or default skill from a meta-skill) that the subject holds is increased by one level. This skill must be one which the subject knows at level one or greater, and the skill being increased must be specified when the ritual is cast. If this ritual is cast on an individual who is already under the influence of a previous Blessing of Skill, the second ritual automatically fails as the Seepage energies become muddled.

DESCRIPTION: This ritual involves images and actions associated with mastery of the skill to be increased. In some versions of the ritual, the subject even puts on a mask of some easily recognized master of the skill.

CURSE OF INEPTITUDE

EFFECT: This ritual makes the subject temporarily worse at a given skill. For the duration of the ritual, a single skill that the subject knows is decreased by one skill level. The skill may not be reduced below one, and it must be specified when the ritual is performed. If this ritual is cast on an individual who is already under the influence of a previous Curse of Ineptitude, the second ritual automatically fails as the Seepage energies become muddled and twisted.

DESCRIPTION: In most version of this ritual, objects associated with the skill are burned or otherwise destroyed.

PROTECTION FROM MAGIC

EFFECT: This ritual protects subjects against the next magical ritual directed against them. It may be cast at varying levels of difficulty and complexity, depending on how much protection the subject desires.

The primary magician chooses the Df of the Protection From Magic ritual. If the Ritual skill test is successful, the subject is protected. When another ritual is targeted at the subject, the subject must conduct a Variable test. The Df of the Protection From Magic ritual is added to the Target Number of the Variable test, and the Df of the ritual to be neutralized is subtracted. If successful, the neutralized ritual has no effect on the subject. Regardless of whether the resistance is successful, once the subject has been targeted by one ritual, the Protection from Magic ritual automatically ends.

If the subject is targeted with a ritual designed to affect multiple targets, all targets automatically resist if the subject who is protected successfully resists. However, the Protection from Magic ritual does not distinguish between hostile and helpful magic. A subject protected by this ritual also resists healing and protection rituals. For this reason, most versions of the Protection from Magic may be quickly dispelled if desired. Usually this involves eating, drinking, bathing in some unusual substance like salt water, alcohol, or some specially prepared herbal mixture.

DESCRIPTION: Sometimes this ritual is performed by drawing designs on the subject in indelible ink. When these designs are washed off the ritual ends. Otherwise, the subject may be given something to carry or wear, and the ritual ends when the object is broken or discarded.

BLESSING OF PROTECTION

EFFECT: This ritual protects the subject from harm. It allows the subject to automatically stage damage down one Wound Level. No roll for staging is made by the defender. This ritual can be extended to protect multiple subjects. For each three or less subjects beyond the first, the ritual's Difficulty Level increases by one (+1Df).

DESCRIPTION: The subject is usually given some object to carry, or a special herbal medicine to swallow. In some versions of the ritual, the magicians paints designs upon the subject or even draws an image of the subject protected by special armor.

CURSE OF VULNERABILITY

EFFECT: This ritual makes the subject more vulnerable to harm. For the duration of the ritual, the subject never succeeds in tests to stage damage down by one Wound Level.

DESCRIPTION: Often, the psychic link to the subject is touched to a variety of weapons. In other versions, the magician sings or tells a story about how the subject is harmed or killed by attackers, and how the subject is powerless to resist those who attack her.

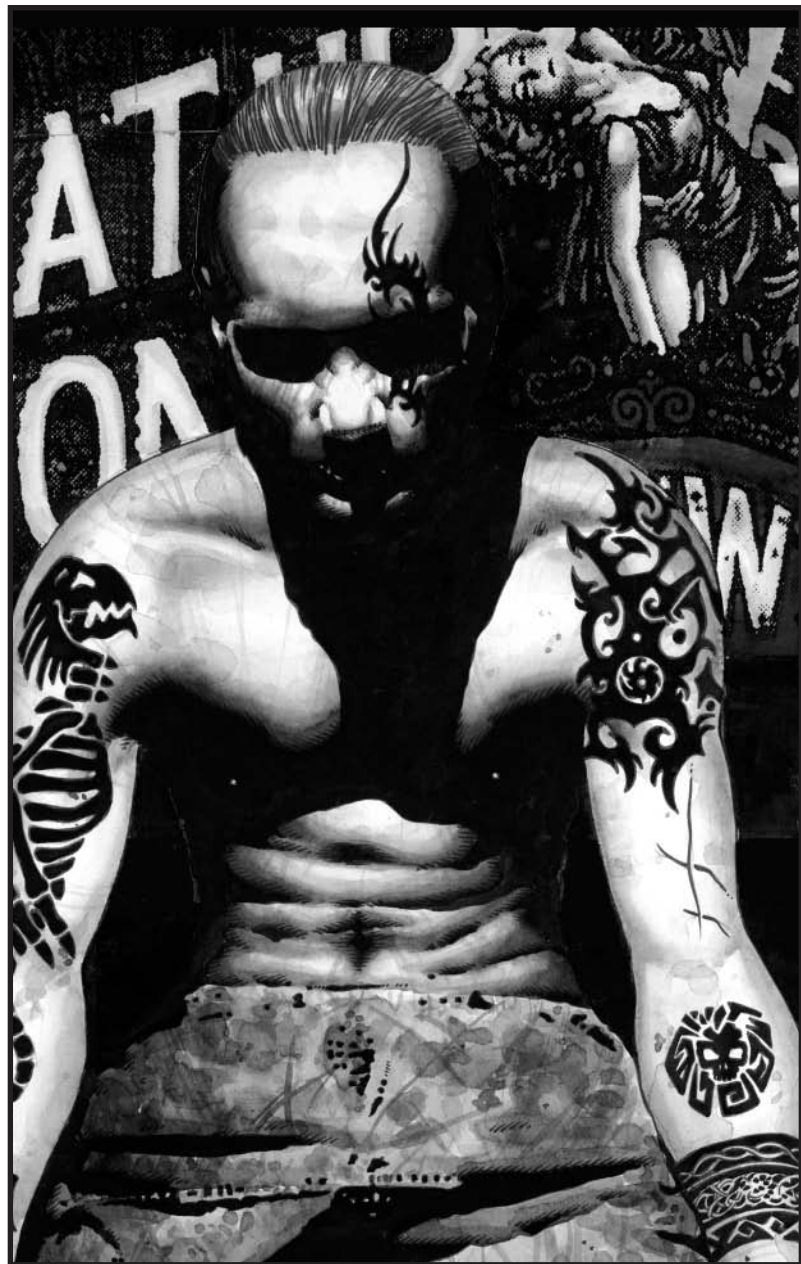
PSYCHE RITUALS

All of these rituals are designed to work only on beings with some human ancestry who retain their connection to the Seepage. They only affect humans, Grey-human hybrids, and the Incarnate. They have no affect on Greys, Saurians, Saurian Men in Black, Atlanteans, Voids, Psinks, and Psychic Burnouts. The power gathered to perform the ritual simply dissipates harmlessly. It is possible to design rituals specifically to affect Greys, Saurians, or others but each such ritual can only be devised as the result of an extended Occult research project. Only magicians who have had extensive contact with aliens may design rituals to affect them.

MIND RIDING

EFFECT: This ritual allows the magician to invade the mind of the target of the ritual. For the duration of the ritual, the magician is able to perceive all sensory stimuli experienced by the subject. All sounds are heard, all sights seen, and all pain felt. If the subject is wounded during the course of the ritual, the magician receives a Br1 (no staging) wound for every wound of any type that the subject receives. However, the magician has no access to anything the subject is thinking. Also, the magician may not influence the subject in any way or even communicate with the subject. Sensitives and Telepaths may perceive the presence of the magician, but the results of the ritual are otherwise entirely unnoticeable. The first 30 minutes of the ritual are needed to establish the link between the magician and the subject. The remaining time, up to 3 hours, can be spent in the subject's mind. The magician may end this ritual at any time without danger of corruption.

DESCRIPTION: In most versions of this ritual, the magician dons a mask, which can be as simple as a blown up photograph, of the subject and holds or ingests the psychic link to the subject. While the magician inhabits the subject's mind, the magician is in a light trance, and suffers a +1Df to all tests. The magician may maintain this trance even in the face of external stimulus. In other words, shaking the mage will not "wake" him and thus end the ritual.



POSSESSION

EFFECT: This ritual grants the magician complete control over the actions of the subject. If successful, the subject is unconscious for the duration of the ritual. Note that the magician does not have access to the subject's minds or skills. Once the initial preparations for the ritual have begun and the ritual skill test is successful, the magician must make a Willpower test with a Difficulty Level equal to the subject's Willpower. If the test is successful, the ritual succeeds. If this test fails, the ritual may not be repeated for the next full day. The subject's resistance to the effects of the ritual does not cause those involved in casting the ritual to test for corruption. If the subject is asleep, drunk, or drugged when the ritual is performed, the subject's Willpower is reduced by one level when resisting this ritual. Subjects of this ritual are allowed to roll again to resist any time they receive any type of damage or are placed in obviously life-threatening danger. If the damage is non-lethal, the subject's Willpower is tested against that of the primary magician. Subjects who receive lethal damage or are placed in life-threatening danger receive a one level increase in their Willpower for purposes of this test. If the subject succeeds at this Willpower test, the ritual immediately ends. If the ritual ends as a result of harm to the subject, the ritual fails and all participants must immediately test to resist corruption. Unless the target of the ritual is also present within the ritual space, she does not risk being corrupted. As in the Ritual of Mind Riding, if the subject is wounded, the magician receives a Br1 (no staging) for every wound the subject receives.

DESCRIPTION: The preparations for this ritual are usually identical to those for the Ritual of Mind Riding. Additional magicians are needed to protect the primary magician's body and to help break down the subject's mental defenses.

OATH-BINDING

EFFECT: This ritual creates a magical oath. Anytime an individual involved in the oath breaks it, all of the other participants will be aware of that transgression. In addition, the ritual is designed so that anyone who breaks the oath will be immediately subject to the effects of one of the following rituals: Basic Curse, Curse of Poverty, Curse of Vulnerability, Cause Wound, or Induce Cardiac Arrest. These rituals need not be known by the participants to impose their effects. The exact nature of the penalty must be decided when the ritual is performed, and the penalty affects the individual every time he breaks the oath. All of the participants must be aware of the nature of the oath they are swearing and the penalties involved. If any of the participants are either unwilling or uninformed, the ritual automatically fails and everyone involved must make a Willpower test to resist corruption. This ritual may be performed so that it either lasts for one month or forever. However, all such rituals also include some provision that allows all surviving participants who have taken the oath to void the oath by mutual consent. All attempts to magically dispel the oath suffer a -2t penalty to the Variable test, and if the oath is dispelled from one individual, it is dispelled from all the participants. This ritual may also be performed between humans and Incarnate, or even between humans and spirits. When performed with non-physical beings, it is possible to have the spirit automatically banished if it breaks its oath.

DESCRIPTION: In all versions of this ritual, the oath must be sworn and the penalties must be stated out loud during the ritual. Everyone participating in the oath must speak or write the entire oath. The oath only affects those participants who actually take the oath. Often magical oaths are signed in blood. At other times, the participants prick their fingers, bleed into a cup of wine and then share the drink to symbolize the binding.

SEND EMOTION

EFFECT: This ritual allows the magician to influence the emotions of the subject. If the Ritual test is successful, the magician causes his target to feel or cease feeling any desired emotion. This ritual cannot make an enemy into a friend, but it can notably alter someone's current emotional state. A bored, hostile, security guard can be made to temporarily feel both content and friendly, and a rather cold person could be made temporarily infatuated with a specific individual. If the desired emotion is to be directed at a specific target, the magician must have psychic links to both the subject and the target of the subject's emotion. The emotions produced by this ritual are ordinary and will naturally fade or be replaced by other emotions as circumstances dictate. Also, the emotions produced using this ritual are neither overwhelming nor uncontrollable. They will not override the subject's reason or common sense except in very unusual circumstances.

DESCRIPTION: Some representation of the subject -- whether a doll, a photograph or even a candle with the psychic link melted into it -- is carved, panted or otherwise decorated with colors, objects and symbols representing the desired emotion.

AMNESIA

EFFECT: This ritual removes the events surrounding a single specific incident from the subject's memory. The incident being removed cannot have happened more than three days prior to the time the ritual is performed. Any time the subject is reminded of the incident, she may make a single Hard Willpower test. If this test succeeds, the subject immediately remembers all of the suppressed memories. However, if the magician possesses psychic links to everyone who remembers the incident, all of their memories of the same incident can be erased in one ritual. Performing this ritual on multiple subjects at once raises the Difficulty Level by one (+1Df) per three persons or less, after the first. For example, casting Amnesia on two, three or four people raises the Difficulty Level from three to four. Adding a fifth target, increases the Df by one again.

Since the human mind is uncomfortable with large blank spaces in memory, the subject's mind will create memories to fill up the blank space. If the magician desires, this ritual can also be used to influence the exact nature of these memories. Bizarre or fantastic memories will be rejected, but normal-seeming memories can be implanted. These false memories serve to mask the blank space created by this ritual. Using this ritual to both remove memories and to suggest the structure of the replacement memories increases the Difficulty Level by one (+1Df). Like the Grey Amnesia lens, this ritual is far from perfect. Even if no one reminds the subject of the lost memories, they may resurface in the subject's dreams in several weeks or months. Hypnosis can fully restore the memories if the subject has any reason to suspect the true nature of these dreams.

DESCRIPTION: Some object representing the memories is usually burned or otherwise destroyed during this ritual. Alternately, the magician may verbally repeat the memories over and over, slowly blurring the statements into nonsense.

INSANITY

EFFECT: This ritual temporarily drives the subject mad. The specific type of madness may be roughly determined by the magician. Any ordinary type of madness, including paranoia, schizophrenia, or catatonia, may be produced using this ritual. However, the exact specifics of the madness, such as who the paranoia is directed against, or what voices speak to the subject, come from the mind of the subject, not the will of the magician.

The madness produced by this ritual uses and builds upon the subject's normal fears and insecurities. These problems are now magnified to such a degree that they overwhelm the mind of the subject. The insanity produced using this ritual appears to have a perfectly natural cause, and will respond normally to medical and psychiatric treatment. Also, this insanity is only temporary. After approximately a month, the insanity will end and the subject will once again be entirely sane.

Once the initial preparation for the ritual has begun, and the Ritual skill test is successful, the magician must make a Willpower test with a Difficulty Level equal to the subject's Willpower. If that test is successful, the ritual succeeds. If this test is failed, the ritual does not succeed, and it may not be repeated for the next full day. The subject's resistance to the effects of the ritual does not cause those involved in casting the ritual to risk corruption. If the subject is asleep, drunk, or drugged when the ritual is performed the subject's Willpower is reduced by one level for purposes of all tests.

DESCRIPTION: This ritual usually involves mutilating an image or object representing the subject, and damaging the psychic link to them in some way. Breaking a mirror with an image of the subject reflected in it is common part of this ritual.

DOMINATION

EFFECT: This ritual allows the magician to control and direct the inner workings of the subject's mind. The magician is actually able to rewrite part of the subject's personality to suit her needs. If the ritual is completely successful, the magician may insert a single statement into the subject's mind. This statement becomes one of the core beliefs of the subject. Statements ranging from "You are madly in love with me" to "You will never betray any agents of the Black Book" will all be equally accepted and believed. This ritual is exceedingly powerful, but also quite dangerous. Minds are very resilient and actively resist tampering. For the ritual to succeed fully, the Ritual skill test must be made, and then the primary magician must test her Willpower against the subject's Willpower. If either test fails, the ritual fails and everyone participating in the ritual must resist corruption. If the subject is present and conscious, the Difficulty Level of both the Ritual skill test, and the magician's Willpower test, are reduced by one.

DESCRIPTION: The statement to be inserted into the subject's mind is repeatedly chanted, written, or otherwise represented for the duration of the ritual. The subject, or the psychic link to the subject, is placed in the center of the ritual space.

INFECTION

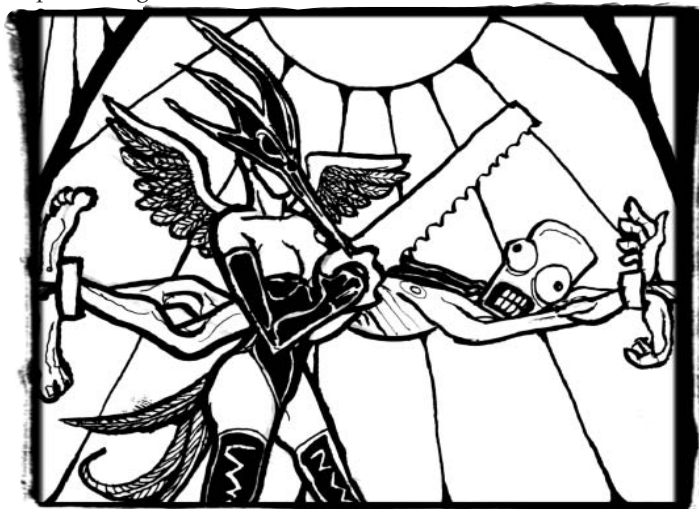
EFFECT: This ritual is designed to corrupt the subject. If the Ritual skill test succeeds, the subject must make a test to avoid corruption. The category of being the individual is becoming -- Predator, Adept or Prophet -- is determined by the individual performing the ritual. The actual archetype, however, may be set by the subconscious desires of the subject. If the subject manages to resist the corruption, the energy summoned will rebound upon the magician. In that case, the magician must test to resist corruption, exactly as if the ritual had failed. If the individual performing the ritual is already Incarnate, this backlash of energy has no effect. The subject must be physically present for the ritual. This ritual may not be performed using charms or psychic links.

DESCRIPTION: The subject is almost always restrained and the magician usually tattoos, paints, draws, or sometimes actually carves images and symbols associated with madness and corruption on the subject's skin. In other cases, the magician performs odd and disturbing chants and strikes or even bites the victim at the climax of the ritual.

EMOTIONAL AURA

EFFECT: This ritual affects how others react to the target. The magician can choose a single emotion as the dominant reaction everyone will have when they encounter or imagine the subject. Emotional reactions like fear, love, distrust, anger, can all be produced with this ritual. However, the magician cannot determine how various individuals will react to these emotions. A loved one at home will react very differently from a stranger on a dark city street to a person who has been subjected to an aura of fear. Such reactions will be perfectly normal and highly idiosyncratic. One of the most disturbing affects of this ritual is that the subject is not directly affected at all. His emotions are unchanged and the only way he might suspect that something magical has been done to him is through the reactions of others. While this ritual is often cast on someone without their knowledge, it is also used by many magicians to provide themselves with temporary charisma or similar useful affects.

DESCRIPTION: The subject, or a psychic link to the subject, is often painted, or otherwise adorned with colors and objects representing the desired emotional aura.



ILLUSIONS

All of the illusions produced by these rituals are Telepathic Illusions without any reality or solidity. An illusory chair cannot support weight, and an illusory dog cannot bite. Although Telepathic Illusions seem to affect all five senses, including touch, they cannot do damage of any kind and are essentially intangible. Someone reaching down to strike an illusory dog would feel fur, but if her hand slipped she might end up seeing her hand actually pass into the dog. Seeing your hand pass through a seemingly solid wall or person is a highly disconcerting experience and will startle almost anyone. Illusions that are disrupted in such a way vanish as the subjects' minds rejects the obviously false input. Psinks, Voids, Psychic Burnouts, Atlanteans, Saurians, and cameras and all aliens except Greys cannot perceive magical illusions at all.

DISGUISE

EFFECT: This ritual allows the magician to change the appearance of the subject. The subject can be made to look and sound like another person, an animal, or even an object. To everyone who can perceive it, the illusion it is entirely realistic to all senses. A human wearing the image of a dog will look, sound and smell like a dog. A person disguised as another person will be an exact duplicate, but only as long as the magician is familiar with the person being imitated or has access to extensive video and audio footage of this person. Anyone who actually touches the illusion will also be fooled. Someone petting a person disguised as a dog will feel fur. However, the subject of the ritual is entirely unchanged. Someone disguised as a bird or a fish will gain no ability to fly or swim. The ritual may be employed on multiple targets. For each three targets or less after the first, the Difficulty Level of the ritual increases by one (+1Df).

DESCRIPTION: This ritual almost always involves the magician applying masks, face paint or similar disguises to the subject. In a few versions, the magician instead elaborately describes the way the subject will look when the ritual is finished. Heavy incense or other means to obscure visibility in the ritual space is a very common part of this ritual.

INVISIBILITY

EFFECT: This ritual renders the subject unnoticeable. Except for Voids, Psinks, electronics, etc. which are not affected by any illusionary magic, anyone who encounters the subject will simply not notice her presence. The subject will not be seen, her footsteps will not be heard and if she is wearing perfume no one will smell it. However, if the subject makes loud noises, strikes anyone, or otherwise draws attention to herself, the effects of the ritual will cease and the subject will be immediately noticeable. While any form of violent melee attack by the subject will immediately dispel the ritual, other attacks may be made. Shooting someone with a silenced rifle or pistol will not dispel the ritual since the subject is not obviously the source of the attack. It is best when under the influence of this ritual to behave in a relatively stealthy fashion.

Remember, electronic surveillance records and reacts to the presence of the subject, since illusions do not affect machinery in any way.

DESCRIPTION: Producing heavy incense or smoke, putting on black or camouflaged clothing, and applying gray face paint are all common elements of this ritual.

VORTEX

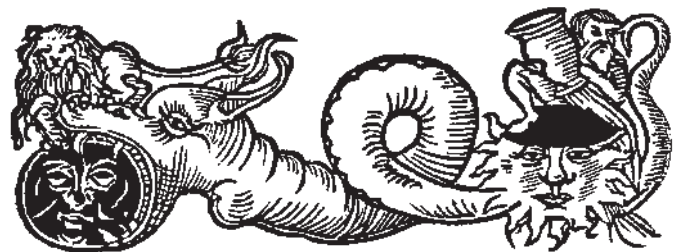
EFFECT: Like the Telepathic Illusion of the same name, this ritual distorts the perceptions of everyone inside the building that is the target of the ritual. Shapes and colors will be distorted, the pull of gravity will seem to vary in both intensity and direction, and everyone's sense of direction will be nearly useless. As before, only those susceptible to Telepathic Illusions can be affected by this ritual. The ritual also affects only subjects within the targeted place. Once someone manages to leave the enclosed space, the effects of the ritual vanish instantly. Due to the nature of the magic involved, the target of this ritual can only be a building. It is impossible to cast this ritual upon a person or other living being. Everyone in the area affected by the ritual suffers +2Df to all Perception-related tests. All other tests incur a +1Df from the confusion and vertigo produced.

DESCRIPTION: A model, photograph, or drawing of the target of this ritual is often covered with random designs like inkblots. Also, this ritual commonly uses thick smoke and loud noises as part of the trappings designed to represent the confusion to be created.

MAJOR ILLUSION

EFFECT: This ritual allows the magician to alter the appearance of any single building. Both the interior and exterior of the building may be affected. This ritual may be used to hide a room in a building, or to disguise the uses to which it has been put. The decor may be entirely changed, and doors, or even entire rooms may be completely hidden. However, any illusory furniture or stairs created by this ritual are completely intangible. Attempting to climb down an illusory staircase will result in a serious fall as nothing supports the subject. If desired, this ritual can even be used to create extremely unusual effects like bleeding walls, snarling werewolves romping through the house and similar horrific scenery.

DESCRIPTION: Once again, a model, photograph, or other image of the target of the ritual must be present at the ritual. This image is then altered, usually through sculpture or drawing to resemble the desired illusion. Alternately, the magician may tell a vivid story about the building. When the story is finished, the ritual is complete.



SPIRIT RITUALS

SUMMON HUMAN

EFFECT: This ritual calls a specific person to the location where the ritual was performed. For the next day after the ritual has been performed, the subject feels inexorably drawn to that location. If asked, the subject generally makes up convincing reasons to be at the ritual site. While the subject feels compelled to go to this location and do not suspect that she is under magical control, this summoning does not over-ride the subject's morals or survival instinct. The subject will not risk death or harm anyone, unless she would normally be inclined to harm others to attain their destination. However, jobs, money and similar lesser concerns will be ignored. When the subject arrives at the ritual site, she will remain there for about an hour, killing time. At this point, the compulsion will end and the subject will act normally. If the subject cannot physically get to the ritual site, the compulsion ends when the duration of the ritual expires. If someone attempts to talk the subject out of making the journey, the attempt will fail unless the reasons given are very important to the subject, and the subject succeeds in making a Hard Willpower test. If this test succeeds, the subject is free from the compulsion.

DESCRIPTION: Some versions involve the magician holding the psychic link and chanting the subject's name. In others, the psychic link is attached to a statue or figurine and the figurine is tied to a thread and drawn across the ritual space.

SUMMON GHOST

EFFECT: The completion of a successful ghost summoning causes the desired ghost or spirit to manifest itself within the confines of the ritual space. Unless the magician is simply attempting to summon the spirit of any nearby ghost, a psychic link to the ghost is needed. Any normal psychic link to the person when he was living, such as a piece of clothing, will work, as will dirt from his grave or a chip off his headstone. Having the complete or nearly complete corpse or skeleton of the individual being summoned will reduce the Difficulty Level of the ritual by one (-1Df). When summoned, most ghosts will manifest a visible Telepathic Illusion. Others will simply speak invisibly or use telekinesis to move objects about. This ritual gives the ghost 7SP with which to manifest its powers. Unless the spirit is bound when it arrives, its reactions will depend upon its personality and the circumstances of its summoning. In general, unless the summoner has some useful information or service to offer the ghost, most ghost reactions will range from disinterested to angry. This ritual can summon any normal ghost, as well as ascended ghosts.

DESCRIPTION: The psychic link to the ghost is almost always placed in the center of the ritual space. Sometimes a brazier burning incense, a mirror, a photograph, or a small statue is placed nearby to serve as a temporary habitation for the ghost. Offerings of bread, milk or liquor are often used to entice the spirit to come. If these offerings are particularly lavish or well chosen, the spirit is more likely to be friendly to the summoner.

GHOST POSSESSION

EFFECT: This ritual allows a ghost to possess a living human, even if the ghost does not have the Possession power. If the subject is willing, the Difficulty Level of this ritual is reduced by one (-1Df). Like the ritual Summon Ghost, this ritual requires a psychic link to the desired ghost. If this is not done, a random ghost will inhabit the subject.

While the ghost possesses the subject, the subject is entirely unconscious unless the ghost allows the subject to remain conscious or the subject succeeds at a Hard Willpower test. Subjects who remain conscious can perceive the world around them and can communicate mentally with the ghost. However, they cannot control their body in any way unless the ghost allows such control. While in possession of the subject, the ghost can speak, move, and act normally, and may use all of its supernatural powers as well as any abilities it learned in life, subject to the limitations of the subject's body. The ghost does not have access to the subject's mind or skills unless the subject is conscious.

At the end of the ritual, the ghost is automatically forced out of the subject's body unless it can succeed in a Willpower test against the host's Willpower. A ghost who succeeds must make another such test every sunset until the test is failed. At that point, it is forced to leave its host. Even if this test succeeds, the host is also allowed one Luck test a day. Good Luck breaks the possession.

It is possible to perform this ritual using a psychic link to a distant subject, causing the person to be suddenly possessed. Magicians can use this ritual to allow themselves to be possessed without penalty. Unless a binding ritual is also performed, few individuals will allow themselves to be willingly possessed by ghosts unless they have met the ghost before and get along extremely well with it.

DESCRIPTION: Sometimes the subject is given the ghost's psychic link to wear. The subject dons a mask representing the ghost. Often the ghost's name is chanted while the subject is given special food and drink, or is painted with symbols.



SUMMON DEMON

EFFECT: This powerful and dangerous ritual is regarded by many occultists as the pinnacle of magical achievement. The magician summons forth a powerful inhuman spirit. Unless the magician wishes to risk instant destruction by randomly summoning any demon that may be nearby, some psychic link to the particular demon desired is needed. For many of the older and more well-known demons, their true name and their special sigil are all that is necessary to summon them. For demons that recently were living Incarnate, a psychic link to the Incarnate's body is sufficient. Once summoned, the demon is free to do as it will unless the summoner binds it or is foolish enough to try and strike a deal with it. Demons generally have extensive Incarnate powers and this ritual provides them with 15SP to spend. While most versions of this ritual simply summon the demon in an incorporeal form, other versions allow the magician to provide a living body for the demon to possess, or even a mobile object like an articulated mannequin or a suit of armor for the demon to inhabit. When the demon inhabits the object, it is able to move or operate the device in a normal fashion, including making a suit of armor walk around.

DESCRIPTION: The preparations for this ritual is superficially similar to those for the Summon Ghost ritual. However, this ritual is much more elaborate and complex. Complex chants and sigils drawn in blood are standard parts of this ritual. Offerings to entice and appease the demon are also provided, but are generally much more elaborate. Animal sacrifice is common as are cups of human blood, valuable gems, or items associated with pure evil such as a piece of a dead serial killer or the gun used by a famous assassin. Demons who are particularly drawn to death or suffering often react much more positively to the summoning if a human sacrifice is provided, or if they are given a human victim to "play" with.

BIND SPIRIT

EFFECT: As soon as the Bind Spirit ritual is begun, the spirit is bound and may take no action except generating Telepathic Illusions in an attempt to interfere with the ritual. If this Ritual test is successful, the spirit is bound until the next sunrise or sunset. At that point, the spirit is free from the magician's control unless another binding is performed. Depending on its power and how it has been treated, newly freed spirits either flee or attack the ones who bound them. However, it is common practice for the magician to command the spirit to depart. This command effectively banishes the spirit and disperses the supernatural energy that imbues it. In this case, the spirit may not reappear until it is summoned again. The basic version of this ritual will only affect ordinary ghosts and poltergeists. A somewhat more complex ritual (+1Df, +2 Threshold, 3 Participants) allows the magician to bind and control ascended ghosts. A notably more complex ritual (+2 Df, +4 Threshold, 5 Participants) allows the magician to bind demons.

Any version of the Bind Spirit ritual may be performed simultaneously with any of the summoning rituals. However, performing the ritual in this fashion requires that a separate magician perform each ritual in the same ritual space.

DESCRIPTION: This ritual usually requires the magician to create some type of object that effectively binds the spirit. Usually this binding is actually attached to, or incorporates, the psychic link to the spirit. Specially tied knots, woven tapestries, carefully wrought sigils, rings, and even chains or locket worn by the magician all function as binding objects. If the binding object is broken, the spirit is instantly freed.

WARDING CIRCLE

EFFECT: This ritual creates a barrier that ghosts, demons, and the Incarnate cannot pass. All Warding Circles will keep such beings from crossing the boundary of the circle in either direction. This barrier must include a closed line like a circle or square that covers an area no larger than 9 yards in any direction. Ordinary humans and aliens can pass in and out of the warding without hindrance. Supernatural creatures can neither move past the circle nor use any of their abilities to either attempt to break the circle or to affect anything on the other side of its boundary. On its side of the circle, the spirit may act as it wills. A number of spirits are quite annoyed at being placed in Warding Circles, but are much less angry at such treatment than being bound. If provided with sufficient rewards, some spirits will not resist being placed in a Warding Circle.

All Warding Circles have some physical mark of their boundaries. If the boundary of the circle is broken in any fashion, the spirit is instantly freed. While spirits may not attempt to break this boundary themselves, they can communicate with individuals outside the Warding Circle, and can attempt to convince them to break the circle. When the duration of the ritual expires the spirit is freed. Since this ritual does not restrain a spirit until the circle is completed, it is normally performed before the spirit is actually summoned. The magician performing this ritual may create the boundary from either the inside or the outside. A somewhat more complex ritual (+1Df, +2 Threshold, 3 Participants) allows the magician to ward against ascended ghosts. A notably more complex ritual (+2 Df, +4 Threshold, 5 Participants) allows the magician to ward against demons.

DESCRIPTION: In all version of this ritual, the magician must physically mark the boundary. In some versions, the entire boundary must be drawn or marked in some fashion. In other versions, markers are simply place at four or more points around the boundary of the warded area. A number of experienced magicians actually have warded areas inlaid in stone or tile in the floor of their preferred ritual space. An area such as this would only need to be touched by the magician during the ritual to cause it to become active, and breaking it would involve physically removing part of the stone or tile. This would be treated as a charm and would need to be refreshed after every use. Given the time and effort necessary to create the inlaid circle, no +1Df penalty is imposed for creating the charm.

BANISH SPIRIT

EFFECT: This ritual can be used to banish a spirit from a person or place. A possessed person can be exorcised and a haunted house can be “cleansed.” Banishing does not return the spirit to some “lower realm” or “spirit world,” instead the spirit disperses. However, the pattern of the spirit’s essence remains in the vague flows of the Seepage and it can be summoned again. Summoning a banished spirit effectively recreates it; the spirit does not exist between the time it is banished and the next time it is summoned. Unless previously bound, spirits will attempt to either flee or to attack the magician and disrupt the banishing. The spirit is banished as soon as the ritual is completed. As listed, the ritual will only work on ordinary ghosts and poltergeists. This ritual cannot be performed using a psychic link, but it can be performed using a charm. As with other rituals, using the ritual to create a charm raises the difficulty of the ritual by +1Df. A somewhat more complex ritual (+1Df, +2 Threshold, 3 Participants) allows the magician to banish ascended ghosts. A notably more complex ritual (+2Df, +4 Threshold, 5 Participants) allows the magician to banish demons.

DESCRIPTION: When used to rid a person of possession, this ritual usually involves restraining the subject and threatening the spirit inside with various magical implements, or cleansing the person using water, salt, or sometimes fire. When used to remove a spirit from a place, the location is usually washed with salt water or some other liquid, while purifying incense is burned and chants and loud noises are made to drive the spirit off. Many purifying incenses are remarkably noxious substances like datura or astophedie that drive off spirits as they drive off everything else. As an alternative, many of the older Ceremonial and Caribbean banishing rituals use bible verses and Christian trapping to drive away evil spirits. In the classic Ceremonial bell, book, and candle ritual, the bell is rung, the book, usually the bible, is closed, and the candle is snuffed.

SPIRIT BOTTLE

EFFECT: This ritual creates an object that can contain the essence of a single spirit. When the ritual is completed and the object is finished, the object will effectively imprison and contain any spirit that is coaxed or forced into it. Trickery and the Bind Spirit ritual are the most common methods of forcing a spirit to enter this trap. Unlike the Banish Spirit ritual, a spirit trapped within a spirit bottle may not be summoned until it is released from the bottle. All spirit bottles are physical objects, which will immediately release the spirit if they are either broken or if the specific conditions for releasing the spirit are met. If the spirit is released without breaking the object, the object may be later reused to contain the same or another spirit. Sensitives and psychics with Telepathy may communicate with spirits within binding objects by simply touching the object. Spirit bottles can contain ghosts, ascended ghosts and demons. Spirits are commonly only released when they have agreed to perform specific services for the individual releasing them. Sensible magicians use the Oath-binding ritual to insure compliance with the agreement.

DESCRIPTION: The binding object is inscribed, chanted over, or simply blessed by the magician. The most common spirit bottles used by shamans and Caribbean magicians are actual bottles like hip flasks, wine bottles, or baby-food jars, which trap the spirit when they are closed and release the spirit when physically opened. Ceremonial and Taoist magicians often contain spirits within books or scrolls, which are blank until the spirit is contained. Spirit books fill up with exotic text when the spirit physically touches or affects it with any of their powers. To release the spirit, either the book must be destroyed, or the text must be physically read out loud from beginning to end by a single reader. Statues and similar objects are sometimes used to contain spirits, but must be broken to release the spirit.

BIND ZOMBIE

EFFECTS: Known as the Ritual of Will-binding by Ceremonial and Taoist magicians, the creation of zombies does not actually involve raising the dead. It is, however, one of the most powerful bindings used against living humans. This ritual may not be performed using charms or psychic links. The subject must be physically present at the ritual. If successful, the subject’s personality and will are suppressed to the point that he only responds to the commands of the magician who performed the ritual. The trance produced by this ritual imposes a +1Df penalty to all Agility and Reflex-related tests, and makes the subject immune to stun or KO. Otherwise, tests and damage are resolved normally. This ritual may only be dispelled by performing the Dispel Magic ritual or by killing the magician who performed the ritual.

DESCRIPTION: The subject is bound and force-fed specially prepared substances. Otherwise, the magician draws or tattoos special sigils on the subject’s body. In some versions, the magician actually buries the subject alive for several hours.






 A central title card for Chapter 5, 'Cabals'. The text 'CHAPTER 5' is in a large, white, serif font, with 'CABALS' in a smaller, white, serif font below it. The background is a dark, textured image of what appears to be a ritual or occult scene. On either side of the central card is a black square containing a white, stylized symbol resembling a cross with horizontal bars, enclosed in a thin white border.

CHAPTER 5

CABALS

MYSTIC ORGANIZATIONS

For a few, magic is a solitary endeavor. However, many rituals demand multiple participants, and the study of magic is often greatly enhanced if the occultist has colleagues as well as books. For this and other reasons, occultists often band together into groups. Some are united by shared goals, others by shared faith, and a few simply out of mutual respect. There are literally hundreds of different occult organizations. Most are relatively small, and many do not outlast the deaths of the founders. As old groups disperse, new ones form.

The goals and motives of each group are unique and the groups themselves are incredibly diverse. In spite of this diversity, many groups fit into three rough classifications: dark cults, magical power-brokers, and scholars. The motives, goals, and methods of each of these groups will be explored in this chapter, and a detailed example of each type of group will be given. All of these examples are ready for use in your own Conspiracy X campaign.

It is important to remember that individual members of these groups can have a wide variety of motives, and some of these conflict with the overall philosophy of the cabal. Within one group, some may desire to work with Aegis, while others may oppose them, or simply wish to remain neutral. Additionally, when dealing with the supernatural, concepts of friend and foe can become extremely blurred. The threat of corruption waits for all occultists. Regardless of their previous motives, once corrupted, helpful allies can sometimes become deadly enemies. Some corrupted individuals are not malevolent and some can even be kind and helpful, in their own inhuman fashion, but many lose their morality with their humanity.

USING THE CABALS

Game Masters and players may use the information presented in this chapter in a number of different ways. The broader general classifications are provided for Game Masters who want to design their own magical societies. Such groups could be Aegis foils or allies, or more likely neutral parties who find their path crossed by Aegis agents. They may be strictly NPCs, or may form Credentials for player characters.

Game Masters may also simply adopt the example cabals discussed in each general classification as part of their campaign. Again, they may be NPCs, or player resources.

For players, the example societies present background information, professional skills and trainings, and pulling strings. A player may choose any one of them to be his character's Credential. We have increased the number of pulling strings available to each group to account for the lack of an umbrella Department, as found in the Aegis Handbook. If a player chooses one of these organizations, the character's relationship with Aegis must be specified. The group may be allied with Aegis for a mission, or perhaps on a more permanent basis. Otherwise, the character must be an infiltrator. Who is being infiltrated, however, is an open question. The character may be part of Aegis, but beholden to the mystic society. Alternatively, the character may be part of the magical group, but in truth an agent of Aegis.

Lastly, with some modification and preparation, a Game Master may establish a campaign where all players are part of the mystic order. The Cell structure may be loosely adopted to equip that group. Such a campaign would introduce the society to the secrets of aliens and the supernatural, as well as Aegis/Black Book activities.

THE SCHOLARS

The vast majority of magicians are scholars. Learning the magical arts is a difficult and lengthy task that requires both great dedication and a deep love of learning. Regardless of whether the magician is a Neolithic shaman living in a cave, or a college professor studying ancient tomes in dead languages, the process of learning magic is quite similar and requires similar aptitudes.

Being a magician is a continuous process of learning. Once started on this path, many magicians find they enjoy learning for its own sake. They find that with each new ritual learned, their understanding of the world and of themselves is a little bit more extensive. For the mystically inclined, this understanding becomes an end in itself. Magic becomes a path to spiritual fulfillment. A few dedicated mystics even eschew the practice of magic for any purpose other than spiritual growth and philosophical discovery.

SCHOLARS AND ADEPTS

Many occult scholars are harmless eccentrics. Others are dedicated researchers who willingly aid those with questions about the supernatural, particularly if the questions are interesting or difficult. A few are mystics seeking to understand the spiritual nature of the world through magic. Any of these types of individual can be valuable allies. They can also become dangerous foes. The failure of a single ritual can transform a magical scholar into an Incarnate Adept. In some cases, no one notices and the scholar continues on, lost in her research. However, the obsessive and amoral nature of most Adept archetypes can easily lead them into areas of research which are quite depraved. Lacking both consciences and morality, Adepts will perform any experiment or ritual that might advance their understanding of the problem at hand, even if criminal, immoral, and even horrific actions must be performed.

THE LODGE OF THE WORLD TREE

On Anomalous Tibetan Magic A Preliminary Report

The Abstract

My journey to Tibet met with some success, but there is still so much to learn. Conditions are very bad, and part of my time was spent avoiding Chinese security patrols, and helping locals conceal their ritual practice. I was able to gain the confidence of the local Lamas by giving them the medical supplies that I was able to smuggle in through my contacts in Nepal, and by providing aid in cloaking their activities from observation. We talked for several weeks and I now feel that I have some grasp of their symbology and methods.

Their facility with the shamanic state is greater than any I have encountered, and their library of spirits, demons and ghosts is equal to any in the world. Most fascinating, however, are their rituals. Some of these rituals are unique in my experience. Of course, several were simply the normal variations of blessings, curses, and similar workings. However, a few of their oldest, most prized rituals allow the practitioners to perform acts unique in my experience. I have witnessed shamans call upon the very earth to rise up and form a wall, or the snow to come down as an avalanche upon their enemies. These effects were not mere illusion. They were large-scale demonstrations of a previously unknown type of telekinetic magic. Naturally, I was not allowed to actually learn any of these rituals, but in discussing them with the High Lama, I did learn some odd facts about their history. All of these special rituals are of great antiquity, and all of them are said to have originally come from the Yeti.

Yeti legends abound in Tibet. Most outsiders who look for the “Abominable Snowman” forget that these legends describe strange magical beings of vast power, not merely large hairy pre-humans. I honestly have no idea what “learning spells from the Yeti” may mean. The High Lama admitted that no one in his monastery has had any contact with the Yeti for many generations. He did speak of several hermits living high in the mountains who have occasionally spoken with these beings. On my next journey, I will attempt to investigate these stories.

Jason Chen, Lodge Member

HISTORY

In the religious purges of the 1950s and 60s, people of many faiths fled the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Block. In addition to members of the more commonly recognized faiths, those of shamanic background fled the oppression. As expected, many of these shamans ended up in various large cities in the United States. One of the largest enclaves of Eastern European refugees gathered in Los Angeles. By the late 1960s, a group of several dozen, highly trained Eastern European shamans set up residence in that city. They gradually got to know each other and began to exchange ideas.

Around the same time, many of America's highly educated youth became interested in the vast potential of the human mind. In the 1960s, young people experimented with psychedelic drugs and a wide variety of meditation techniques in an effort to understand both their own minds and the spiritual reality of the world around them. A few of the shamans taught classes to these seekers to raise money. By the early 1970s, the Eastern European shamans and the American collegians had talked a great deal and found that their different view-points were useful counterpoints to one another other. Some of the students apprenticed themselves to the shamans and the relationship between the two groups deepened.

By the late 1970s, a highly gifted American student named Alicia Svenski completed her training and decided to use the knowledge she had gained for more than simple divinations, blessings, and healings. She gathered a group of like-minded shamans and formed an organization dedicated to mystic knowledge. The members vowed to work to understand the spiritual nature and structure of reality, and the true nature of magic. This group took the name the Lodge of the World Tree, and has been working on these problems ever since.

MAGICAL PRACTICE

As expected, almost all of the members of the Lodge are shamans of one kind or another. Since the 1970s, the group has branched out to include shamanic practitioners from around the globe. Koreans, Javanese, Native American, and even a few Amazonian shamans belong to this organization. Recently, the group has even admitted a few interested Caribbean, Taoist and Ceremonial magicians. In an effort to truly understand the basics of magic, members of the Lodge work with elements drawn from a wide variety of traditions, and attempt to discover the similarities and differences between the many disparate paths of magic.

Members of the Lodge work together to categorize, classify, and understand the various types of spiritual beings, as well as attempting to discover more about the nature of magic itself. These researches often begin by collecting anecdotes from other magicians or from notes found in grimoires and occult treatises. Like shamans everywhere, however, the Lodge members are extremely practical and pragmatic in their approach to magic. If some theory seems to be true, one or more members will perform research and rituals in an effort to ascertain if the idea is indeed correct.

STRUCTURE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Lodge continues to be primarily based in Los Angeles, but a few smaller branches have been started in Seattle, New York and Toronto. Unlike most other occult societies, the Lodge is not secret. They publish a magazine called *The Shaman's Path*, and hold occasional lectures and workshops for those interested in exploring their spirituality. The public persona of the organization is simply that of a group of scholar and shamanic practitioners who are deeply interested in the cultural phenomena of shamanism. While many members freely admit that they perform shamanic magic, the Lodge does not offer public demonstrations of its magic, and non-members are never allowed to observe or participate in its rituals.

Membership is by invitation only. Most new members are students of current members who are both exceptionally talented, and interested in understanding magic on a deep level. Individuals who contribute thoughtful articles to *The Shaman's Path*, or who participate in a number of the group's lectures and discussions, may also be asked to join. Prospective members are first questioned thoroughly by a screening committee of senior practitioners. People who demonstrate the requisite amount of knowledge and dedication are then asked if they wish to attend several of the group's private meetings.

During these meetings, the candidate is questioned about his background and interests by a variety of Lodge members. At this point, one of the more senior members performs a divination to see what the future holds if the new member joins the Lodge. Recently, a new member was discovered using the knowledge he gained for criminal purposes. As a result, a moderately extensive background check is run on all prospective members. Finally, all current members able to travel to the Grand Library in Los Angeles vote on admittance. If the candidate passes all of these tests, he is notified that he is eligible for admission, and told more about its goal and purposes. If the individuals accepts, a formal initiation ceremony is held and the new member is given full access to all Lodge meetings and libraries.

Currently, the Lodge has just over 400 full-time members. Several hundred other practicing shamans stay in active contact with the Lodge. The organization of the Lodge is quite informal. Members meet to share information and contact each other with any question they may have. The Central Lodge in Los Angeles maintains a file on the past and current projects of each member, as well as an extensive library on a wide variety of occult topics.

As stated above, members of the Lodge come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Most are shamans, but some are non-shamanic magicians or even anthropologists, psychologists, or dedicated scholars of the occult. One of the founding principles of the Lodge is that no single path to spiritual understanding exists. Various approaches are honored in hopes that this diversity of methods and opinions produces a higher and better comprehension.

The Lodge collects dues from all members based on the ability to pay, as well as obtaining revenues from its magazine and lectures. These funds are available for members to use to pay for their various projects. A three-member Council, elected biannually by Lodge members, administers the financial affairs of the group, and awards project support funds. Members simply present their proposals to these three people. If the proposal is approved the money is given.

Members who abuse their privileges or who use their magic in a harmful fashion are first warned, and then asked to leave. The rest of the membership is instructed not to contact them, and the ex-member is denied all access to Lodge facilities.

As part of their initiation, Lodge members pledge to help each other in times of need. If a Lodge member becomes corrupted, all available members of the Lodge are obligated to assist in efforts to cure the individual. If the member cannot be cured, and becomes Incarnate or Forsaken, it will be examined by a group of the most senior members. If the creature appears to be able to exist in society without harming others, it is free to go, and may keep its membership if it wishes. However, Incarnate members are subject to periodic scrutiny to determine if they have become dangerous. If the former member is found to be too dangerous to go free, the Forsaken are turned over to mental health officials and the Incarnate are humanely killed.

ACTIVITIES

Depending upon their background, members of the Lodge can be found doing almost anything relating to the occult. Some travel to isolated third-world nations to observe and interview local magicians. Others summon a wide variety of spirits for discussion groups. A few perform difficult and demanding rituals to open their minds to the deep structures of magic and the Seepage.

Sometimes members do more than simply investigate various supernatural questions. Many members look into any incidents of supernatural activity that they uncover. Some of these incidents are highly dangerous, and part of the initiatory oath of the Lodge requires members to attempt to solve any supernatural problems they find. More than one investigation has ended with Lodge members slaying one of the Incarnate or even banishing a demon. Such incidents are fortunately fairly rare, but most members regard dealing with them a part of their duty to humanity and whatever gods they may honor. With a few notable exceptions, most members are cautious enough to avoid most dangers, but dedicated enough that they will investigate even highly dangerous phenomena.

While individual members are free to believe as they choose, the official position of the Lodge is highly ecumenical. Spiritual questions such as survival after death, or the existence of one or more gods, are investigated, but so far nothing resembling definitive evidence has ever been found.

RELATIONSHIPS

During the course of their investigations, the Lodge uncovered several anomalous incidents that did not fit into any known pattern of supernatural or psychic activity. In short, the Lodge uncovered evidence of alien activity. After detecting certain, limited Grey activity at a few minor supernatural sites, a few members of the Lodge began looking around for other information about the aliens. In some of these cases, Lodge investigators encountered members of Aegis or the Black Book. Thus far, the Book has discounted, or been hostile to Lodge activities. Several Aegis Cells, however, have been more receptive to Lodge members, and a few joint missions have been undertaken. Neither organization fully trusts the other, and a few badly handled encounters could poison future relations. Nonetheless, both groups are willing to consider closer ties for now.


Lodge Nomenclature

Through their efforts, the Lodge has gained a profound understanding of the nature of the Seepage, ritual magic, and corruption, as well as a detailed knowledge of a multitude of spiritual beings ranging from ghosts and minor spirits, to powerful beings which some call gods. While their theories are similar to those presented in the Queens Tome, Lodge scholars are uncertain as to the origin of the mystic energy, and most of their terms vary. For example, what the Queens Tome refers to as Seepage, the Lodge mystics call "astral force", the "oneness", the "shamanic state", or even the more prosaic "nonordinary reality." Lodge shamans believe that they must "enter" that "shamanic state" to perform their magic.

LODGE MEMBER PLAYER CHARACTERS

Lodge members can purchase any Ritual skill tradition, and even more than one such tradition, during character generation. Many are Sensitives, Foci and are Highly Educated. Some are Driven, and many are addicted to whatever substance enables them to enter the shamanic state. A few are Aged. Most have Distinguishing Marks, or have a highly distinctive style of dress. None are Extraordinarily Average. No traits are required.

LODGE MAGICIAN

Influence provided: 

Professional trainings: Awareness, Ritual: Bind Spirit, Ritual: Dispel Magic, Ritual: Mind Riding, Ritual: Prophecy, Ritual: Questioning, Ritual: Summon Ghost, Ritual: Strengthen, Savoir Faire, Survival, The Protective Circle

Professional skills: Diplomacy, First Aid, Humanities, Martial Arts, Medical, Meditation, Occult, Parapsychology, Ritual (any tradition), Science, Teaching.

PULLING STRINGS

Libraries: Substantial occult libraries have been gathered and catalogued at the various branches of the Lodge of the World Tree, particularly the Grand Library in Los Angeles. Access to one of the branch libraries requires a Df2 Influence test and grants a Lodge member a +2t bonus on any Occult research test, including the development of new rituals (as adjudicated by the Game Master). Access to the Los Angeles library requires a Df3 test, but grants a -1Df bonus.

Lodge Assistance: Lodge members go out of their way to help each other. If a Lodge member needs assistance, he may ask a fellow member for it. The Difficulty Level of the Influence test is equal to highest skill level of the member requested. The GM should determine the details of any Lodge members in the area, and any other areas the character knows contain Lodge members.

Occult Knowledge: A Lodge member may be consulted about Occult questions. The Lodge member has Occult 4 and can research anything the character requests. Lodge members have their own business to conduct, however, and the answer will not be forthcoming for 1D days. A Df3 Influence test will encourage the Lodge member to set the request as a priority, and respond in 1Dx6 hours.

Ritual Assistants: When a character needs help for a Ritual, she can call on a other Lodge members of equal or lesser skill. A Df2 Influence test provides a member of sufficient skill in 1Dx30 minutes. A Df3 test decreases that time to 1Dx10 minutes. Add +1Df if the Ritual is dangerous, and +1Df if the Ritual is to be conducted away from a Lodge facility.

Ritual Support: If a Lodge member needs a specific Ritual cast, and he does not know it, or is not skilled enough, he can call upon his Lodge brothers. A Df3 Influence test is required. A member who knows the appropriate ritual will be available for casting in 1D hours. A Df4 tests decreases the wait to 1Dx10 minutes. Add +1Df if the Ritual is dangerous, and +1Df if the Ritual is to be conducted away from a Lodge facility.

Ritual Training: A Df4 Influence test will provide the character a Lodge member to instruct her in a new ritual. The tutor grants a +1PV to Ritual research tests for purposes of a breakthrough. This bonus is cumulative with other bonuses, such as those for libraries, and penalties, such as for modifying the parameters of the ritual.





MAGICAL POWER-BROKERS

One of the most common types of occult organization is one dedicated to the collection of personal status, wealth, and power. These organizations are usually quite selective in their recruitment and very subtle in their goals. In most cases, no one but their closest associates are aware that the members of these organizations are even interested in the occult. The goal of the members is to be wealthy, powerful and respected, so eccentricities such as performing magical rituals are carefully hidden.

While using magic for mundane goals like wealth and power need not be harmful or destructive, most obsessively ambitious people soon decide that the ends justify the means. Rituals to aid personal success may be harmless, but are often followed by rituals to ensure the failure of competitors, and sometimes rituals designed to harm or slay rivals. Magic is the precise and carefully directed focus of will on a single goal. If the magician's goals are amoral, the magician will sink deeper into evil and depravity. In time, actions that would have previously seemed heinous become very easy to rationalize. On the other hand, these groups never engage in pointless violence or depravity for its own sake. The only way to effectively use magic as a means to attain mundane power is to use it carefully, sparingly, and with due deliberation.

Individuals who are unable or unwilling to act in a discrete manner are either not recruited, or are eliminated by the other members as a threat to the security of the organization. Members who become corrupted are either cured or killed. To maintain the necessary secrecy, groups of this type must avoid any hint of bizarre or depraved behavior. Archetypes are simply too uncontrolled for the other members to tolerate.

The most important factor about power-brokers is that magic is merely a means to an end. The members know the dangers involved in magic, but regard the risks as worth the benefits they can obtain. These people avoid using magic when other, safer, methods will work equally well. Members of such organizations are cold, heartless and calculating. They may present a friendly exterior and be full of grace and charm, but they rarely let kindness, compassion, or even morality get between them and their quest for wealth and power. Mass media and entertainment industry depictions of shark-like corporate heads are good stereotypes for power-brokers. The added kicker for power-brokers, however, is that such people occasionally exchange their business suits for ceremonial robes and ritual swords.

USING POWER-BROKERS

When designing a Conspiracy X campaign, it is important to decide just how far the opposition reaches. Important choices must be made when deciding what type of power-brokers will be used in your game.

THERE ARE NO POWER-BROKERS: One obvious answer is that there are no such groups. The poor and the jealous start rumors about the evils of the rich, but these rumors contain no basis in fact. While less interesting than some of the other options, this choice does have its merits. Clearly, a few occultists and magicians sincerely believe that a number of important corporation heads and other wealthy entrepreneurs have achieved their position in society through the use of magic. Some magicians may take it upon themselves to "balance the karma" of these entrepreneurs through curse and other magical attacks. Reports of mysterious deaths of several important business people might remind the members of the Cell of a strange report they read a few months ago about the dangerous magical power-brokers. When they check into the deaths, they find no evidence that any of these business people belonged to any occult organization or even that they practiced magic at all. However, these individuals do seem to have been killed with magic.

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

Tracing the author of the report will eventually reveal the identities of the magicians responsible for the deaths. These magicians will be absolutely certain that the people they are attacking practice evil magic and are intent on using their powers to subtly and quietly take over the world.

When confronted by the characters, the magicians will maintain that they acted in the best interest of humanity and that they are heroes. If evidence is presented, some of the newer members will realize their mistake and quickly leave. The leaders will maintain the truth of their beliefs in the face of almost any evidence. They will cite divination, bizarre coincidences, and strange omens as proof that their beliefs are correct. Mundane evidence will be scoffed at as unreliable and easily faked using magic.

This type of setting is a wonderful introduction into the link between magic and madness, and the fact that occult theories and magical divinations must be tempered with sense and rationality or truly insane theories can be accepted as truth.

THE POWER-BROKERS RULE THE NATION: Just because a theory sounds crazy doesn't mean it isn't true. CEOs performing dark rituals in backrooms are strange, but if such rituals could guarantee them a higher profit margin, at least some CEOs would perform them.

If magic works and can be a source of vast power, powerful magicians may indeed be secretly running the country. In this case, most of the wealthiest people in the nation, and probably the world, are secretive amoral magicians. They use rituals of vast power to harm their rivals, to influence public opinion, and to warp the judgment of politicians. The power-brokers are highly organized and almost everyone who rises to a certain level of power is either recruited, financially destroyed, killed or turned into the pawn of one of the members. The only reason that these magicians do not control everything is that they do not wish to compromise their secrecy. Further, they use their magic very sparingly to avoid madness and corruption. Such a unified conspiracy of power-brokers is ultimately behind almost all occult conspiracies uncovered by the characters. They were the secret Masons who controlled the founding fathers of the United States, and they were behind the Secret Doctrine who initiated Hitler. They might not control the entire world, but few occult events and actors escape their notice.

While highly interesting, this possibility does raise several problems. It will be necessary to work out the relationship between the magical power-brokers, Aegis, the Black Book, and the various alien factions. An organization as powerful and widespread as these power-brokers would not remain ignorant of the existence of potential rivals for long. They will most likely be very aware of Aegis, and while they might not interfere with the disposal of rival groups, any attempt by Aegis to interfere with the plans of these power-brokers could result in Aegis being targeted for destruction. Of course, this assumes they are not the force behind Aegis Prime and its Cells.

MODERATELY POWERFUL MAGICAL POWER-BROKERS: What if wealthy magical power-brokers existed, but they were small and disorganized rather than large and unified. By their very nature, occult groups and secret societies tend to be their own worse enemies. Infighting, secrecy, and paranoia have traditionally meant that most magical organizations are either small or very short-lived. Perhaps the power-brokers are no exception.

The Freemasons who founded this country may have been one such group, the people who initiated Hitler were another. There may be a vast network of occult groups who use magic to seek wealth and power. However, these groups are almost all small, they rarely work together, and few of them last more than 40 or 50 years. Thus, some of the richest and most powerful people in the United States are unscrupulous magicians, but many are not. Each group is quite secretive and most are very careful about their recruitment procedures, lest they let in someone unsuitable, or worse yet, a spy from a rival group.

Magic has a profound impact on the politics and the economy of the world, but this effect is buffered by the fact that many of these secret groups are working at cross-purposes. Often, the large-scale effects of various competing rituals cancel each other out, leaving the situation once again dependent on chance and the decisions of the rest of humanity. Also, because few of these groups have more than two dozen members, corruption and madness are not only personally repugnant, but they debilitate valuable personnel assets. Few of these groups perform more than a dozen rituals a year.

This level of occult conspiracy is a good choice for the Conspiracy X setting. Individual groups can be quite powerful, but none of them are running the show. Skilled Aegis operatives can avoid direct confrontation with these secret societies by pitting rival groups against each other, and, hopefully, watching them destroy each other.



THE MONTAGUE CLUB

Montague Indoctrination Speech

We fought the Silver Circle directly in the 1960s. Dozens of our members burned to death in their beds before the killing ended. A few of our more zealous members had attacked some of the magicians who had foiled our plans in the 1940s, but these were personal vendettas. Once the Silver Circle allied with Aegis, we were all hunted down like dogs. For heaven's sake, we are business-people, not killers. We should be constantly vigilant to avoid such events in the future. Pick your battles wisely, with as much knowledge of the consequences as possible.

After the disasters of the 1960s, we were forced to rebuild. We sought assistance against the dangerous lunatics of the Silver Circle. Some of the people we have allied are no more sane than those who oppose us, but at least they have the decency and good sense to leave business to the business-people and play their games far away from us. Again, mistakes were made and should not be repeated. Remember, rely on yourself and your brethren in the Club. Outsiders are not loyal, they do not understand our needs and they cannot always be controlled.

You have no doubt heard about our allies in the Black Book. For the most part, they understand that while ideology has its place, the profit motive is the basis of all successful endeavors. They do indeed have the same potential for harm as Aegis and the Center for Phenomenological Studies (as the Silver Circle has become). You must remember, however, most of the agents of the Black Book are not unpredictable ideologues like those in Aegis. They are people driven by simple, comprehensible motives like greed, pride, and an honest desire for power. We know how to work with, and yes, how to manipulate such people, and some of us have been doing so for the last 40 years. As long as we make sure that the favors they perform for us are more valuable than the favors we perform for them, our informal alliance should be maintained. Make no mistake, we are not without options -- we have the capacity to eliminate several important members of the Black Book should that be necessary. For now, however, they are useful.

Remember, that even though the Black Book claims to be directing alien activities on Earth and some of its members talk about world domination, they are still people like anyone else. Most of them have at least one hidden vice which can be exploited and the ones who threaten us are just as vulnerable to accidents as anyone else. They like us because they don't know much about magic. Never be afraid to use that fact against them.

Remember also that direct warfare against Aegis is forbidden. It serves no purpose and risks the disasters of the 1960s. Aegis is to be watched carefully, and avoided or redirected if it interferes with our plans. Plans are in place for addressing our relationship with Aegis. When you are needed, your part in the final destruction of Aegis will be revealed. For now, we watch, build and plan.

HISTORY

In 1921, a number of Americans who had fought in World War I gathered in San Francisco to discuss their experiences. In addition to the horrors of trench warfare and the wonders of Europe experienced by many Americans, this select group had been a part of other, more unique events. All members of this club, later called the Montague Club after the founder, Theodore Montague, had come face-to face with the supernatural. Montague himself had hidden behind enemy lines in an old Church on the outskirts of Mannheim. While trapped there, he talked extensively with the elderly priest. This priest dabbled in Ceremonial magic, and shared some of his knowledge with Montague. Other members of the club had seen magic practiced by gypsies or other rural folk, or had run into a few of the Predators and other monsters that haunted many of the battlefields.

By 1922, the Club had 23 members and a small but well-chosen occult library. After the first few years of simply investigating the limits and possibilities of magic, Montague and the others decided to start applying their new-found knowledge. In the heady atmosphere of the 1920s, this group of college-educated, middle and upper class young men sought economic advancement. Basic luck rituals and blessings rapidly moved into rituals designed to manipulate the fates of various companies and attempts, largely without success, to influence the entire stock market. The crash of 1929 was no huge surprise for the members and their divination rituals. After the crash, shrewd business savvy, and a few carefully chosen divination rituals, lead several members of the Club to become immensely wealthy by secretly selling supplies, including munitions, to Adolph Hitler and other German extremists.

Montague himself was even in loose contact with the Secret Order, Hitler and the rest of the Nazi elite. The Club had no creed but its own advancement, and many members hoped to become major trading partners with the new Nazi-controlled Europe.

While the Clubs divinations showed the Nazi rise in power, the members either failed to recognize, or ignored, the signs of vast occult power assembled against Hitler. The actions of the Watch and the other groups that helped defeat the occult power of the Nazis greatly shocked the members of the Montague Club. Up to this time, the members of the club had never encountered any other occultists who were not either frauds or harmless scholars. Suddenly several members of the club experienced direct supernatural attack, and Montague and a few others were killed during one particularly powerful ritual performed by the Watch. This disaster combined with the loss of potential wealth and power enraged the surviving members of the club. After the war, most members continued to amass wealth and power but became more guarded in their occult activities. Some went into hiding, living off their previously collected booty. A few prepared to exact revenge.

In the early 1950s, the more rabid members of the Club began investigating the occultists who had opposed their efforts on behalf of Nazi Germany. After a few years of strenuous effort, these revenge-seekers tracked down a few of the Watch's more prominent occultists. As it happened, the first of these who were captured and tortured had sided with Aegis when the Watch split, and thus they revealed their non-occultist contacts within that organization. By the early 1960s, the avengers had cracked several Aegis Cells, and began monitoring communications. The Club even uncovered the plot against President Kennedy and identified the Cells responsible. Whether unwilling or unable, the militant Club members did not act to stop the assassination. Starting in the early mid-1960s, the power-brokers used a combination of powerful magics and political influence to destroy a number of Aegis Cells. At this point, Aegis had insufficient resources in the occult arena to mount an effective counter-attack. Aegis Prime seemed at a loss, and the whole organization was threatened.

In 1966, Aegis Prime was contacted by Peter Henry Westmane. Westmane and his Silver Circle cabal had worked with the Watch in WWII, and they had been investigating the Montague Club for several years. Westmane and Aegis Prime joined forces.

By the mid 1960s, the Montague Club had approximately 150 members, and less than 50 of these magicians were involved in the campaign against the Silver Circle and Aegis. By 1967, the tide of the battle had turned and most of the Montague Club members who had attacked Aegis were dead, insane, or corrupted. The remaining members of the club went into hiding and did not emerge for five years. After this battle, the surviving members of the Silver Circle, lead by Westmane, renamed themselves CAPS and permanently allied themselves with Aegis.

The next chapter in the club's history began in 1969. In that year, a group of five hippies lead by the young eccentric heiress Jennifer McBain decided that they were tired of living in old vans, and began to focus on magic studies. Their first breakthrough came when they convinced a Taoist magician named Li Wong to mentor them. The San Franciscan magician was quite elderly and was simply interested in sharing his knowledge and enlightenment. So strong was this desire that he was fooled by these intelligent Westerners who seemed to be honestly seeking answers. Unfortunately, the answers the students found were not precisely those being taught. Ignoring the Taoist emphasis on balance and harmony, they saw magic as a path to worldly advancement. In disgust, their teacher abandoned them and left San Francisco.

A wealthy lawyer that the group used to facilitate a number of highly lucrative deals began to probe the group's activities. He was member of the Montague Club, and, over time, found the McBain group open to his suggestions. By 1972, the entire McBain group had become Club members. McBain proved to be a brilliant adept. She eschewed the old-timer's Ceremonial practices in favor of her Taoist training. Nonetheless, within a few years, she was undisputed master of the Club.

After its revitalization by McBain, the group continued to maintain a low profile. The members mostly worked to bring themselves luck and occasionally curse their direct competition. However, as the membership expanded and spread throughout the country, McBain ignored the advice of the older members, and decided the Club needed loftier ambitions. McBain was neither consumed with revenge against Aegis, nor fearful of its power.

The Montague Club swiftly expanded their activities. Influencing politicians, swaying public opinion, engaging in industrial sabotage and even murder became regularly employed tactics. In short order, they became one of the most influential magical groups in the Western half of the United States. With this increased power came increased notoriety. While most members prefer to avoid publicity, a few have become somewhat famous. In all cases, their involvement with the occult has been carefully concealed.

Of course, this rapid expansion attracted the notice of a number of groups involved with the occult. CAPS was among those groups. McBain and the Club detected the investigations, indeed, they expected them. No occult warfare was triggered this time, however. Both groups kept their troops in line, and made plans. By this time, the Club had learned of the existence of the Black Book. McBain decided to contact them. Her plan was to enlist their aid should Aegis go to war. If no such war developed, McBain determined to suborn the Book's mystic capabilities. What she found surprised and delighted her. The Book had no significant occult practitioners. McBain quickly moved to fill that gap, on a strict contractual basis. While many members of both the Black Book and the Montague Club are entirely unaware of this relationship, guarded but mutually beneficial ties have been formed between the leaderships of the two organizations. The Black Book has since pressed more resources into developing a mystical arm, but these attempts have been subtly undermined by the Club, covetous of its service contracts with the Book.

MAGICAL PRACTICE

Originally a fairly typical group of Western Ceremonial magicians, the Club has left these roots behind and largely embraced the Taoist tradition of McBain's group. Almost all of the members recruited since the mid-1970s have been trained in that tradition. A number of the members perform solitary rituals using meditation and physical movement, but the large group rituals are performed using rituals which resemble a combination of magical practice and martial arts practice. Physical health and fitness are highly valued in the Montague Club, and members who allow themselves to become overweight or otherwise out of shape are held in low regard and denied advancement.

Montague Club Nomenclature

No Montague Club member had access to the Queens Tome despite the Club's sponsoring of its writing (see Chapter Six: Enlightenment). Hodgewell did leave certain papers and notes behind in his haste to escape the Club shortly after Montague's death. Further, the Club retained the extensive library that Hodgewell helped build. In the last forty years, the notes have been translated, decoded and expanded. At present, Montague Club theory and nomenclature varies little from that presented in the Queens Tome.

STRUCTURE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Montague Club is an extremely selective organization. Intelligent, ambitious, ruthless, and if possible, magically talented, individuals are recruited shortly after they graduate college and enter the work force. Like many similar occult organizations, the new recruits are first offered membership in an exclusive club for ambitious professionals. The overt club goes by several names in several areas, from the innocuous Society for Business Advancement, to the more sinister Blood Argent club. These groups are presented as places to network and obtain inside information. Certain new members, carefully selected by the leadership, are then allowed to participate in special empowerment seminars. These seminars teach self confidence, practical decision making, mind-body unity, and the basics of magic. Over the next year or two, unsuitable candidates are gradually weeded out as their memberships are not renewed. New members who show both the proper level of interest and dedication gradually find that more of the content of these seminars deals with magic and occult philosophy. None of these seminars actually use words like magic, occult, or supernatural, and all of the ideas imparted are presented in very matter-of-fact terms. The final step in the membership process requires the candidate to actually realize that the seminars are designed to teach magic, and to ask to learn more. Those candidates that do so are given a formal initiation. Those who do not ask such questions are quietly asked to leave after two years.

Members are subject to oaths of secrecy and mutual aid. Further, initiation rituals include both curses that will take affect if the new member ever betrays the Montague Club, as well as the provision of hair, blood, and other samples that may be used as psychic connections if necessary. When the initiation is complete, an intensive period of training both in the general practice of ritual magic, and specific rituals is conducted. After that, all candidates are given one ritual to perform on their own. These rituals are generally designed to benefit one or more of the leaders of the Montague Club. If the ritual is performed successfully, the new member is introduced to all local members of the club, and is entitled to the full benefits of membership.

Members who become corrupted immediately lose their membership. If three other members of the Club, including at least one senior member, suspects someone of corruption then a divination ritual is performed. If the person is actually corrupted, they are restrained and a ritual to reverse the corruption is attempted. If this ritual fails, an accidental death is arranged. Members of the Montague Club do not usually perform more than eight to ten rituals a year and are always extremely careful in their ritual preparation. The risk of corruption is usually quite slight. In the entire history of the organization, only five members have been killed for this reason.

Currently, the Montague Club has approximately 1,000 full members. The base of the organization is still San Francisco, but large branches exist in Seattle, San Jose, and Los Angeles, and small branches are located in Denver and New York. The Club has fully infiltrated the high tech industrial sector, and has expanding toeholds in most other areas. The leadership plans to expand operations on the East Coast, but lacks the close personal contacts with the East Coast business community that are so necessary for successful and long-lasting business endeavors.

Each local branch of the Montague Club is headed by a group of three leaders, called the Board of Governors. These three are the only members who know the true identify of the Executive Council. The Council includes McBain, as chairperson, two of her associates and two of the older members of the club. These five still live in San Francisco, but avoid contact with anyone in the organization other than the governors of the various branches. In addition, except in emergencies, the various branches are only supposed to contact each other by relaying messages through the Executive Council.

The primary disadvantage of joining the Montague Club is that all memberships are for life. The only way to quit the organization is through death or permanent madness. On two occasions in the late 1980s, the Club admitted people who turned out to have moral qualms about the club's activities. In the first case, the new members died in a magically caused boating accident. In the other case, the individual's objections were less severe and some subtle emotionally manipulative eliminated her concerns. She has since become one of the more dangerous and efficient of the Club's members.



ACTIVITIES

Members of the Montague Club largely work for their own social and material advancement. Rituals of luck, curses, blessings, spells to influence the emotions, magical attacks on rivals, healings and divinations form the majority of members' mystic practices. All full members have access to the Club's extensive occult libraries, and are free to pay for instruction from the Club's more experienced magicians. Most members of the Club perform their rituals alone, or with the voluntary aid of a select few contacts within the Club.

While some of these rituals are fairly benevolent, the entire creed of the Montague Club is success at any price short of corruption. If benevolent solutions are available to a problem, such methods will be used. If the easiest way to eliminate a rival involves a magical attack causing them to die in a fiery car crash, so be it. The rhetoric of the Montague Club is all about the "bottom line" and a belief in the survival of the fittest. While the members avoid senseless violence, tens of thousands of people have lost their livelihoods and several hundred people have been maimed or killed as a result of the Club's magics.

One of the quirks of the Montague Club is that magic is regarded as being too important for frivolous use. Employing magic to aid careful business practices and non-magical powerplays is perfectly acceptable, but using magic as a substitute for competence is not. Similarly, using magic for such goals as love or altruism is also seen as a sign of weakness. Members who are seen as weak or frivolous are rarely asked to help with important projects, and are quite unlikely to obtain aid from fellow members or the leadership of the organization. Some are removed.

Most rituals the Montague club performs for the Black Book are minor. Divination, illusions, and spells of emotional influence make up the majority of spells. In all cases, either the local governors perform the spell themselves, or the exact purpose of the spell is kept from all of the club members who are assisting them. The primary reason the Club leaders are so secretive about their involvement with the Black Book is simply that they do not wish to share the benefits of the bargain. In return for the magical assistance, the Black Book provides a wide variety of useful information, as well as access to various government facilities. On rare occasion, in exchange for some potent mystic effects, the Book has provided a carefully supervised loan of alien technology. This, of course, has wetted the Club leaders' desire for more, and will no doubt serve as a source of tension between the groups at some point in the future.

HOW AEGIS CAN BECOME INVOLVED

There are two ways Aegis can become aware of the activities of the Montague Club. The most obvious method is through their ties to the Black Book. Information of the Montague Club might be found in Black Book papers or computer disks seized by Aegis. References to the club will be quite cryptic, especially since most members of the Black Book are fairly ignorant about magic and the supernatural. The most likely information would consist of a report about magical services provided by the Club. The address of the local Club stronghold may be provided, but it will invariably be a wealthy, private and very prestigious institution. Entry will be exceedingly difficult and no occult evidence will be apparent. The names of the Club members will be completely absent.

The other way Aegis could hear about the Montague Club is from a disciple of the teacher who originally taught McBain and her associates. After moving out of San Francisco, Li Wong realized that his judgment had been poor in this matter. For the next decade, he lived alone in the mountains of northern California attempting to obtain wisdom and improved judgment. In no small way, he also sought refuge from certain attack by his former pupils. After this time, Li moved to Oregon and sought one or two highly talented students to teach martial arts and esoteric philosophy. In the late 1980s, he found a suitable student, Amanda Molton. Molton was a highly skilled martial arts instructor. In the early 1990s, the elderly Taoist master died, but not before he performed a divination which told him that the amoral students he had trained 25 years ago were coming into possession of truly dangerous powers. He made Molton pledge herself to stopping these previous students.

Unfortunately, the leaders of the Montague Club had protected themselves with numerous wardings against divination and magical influence. After several years of unsuccessful research, Molton managed to uncover the existence of the Montague Club. She is entirely unaware of their goals or plans, but she is aware that this club for wealthy business-people is also an occult secret society. In 1996, Molton was recruited by Aegis after an incident where she attempted to exorcise evil spirits that turned out to be Greys. Her exemplary performance in this unusual incident impressed the on-site Aegis agents, and after an extensive background check she was asked to join.

Once her initial training was completed, she described the information she has uncovered about the Montague Club. A report was filed on HERMES and several Aegis Cells began investigating the Club.

Infiltrator

Working the Montague Club, and even the Children of Ragnarok, into an Aegis campaign may be facilitated by using the Infiltrator trait detailed in Chapter Three: Secrets. This trait is used for either Aegis agents infiltrating a rival (or allied) conspiracy, or a rival conspirator posing as a member of an Aegis Cell.

MONTAGUE CLUB PLAYER CHARACTERS

If desired, Aegis might already have discovered the Montague Club and could be in the process of recruiting double agents or inserting members into the Club. Most members of the Club have either the Supernatural Focus or the Sensitive traits, but no traits are required. Poor, poorly educated, physically handicapped, or obviously unstable characters will not be recruited.

PLAYER Influence provided:  or  (pick one)

Professional trainings: Awareness, Blood Charms, Politics, Ritual: Blessing of Skill, Ritual: Curse of Ineptitude, Ritual: Curse of Poverty, Ritual: Dispel Magic, Ritual: Prophecy, Ritual: Protection from Magic, Ritual: Scrying, Savoir Faire, The Protective Circle

Professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Diplomacy, Forgery, Humanities, Hypnosis, Martial Arts, Meditation, Occult, Pilot, Ritual: Ceremonial or Taoist

PULLING STRINGS

Libraries: The Montague Club headquarters in San Francisco boasts one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of occult materials. Due to the exclusive nature of the Club, access to this library is limited. A Df4 Influence test is required for admittance. The library has a Quality Rating of Excellent (-1Df to all tests) with regard to occult and ritual research. Individual members keep their own libraries at various locations. A Df3 test is required to gain access to these. Such libraries invariably have a Good Quality Rating (+2t to all tests).

Wealthy: Members of the Montague Club are all rich, and used to the privileges such money brings. All members of the Montague club gain the Wealthy trait at no CP cost.

Club Assistance: Any full member can request that the local governors grant access to the full resources of the club. All such requests are judged on their general usefulness to the club at large, as well as by the services already rendered by the member requesting aid. In general, a Df3 test is necessary. Particularly burdensome requests require a Df4 test. Some requests are granted automatically, if the governors or Executive Council can be convinced of their merit. If the request is granted, the aid may be of any sort. Skills, money, pulling strings may all be provided. Further, the most experienced magicians (Ritual: Taoist 3) in the local region will aid the individual free of charge. In return, several times a year the Executive Council or local Board will call upon all members to assist them in projects for the benefit the entire club. Most such projects include large-scale manipulations of public opinion, eliminating dangerous rival corporations or magical groups, and contract missions for the Black Book.

Influence: Because of their contacts and focus, all member of the Montague Club are power brokers to some extent. Each member begins with an Influence of 2, and Influence increases cost only 12 CPs each.



DARK CULTS

The most obviously dangerous cabals are composed of people working together towards some strange and twisted goal. This might be the worship of a deity that demands human sacrifice, a plot to let demons walk the earth, or simply the destruction of some government, or organization. Those who are drawn into these types of organizations are often highly unstable fanatics who care more about accomplishing their goals than about anything else, including their own survival and sanity. A few members of such groups will even willingly attempt to become Incarnate in order to attain the powers which corruption offers. They rarely have difficulty attaining this goal. Since most humans will not turn against their fellows without provocation, most dark cults have twisted but charismatic leaders as their focus. In some cases, this human leader is only a figurehead and the true heart of the cult is a malevolent spirit that speaks through the leader.

USING DARK CULTS IN YOUR GAME

Dark cults bent on spreading chaos and destruction are a wonderful addition to any Conspiracy X game. The key to making them more than a generic group of insane villains is deciding upon their motives.

MAGICAL TERRORISTS: Some groups might be motivated by an obsessive desire to destroy an organization or government that they view as evil. Like any terrorists, the ends justify the means. Such people do not care who gets hurt as long as the world is cleansed of the evil they perceive. The insidious thing about magical terrorists is that much of the destruction they cause will seem to have perfectly natural causes. Magically caused murder usually looks like a random house fire or an unexpected heart attack. Fortunately, few magical terrorists will pass up an opportunity to engage in mundane murder and destruction. These groups are most easily detected though their non-magical acts.

Magical terrorists almost always have comprehensible, if twisted motives. While a number of these groups are lead by Incarnate Prophets, their basic motives remain fully human. They seek the destruction of some organization that performs or has performed evil acts. These evil acts (in the cultists' minds) can range from violating religious taboos, to oppressing or refusing to oppress various peoples.

SERVANTS OF EVIL POWERS: Other groups have more esoteric motives. Spirits sometimes appear spontaneously at a Pool or a Locus. Other spirits occasionally appear when a ritual fails. Many of these spirits or demons will contact nearby people and promise them vast rewards. A high price tag is always attached to such bargains. While a few spirits merely ask for their servants to perform bizarre and incomprehensible acts like leaving strange offerings at the mouths of alleys, many ask for more sinister services, including human sacrifice.

No one knows why such acts benefit spirits and demons, but many occultists theorize that these beings subsist on the energies and emotions released by various actions and events. Spirits who savor joy or religious awe may recruit followers among occultists, but their servants usually end up as harmless eccentrics. Unfortunately, spirits that need fear, pain and death to survive seem especially common. Spirits can easily read a human's aura and they will almost always choose servants who are on some level willing to perform the services asked of them. Continued service usually leads to the corruption of the already unstable servants. Most spirits find the fanatical dedication of the Incarnate and the Forsaken useful and are more than happy to aid in the corruption of their allies.

The most twisted of these spirits often promise that their servants' efforts will result in the spirit gaining great power and rising up to rule a world transformed into its own image. The servants are promised a place of great power in this new world. Whether any of these spirits can actually fulfill their terrible plans is up to the individual GM. While world-shattering threats make excellent motivations, if the PCs fail, the consequences could be more extreme than either players or GM want. More importantly, a multitude of ancient demons of vast power, all vying to rise up and rule the ruins of a destroyed world rapidly becomes both pointless and silly.

The heinous actions of the spirit's human agents should serve as sufficient motivation for the players. Also, even if the PCs strongly suspect that the spirit's claims of world domination are merely empty promises made to motivate its servants, absolute proof is hard to find when dealing with the supernatural. If even a minute chance exists that the world will be destroyed, the matter must be addressed.

DARK CULT PLAYER CHARACTERS

Although unusual, a player may want to roleplay a member of a dark cult. To allow the character to be part of an outside organization, the cult's leader must believe that the character is able to gather power or wealth for that leader. Thus, whether actually working for Aegis or the dark cult, the character will be given special dispensation to work with members of Aegis. Of course, if some recompense is not forthcoming regularly, such as new rituals, new or high-tech items, or even alien artifacts, the leader will revoke his blessing and most likely dispose of the character.

THE CHILDREN OF RAGNAROK

Transcript of Speech

by Jerome Tanner, Grand Master, Children of Ragnarok

published in Blood and Iron, The Real Truth

Greetings, my breathren. I thank you and praise you for once again listening to my words. Your devotion shows that you walk the path to salvation and empowerment. You have heard the call to arms and have heeded the words of truth that lie deep in your soul. You know that you are destined for greatness, and your presense with me here today screams in the face of those that would destroy us and continue to enslave us.

Make no mistake, our day will soon be upon us. It cannot be delayed, and it cannot be stopped. If we are strong, we shall rule in a world of blood and iron. We are the true and chosen servants of our leader Surtur, lord of fire giants, scourge of weakness, and slayer of the impure races. In his name we strive, and in his name we shall soon rule. As the gates between the fiery realms and our own open, we shall have our one and only chance to destroy the corrupt rule of the non-Aryans. If we seize this moment and triumph, we shall rule in Surtur's name for millennia. If we fail, the white race may well be extinguished in the coming days of darkness and oppression. We are fighting to be free, yes, but more, we are fighting to assume our rightful place as rulers.

Such ascension comes with a cost. We must be ready and willing to do anything to achieve our goals. Those that oppose us believe no less. We must not fail for lack of will. We must not turn away from our rightful destiny and give the day to our enemies for lack of effort.

The people we kill and the places we destroy may seem random. In part, this is done to confuse our many enemies, but this destruction is part of a larger pattern which Surtur has shown to me. Each act of terror, each death breaks another small hole in the wall between his dimension and our own. When enough breaks have been made, he will rend the barriers and come through to aid us, his true children. The Jews, the Blacks, and their Quislings, the Liberals, all oppose us. If they knew our plans they would slay us without mercy. Our wills must be strong and we must keep silent about our plans. One word uttered to the wrong person could bring their foul hordes down upon us.



THE LEADERS

Started by Jerome Tanner, a disaffected neo-Nazi, the Children of Ragnarok are a cult dedicated to destroying the existing social order in a fiery blaze of destruction. When the ashes settle, the Children plan to lead the newly-cleaned world out of the ruins and into an endless regime of blood and iron.

Jerome Tanner was a security guard with little future when he became involved with the neo-Nazi movement through his fascination with World War II-era Nazi paraphernalia. In 1992, at a gun show in Kansas City, an elderly woman who referred to herself only as Hel approached Jerome. She told him of her experiences in WWII with the SS. As they talked further, she offered to teach him some special Nazi secrets in return for help with some of her plans.

Hel taught Jerome the basics of ritual magic. Hel's divinations had lead her to Jerome because he was a Supernatural Focus of great power and a willing student. Jerome proved to be extremely adept at occult studies and rapidly mastered everything Hel had to teach him. Finally, Hel asked Jerome to perform a special ritual to bind the two of them together. In reality, the ritual corrupted Jerome, who has been slowly becoming a Purifier Prophet ever since. Jerome's will is strong, so the process of corruption is quite slow. Jerome has merely noticed that he has become more charismatic and has begun attracting followers.

Hel claimed that during her days in the SS she was contacted by the spirit of the Norse Fire Giant Surtur. Surtur promised her a place by his side if she would help free him from his confinement, to cleanse the earth with fire. Surtur would then rule over the glorious new world. Hel told Jerome that she realized that she would need a partner to complete the preparations for Surtur's return, and selected him. Once Surtur has been freed, she has promised Jerome that they will both take their place at his side, to rule in his name.

In actuality, Hel is an elderly occultist who found several Nazi books on Ceremonial magic while visiting Paris a few years ago. When she performed the rituals in the books, she was corrupted and rapidly became an Alchemist Adept. She has significant power, but she wants much more. She believes that in a past life she was once the Fire Giant Surtur, and that if the proper rituals are performed, her true nature will be revealed. At that point, she is convinced that she will gain unlimited power. She needs the help of many others to perform these rituals. Being aware that she is old and not terribly charismatic, she set out to find an appropriate puppet. Feeding Jerome's dreams of power, Hel, whose actual name is Agnes Kurtz, has managed to acquire a willing servant. Hel is also quite paranoid and wishes to avoid the attention and the danger that being at the head of a cult involves. Jerome has proved to be an excellent cult leader and only the two of them know that Hel is actually in charge of the entire cult.

THE GROWTH OF THE CULT

As Jerome became increasingly enchanted by the power promised by Hel, he grew too erratic and strange for his fellow members in the neo-Nazi organization. They threatened him and told him to leave. He left, and within a week, several of them had burned to death in their homes. Particularly crazed neo-Nazis, sociopaths and people on the far fringe of the occult community began to cluster around Jerome. Naming his new organization the Children of Ragnarok, Jerome has proved to be an excellent, if insane leader. Jerome teaches his followers that the current world is corrupt and ruled by inferior races. The true race, which he calls Aryans but whose only criteria appear to be membership in his cult, are oppressed and denied their rightful place, and the false gods of the inferior peoples have displaced the worship of the pure Aryan deities.

Jerome leads his members in magical worship services to honor and give power to these Aryan deities, especially Surtur. As part of these services, the group also works magic to aid them and to help further Hel's plan. Hel has told Jerome that Surtur must have help to bring about the inevitable cataclysm. In addition to performing rituals to sow chaos and destruction throughout the nation, the Children of Ragnarok perform a series of rituals at special places and times around the nation. Hel claims that the cataclysm will begin in several years, when this series of rituals is complete.

MAGICAL PRACTICE

The Children of Ragnarok are essentially old-style European Ceremonial magicians. Their rituals involve a large number of complex props, including swords, wands, central fires, special robes and jewelry. Based upon Nazi occultism, their magic has been strongly influenced by Nazi symbolism. SS Daggers, WWII Nazi insignia and similar accouterments are used in the rituals whenever possible. All new members are forced to give Hel and Jerome samples of their hair and blood. These are used to make black magic protection charms for Hel, Jerome and their lieutenants, known as the Wolves, to wear while engaged in ritual practice. Members who become corrupted are allowed to continue in their membership, and most become even more devoted to the cult. Currently over 50 of the group's approximately 500 members have been corrupted.

Children of Ragnarok Nomenclature

Neither Jerome nor Hel have much use for a deep or rich theory of magic. They adopt terms and concepts as they see fit, and discard them just as easily. For the most part, cultists practice magic by rote and under the sole direction of Jerome, who is carefully instructed by Hel. The magic is sustained by blind obedience, servile faith and the guiding hand of Jerome or Hel. Consistent theory or terms are superfluous.

LOCATION

Jerome and Hel live in Springfield, Illinois (or any similar small Midwestern city which is convenient for your campaign). They live in a large old house on the edge of town. The house was bought with donations from the cult members augmented with prosperity rituals. The house is also home to two low-level cult members who act as their servants. The cult has members in Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee, but Hel maintains the headquarters in Springfield to decrease the possibility of media coverage. The cult has a strong following in Springfield, but the vast majority of the town think of the members of the cult as "Nazi weirdoes." Hel has made a point of staging the larger cult rituals and most of the cult's destructive activities in the surrounding cities in a further effort to avoid too much local publicity.

STRUCTURE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Hel is firmly in charge of the cult. She claims to speak for Surtur and Jerome hangs on Surtur's every word. To the rest of the members, Jerome is the head of the cult and Hel is merely an elderly aid and disciple. The cult is run very autocratically. All rituals are either performed directly by Jerome and Hel, or are designed by them and given to trusted members to perform exactly as they are written. Even rituals performed purely for personal gain must be approved by Jerome. All members are presented with contracts of loyalty and service to be signed in blood. Jerome and Hel are quite willing to use this blood as a psychic connection to harm or destroy members who disobey them.

The cult has a strict hierarchy. Directly under Jerome are the six Wolves. A pair of Wolves each are in charge of the branches in St. Louis, Kansas City, and Indianapolis. Even though the cult only has around 500 members, an inordinate number of titles and offices have been created and assigned. Jerome claims that soon the cult's membership will grow by "more than a factor of ten."

Like Jerome, the vast majority of the members are lower-middle class or poorer. Many recruits are from rural areas or small towns and very few have had any education beyond high school. All had extreme racial views before they were recruited. From this rather dubious pool of applicants, Hel has used both a shrewd knowledge of human behavior and magical divination to select those members who are both willing and able to perform the desired rituals. The Wolves and their aids are responsible for teaching the doctrine of the cult and the basics of ritual magic to all applicants. Most new members are with the cult for at least six months before they are allowed to participate in any of the rituals.

No one in the cult other than Jerome knows about Hel's supposed connection with the SS. Hel has convinced Jerome that she must be protected from the many forces arrayed against them, and Jerome is quite willing to guard her and her secrecy with his life. Hel is aware that if something goes wrong with the cult Jerome is quite likely to be killed. She has already picked out several possible replacements among the upper rank of the disciples.

ACTIVITIES

So far, the rituals performed by this organization have done little other than cause a small amount of local destruction. The requirements of magical ritual, combined with the narrow-minded thinking of the members, have so far limited their efforts to petty acts of magical vandalism in their local area, and a few rituals of illness and injury directed at local politicians and other important figures. Jerome and the Wolves have taught most of the members the basics of magical practice. In addition to all gathering together to work the most powerful rituals, members of the group occasionally violate cult law and work magic separately from Jerome.

Recently, the group has completed all of the necessary rituals in the vicinity of the Midwestern cities where the group is based. Jerome soon plans to send groups of followers to various Pools and Loci throughout the nation. The eventual goal is to link all of these Pools and Loci together. At that point, a series of rituals will be commenced simultaneously. A vast network of supernatural power will be created, and so open the way for Surtur to appear.

HOW AEGIS CAN BECOME INVOLVED

Aegis Cells may become aware of the existence and activities of this organization through a variety of means. A number of non-magical neo-Nazi organizations are aware of the Children of Ragnarok, though most consider the members to be useless and deluded. Also, several members of the group have been unable to refrain from boasting of their efforts. As a result of these boasts, one member of the group, Leonard James, was even arrested in connection with the death of a local civil-right lawyer. Unfortunately, the police were unable to prove any connection between the individual and the lawyer's death. Shortly after he was released on bail, Leonard, who had boasted about several other rituals to outsiders, was hit by a car and remains in a coma. The police have dropped all investigations relating to Leonard James.

The key to any successful investigation will be uncovering Hel's role in the cult. She is quite intelligent and unlike many Incarnate, except for her paranoia, and her obsession with unlocking more of her perceived magical potential, Hel is quite sane. In contrast, Jerome's personality is becoming increasingly lost in the archetype of the destroying Prophet. As this process continues, his delusions will be increasingly obvious and most people in his home town who are not among the ranks of his followers will have odd stories to tell about him.

CHILDREN OF RAGNAROK PLAYER CHARACTERS

Many Children of Ragnarok have negative Psych Profile traits. More than a few have been Corrupted by the Supernatural. No cult member may be Wealthy or Highly Educated.

CULTIST

Influence provided: 

Professional trainings: Awareness, Blood Charms, Ritual: Cause Wound, Ritual: Curse of Ineptitude, Ritual: Dispel Magic, Ritual: Hasten Corruption, Ritual: Induce Cardiac Arrest, Ritual: Infection, Ritual: Sacrifice, Survival

Professional skills: Brawling, Diplomacy, Drive, Forgery, Hypnosis, Meditation, Occult, Ritual: Ceremonial, Small Arms: Pistol

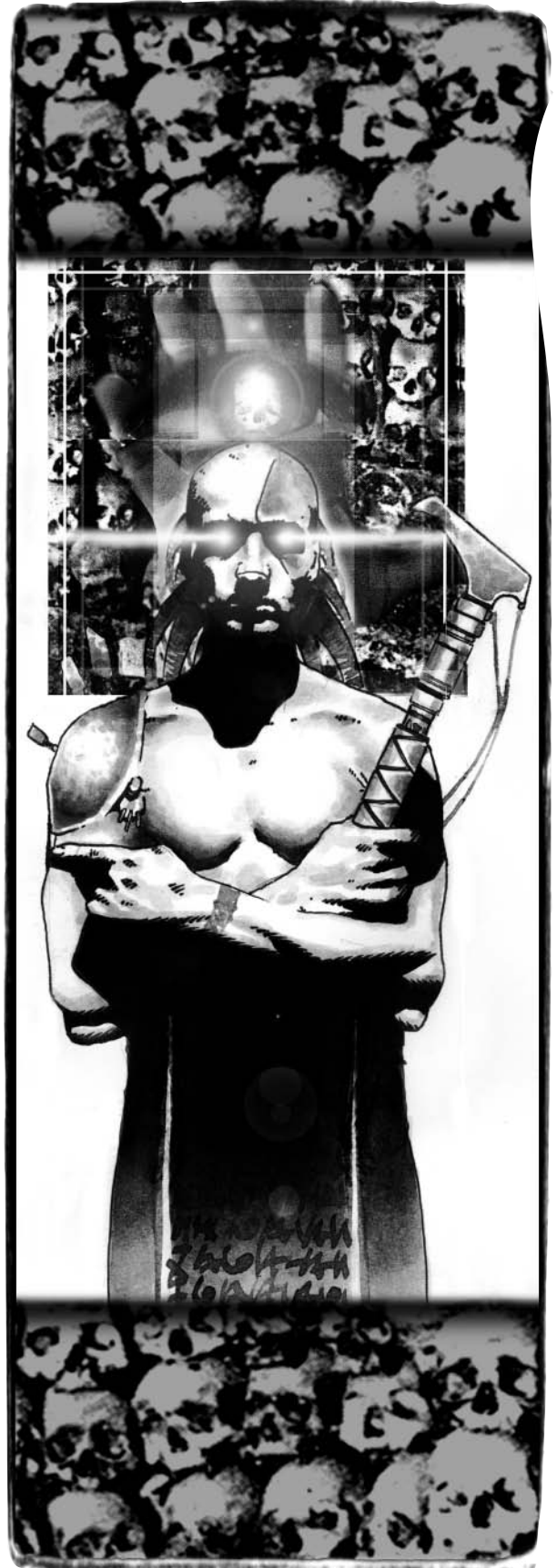
PULLING STRINGS

Contact with Supernatural: The corrupted among the Children are held in particular esteem. The Incarnate and Forsaken are honored even more. A cult member may call upon the aid of an Incarnate (Df4 Influence test), or a Forsaken (Df3 Influence test) at any time. The conditions and nature of the assistance is up to the Game Master, but the members wishes will be considered.

Criminal Allies: Many members have served time in a penal institution at one point or another. The rest have strong criminal ties. This gives each member the Criminal Connection trait, but his ties are assumed to be universal inside the United States. Cult members may use any Criminal Connection pulling string without restriction in the cult's home city, and in the branch cities. In other places, each time a specific ability is used, all further attempts to gain help in that area are +1Df. A particular location's penalty may be eliminated if the member does some sort of "favor" for the criminal elements that provide the aid (GM's discretion). The penalty process begins anew after any such "favor" is completed satisfactorily.

Local Law Enforcement: Horrific as it seems, the Children have their sympathizers in the local law enforcement community. This grants each member the Police Connection trait. For obvious reasons, these connections must be kept very secretive, and all Influence tests to pull law enforcement strings are at +1Df.

Teaching: The Children of Ragnarok have no formal library. To receive instruction, a member must seek permission from Jerome or one of the Wolves. The provision of such teaching is entirely up to the Game Master (but at least a Df2 Influence test is required), and must be sufficiently justified. Jerome has little time to devote to the rank and file, but just about any Wolf will be susceptible to flattery or promises of personal loyalty. Of course, such promises will be called upon for a variety of distasteful acts. If the GM grants this teaching to a character, they receive the Instructor: Mentor trait (see Chapter Three: Secrets) for a duration determined by the Game Master.







CHAPTER 6

ENLIGHTENMENT

SEEPAGE AND HISTORY

To outsiders, the history of magic and the occult entails a bizarre series of madmen and crazed cults that arise spontaneously and dissolve quickly. Magicians and occult scholars sift for patterns amid the chaos, and discover the vast and obscure histories of the many secret societies that have existed throughout human history. All but a few seekers are satisfied with these answers, and look no further. A very few dig even deeper and find yet another layer of secrets waiting.

Humans are not alone on the Earth, and some of the other beings here on Earth seek to manipulate and control humanity. Since several of these non-human groups have a deep and abiding interest in magic and the occult, it is unsurprising that the true history of human magic is intimately tied up with the hidden factions which seek to rule mankind.

Readers should note that most of the information discussed below focuses on mystic developments in Europe and the western hemisphere. Parallels can be drawn from this material to other areas of the globe, but obviously the specifics will vary. The following information is of primary use in an Aegis-based campaign.

EARLY HISTORY

Until the human revolt against their Atlantean overlords around 10,000 B.C., the Atlanteans largely regarded magic as a minor force which might eventually become useful in their millennia-long struggle against the Greys. However, the pre-human Pilosi recognized the full potential of magic even before the humans that produced the mystic energies. The Pilosi occasionally taught rebel humans who had escaped Atlantean domination the secrets of ritual magic. Human shamanism derives from the Pilosi, the majority of which are natural shamans. With help from the Pilosi, human rebels and revolutionaries plotted to overthrow the Atlanteans and free humanity from their rule. Approximately 12,000 years ago, the human Akki'r led a revolt which began in the Atlantean city of Tro'don. This revolt, aided by Pilosi magics and the mystic substance called orichalcum, eventually destroyed the city of Tro'don.

Fear of the magic used in this attack was directly responsible for the Atlantean decision to destroy their great citadels and seek to rule humans in a less direct fashion as gods and hidden overlords. The destruction of Tro'don convinced most Atlanteans that magic was a potent weapon. Some viewed it as a threat, while others saw it as a powerful tool, but all of them recognized that magic was a force of great power.

Since that time, both the Pilosi and the Atlanteans have maintained a keen interest in human magicians and magical practices. For many years, the Pilosi sought out human magicians as companions and students, in an effort to help bridge the gap between the two species. The Atlanteans worked hard to foster prejudice against the Pilosi, but the Pilosi continued to walk among humans disguised by powerful illusions. They also began to kidnap human children who possessed significant magical potential. These children would be taught the true nature of the Pilosi and invariably became strong allies.

Whether isolated or integrated, the Pilosi were always deeply concerned with mystic matters. Most Atlanteans addressed magic only in an effort to eliminate it. A few Atlanteans, however, did begin to investigate magic. This was not an easy task. All Atlanteans are Voids and incapable of perceiving all but the most obvious magical effects. In order to study human magic, the Atlanteans visited human magicians, usually in the guise of gods or powerful spirits. Sometimes they rewarded the humans with small nanotech devices that were seen as items of powerful magic. Other times, the Atlantean kept a careful watch and interacted often, learning all it could about the magicians' abilities. In a number of cases, the magician began to resent the Atlantean's interference, and overconfident, threatened the Atlantean in some fashion. These magicians were killed, usually in a highly obvious fashion to deter others with similar thoughts.

Atlantean nanotechnology is incredibly powerful and versatile, but human magic can foretell the future and transcend the limitations of time and space in a manner impossible for even the most advanced conventional technologies. These powers had a great appeal for those few Atlanteans who did not simply wish to eradicate all magic. In typical Atlantean fashion, those who decided to study magic did so for many hundreds of years. In time, and in spite of their limitations, these Atlanteans gradually came to a basic understanding of the rules and parameters of magic. In this era, they also collected a wide variety of magical books, and even a few enchanted items created by early Adepts. The Atlanteans also learned the true nature of the Incarnate and the Forsaken and feared their power. A few of the Incarnate proved to be too powerful for the Atlanteans. The Atlantean Ori'don was even killed by one of the Incarnate. After this disaster, the Atlanteans often supplied human heroes with special weapons to help them hunt down and kill all members of the Incarnate they found.

By the 8th century B.C., the worst of the Incarnate infestations had all been banished and most human magicians had been co-opted by the various Atlantean-run temples. The fear and distrust of independent, free-thinking magicians found in most human civilizations was fostered by Atlanteans who feared magicians they could not control.

For both Atlanteans and humans, the next 1,000 years was an era of great progress in the study of the occult. The foundations of Taoist magic were developed in China. An early variety of Ceremonial magic arose in Persia and was further refined in Hellenistic Egypt. The large states of this era had sufficient wealth and power to support a number of priests and other government-sponsored magicians. Behind these states, watching carefully, the Atlanteans observed and directed much of the magical research of the day. By the end of this era, Atlanteans had amassed an enormous quantity of occult information, but that material was scattered and, as usual, was rarely shared. Further, although most Atlanteans possessed more occult knowledge, more books of rituals, and a greater understanding of the occult than any human, and they were completely incapable of using any of this knowledge.

By the 4th century B.C., the Atlanteans studying the occult understood it well enough to embark upon a lengthy campaign to use the Seepage for their own ends. From helping them in their on-going conflict with the Greys to granting them vast powers, a few Atlanteans wished to have the powers of the Seepage at their command. Several Atlanteans even dreamed of developing nanotechnology that would give them direct access to the Seepage. However, the majority of the Atlanteans feared magic and continually strove to eliminate its use among humanity. By the 2nd century B.C., a compromise was reached and this magical research was mostly confined to isolated monasteries in the East and to Atlantean-controlled mystery cults in the West.

The classical mystery cults, like the Orphic, Isiac, and Elusinian mysteries, were all fronts for Atlantean activity. Atlanteans played the roll of the various gods who appeared in the highest-level ceremonies. They directed the cults through the priests and used the cults to continue their researches and to serve various political ends.

THE WANE OF THE PILOSI

By the 2nd or 3rd century B.C., as humans continued to expand and the Pilosi continued to be killed or driven away, the Pilosi began to acknowledge their failure. Most Pilosi retreated from all contact with humanity. However, legends of ancient inhuman magicians who were marked in some fashion still remain. The two most famous of these non-human magicians were Hanuman, the monkey-god of Hindu legend, and Hermes Trismegistus, also known as Hermes-Thoth, named after the baboon-headed god Thoth. Hermes-Thoth taught the secrets of magic and magical metalworking techniques to the ancient Egyptians and later to a few Greek magicians.

In these early days, the Pilosi who refused to abandon humanity sometimes even mated with humans. The children of such unions usually had powerful magical gifts. Merlin, the magician at King Arthur's court was a half-breed Pilosi, as were Simon Magus and the Taoist alchemist Yu Tzu.

In response to Atlantean machinations, Pilosi in China worked with Taoist monks and hermits to influence various Chinese emperors. In the West, some Pilosi continued to kidnap various magically gifted humans, including the famous British prophet and musician Thomas the Rhymer. These humans lived among the Pilosi and learned to see the world as the Pilosi did. A few of these individuals took home "faerie" husbands and brides. Even today, especially in Ireland, the last stronghold of the European Pilosi, numerous children are born with various magical "faerie gifts" like Sensitive and Supernatural Focus. These children often prove to be natural magicians as well.

While many continental European and English rulers were unwitting pawns of the Atlanteans, Scotland and Ireland remained Pilosi strongholds until quite late. The English campaign to wipe out Irish and Scottish culture which began in the 7th century A.D., including the Catholic effort to stamp out the Celtic Christian Church, was in large part motivated by an Atlantean plot to wipe out the Irish and Scottish Pilosi. This plan succeeded in Scotland, but a few Pilosi still survive in Ireland. In France, the last Pilosi died with their Cathar allies in the thirteenth century. The Cathars were a heretical sect of Christianity, which preached spiritual perfection and a distrust of authority.

By this time, the vast majority of Pilosi in Europe had been killed or driven out. The Inquisition was developed in the 14th century to root out heretics and political enemies to the Church. The Inquisition also served to hunt down the last few Pilosi-trained magicians in Western Europe. Unfortunately, this plan worked a bit too well, and the Inquisition began hunting down everyone who practiced magic, including those engaged in research for the Atlanteans.

THE RESURGENCE OF SECRET SOCIETIES

With the Piloni threat removed, the European-based Atlanteans who continued to study magic reasserted themselves. To protect their work from the threat of the Inquisition, and to continue the Atlantean practice of keeping the magic hidden from the vast majority of humanity, these Atlanteans recreated a less obviously religious version of the old mystery cults. These new secret societies allowed powerful humans to gather together and make plans, under the watchful eyes of the disguised Atlanteans in their midst. In addition, these same secret societies became an excellent place for Atlanteans with an interest in the supernatural to train magicians and psychics, and to engage in magical experiments.

The idea of secret societies spread rapidly among the Atlanteans. Soon, they reached every corner of the civilized society. While less openly hostile than their European counterparts, the human rulers of China and the Middle Eastern were still quite suspicious of magicians who performed unusual and potentially dangerous experiments. The secret societies run by the Atlanteans provided a perfect setting for the humans to practice magic with no outside interference.

By the 16th century, Freemasonry and a few of the other Atlantean-run secret societies were firmly in place. The elaborate titles and strict hierarchy that marked most European secret societies were a direct result of their Atlantean origins. These secret societies were ostensibly private clubs for the wealthy, where influential people met and exchanged information. Most of the non-Atlantean secret societies created by imaginative humans were nothing more than that. However, the Atlantean-created societies were also places where Atlanteans could discretely influence important humans as well as engaging in occult research. In typical Atlantean fashion, most of these organizations had highly complex and secretive structures. Not only did none of the human members realize that the organizations were actually run by non-humans, most of the human members never even knew that they belonged to an organization which had the study and practice of magic as one of its primary purposes.

Like all Atlantean-derived organizations, these secret societies were inherently unstable. Competition, in-fighting, and constant rivalry between different societies and within a single society meant that few of these organizations lasted more than a hundred years and most did not outlive their human founders. However, splinter groups and rival organizations formed constantly and the Atlanteans monitored most of these groups and secretly controlled the ones that looked most promising.

While most Atlanteans who were interested in the occult were content to work behind the scenes, controlling large secret societies, a few took a more direct approach. The most famous of these Atlanteans was known in the 16th century as John Dee. Dee studied everything about the occult known to the Atlanteans. He devised complex and elaborate rituals to contact various spirits and uncover answers about the true nature and potential of magic. Unfortunately, he was entirely incapable of performing these rituals on his own. He was forced to use Edward Kelley, a powerful Sensitive and Supernatural Focus who was also a rather inept British con man. Dee designed the rituals for Kelley, who performed them and talked to the spirits that appeared. Dee formulated the questions, Kelley asked the spirits and relayed their responses to Dee. Dee's grand effort was largely a failure. Many of the spirits communicated though telepathy instead of actual speech and Kelley's mind proved incapable of fully understanding the concepts conveyed to him. Since that time, several Atlanteans, including Dee himself, have been searching for intelligent, highly trained occultists in an attempt to repeat these same experiments with a partner more able to produce useful results.



However, in the 16th and 17th century, the failure of Dee's efforts and the fragmented nature of the secret societies greatly limited the magical knowledge gained during this era. While these societies allowed the Atlanteans to influence the fate of nations using both magical and mundane means, their long-term accomplishments were few.

Around this time the scientific revolution began, and in the West, belief in magic and the supernatural faded. The Atlanteans who abhorred magic users instigated this social upheaval to uncover their fellows who attempted to study and master the supernatural. Most Atlanteans encouraged human disbelief in the supernatural and by the early 19th century, in the West, only the superstitious and uneducated still believed in magic.

THE VICTORIAN OCCULT REVIVAL

The rise of colonialism in the 19th century finally provided the Pilosi with a chance to once again influence European civilization. In the mid-19th century, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky emigrated from Russia to the United States. She settled in New York and used her prodigious magical gifts to become a popular spirit medium. In time, she married Henry Steel Olcott and, urged on by dreams sent by the Pilosi, the couple visited India, hoping to discover spiritual enlightenment. They visited powerful Pilosi who lived in jungles of India and were magically transported to a Pilosi stronghold in Tibet. There they were taught that humanity must learn to use both scientific rationalism and magic to reach its true potential. Convinced of the value of this message, Blavatsky and her husband returned to the United States and in 1875 founded the Theosophical Society, which was dedicated to allowing everyone to unlock their full magical potential.

Once this new threat was recognized, the European Atlanteans responded in kind and convinced a prominent British member of the Theosophical Society, Dr. Wynn Wescott, that magic was inherently dangerous and should be kept secret from the ignorant masses, who might misuse it. Working with S.L. MacGregor Mathers, a Masonically trained magician, he formed the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1888. The Order of the Golden Dawn sought out magically gifted individuals, especially among the middle and upper classes, and carefully trained them in typical secret society fashion. Their leaders directed the performance a wide variety of rituals, some of which served to thwart the aims of the Pilosi, while others were used to influence more mundane events in the 19th century. In addition, the Golden Dawn served as a way to co-opt a large number of magically interested and talented people, keeping them and their money out of the hands of the Theosophists. Most importantly, many prominent British literary figures were members of the Golden Dawn, and Golden Dawn ideas were spread in the poetry of Yeats and the popular writings of Bulwer Lytton.

The Atlanteans planned to expand the Golden Dawn throughout Europe and the United States. Unfortunately, they had not counted on Aleister Crowley. Born in 1875, Crowley was likely the most magically gifted human of the 19th century. Drawn to the vast magical knowledge held by the Golden Dawn, Crowley joined the secretive group in 1898. He rapidly became a close associate of Mathers. Unknown to Mathers, Crowley's powerful magics enabled him to notice that one of Mathers' visitors was not entirely human. This visitor was actually an Atlantean who was checking up on Mathers. Crowley devoted himself to trying to learn more about this mysterious visitor. After numerous divination rituals Crowley became certain that the Golden Dawn was secretly controlled by malevolent non-human interests. He tried to convince Mathers to rid the Order of this influence. The attempt failed and the two engaged in a magical duel which left Mathers seriously ill and under a curse which caused him to be thrown out of the Order in 1900. Crowley left and founded his own magical society. Shortly before WWI, the Golden Dawn fragmented from the same in-fighting and conspiracies that destroyed almost all Atlantean-influenced secret societies. However, Crowley's OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis) still exists today.

Crowley never worked with either the Atlanteans or the Pilosi, and never knew more than the vaguest of hints about either group. However, he had a major effect on both of their plans for humanity's investigation of the occult. Crowley had no use for secrecy for its own sake and published a large amount of Golden Dawn material as well as a number of his own books. For the first time ever, books that actually described the basics of occult practice were printed in mass-market editions. The explosion of occult interest and knowledge in the 20th century was in large part due to Crowley's actions.

THE 20TH CENTURY

The 20th century has been a time of great discoveries in the occult. Crowley and numerous magicians who followed after him had grown up as well-educated members of a society that believed in scientific rationalism as the basis of its philosophy. The blend of scientific thought and occult practice proved to be extremely powerful. Human magicians learned a great deal about the theoretical basic behind magic and shared this knowledge widely, first through books and letters, and most recently over the Internet. While the Atlanteans already possessed much of this knowledge, they were severely handicapped by their inability to perceive most subjective supernatural phenomena. Further, normal, mundane human intuition proved beyond the Atlanteans. Mastery of the true nature of magic seemed as unattainable as ever for the Atlanteans.

In response to the disruption of the Golden Dawn by Crowley, the few Atlanteans who remained interested in the occult turned their efforts to more secretive organizations. A number of the groups of magical power-brokers were started and directed by Atlanteans. Fortunately, each of these organizations is usually under the control of a single Atlantean, and Atlanteans are rarely inclined to work together. If the Atlanteans controlling these organizations ever decided to cooperate, they would control much of the economy and many of the governments of the First World. However, this cooperation is never likely to occur. In fact, a number of these groups actively work against each other. The stock market crash of 1929 was in part caused by conflict between three such organizations.

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

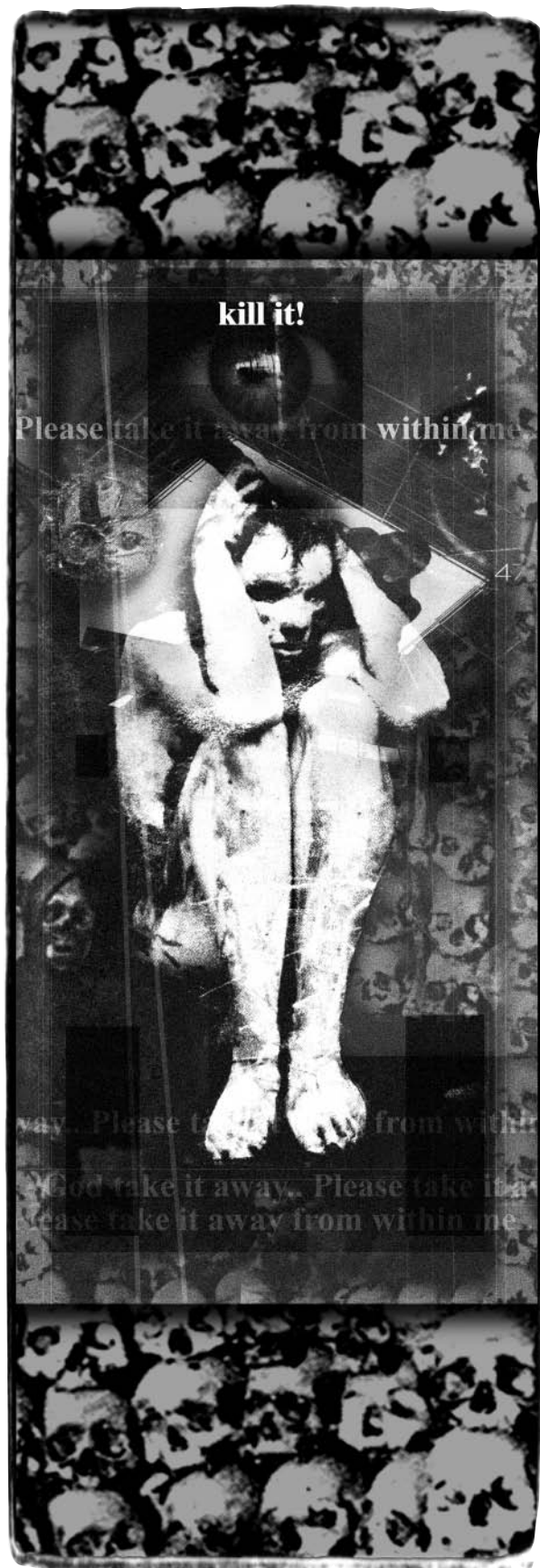
In the 1920s and 30s, various Golden Dawn splinter groups spread throughout Britain and the United States. These groups trained a number of prominent occultists. Unfortunately, this renewed interest in the occult was not confined to occult scholars. In Austria, Adolf Lanz founded the Germanen Order in 1912. This group had as its basis a series of rambling documents written by mad occultist Gourenot des Mousseaux in 1869. Mousseaux had somehow uncovered evidence of the Atlantean efforts to control humanity. Unfortunately, he was an extreme anti-Semite and immediately assumed that these secret manipulators must be Jews. Influenced by these documents and their own prejudices, Lanz and his fellows also assumed that the Jews were attempting to control the world.

From these small beginnings the belief in the bogus international Jewish conspiracy was born. A few members of these early anti-Semitic groups were powerful magicians who used their magics to uncover further evidence of Atlantean involvement inhuman affairs. However, their prejudices never allowed them to see beyond their certainty that the Atlanteans were Jews. This movement disgusted a few Atlanteans, but many more were fascinated in humanity's irrational hatred. None felt compelled to put a stop to it because human life meant little to the immortals, and they feared that discrediting the Jewish conspiracy might accidentally reveal more about the Atlantean conspiracy.

In 1931, Hitler and Himmler were initiated into the most powerful of these German occult organizations, the Secret Doctrine. When Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, he decided that the only way to put an end to the inhuman threat to humanity was to exterminate every Jew in the world, along with other groups like gypsies and homosexuals who he believed were allied with the Jews in their effort to control the world. In a surprising display of cooperation, a number of occult groups, including several offshoots of both the Theosophical Society and the Golden Dawn worked together to help stop the Nazi occult threat. These occult groups, like nearly everyone else in Europe and elsewhere, however, did little to prevent the wholesale slaughter of the Jews. Again, few Atlanteans cared, and those that did let their own interest in secrecy dictate their actions.

After the war, the Pilosi made another attempt to transform Western culture away from its hierarchical Atlantean-based structure. When Gerald B. Gardner founded the new religion of Wicca based upon Pilosi-derived writings carefully preserved by a few rural British mystics, the Pilosi decided that the time might be right to use religion to spread their influence. In the early 1960s, the Pilosi sent dreams designed to spread their ideas to prominent psychically open people like Professor Timothy Leary and Dr. John Lilly. Other Pilosi also influenced Westerners to investigate a wide variety of natural psychedelic drugs that enabled them to temporarily perceive the world in a manner similar to that used by the Pilosi. Many of the wealthy and dissatisfied youth of Europe and the United States traveled to the Far East and other remote corners of the globe in search of other ways of life. The Pilosi used dreams and visions to influence many of these travelers. Some even met with a few of them and sent them back as messengers of a new way of life.

These Pilosi efforts in part created the counterculture movement of the 1960s. The study of magic was an intrinsic part of this counterculture. From the basics of meditation to learning to see auras or directly experience the life within a plant or animal, Pilosi-derived techniques spread throughout the West. The increased environmental awareness of the 1960s was also part of the Pilosi plan. The Pilosi are more sensitive to pollution than ordinary humans, and a number of the remote regions where they still lived were under increasing development pressure. Indeed, the increasingly powerful environmental movement has, so far, saved the Pilosi from extinction.



Of course, this increased interest in the occult also revitalized the remnants of the various Atlantean magical secret societies. New Golden Dawn-based magical orders sprang up all over the United States and Europe. The Pilosi efforts of the 1960s removed many of the previous cultural barriers against magic and magicians. As a result, more people are involved in the occult than ever before in human history. Books on magic are available in almost every bookstore. While most of these books are written by charlatans or fools, a few actually contain essential, if basic, information.

Also during the 20th century, the Pilosi have been able to perform a few truly vast rituals using unwitting human aid. While their numbers continue to shrink, the Pilosi are by no means impotent. They appear to have discovered how to tap into vast unfulfilled needs possessed by many humans. They are still struggling with how to best use this power.

In the meantime, an ever-increasing number of purely human occult cabals have also formed, fragmented, and spread. These cabals attract the attention of the Atlanteans or Pilosi sooner or later, but some develop real occult power before that happens. This power actually forestalls non-human infiltration or control, and prolongs the cult's independence.

THE OTHER VISITORS

The 20th century has also marked the entrance of another player in occult conspiracies. The Greys have been observing Earth since 1903, and began taking an active role in the late 1940s. The Greys have an intense interest in the Seepage; unfortunately, close proximity to powerful magical phenomena injures Greys. Since the creation of Grey hybrids in the 1940s, the Greys have been able to obtain much more information about magic and the Seepage. While both the Atlanteans and the Pilosi seek to harness the vast power of the Seepage, the Greys seek to eliminate it. Even though several previous efforts have met with disaster, the Greys remain fascinated by Adepts who seek to modify or shape the Seepage. Adepts working on such projects are fervently sought out, and carefully watched.

Today, the Greys know much more about the Seepage than they did prior to their arrival on Earth. However, this knowledge has only served to make them more afraid. The Seepage is more powerful than they expected. After a Grey ship was actually destroyed when its crew attempted to capture a demon, the Greys have been much more circumspect in their dealing with the Seepage and its manifestations.

Meanwhile, a few Atlanteans have begun to understand that high concentrations of Seepage energy actually harm the Greys. This information has caused these Atlanteans to redouble their efforts to harness magic and the Seepage. Since the 1950s, some Atlanteans have been persuading their human agents to perform rituals designed to concentrate and direct increasingly large amounts of Seepage energy. Other Atlanteans are attempting to organize occult organizations all over the planet to simultaneously perform a single mass ritual that will destroy, or at least seriously cripple Greys everywhere. The current interest in UFOs can be partly attributed to Atlanteans seeking to increase fear of the Greys and so further shape the Seepage against them. These Atlanteans believe that a properly run media campaign could cause humanity's collective unconscious to hate and fear the Greys to the point that even low level Seepage energy will harm them. There is currently no evidence that either plan is succeeding. In spite of thousands of years of research, the Atlanteans still do not have a complete understanding of magic and Seepage.

The Pilosi have wisely stayed out of the Atlantean-Grey conflict. They would love to destroy the Atlanteans, but fear the mysterious Greys almost as much.

Like the Atlanteans, the Saurians are all psychic Voids. Of late, a few Saurian commanders have become interested in the weapons potential of psychic powers, but magic and the Seepage are still considered primitive human mythology by most.

THE QUEENS TOME

Although sponsored by one of the more powerful occult conspiracies in the 20th century, the most significant breakthrough in supernatural knowledge in centuries was performed by a recluse. Jasper Hodgewell, the son of a wealthy shipping magnate, was always a bookish type. At college in the early 1940s, he became interested in the occult. His talent for comprehending and explaining the nature of the paranormal soon came to the attention of Theodore Montague and his associates. He was enticed to join by promises of access to the Club's small but rich occult library.

Hodgewell spent three years pouring through books. He discovered weaknesses in the Montague library and identified books that would enrich the collection. Montague soon had several associates working just to procure the books Hodgewell requested. The groundwork for the excellence of the Montague libraries today stems from this time, and Hodgewell's work.

In the course of consuming years of occult knowledge, Hodgewell snapped and became a Scholar Adept. Soon after his corruption, Hodgewell began his opus, a volume that would come to be known as the Queens Tome. He refused to share his work as he was writing. Indeed, his paranoia led him to develop an elaborate cipher as he penned the tome. Montague somehow knew that Hodgewell was producing a seminal work and left him to his own devices. Montague may have even suspected that Hodgewell had been corrupted. Even so, Montague resolved to wring everything he could out of the scholar and then dispose of him. Montague did not count on dying in a supernatural assault by the magicians associated with the Watch.

After Montague's death, the Club dissolved into chaos. For a time, Hodgewell and his work were forgotten. Hodgewell took this opportunity to slip away. So complete was his understanding of the supernatural at this time, however, that he was able to complete the Tome in 1950, without access to the Montague library.

In 1983, Aegis managed to secure the Tome, but not before its keeper removed several important pages. Still, the revelations that Hodgewell scrawled in the fever of his corruption have significantly changed, and enhanced, mankind's supernatural abilities.

TODAY

More humans have learned more about magic and the Seepage than ever before. Moreover, a number of human occult groups including CAPS, the Lodge of the World Tree, and several others have learned about the various alien invaders on our planet and are using their new knowledge to uncover the plans of the aliens and sometimes to defeat them. The days of unfettered manipulation by the non-humans appear over. Indeed, a number of humans are starting to take control of their powers, and fight against domination.

TIMELINE

- 12,000 B.C. First solid evidence of shamanistic practices among humans.
- 10,000 B.C. An alliance of humans and Piloni lead a revolt against the Atlanteans which destroys the city of Tro'don in Asia Minor. Atlanteans learn true extent of mystical power.
- 5,000 B.C. The Atlanteans begin reappearing among humans, this time as distant and capricious gods. The Atlanteans teach a few human communities some of the arts of civilization -- writing, architecture, etc. A few Atlanteans attempt to control supernatural energies through humans.
- 500 B.C. The formation of the first European Atlantean-run mystery cults.
- 100 B.C. For the next four hundred years, Alchemy, Hermeticism, Gnosticism, Kabbalism, and the basics of Western Ceremonial magic are all developed in Classical Alexandria.
- 1582 The Atlantean known as John Dee begins working with the human Edward Kelley in an attempt to unlock the secrets of the Seepage
- 1791 Haitian rebels begin to use magic to help free Haiti from French Rule
- 1802 Napoleon's attempt to crush the Haitian rebellion fails due to magic and guerrilla tactics.
- 1875 Helena P. Blavatsky founds the Theosophical Society in New York to bring Piloni ideas to the Western world.
- 1888 The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is founded in London with Atlantean assistance. Famous Predator Jack the Ripper kills six women in London and then vanishes.
- 1898 Aleister Crowley joins the Golden Dawn.
- 1903 The Greys arrive on Earth and begin investigating the Seepage.
- 1920 Aleister Crowley becomes head of the O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis)
- 1921 The Montague Club is founded.
- 1931 Adolph Hitler and Heinrich Himmler initiated by the Secret Doctrine
- 1941 The Lammas Night ritual in Britain. Hundreds of British magicians gather to perform a ritual to protect Britain from invasion.
- 1943 The Watch recovers the Spear of Destiny from the Nazis.
- 1951 Gerald B. Gardner publishes Witchcraft Today and founds the religion of Wicca.
- 1953 Anders Soderstrom creates the Philadelphia Mirrors.
- 1964 The beginning of hostilities between the Silver Circle and the Montague Club.
- 1967 The Montague Club is defeated, the Silver Circle becomes CAPS, headed by Peter Henry Westman.
- 1969 The Montague Club is revived under Jennifer McBain.
- 1969 Forsaken Prophet Charles Manson organizes a murder cult.
- 1977 The Lodge of the World Tree is organized by Alicia Svenski.
- 1978 The members of Incarnate Prophet Jim Jones' People's Temple commit mass suicide.
- 1983 Aegis receives the Queens Tome and begins extensive investigations of the supernatural.
- 1989 The Montague Club begins working with the Black Book
- 1991 The Lodge of the World Tree makes contact with Aegis.
- 1993 Neo-Nazi cult the Children of Ragnarok is formed.





CHAPTER 7

BESTIARY

SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

A multitude of creatures and beings exist within the vast realms of the supernatural. Since the Seepage originates from the human unconscious, most of these beings have some connection to humanity. Ghosts were once human, while the Incarnate hang onto their humanity by the slenderest of shreds. Most demons were human long ago, and even the bizarre animates almost always come from animals and objects which possess a close connection to humanity.

Beings like the Saurians and the Greys are simply alien. Many of their motives are entirely incomprehensible since they share no kinship with humanity (despite genetic manipulation). Supernatural beings are as terrible as our worst nightmares, but almost all are comprehensible to us, if we are willing to gaze deeply into the most sordid depths of the human psyche. Even Predators are no more than the distilled essence of the same violence that can be found wherever hope has given way to despair. Most creatures of the Seepage differ from humanity only in their purity. Almost all human emotions and drives are a complex mixture of many factors. Even the most obsessed scientist will occasionally enjoy a good meal or a pleasant walk in the sunshine. Even the most violent serial killer or the most hardened assassin may have a favored pet or even a family. The Seepage strips away such externals and pares beings down until they are filled with one desire and one essence. By any reasonable definition, someone in such a state is far from sane, but their emotions and their motives still derive from the same sources we all have within us.

CORRUPTED BEINGS

Many whom corruption transforms into Incarnate and the Forsaken become predatory monsters, crazed magicians, obsessed serial killers, and fiery-eyed cult leaders. However, these dark paths are not the only possible result of corruption. At its heart, corruption is not about becoming evil, it is about ceasing to be human. When the Seepage enters into the deepest reaches of a person's being, it slowly removes all facets of personality that fall outside the pattern desired by the Seepage. This pattern differs from individual to individual, and depends both on the method of their corruption and the specifics of their personality.

Someone who is full of anger and hatred may become a werewolf, if Incarnate, or a cannibalistic serial killer, if Forsaken. However, a scholarly magician who is corrupted by a failed ritual might instead become an Adept. This corrupted being's fascination with magic will slowly drive away friends and associates, leaving the scholar alone in an isolated cabin with only books and obsession.

By all normal standards, most of the Incarnate and all of the Forsaken are totally insane and entirely incapable of functioning normally in society. They need not be dangerous, however, unless they or their way of life is threatened. The isolated magician described above might never create or perform a ritual to harm anyone. However, if someone stole one of his papers, or perhaps even refused to sell him a book, the dark side of his insanity might make itself known.

Prophets are the most ambiguous of all of the varieties of the Incarnate. Many become leaders of dark and twisted cults, but certainly not all. Some become saint-like in their selflessness and caring, while others are merely lost in their own private communion with the forces beyond. The latter become hermits who leave their trance-like dreams only when someone comes seeking their aid and assistance.

ARCHETYPES

Being corrupted is at its essence leaving humanity behind and becoming a living archetype. Even if the archetype is one of love and caring, humanity is lost in the process. The essence of being an archetype is being concerned only with matter relating to that particular nature and function. Friends, hobbies, life goals and even personality quirks not directly relevant are slowly lost as the corrupted being divests itself of the remaining tatters of its humanity.

Archetypes are single, easily-defined, culturally universal concepts. Archetypes form the basis of most myths and legends. The wise magician, the holy hermit, the young hero with great potential, the wicked stepmother, the wildman or wildwoman, death personified, the berserk warrior, the sacred fool, and the evil tempter are all archetypes found in stories told throughout the world. In the West, a variety of archetypal images can be found in Tarot cards, Arthurian myths, and the legends of all the Indo-European religions. Psychologist Carl Jung was the first person to define and categorize archetypes, but they have always existed.

No one knows if our existing archetypes are in some way based off of legends of the Incarnate and the Forsaken. Alternatively, the Seepage may create archetypal monsters as a response to the deep structures of the human mind. In either case, every corrupted being is some reflection of these archetypes.

It is important to remember that there are no "species" or "breeds" of monsters. The similarities are based upon the laws of magic and human psychology, not those of biology. Some of those who are attacked by a Predator and survive slowly become Predators. However, they need not become the same type of Predator as their attacker. The specific archetype "chosen" by any individual corrupted being depends on a combination of circumstance and quirks of their personal psychology.

As a general rule, no corrupted being adopts an archetype that is wholly alien to their former human psychological make-up. Some might take comfort in this fact. Remember, however, that within all of us lies the potential to become a number of archetypal beings -- some fearsome and deadly and all strange and inhuman. When attacked by a Predator, an angry person of dubious morals might become a cannibalistic monster who kills and consumes random people. On the other hand, a person of great faith and strong moral convictions might become a terrifying avenger who hunts down and kills anyone who transgresses their now rigid moral code. We all carry the seeds of inhumanity within us.

THE INCARNATE

The transformation into a member of the Incarnate results in a complete physical and magical change. A vampire will gain fangs and thirst for blood, a werewolf will grow larger, stronger, and more hairy, and an Adept will suddenly command vast magical powers. This physical transformation usually signals the end of the progressive mental development that has been occurring.

Incarnate keep the stages of corruption that they have already gone through, but they do not progress through any new stages. While many Incarnate only transform after their sanity has been entirely eroded by corruption, others transform early and have a largely sane human mind in the body of a living archetype. For some, this transformation is a great boon. Many Prophets who are still sane feel they have been blessed by God, while Adepts believe that they have finally become one with their knowledge. For others, it is a bizarre and awful curse.



F O R S A K E N R I T E S

The most disturbing cases are those of Predators who have suffered little mental corruption. Suddenly a relatively sane human being is living in a body with extended canines, or one that has become hairy, muscular, and fearsome. Many Incarnate crack under this strain and rapidly become insane. Others learn to accept their new life. A few are even capable of functioning in society so long as they learn to keep their unusual abilities and physiologies carefully hidden.

Even if the mental changes were minor and few, however, the mind is easily led by the body. Over the course of months, years, or sometimes decades, the most human of the Incarnate will generally slip more and more into the mentality of their archetype. This process can be quite gradual, and for some exceptionally strong-willed individuals it may be almost imperceptible, but it almost always happens. Some Incarnate are capable of living for centuries, but very few make it past their first 100 years with their humanity intact. Living in the body of an archetype, with needs, desires, and powers far beyond humanity, slowly makes the once-human mind and spirit into a fitting occupant for the body.

THE FORSAKEN

For the Forsaken, the path beyond humanity is somewhat different. When their physical transformation fails, the Forsaken's mind breaks and the only remnant left of their shattered personality is the archetype itself. Forsaken are no longer mentally human. They have become fully focused upon those activities and interests central to the archetype they have become. All other activities and desires become irrelevant and are seen as incomprehensible, impure, or incorrect.

Forsaken are incapable of anything other than the most superficial conversation if it does not relate to their nature. A Forsaken Prophet can talk about her own beliefs and faith until she becomes hoarse. Discussing sports, politics, or movies will engender confused mumbles, stone-faced silence, or anger. With rare exceptions, Forsaken rapidly lose their jobs, family and friends and end up as hermits, homeless people, or drifters. Even independently wealthy Forsaken will require the services of someone to manage their day-to-day life.

Mentally transformed, but lacking any of the abilities of the Incarnate, most Forsaken believe that they actually possess special powers. Any attempt to disprove or make fun of their claims of inhuman supernatural power will be met with fear, disbelief, or murderous rage.

Those Forsaken who understand that they lack the supernatural powers of the Incarnate can be equally dangerous. Most of these individuals have as their primary goal trying to acquire such powers, at any cost. Bizarre rituals, self-mutilation, frantic quests to obtain certain special items, and even cannibalism are all examples of desperate measures to acquire Incarnate powers. Some Forsaken who seek such powers are primarily a danger to themselves, and often end up killing themselves in their quest for power. Others eventually resort to theft and finally murder as other, lesser methods fail them. There is evidence that at least some of the Forsaken actually succeed in finding the power they seek, but most fail, often in highly unpleasant ways. Legends of rituals that can cure the Forsaken exist, but no such ritual has been unearthed or designed thus far.

Playing the Incarnate

At some point, a player is going to want to portray a vampire, a werewolf or other Incarnate character. Such characters are extremely powerful and should only be allowed after extensive consideration. Conspiracy X is not a game where heroic ultra-powerful monsters make sense as player characters. To simulate the danger and uncertainty of the corrupted, and to avoid the problem of playing a nifty collection of powers rather than a real person who has been transformed into an inhuman, the character should start as an ordinary human with the Psych Profile flaw Corrupted by the Supernatural. Normally, players who take this flaw do not choose the exact archetype and description of the creature their character is becoming. However, players who wish to play Incarnate may be allowed to choose these details when they generate their character.

Players who do this should only receive 10CPs for the flaw, instead of the normal 30CPs.

The campaign should then include this player character's slow descent into the supernatural.

If the character is not playing a Supernatural Focus, they may wind up a Forsaken rather than an Incarnate.

If the GM wishes to avoid this possibility, she should provide access to a Ritual to Hasten Corruption, which grants an increased chance of becoming Incarnate.

Essentially, the process of becoming Incarnate will be fraught with risks and doubt. The player will not know how many stages of corruption his character will assume before the inevitable transformation occurs. He will have to roleplay all aspects of the corrupted personality, particularly the unpleasant ones. Further, his friends and allies will no doubt be less than pleased about his mental state. Such is the life of the Incarnate.

Once the character has become Incarnate, it should receive approximately four Powers. These can either be ordinary Incarnate Powers or Mutations which grant +1 to one of his attributes. The GM should work out these changes, as well as any obvious physical mutations, with the player based on the chosen archetype and the player's conception of the creature. The GM can then work out the specific weaknesses of the creature based upon its archetype. GMs should feel free to disallow over-powered or unbalanced creatures.

DEMONS

Many occultists regard demons, angels, dragons, and the various other powerful, non-human supernatural creatures as denizens of some upper or lower astral realm. In truth, these beings exist merely as patterns of will and desire imposed upon the vast power of the Seepage. Another common fallacy is that none of these beings have anything to do with humanity. Most such creatures describe fantastic origins, and an existence long before human's earliest ancestors first crawled from the primordial ooze. The truth is much more prosaic and has been guessed by a number of careful magicians through the centuries.

Demons, angels, and similar creatures are nothing more than the ghosts of the Incarnate. When the vast majority of the Incarnate die, they leave behind nothing but victims and unpleasant memories. However, some of them return in a non-corporeal form. The crucial difference is that demons are always fully sentient and are much more powerful than mere ghosts. Also, while some ghosts retain their memories and personality, demons lose all but a few remnants of their humanity.

The process of death strips away any humanity that may have been retained. Unlike ghosts, demons have impressed themselves deeply onto the fabric the Seepage. Demons never simply fade away. As the centuries pass, most demons entirely forget their human origins, becoming ever more purely the archetype they represent.

CREATING DEMONS

Most Incarnate who die do not become demons. The single best way to make sure that an Incarnate does not return as a demon is to kill it in the appropriate manner. Exposure to sunlight will vanquish most Stalkers, while destroying their life's work will kill any Adept. Every type of Incarnate has its own special Bane. If these methods are used, the essence of the Incarnate is destroyed along with its body.

When something other than a Bane is used to kill an Incarnate, it may well return in a much more durable form. Some occultists theorize that Incarnate are only transitional forms. In their view, the final result of corruption is a demon.

Just as many corrupted individuals become Forsaken as Incarnate, and many Incarnate disperse rather than becoming demons. Thus, new demons are extremely rare. Even within a powerful Pool or Locus, no more than five percent of all Incarnate who are killed return as demons. The true horror of demons is that once created, they will always exist.

The key to killing an Incarnate without creating a demon is to understand the archetype, and to discover its vulnerabilities. A combination of research and observation should reveal the vulnerabilities of most such beings. If the opportunity for such investigations is not available, another source of answers lies in old legends and stories. Killing vampires with a stake through the heart actually works on some such beings. The people who recorded the old legends about the various types of monsters may not have had the benefit of modern data-collection methods, but they were careful observers, and the many of the legends which survive are rough compilations of dozens of actual similar incidents.

THE NATURE OF DEMONS

While a demon may be viewed as a ghost of an Incarnate, a number of important differences separate demons and Incarnate. Even the most inhuman Incarnate still remembers and is to some degree concerned with its previous life. The sight of a former loved one may cause an Incarnate to hesitate a moment before attacking, and may even result in a few moments of seeming sanity. Underneath all of the strange desires and dark motives still lies the remnants of a human personality.

When an Incarnate dies and becomes a demon all of its remaining humanity is lost in the final transformation. If the Incarnate had avoided any of the steps of corruption, these are immediately acquired. A demon may recognize a former loved one, but no compassion will be shown. At best, laughter or a few cruel comments may result. Further, every demon is a perfect representative of its archetype. Lacking all humanity, demons lack all true emotions. They react to situations, but they care for nothing outside of their plans and their own survival.

Physically, many demons are extremely similar to the Incarnate. Newly-formed demons often project a Telepathic Illusion that recreates its previous Incarnate body. Also, all demons have either the Possession or Form Body powers, and many have both. To make matters worse, all demons who have the ability Form Body also have Invulnerability.

Not all demons retain a corporeal form after death. While most demons take on the form they had in life, a number of them prefer to attack in ways only possible for a totally insubstantial being. Roiling clouds of malevolent darkness, flying disembodied heads, enormous dragons, ethereal winged angels and other fantastic forms are all equally possible for beings who lack physical form. Details of each archetype's demonic form are provided later in this chapter. Remember that Voids, Psinks and Psychic Burnouts cannot perceive the visual aspects of a demon; they may, however, be attacked physically.

A demon's total lack of humanity limits it in a number of ways. Being purely creatures of the Seepage, demons lack both free will and creativity. While demons can lie with ease, all demons are incapable of breaking their word once they give it. If a demon swears to never attempt to harm any member of Aegis again nothing on Earth can force it to do so. It will literally be unable to consider doing so. However, this oath will not prevent the demon from methodically killing the loved ones of every single Aegis agent. Demons are very conscious of their limits and are bound only by the exact words of any oath they swear. If there is a loophole in the oath, a demon will find and exploit it.

Demons power their abilities just as Incarnate do, using ambient SPs and their Willpower attribute.

DESTROYING DEMONS

Because of their vast power and their degree of separation from humanity, rituals to banish or permanently contain demons are usually extremely difficult. This difficulty, combined with the lack of a physical body, makes demons very difficult to combat. Like all incorporeal creatures, demons cannot actually be killed. They can be banished and they can be permanently contained within Spirit Bottles, but their existence cannot be ended. For Aegis agents who are not powerful magicians, demons can be extremely deadly foes. However, their very nature also provides weapons that can be used against them. Like their Incarnate predecessors, all demons have certain antithetical objects, or action. These limitations are known as Banes. More information on Banes can be found in the individual descriptions of the archtypes.



NEW INCARNATE POWERS FORM BODY

Useable only by incorporeal beings like demons, ghosts and ascended ghosts, this ability allows the creature to form a seemingly solid body out of the energy of the Seepage. This body can act in all ways like a normal physical body, and is usually a duplicate of the body the being had while alive. Unless the being has power Invulnerability, this body will be affected by all normal weapons. However, the body is not alive and contains no internal structure. Even the most cursory medical exam will reveal that the body is a far from normal. As there is some physical aspect to this body, Voids, Psinks and Psychic Burnouts can perceive it. Forming a normal body costs 2SP, forming a horrific or unusual body costs 3SP.

INVULNERABILITY

All demons and ascended ghosts who have the ability Form Body automatically gain this power. The creature is invulnerable to all attacks except those relating to that archetype's Banes. Specific Banes like sunlight and holy symbols will harm a demonic vampire, for example, but bullets or even grenades will do no damage at all. Living beings and ordinary ghosts can never possess this ability. This ability has no SP cost and it functions constantly.

DESCRIPTION FEATURES

The list that follows is not meant to serve as an exhaustive list of all possible corrupted beings. The entities described merely give Game Masters and players an idea of the range of many possible types.

Archetype: The name of the particular archetype is given.

Powers: The powers commonly possessed by the archetype are listed. Both Incarnate and demonic version of this archetype possess these powers. The Forsaken have no powers. Remember that all demons will also have Form Body or Possession.

Primary Motivation: Every archetype is based on a particular obsession or motivation. These can range from simple motives like producing terror, to complex ones such as a desire to transcend the limitations of the physical world. Regardless of the exact nature of the motivation, corruption renders this motivation increasingly important, until it eventually replaces all other interests

Description: This section describes both the physical appearance of the being, as well as information on their powers and expected behavior. If the particular archetype is subject to mutation, the type of mutation will be described here.

Banes: Banes are those objects, conditions, or actions that are antithetical to the archetype. Being presented with a Bane will make both Incarnate and demons momentarily hesitate before an attack. Some Banes will simply make the creature flee, or, if cornered, attack wildly. When a Bane is actively used against an Incarnate or demon, the creature suffers a -1Df penalty on all actions. Also, using a Bane to kill an Incarnate utterly destroys the essence of the monster, preventing the creation of a demon. Some Banes kill Incarnate; others merely weaken them. Banes have no innate power over Forsaken, but the Forsaken may believe otherwise. Banes may upset and repel Forsaken, and often cause them to act irrationally and become easier to kill or capture.

Demons with corporal forms may be physically attacked using a Bane. While bullets will pass through the "body" of a demon without harm, being impaled with a specially blessed spear, or some such, will instantly banish the demon. Banes used as weapons do normal damage to the demon. Remember that when a demon is banished it leaves no traces behind. It had no body other than that which it generated out of the Seepage.

Demons possessing humans can be forced out when presented or attacked with a Bane. In such cases, the human immediately becomes free from possession if she can succeed in a normal Willpower test.

Demon: The demonic version of the archetype is described. In many ways, demon archtypes are identical to Incarnate archtypes.

Forsaken: Even these damaged victims of the Seepage remain tied to their archtypes. Their lack of supernatural power tends to make them more devious and cunning in pursuing their obsessions. Their methods and distinguishing characteristics are described in this section.

PREDATORS

Predators are obsessed with death, fear, and pain. All Predator archetypes share a number of common characteristics. Predators hunt humans. Some Predators also kill animals, but hunting and killing other humans is the defining characteristic of all Predators. A number of occultists with an interest in psychology maintain that all Predators arise out of the fear humans have of dangerous animals, combined with the unconscious realization that humans are the most dangerous animals of all. Some Predators are wild and bestial, others are subtle and cunning, but they are all hunters. Perhaps because they are the most physically dangerous of all the Incarnate, Predators are by far the most common Incarnate to be affected by mutation. Some of these mutations serve to make the Predators into more proficient hunters. Others simply make them more frightening.

BECOMING A PREDATOR

Most Predators are born by being attacked by another Predator. Predators seek a close connection with their prey. Anyone who is hunted by a Predator and escapes alive, but with serious injury (Wn2/Tw2 or worse) must make a Willpower test to avoid corruption. The difficulty of the test is the Damage Level of the wound -1. Simply fighting and being injured by a Predator does not incur this risk. Only people who have been hunted by Predators and survive must make these tests.

Sometimes anger and obsession alone can trigger Predator corruption. Not all serial killers or mass murderers are Incarnate or Forsaken. Acting in such a manner, however, may cause someone to become corrupted. Also, this type of violent obsession is often found among the less stable people who spend their time hunting Predators. Hunting Predators for revenge, with hatred in your heart, is an excellent way to become a Predator. Also, people filled with anger, hatred, and rage who become corrupted because of a failed ritual may become Predators instead of Adepts.

ARCHETYPE: STALKER

Powers: Mask, Phantasm, Thrall, Mesmerism, Regeneration, Teleport.

Primary Motivation: Producing Fear. Stalkers slowly pursue their victims, allowing them to hear or catch glimpses. They cultivate their victim's fear, and revel in it, before they kill.

Stalkers prefer to avoid being seen until they are just about to kill their victims. Stalkers use and thrive upon the fear of the unknown. Dark unfamiliar places, ranging from the space under a child's bed to the inside of a dark deserted warehouse, produce this fear. Even a familiar city street seen at 3:00 AM, when it is barren of both people and sound, is a Stalker's playground. Stalkers can sense such emotions and seek out victims who are experiencing these feelings.

Description: Stalkers are silent killers who primarily prey upon single, isolated individuals. Anyone who is out at night in an unfamiliar and largely deserted area could potentially become the victim of a Stalker. Stalkers spend as much time as possible stalking their victims, allowing their prey to slowly become aware that something is after them. Once their prey has actually been cornered or otherwise restrained, the Stalker will, if possible, play with the victim, allowing him to escape and recapturing him. All this is done, if possible, under conditions where the victim can not see his hunter.

Stalkers often use Telepathic Illusions to conceal themselves in swirling pitch-black shadows or cloaks of blackness. Stalkers do not usually physically torture their victims. When the victim has collapsed from fear and nervous exhaustion, the Stalker will kill him rapidly with any weapon at hand. Stalkers often have no visible mutations, but many gain an additional point of both Reflexes and Perception as their reactions and their senses are heightened to a superhuman degree. Those Stalkers who do change physically generally become thin and attenuated, with small sharp claws and an uncanny ability to move without making noise.

Banes: Stalkers can only function effectively when alone with their prey in dark, threatening environments. Confronting a Stalker as a group, surrounding it and attacking from all sides is one effective way to destroy a Stalker. Stalkers are extremely reluctant to let themselves be cornered or surrounded, and will usually revert to a mad killing frenzy to avoid having this happen. When humans band together against a common attacker much of the visceral fear that feeds Stalkers vanishes, and often the hunter can become the hunted.

Stalkers are also much more effective at night or in near or complete darkness. Attacking a Stalker in daylight or under extremely bright artificial lights will greatly hamper it. Exposure to such lights will banish demonic Stalkers. Stalkers are also extremely reluctant to enter well-lit environments. While a bright flashlight or ordinary house lighting will not harm Stalkers, it does disturb them and make them wary. To actually weaken or harm a Stalker, only direct sunlight, bright spotlights or commercial lighting are necessary.

Photographing or videotaping a Stalker cannot destroy it, but will both upset and weaken it. Like bright lights, photographs and similar media fix the form of the Stalker and remove much of its aura of fear.



F O R S A K E N R I T E S

Demons: When Stalkers become demons, they are especially threatening. No longer limited by natural laws or the confines of the flesh, Stalker demons can instantly appear anywhere a potential prey is alone and afraid. Many such demons stake out particular "hunting grounds" and will suddenly materialize whenever someone is alone in this place. Some demonic Stalkers retain the same form they used in life, but many of them adopt guises like roiling clouds of darkness or shapeless shadows with glowing eyes. Most demonic Stalkers can Teleport.

Forsaken: Forsaken Stalkers become reclusive serial killers, murdering victims in deserted places and then burying the bodies in shallow graves. Forsaken Stalkers usually pick a particular area to hunt their prey, and if they are careful enough in hiding the bodies, it may be many years before they are caught. Unlike many serial killers, Forsaken Stalkers are not concerned with particular types of death or mutilation or with specific types of victims. Anyone helpless and alone is a potential victim.

ARCHETYPE: DESTROYER

Powers: Mask, Frenzy, Pyrokinesis, Regeneration, Telekinesis.

Primary Motivation: Violent Destruction. Destroyers perform random acts of destruction, especially acts which result in the violent deaths of one or more people. Extreme violence, involving rendered bodies, significant fires and large amounts of property destruction become the center of their existence. Destroyers are more common in regions cursed with long-term wars, violently oppressive governments, or other causes of large-scale destruction. These features introduce the inhabitants to the true horror of such events.

Description: The site of an attack by a Destroyer is usually easy to recognize. Destroyers prefer to kill their victims in as violent a method as possible. Hacking people apart, ripping out their throats, or simply shooting them with large caliber weapons are all preferred options. Successful Destroyers almost always attack their victims in isolated locations since careless Destroyers tend to attract massive police response. This can result in the Destroyer being killed. Almost all Destroyers gain both a point of Strength and a point of Size from mutation, as their bodies become highly efficient killing machines. Many Destroyers grow extremely tough claws designed to rend their victims. Other than being large and muscular, some Destroyers appear quite normal. Others become extremely inhuman, growing long claws, large fangs and coarse fur. When engaged in killing and destruction, Destroyers use their Telepathic Illusions to project images of terror. They appear to have twisted faces with long fangs, tusks, or similar inhuman features. Most people who see such beings assume they are wearing particularly horrific masks. A few Destroyers actually avoid direct physical violence and instead use Pyrokinesis and Telekinesis to cause greater destruction.

Banes: Destroyers are creatures of violence and rebellion. They revel in destroying people, property and the social order. They may be opposed by courage and conviction. Symbols of the ordered works of society repel or destroy them. Religious symbols presented by a true believer can be used to weaken, repel, or even trap Destroyers. A Destroyer can even be trapped as if in a Spirit Bottle, if it is forced into a closed room or box adorned with religious symbols by people of faith. A full religious exorcism performed by a priest will banish any Destroyer demon and will weaken an Incarnate and allow it to be safely killed.

Most Destroyers specialize in particular types of destruction. Some use Telekinesis or their great strength to simply rip people and things apart. Others prefer to use fire, electricity, explosives, or other means. Any substance that specifically stops or inhibits their chosen form of destruction will weaken or harm the Destroyer.

Finally, daring to face a Destroyer in single combat will weaken or harm it. Unfortunately, Destroyers must be faced on their own terms. Guns or other long distance weapons will have no effect on Destroyer demons and cannot safely kill Destroyer Incarnate. Swords, fists, and other close combat weapons will all work, but any weapon that does not place the attacker in close physical proximity with the Destroyer will not. Of course, given the great physical power possessed by most Destroyers, this method of destroying such creatures is quite dangerous.

Demons: Fortunately, Destroyer demons are extremely rare. While many Destroyer demons retain the forms they used in life, some become incorporeal avatars of destruction. These demons sometimes possess vehicles to run people down, or buildings to kill everyone inside. The authorities usually place the blame on gas leaks, terrorism or large-scale electrical system failure, but often wonder about the sheer scale of the devastation involved. Destroyer demons seem to require several months or years rest after such carnage, and so this type of wholesale devastation is fortunately quite infrequent.

Forsaken: Lacking the powers of Incarnate or demons, most Forsaken Destroyers are fairly short-lived. These Forsaken often begin as vandals and end up as classic spree killers, where they gun down, or otherwise kill up to several dozen people in a mass orgy of death. Shotguns, axes, or other direct, highly destructive weapons are their preferred methods of attack. When the killing and destruction are at their height, Forsaken Destroyers will completely lose any instinct for self-preservation and are usually destroyed as they attempt to kill one more victim.



ARCHETYPE: PARASITE

Powers: Thrall, Mask, Telepathy, Teleport.

Primary Motivation: Causing Slow Death. Parasites slowly drain the life from people who they cause to love or depend upon them. If possible, the Parasite endeavors to prevent its victims from learning the cause of their "illness," even from knowing that they are dying. Parasites become the center of their victim's world and slowly drain their victim's life. Parasites require the emotional dependence and devotion their victims place upon them at least as much as they require the actual life energy. Most of their victims are already quite shy and isolated from other people. Parasites encourage this, and if possible cut their victims off from contact with anyone else.

Description: Parasites pick a single, or occasionally several separate targets, and slowly kill them. They chose isolated or solitary targets, invalids, people who have been imprisoned alone, or simply one of the millions of lonely people found in any large city. Parasites often visit their victims secretly and gain their confidence by telling them of the wonderful life they will have together. The Parasite uses its Telepathic Illusions to prevent others from seeing it when it visits its victim. As the victim's life ebbs away, she will begin to exhibit symptoms often mistaken by doctors as a slow wasting disease, like Leukemia or AIDS. Once a Parasite has killed its victim, it will often wait a few weeks and move on to search for other prey. On rare occasions, Parasites will corrupt their victims and then carefully tend them so that they progress rapidly and without possibility of rescue. Most Parasites spend between several weeks and several months killing or corrupting the victims. In either case, the Parasite will always stress that their relationship with their victim must be kept entirely secret. Some Parasites can Teleport and use this power to escape detection and to visit victims who are confined or protected.



Parasites are all affected by mutation. They have exceedingly sharp senses and generally gain a point of Perception. However, they also all have a pale and somewhat wasted appearance, much like victims of a wasting disease. Everyone except their victims, and the other targets of the Parasite's emotional influence, find their appearance disturbing. While many Incarnate Parasites feed only upon their victim's life energy, others supplement this feeding by actually drinking some of their victim's blood. These Vampiric Parasites usually have long slender fangs and a metabolism that allows them to digest blood.

Banes: In some sense, Parasites are disease spirits. They are repelled or harmed by any of the standard magical purifications and protections against disease, like garlic (a natural antibiotic), salt water (an antiseptic), or strong ultraviolet lights (sunlight alone is not strong enough). Unconventional occultists have also discovered that modern antibiotics dispensed from a spray bottle may be used effectively upon such beings. All of these Banes will weaken and repel Incarnate Parasites, and will allow them to be killed without danger of them returning as demons. When used upon demons, these methods will actually banish the demon.

Demons: Parasite demons are quite difficult to either detect or combat. While some have a corporeal form, many remain entirely insubstantial and appear to their victim only in dreams or other illusions. To everyone else, the victim seems to be suffering from a wasting illness. Parasite demons are among the more common varieties of demon and come in a wide variety of forms. Some continue the same fatal seduction that they performed in life, others gradually become less and less human. They cease their romantic talk of life together and an end to loneliness, and concentrate only upon draining their victim's life. These demons are known as Incubi, Succubi, and Nightmares.

Incubi and Succubi are demons that become their victim's lovers and drain their lives away through endless exhausting sexual activity. Incubi are male demons and Succubi are female ones. Most demons can take on either form depending upon the preferences of the victim. Nightmares enter their victim's dreams and cause them horrific, and fascinating nightmares, which gradually exhaust them. All of these creatures work slowly, kill infrequently, and are exceedingly difficult to detect. Sensitives and psychics with Clairvoyance are best at detecting the activity of Parasite demons. Otherwise, their victims must be persuaded to talk about their odd experiences or dreams. In most cases, the Parasite will cease coming if the victim is hospitalized, but the Parasite will attempt to persuade their victim that hospitalization is unnecessary and harmful, or that hospitalization will prevent the Parasite from visiting them. Often, victims will leave the hospital when their Parasite ceases to visit them.

Forsaken: Lacking the supernatural means to drain and feed off their victim's life, Forsaken Parasites resort of more conventional means. Most become involved in long-term relationships with helpless and dependent victims, and slowly cut them off from all outside contact. These Forsaken are insanely jealous of their victims and resent anyone having any contact with them. Once the Forsaken controls its victim's life, it may kill the victim, subtly encourage her to commit suicide, or simply keep her captive, unsure of what more it wishes to do. Unlike most of the Forsaken, these individuals only reveal their madness in the presence of their victims and are generally capable of holding down jobs and interacting with others. They will strike particularly perceptive or psychic people as a bit odd, but only those who see them with their victim will know the true extent of their madness.



NOSFERATU

Nosferatu are an ancient variety of vampire found throughout Germany and Eastern Europe. Nosferatu are essentially spirits of disease who slowly drain their victim's lives. They are often found in places with endemic disease and plagues.

Archetype: Parasite

Appearance: Dead white skin, a somewhat wasted or emaciated appearance, and slender narrow rat-like fangs in place of canines.

Mutations: +1 Perception, +1 Strength, fangs, must drink a cup of human blood at least once a week. Demons gain +2 to both characteristics as well as gaining +1 to both their Reflexes and Dexterity.

Powers: Thrall (fear, love, and devotion only), Mask (being unnoticeable and being beautiful), Telepathy (only with someone whose blood they have drunk). Demons also gain Phantasm, Teleport, and Form Body.

Banes: Medicine, charms and protections against disease.



PROPHETS

Prophet are convinced that they have special knowledge and that others must be shown the rightness of these beliefs. While Predators are solitary and self-centered beings, seeking only to survive or to increase their own power, Prophets are highly social. A lone Prophet is a miserable and unsatisfied creature, and in many cases isolating a Prophet from all contact is the most effective way to destroy it. Unlike Predators, which are almost all dangerous and malevolent monsters, not all Prophets are harmful. Evil cult leaders, murderous paranoids, and power-mad megalomaniacs, all intent on purging society, are candidates for Prophet corruption. Mass murderer Charles Manson, and Jim Jones, the infamous cult leader of the late 1970s, were both such Prophets. On the other hand, Prophets also manifest as saintly ascetics who forgo their own needs to devote their life to caring for others, and courageous crusaders who fight oppression and risk their lives to preach peace and tolerance.

Like all Incarnate, Prophets are no longer truly human. While Predators replace their lost humanity with corrupt desires to cause pain or death, Prophets exchange their individuality for a set of beliefs about the world and their duty to humanity. Many of these duties involve killing the enemies of their chosen way, or remaking to world into a fixed and rigid form. However, some Prophets find beliefs which set them on a path to right wrongs, or help the less fortunate.

While the Catholic Church and associated groups refuse to take an official position on this matter, many occultists are convinced that several Catholic saints were powerful Prophets. Such individuals perform valuable services for the world, but their plight is in many ways no less horrific. Their goals may be noble, but they pursue them at the cost of everything else. Being benevolently non-human makes one no less non-human. Leaving hobbies, friends, and ultimately loved ones behind to pursue a vision may be less destructive than leaving all of that behind to become a slaving beast, but it is no less horrible.

Demonic Prophets make the more religious among us rather uncomfortable. The legendary medieval demons of temptation and desire seem to have their origins in encounters with demonic Prophets. Similarly, at least some of the reported visions of Christian saints and angels derive from encounters with benevolent demonic Prophets. A few occultists claim that all religious belief is nothing more than an effort to explain Seepage and its creatures. Others hold that faith is something beyond the Seepage.

Involuntary summoning is relatively common with demonic Prophets. Whenever a large group of people are all focused on worshipping, honoring and seeking to become a specific archetype, an appropriate demonic Prophet may be drawn to them and appear, using the energy of the belief to manifest. Demon Prophets are all dependent upon their followers. If the followers cease to worship or emulate them, the demons will be banished back to oblivion. Disrupting the demon's cult, and convincing its followers to cease worshipping it, is the single most effective way to banish these demons.

PROPHETS AND MUTATION

A few of the most utterly debased and diabolic Prophets twist their outer forms to match the evil within them. The vast majority of Prophets, however, incur no obvious physical changes. Upon becoming Incarnate, most Prophets gain a point of Willpower, Intelligence, or Perception as their new cause strengthens their wills and sharpens their senses. Also, while they rarely look any different, some particularly violent Prophets gain increased physical capabilities.

BECOMING A PROPHET

Most Prophets become corrupted while practicing some form of religious magic. Whether a Catholic priest performing exorcism or a Voodoo Houngan summoning a Loa, when a ritual performed by a person of deep faith fails, the person may become a Prophet. Only people who have intense personal faith become Prophets. People without such faith usually end up as Adepts or occasionally as Predators. On rare occasions, people of faith who have been corrupted from the failure of non-religious rituals or even from an attack by a Predator become Prophets instead of Adepts or Predators. For a few people, religious obsession alone is enough to transform them into a Prophet.

ARCHETYPE: PURIFIER

Powers: Thrall, Pyrokinesis, Telekinesis, Frenzy, Regeneration.

Primary Motivation: Cleansing Evil. Purifiers see the world as base and corrupt, and are an inherently destructive archetype. Their goal is to destroy all evil and immorality. Rebuilding a new order after the old one has been destroyed is something that they rarely consider. If asked, most will talk of how the innate morality of mankind will triumph when the people are freed from the evil and oppression. Whether they strive to destroy a government, a rival faith, an organization, a single powerful individual, the entire social order, or merely an imagined conspiracy, Purifiers cannot exist without their chosen enemy.

Description: Purifiers are only found where the populace feels restricted or oppressed. This oppression turns to rage and an urge to destroy the oppressors. In such an environment, Purifiers find many willing to accept their message of destruction. Unfortunately, Purifiers are sometimes wrong about source of the oppression. As highly directed archetypal beings, they seek simple answers to the problems they perceive. Most Purifiers single out some group, or more rarely some individual, as the source of all evil and oppression. According to the Purifier, when this group or individual is destroyed all other problems will magically vanish. As well as infesting violent religious cults, a number of Purifiers can be found among various terrorist and freedom fighters throughout the world.

Banes: Purifiers are beings of violence and destruction. The only way to combat them is with non-violence and passive resistance. Fighting Purifiers and their minions just strengthens their cause and their resolve. However, standing before them, unwilling to fight, but unwilling to let them carry out their destructive plans will weaken them and cause all but the most corrupt and violent of their followers to pause and consider the situation.

Unfortunately, the only safe way to kill a Purifier Incarnate is to persuade one or more of its followers to kill it. Any other form of killing runs the, admittedly small, risk that the being will return as a demon. Usually outsiders infiltrate the ranks of the followers and work to turn them against the Incarnate from within, but only actual followers who once believed in the being may perform the killing. If the followers can be persuaded to lay down their weapons or otherwise cease their violence, even temporarily, Purifier demons will be banished.

Demons: Purifier demons are spirits of elemental violence. They are actually able to feed on the destructiveness of their followers and receive 1 SP for every 10 followers who are actually engaged in violent, destructive action. Mob action by the followers of a Purifier can be a ghastly scene. The demon will almost always use its new-found energy to perform further violence, using Telekinesis and Pyrokinesis. Gasoline storage tanks and natural gas mains may explode on their own, and rocks may hurtle towards previously passive observers or law enforcement officials, to draw them into the destruction.

Forsaken: Lacking the supernatural charisma of demons or the Incarnate, Forsaken Purifiers usually join existing violent opposition groups, or engage in solitary campaigns of terror. Like all other Purifiers, the Forsaken are obsessed with spreading their message to others and may threaten to set off bombs or perform similar heinous acts if their messages are not broadcast on the radio or printed in newspapers. While fully capable of careful planning and secrecy concerning their acts of terror, most Forsaken Purifiers feel compelled to speak about the enemy they hate and fear to anyone they feel might be receptive to their views.



AVENGING ANGEL

Avenging Angels are Incarnate who exist to rid the world of all opponents to a particular leader, organization, or faith. Anyone who commits transgressions against this person or organization will be hunted down and killed by the avenging angel and its followers. Avenging angels usually only punish actual transgressions, shunning attacks on potential threats or to prevent future harm.

Archetype: Purifier

Appearance: Avenging angels are usually tall, slender and beautiful. Their glowing red eyes hold an insane glitter.

Mutations: +1 Strength, +1 Willpower. Demons gain +2 to both characteristics as well as gaining +1 to both their Perception and Reflexes.

Powers: Thrall, Pyrokinesis, Frenzy. Demons also gain Possession, Teleport, Form Body.

Banes: Pacifism or attack by one of its own followers.



ARCHETYPE: SAVIOR

Powers: Thrall, Mesmerism, Healing, Phantasm, Mask.

Primary Motivation: Saving People. Like Purifiers, Saviors arise when large groups of people are harmed or oppressed. Saviors seek to build a new world where their followers will be safe and happy.

Description: On the surface, it would seem that Saviors are harmless or even benevolent. Some are, but others have a vision of paradise that is abhorrent. Such a paradise may have no place for certain people. While some Saviors work towards creating free-spirited utopias, others attempt to build rigid theocracies. Also, just because Saviors focus more on building than destruction does not mean that those who oppose them are dealt with any less harshly. While some Saviors attempt to convert those who oppose them and turn the other cheek to their attackers, most are more than willing to fight against their adversaries, and for their cause.

Every Savior has its own special agenda. Central to the Savior is the new world order it seeks to create. This new world is usually both highly unrealistic and impossible to achieve. Some Saviors truly work for something beyond enforced prejudice and totalitarian theocracy. They sometimes catch the imagination of a great number of decent thoughtful people and leave a legacy of belief which lasts far beyond their deaths. Many occultists theorize that the more widespread modern religions have their origins in such exceptional individuals. Unfortunately, the visions of most Saviors are notably simpler and more base. Religions built upon fear and oppression are far easier to build than those based on love and respect.

Banes: Opposition, suffering and even death hold no fear for Saviors. However, all Saviors are convinced that their path to salvation and a new world is the only one possible. The only truly effective way to weaken or harm a Savior is for a person of deep faith (Faith trait) to oppose them. Saviors can deal with adversaries who oppose them for selfish motives like power, greed or fear. However, if someone with deep personal convictions and devotion argues that the Savior's vision is harmful, destructive, or simply impossible, the Savior will be weakened and their hold on their followers temporarily disrupted. A person of faith can also safely kill any Incarnate or demonic Savior, but only if they truly believe the Savior is in the wrong.

Demons: Demonic Saviors see themselves as spirits returning to the mortal world with a vision of the wonderful after-life which awaits all true believers. They offer their followers codes of behavior and belief that will assure a place in heaven. In a few cases, these codes of behavior result in the followers joining the demon, since these prescriptions often involve performing special rituals that corrupt all who perform them.

Some occultists argue that the popularity of Spiritualism in the late 19th and early 20th century was in part due to one or more relatively benevolent demonic Saviors. These beings fed off of the faith of their believers and in return spoke of the wonderful spirit world, even summoning a variety of ghosts to prove their claims.

Demonic Saviors seem to have no goal other than convincing people of the proper path to salvation and, as with all Prophets, surrounding themselves a group of followers. These faithful grant the demon sufficient Seepage energy to act, and enough belief to allow it to easily return if they are ever banished.

Forsaken: Forsaken Saviors see a vision of the how the world could be, but they lack the power and the supernatural understanding to help bring about this new world. Despite their lack of power, these Forsaken desperately wish to convince the world of the rightness of their beliefs. They will talk to anyone remotely willing to listen, and most will perform almost any action for a chance to present their beliefs to the world. Desperate measures such as pushing aside a priest to speak to a congregation, sponsoring pirate radio broadcasts, and threatening to perform acts of mass destruction if a newspaper will not print their article, are not beyond them. Forsaken Saviors will even perform suicidal acts, if it gives them a chance to present their plans and ideas before a large audience.



ARCHETYPE: GOD-KING

Powers: Mask, Thrall, Mesmerism, Regeneration, Telekinesis, Telepathy.

Primary Motivation: Personal Power. God-Kings want to rule the world. Like Saviors, they desire to rebuild the world into a new and purer form. However, they are convinced that for this new world to work they must be in charge. Most God-Kings feel that they have been selected by some higher power to rule as its representative on Earth.

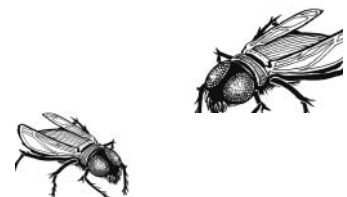
Description: While every God-King has a precise idea how the world they rule will be run, none of these details are as important as the fact that they will be the one ruling it. Of all the varieties of Prophets, these are the most openly mad. God-Kings are all firmly convinced of their superiority and their destiny and their right to rule the world. Many God-Kings claim to only wish to rule a single nation, or even a single city or town, but such lesser goals are usually merely stepping stones to controlling the actions and the fate of the entire mass of humanity. Most of a God-King's followers are not attracted to the ideal or plans for the new world. Most of the followers are simply caught up in the God-King's supernatural charisma and personal magnetism. As a result, a cult of personality develops, and the followers are loyal to the Prophet and not to any higher cause. This personal loyalty makes God-Kings the most difficult variety of Prophet to stop. Most followers will disregard even radical changes in their leader's beliefs or actions, and view them as proof that the God-King has some hidden plan. God-kings reinforce this faith through frequent, extremely flashy displays of their power.

Banes: God-Kings depend on their charisma. To weaken or destroy a God-King, it is necessary to disgrace or defame it. Any successful attempt to make a God-King look helpless, stupid, incompetent, or simply ridiculous will weaken both Incarnate or demonic God-Kings and will allow Incarnate God-Kings to be safely killed.

To actually banish a demonic God-King, the demon must be made to seem so incompetent or ridiculous that a portion of its followers begin to actually revile or ridicule it. Several incidents that show-up or ridicule the God-King may be necessary to actually change the follower's opinion of their leader. A variety of techniques have been used to destroy a God-King's illusion of infallible power. Sometimes uncovering and thwarting their sinister plans is sufficient. In other cases, revealing contradictions in their information may suffice. Occasionally mockery, ridicule, and practical jokes can break a God-Kings hold on its followers. While practical jokes may seem a rather frivolous way to end a potentially dangerous threat, God-Kings usually react extremely violently if their authority is threatened. A failed practical joke can easily result in injury or death for those who performed it.

Demons: Demonic God-Kings believe themselves to be actual gods. They desire worship and sacrifices from their followers. In return, they promise wealth and power to all those who honor them. Instead of merely wishing to physically rule the entire world, these demons believe that they are destined to rule the entire physical universe or at least some significant aspect of it. Some of these demons believe they are gods of a specific realm like war or death, others that they are the gods of some chosen group of people, and a few even claim that they are the true creator of the universe. Most of these demons explain their lack of omnipotence as a result of the efforts of some adversary. The demons require some form of human intervention to allow them to reclaim their rightful place of power. If their worshippers provide sufficient aid, the demons believe that they will attain even greater power and be impossible to banish as they rule over their chosen activity or people.

Forsaken: Forsaken God-Kings tend to be dangerous, reclusive megalomaniacs who are constantly seeking some way to prove themselves before the world, and to convince humanity that they are its specially chosen ruler. Some rant about their destiny on street-corners. Others plan, and sometimes carry out violent acts to prove the weakness of the current rulers and to gain the publicity they crave. When carrying out acts of terror, Forsaken God-Kings always make sure to let the world know that they are the ones responsible for the destruction that their acts cause. Their desire for publicity is often much more important than the exact nature of the acts they plan. Fortunately, this desire for fame usually allows Forsaken God-Kings to be rapidly apprehended once they have committed some heinous crime.



ADEPTS

Adepts are obsessed with knowledge and with a desire to do something which no one has done before. Adepts are most often created when a magician becomes corrupted while performing a failed ritual. Adepts become fascinated with the acquisition and use of supernatural and esoteric knowledge. The exact nature of the knowledge desired depends on the individual. Some seek to perform more and greater rituals, or attempt to locate supernatural places and objects of ever increasing power. Others seemingly turn their back on the magic that corrupted them and seek answers in science and technology. The first group is known as Conjurers, the second Mad Scientists.

Each variety of Adept has its own special power. Conjurers are extremely good at creating new rituals. They receive a -1Df to all Ritual research tests. Also, they frequently have a wide variety of Incarnate powers that supplement their magics. Mad Scientists have no special abilities beyond the ability to create Enchanted Devices (see below). They do not perform rituals, nor do they possess any Incarnate powers. Their devices, however, make them potentially much more dangerous than any other form of Incarnate.

Most scholars who investigate Adepts use the Conjurer/Mad Scientist division as the basis for their classifications. While useful in some ways, this division does not address the archetypal natural of such beings. Instead of explaining the motivation of the creature, the division highlights differing methodologies. Conjurers attempt to use ordinary-looking magic to attain their ends, while Mad Scientists create bizarre mechanical or electronic constructs to attain their ends. The exact nature of these ends -- whether creating life, becoming immortal, or releasing dark powers to rule the world -- may well be identical.

Regardless of how they express their particular obsession, all Adepts use the knowledge they obtain to create something beyond themselves. This "Great Work" may be anything from writing a unified theory of magic to opening a magical gateway allowing dark beings of vast power to conquer the Earth. This work is the heart of every Adept's existence. Most Adepts would eagerly sacrifice their own, or others' lives in order to complete this work.

ENCHANTED DEVICES

The devices created by Mad Scientists are special creations that use the Adept's unnatural understanding of the Seepage to warp reality to their own ends. Attempting to analyze these devices using normal scientific principles always fail. No normal device powered by a single transistor radio battery could start a large fire anywhere it is pointed, or open a gateway to a distant country. An Enchanted Device may do such things and more by drawing on the power of the Seepage. The wonder of these devices is that they can repeatedly work magic on their own. Unlike mere charms that work only once, a Mad Scientist's device will continue to function until it is destroyed.

Almost all modern Mad Scientists firmly maintain that their devices must be complex constructs of gears or circuits. This requirement seems to stem from the modern fascination with technology. This mindset has been impressed upon the Seepage. Many older occult organizations have a supply of ancient magical items like cloaks which render the wearer invisible and armor which protects the wearer from all normal harm. These items made by Mad Scientists long ago, and thus do not suffer from an excessive love of complexity. Unless broken or destroyed, these devices continue to work indefinitely. Many are still used long after the being that created them is dead.

Because of their unique nature, Enchanted Devices cannot be duplicated. Even an exact duplicate of such a device will merely be an odd collection of disparate parts. The true magic of Mad Scientists is that they are able to imbue these devices with special powers. Without this special connection to the Seepage, the device is useless.

Enchanted Devices that receive minor or moderate damage (10 or less on the Equipment Damage and Malfunction Table) may be repaired, if all the parts are present. The Occult skill must be used in place of the Repair/Build skill. Further, all such repair tasks are one Difficulty Level harder. Finally, the time necessary to repair such devices is multiplied by five.

Enchanted Devices can be extremely powerful. Rumors exist of long-range mind control devices and even working interstellar space ships having been built by particularly gifted mad scientists. Such devices naturally attract a great deal of attention from the Black Book, Atlanteans, and in extreme cases, even the Greys and the Saurians. Even fairly benevolent Adepts can create an enormous amount of chaos simply because of the number of factions who want their creations.



The Philadelphia Mirrors

This device consists of two large mirrors. Each mirror is approximately one meter wide and two meters high. They are mounted on ornate frames fitted with numerous vacuum tubes and florescent lights. When the mirrors are attached to an electrical supply, anyone who attempts to walk through one mirror will instantly emerge from the other mirror. These devices were created in the early 1950s by now deceased Adept Anders Sonderson. Since this time they have been owned by various wealthy collectors wholly unaware of their true purpose. For a time, both mirrors even spent time in a New York thrift shop. Most recently, they were purchased by wealthy occultist Jennifer Donnelley. Donnelley ran into references to these mirrors when researching Sonderson's work. Currently Donnelley is using these mirrors to commute between her apartment in Manhattan and her cabin in the Adirondack Mountains. However, Black Book agents have become aware of the existence of these mirrors and are planning on stealing them as soon as they can locate them.



ADEPT BANES

All Adepts have the same Bane -- the disruption or destruction of their Great Work. Destroying an Adept's work will instantly banish any demonic Adept. Disrupting a work in progress will weaken both demons and Incarnate, and will allow Incarnate Adepts to be safely killed. Unfortunately, threatening to disrupt or destroy an Adept's work will provoke an extremely violent response.

ADEPT DEMONS

Adept demons are actually quite rare. The linkages that bind Predators to their prey and Prophets to their followers are simply not present for Adepts. Most Adepts have little to do with the rest of humanity and so Adept demons have little reason to interact with humans. Those that do interact with humans usually do so for similar reasons, and so do not require separate write-ups for each archetype.

Upon death, an Adept's drive to produce a lasting and immortal legacy greatly diminishes. However, Adept demons can still be voluntarily and involuntarily summoned. Adept demons of all types usually act as advisors and mentors for occultists and inventors with goals similar to those the demon had in life. These demons prefer working with uncorrupted or partially corrupted humans and usually disappear once the individual becomes Incarnate. Assistance from such a being usually results in the eventual corruption of the individual being helped. However, the assistance of such a demon is the only way that someone who is not Incarnate can create enchanted devices. Unfortunately, mere mortals are incapable of fully understanding such devices, so the demon is the only one who will be absolutely certain what the device will do. The occultist or inventor may believe she is making a device to generate unlimited amounts of free energy, while in reality she could be creating a deadly bomb.

ADEPT FORSAKEN

Forsaken Adepts have the same desires and goals as other Adepts. They simply lack the special powers which will enable them to accomplish these goals. This realization occurs to most Forsaken at some point. Some continue their experiments in the hope of an eventual breakthrough. Others seek less savory paths to success. If the Forsaken comes across any evidence that anyone else is working on a similar project, it will become obsessed with stealing the rival's work and using it in his own creation, or with killing the rival in order to eliminate competition. Others attempt to summon demons or other beings to assist them. Most demons have little interest in helping the Forsaken and only those in need of an unsuspecting dupe will heed such summonings.

ADEPTS AND MUTATION

Adepts never suffer obvious mutations. However, many of them gain a point of Intelligence, or occasionally of Willpower. This results from their deeper understanding of the supernatural world.

AEGIS AND ADEPTS

Adepts, especially Mad Scientists, are very powerful and somewhat dangerous. However, they can also be extremely useful. Aegis has a standing policy that Adepts should be captured if evidence exists that they are working on projects which might be of use. The Black Book has a similar policy and more than one Adept has undergone multiple kidnappings.

BECOMING AN ADEPT

The vast majority of Adepts become corrupted when one of their rituals fail. However, a rare individual who has never practiced magic may also become an Adept. A few scientists who effectively live in their laboratories, shunning all human contact, may after many years become corrupted and end up as Adepts. Once again, the key to corruption is obsession.

ARCHETYPE: CREATOR

Powers: Often none, some have Mesmerism to motivate their assistants and possibly Telekinesis or Divination to help with their work. Their creations often have numerous powers.

Primary Motivation: Creating a Masterpiece. Creators seek to create some unique and impressive creature or device. Creating life, transforming animals into people, turning lead into gold or making a machine that can teleport objects are all possible goals for Creators. The Creator's project is always something that no one has ever done before, and that others believe to be impossible. Frequently, these creations involve breaking down boundaries that others regard as inviolate such as the distinction between life and death, or the boundary between one mind and another.

Description: Like all Adepts, Creators are obsessed with their creations. Most Creators choose projects of such difficulty that success is impossible or will only occur after many years of effort. Creators who believe they have succeeded in making their chosen creation become deliriously happy. Unlike most other varieties of Adept, the process of creation is the end-point of their desire. Once it has been reached, some Creators simply enjoy using their creations, while others seek the fame, fortune, and acceptance they believe they deserve for their efforts. Many eventually pick another, even more difficult project to work on and the cycle begins again. A few simply slip away and die.

If the creation turns out to be flawed or inadequate in any way, the Creator will become extremely angry and will often destroy it and begin again. This is generally not a problem unless the creation is a living sentient being. If the creation objects to being destroyed, serious conflict may ensue. Unfortunately, Creators working on difficult projects usually produce at least one flawed creation before they succeed. Like all Adepts, Creators are convinced of their own brilliance and will be unwilling to believe their creation is flawed until the defect cannot be ignored. Careful testing and proper safeguards are generally regarded as unnecessary, or even insulting to the Creator's innate genius.

The only harmful Creators are those who work on dangerous projects. A Creator intent on building the world's fastest automobile is unlikely to cause problems until the vehicle is road tested in heavy traffic. However, Creators who wish to raise the dead may require a source of freshly dead bodies and may not be too particular about the origin of the bodies. Also, creating sentient beings is especially difficult, whether grown in a vat, assembled from dead body parts, or even from electronic components. Many such creations are flawed and develop dangerous or even homicidal quirks, especially if the creation realizes that its maker regards it as imperfect. Victor Frankenstein is among the most famous Creators, as his exploits were circulated in the guise of fiction, but there have been numerous others.



NECROMANCER

Necromancers are Adepts who seek to understand and transcend the division between life and death. Ordinary magical rituals can transform humans into will-less zombies and summon spirits, but they cannot restore the dead to life, or even the semblance of life found in the fictional undead. Necromancers want to create life out of death and perhaps entirely erase the boundaries between the two. None of them have ever truly brought the dead to life, but a few have managed to create shambling undead. Most experienced Necromancers live in isolated locations with only their odd creations as their servants. Many Necromancers have some specific reason for their obsession, such as restoring a deceased loved one to life.

Archetype: Creator

Appearance: Necromancers are usually pale and somewhat unkempt. The smell of death lingers around them.

Mutations: +1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower. Demons gain +2 to both characteristics as well as +1 to their Perception.

Powers: Regeneration or Mesmerism. Demons also gain Possession, Phantasm, and Healing.

Banes: Having its work destroyed.



ARCHETYPE: SCHOLAR

Powers: Telepathy, Divination.

Primary Motivation: Discovering New Knowledge. Scholars are usually the least active and least dangerous of all Adepts. Scholars are not interested in creating anything other than a body of knowledge that will help to explain something previously unexplainable. Like all other Adepts, each Scholar has a special area of interest. Some seek to discover the truth about metaphysical question like the existence of God or the nature of the afterlife. Others have somewhat more practical goals like developing a complete theory of gravity or time. Regardless of the specifics, all Scholars seek to record their theories. Many Scholars wish to distribute their theories among those who will appreciate it. Others hold their new knowledge apart, and only release it to a chosen few who they trust to use it wisely. Like most other Adepts, Scholars who succeed will often look for another more complex problem to attempt to understand.

Description: Scholars are in love with knowledge. Most would happily do without food for a week to save the money to purchase another old magical tome. All Scholars have extensive private libraries and eagerly seek admittance to specialized research collections, especially restricted collections like the Vatican library. Scholars who find a useful book owned by someone who will neither sell nor loan it to them have been known to resort to theft or even threats. Similarly, a threat to the Scholar's library is regarded as more significant than a threat to the Scholar's life.

While all Scholars search books for answers, some also perform a wide variety of experiments to obtain the answers they seek. The majority of these experiments are harmless, if quite eccentric, but some may require human subjects or other rather problematic components. In their quest for knowledge, Scholars regard almost any risk as acceptable, even if they are not the only ones placed in danger. Scholar Adept Nicolai Tesla blacked out the entire city of Denver in the early 20th century. A few Nazi Scholars tortured numerous human subjects to death. Some more recent Scholars have risked a massive release of radiation or poisonous chemicals into populated areas. As long as useful knowledge is to be gained, many of the more obsessed Scholars regard such events as a minor price to pay for knowledge. However, some Scholars, especially those who became Incarnate early enough in the process of corruption to avoid the greatest depths of obsession, try to avoid such negative consequences of their work.



ARCHETYPE: ALCHEMIST

Powers: Initially none, but they may gain any Incarnate power in the course of their experiments.

Primary Motivation: Self-transformation. The highest goal of all medieval alchemy was self-transformation and the perfection of self. Alchemists seek to use their special knowledge to transform themselves into another form or state. Some seek physical immortality. Others wish to improve their bodies to reach some desired physical goal. A few want to abandon their physical form and create a body of pure energy. Alchemists create the same types of devices and perform the same varieties of experiments as other Adepts, but their ultimate goal is to use the device, ritual, or drug upon themselves. Alchemists are the type of Adept most likely to become demons. Becoming a creature of pure (Seepage) energy is a common goal for Alchemists. However, the desired transformation can take almost any form imaginable, even granting the Adept vast physical powers of comic-book super-heroes.

Description: Many Alchemists end up killing themselves in a spectacular or unusual fashion as they attempt to transform themselves into their desired state. Others pay or recruit desperate subjects to test these transformations for them. Sometimes Alchemists even kidnap subjects for their experiments. Like all other Adepts, most Alchemists never succeed in the transformation they seek. Those few who do must now find another goal to sustain them. Some become obsessed with transforming others into their own "perfected" state. Still others use their new abilities to become either deadly Predators or heroic figures who secretly battle supernatural beasts or dangerous criminals.

In a few cases, especially when the Alchemist becomes a being without vast supernatural powers, it will cease to be Incarnate. Such transformations as to a person with a highly attractive or physically perfect body, or simply to someone who is immortal and ageless, will allow the Adept to resume life as a seemingly normal human being. In these cases, the obsession which is at the heart of being an Adept has run its course, and when it ended the Alchemist lost his connection to the Seepage.



GHOSTS

In common parlance, ghosts are the wandering souls of dead humans. Most of the people who have had direct experience with ghosts believe this implicitly. Numerous theories have been postulated to explain the fact that only a tiny number of the many millions of people who die every year ever reappear as ghosts. Some believe that ghosts have unfinished business in the mortal world, others believe that only people who die under special circumstances, often ones involving magic or violence, return as ghosts. Most such theories are no more than wishful thinking and self-delusion, but there are grains of truth contained within them.

The Queens Tome indicates that while the existence of actual immortal souls remains entirely beyond the realm of scientific investigation, ghosts are phenomena derived from the Seepage, not from the afterlife. A ghost is essentially a recording of the individual's memories and personality that has impressed itself upon the Seepage. Many of these "recordings" are quite fragmentary and contain little more than repeating patterns of action or responses to specific stimuli.

Most ghosts perform a single repetitive action. If summoned or otherwise called from the depths of the Seepage, the ghost will respond in highly predictable ways. Many ghosts will either deliver the same message to everyone they see, or will treat everyone as a specific person they know well. Often such interactions are entirely harmless. On the other hand, a ghost that reacts as if every human it meets is its murderer can be dangerous. Poltergeists are just as likely to be non-sentient "recordings" as any other type of ghost, but their ability to affect the physical world renders them profoundly dangerous. Aegis policy mandates that all obviously non-sentient poltergeists be banished or otherwise rendered harmless.

The vast majority of ghosts are incapable of remembering anything that has happened to them while they have been ghosts. Conversations an hour old are completely forgotten and mentioning them will merely confuse the spirit. In a very real sense, most ghosts are trapped in the past.

Regardless of the specifics of the manifestation, most ghosts are no more sentient or conscious than a complex video game which reacts to the player's input. Some ghosts are different. A few unusual ghosts are fully conscious and sentient. Such ghosts can communicate clearly and are aware of their surroundings. Unlike the simpler, "recording" ghosts these spirits are even capable of learning and remembering events which happened after they died. These ghosts seem identical in both personality and memories to the actual individual.

Even these more "conscious" ghosts are still nothing more than constructs of the Seepage modeled after the minds and consciousness of the once-living individual. Indeed, on rare occasions, such ghosts are produced by individuals who are still alive. These spiritual duplicates, usually known as a Fetches are quite rare, but strongly indicate that ghosts have no direct connection to the person they appear to be. Some parapsychologists firmly maintain that conscious ghosts do seem to be fully sentient individuals, and that banishing a sentient ghost is tantamount to murder. Current Aegis policy is to contain or banish malevolent ghosts, and to ignore or recruit the non-malevolent ones. Wilson Jenkins, an Aegis agent who died in the line of duty and became a ghost, still haunts the Groom Dry Lake Research Facility. He has been quite helpful to a number of operatives.

One curious phenomenon common to many ghosts is their limited mobility. Usually, non-sentient ghosts can only appear and affect the region near where they died. Some can appear anywhere in the building or the city block where they died, others are so limited that they are unable to leave the room where they died. Some ghosts appear in other places, usually their homes, and a few can only appear in the vicinity of a treasured possession or a loved one.



When a summoning ritual is used on a ghost with limited mobility, the ghost will appear at the site of the summoning. As long as the ghost is held there with summoning or binding rituals, it will appear where the magician wills. However, as soon as the ritual is ended, the ghost will return to its place or residence. Some occultists suspect that sentient ghosts can be freed from the mobility restrictions by repeated summonings. Most fully sentient ghosts have full freedom of movement and can appear wherever they wish, or wherever they are summoned.

While no one is sure of the reason, there are very few ancient ghosts. With a few notable exceptions, ghosts fade over time. Almost all known ghosts are less than 300 years old, and the majority of ghosts are less than a century old.

Involuntary Summoning

Incorporeal beings like ghosts, demons, and ascended ghosts most commonly appear in response to a summoning ritual. Once summoned, if they are not controlled, they may then go off and act on their own until they are either bound or banished. However, summoning rituals are not the only way such being can appear. All supernatural beings have particular events, emotions or places with which they are associated. If a large group of people, especially a large group of highly emotional people, are feeling the appropriate emotions, performing the appropriate actions, or are simply assembled in the correct place, the spirit may spontaneously appear. In all of these cases, the assembled people emit appropriately tinged Seepage energy, and agitate the Seepage already present with their emotions.

This attracts the appropriate incorporeal being and gives the being the energy necessary to manifest itself. Some of these beings can only appear while the people are assembled. Others have the necessary stability to remain long after the conditions which summoned them are over. While Sensitives will automatically notice involuntary summonings, demons or other beings rarely appear in clouds of sulfurous brimstone. Even those spirits capable of corporeal interaction either form a body similar to those around them or simply possess one of the people involved. Many creatures appear only in the presence of numerous people. Sometimes, however, a single individual can act as the catalyst for an involuntary summoning. A single person who is obsessed, desperate, or wildly begging the supernatural for help will sometimes receive an answer. In such cases, the being that appears will usually take a deep interest in the person who accidentally summoned it. Some creatures will attempt to aid the person, but most will seek to corrupt or use them. Involuntary summoning are most common in Pools and Loci and are especially common if one or more Supernatural Foci are among the assembled people. However, Pools, Loci and Foci are not necessary for such summonings to occur.

GENERATING GHOSTS

All ghosts use Telepathic Illusions similar to the Incarnate power Mask, which allow them to speak and to generate a visible form. More powerful ghosts, such as poltergeists, can create and control Phenomena, such as Telekinesis and Pyrokinesis. The most powerful ghosts, such as ascended ghosts, can use Incarnate powers such as Possession or Form Body.

The typical non-sentient "recording ghosts" possess only these powers. Sentient ghosts, on the other hand, also possess the full range of knowledge and experience that they had when they were alive. Most sentient ghosts have between 30 and 100CPs worth of skills and trainings, depending upon their age at death and their background. Only skills based upon Intelligence, Perception, and Willpower, and those not requiring a physical body may normally be used by ghosts. However, ghost in possession of someone may use any skills it knows normally, subject to the limitations of the body it is possessing. Ghosts generally do not have access to the possessed person's skills and abilities.

PLAYING GHOSTS

With the GM's permission, a character might begin the game as a ghost. Players of ghosts characters must generate a previous occupation and may purchase any skill, trainings or other traits associated with this background (except Void, Psink or Psychic Burnout), using the normal 100CP base. Unlike usual character creation, CPs may be set aside and retained for the next stage of creation. The player should also work out the circumstances of their character's death.

To avoid the problem of playing characters who are simply too limited to be interesting, all character ghosts use Incarnate Powers, instead of the usual Telepathic Illusions and Phenomena. Ghost characters begin with Mask and one of the following Powers: Telekinesis, Possession, or Form Body, free of cost. Ghosts have only Intelligence, Willpower, Perception, and Luck attributes. These characteristics are purchased normally. Ghosts have no physical characteristics. They also lose any Influence purchased.

Ghost characters retain any Psych Profile advantage or flaw like Photographic Memory, or Impulsive, and any Talent or Ability except psychic abilities. Ghosts cannot currently possess any Medical Profile or Background and Resources advantages or flaws. Any CPs spent on such traits are returned to the character upon death. If the total of the lost traits and retained CPs is negative, no new powers may be purchased. Otherwise, powers and new traits may be purchased using any remaining CPs.

Ghosts can also possess the Incarnate powers of Telekinesis, Flight, Form Body, Possession, Pyrokinesis, Telepathy, Divination, or Animal Control. Each power costs 40CPs and must be bought when the character is created. Other Incarnate powers are too powerful for ordinary player characters to possess and may only be purchased as allowed by the GM. Remember that, unlike Incarnate, ghosts only have access to ambient SPs to fuel their powers, and generate none of their own.

To maintain their connection to the physical world, most ghosts choose to interact with it much as they did in life. Ghosts move around much as they did in life. Even while incorporeal, ghosts are incapable of moving faster than a human can run. However, ghosts are capable of walking over surfaces which would not support a human, including water. Also, obstacles like walls are no hindrance to ghosts. Ghosts which have the Incarnate power of Flight can move very rapidly through the air, but only by expending Seepage points.

Ghosts can make interesting and unusual player characters. However, care must be taken for them to become neither all-powerful spies nor helpless voices in the background. It is recommended that no more than one player in a group be allowed to play a ghost, unless a special all-ghost campaign is desired.



WILSON JENKINS

Wilson Jenkins was an electronics technician and computer programmer who worked in the Groom Dry Lake Facility. For many years, Jenkins worked on uncovering the secrets of alien technology, and dreaming of eventually discovering a method of allowing humans to travel to the stars. Jenkins was killed when a Grey psibot unexpectedly lashed out as it was being disassembled. Everyone in the facility was quite surprised when Jenkins showed up for work the next day. Jenkins assumes that his wish to see humanity travel to the stars was strong enough to allow his personality to survive his death. Since his death, Jenkins has traveled around various Aegis facilities and has even gone on a few missions. While he is happiest working in a laboratory, Aegis Prime has convinced him that a ghost can occasionally be quite useful on important missions.

Per 3 **Wil** 4 **Int** 4 **Luck** 2/12

Powers: Mask (appear as himself), Telekinesis, Possession

Skills: Engineering: Electronic 4, Computer Programming 4, Build/Repair: Electronic 4, Science: Physics 3, Computer Use 3, Occult 2, Mediation 2, Research 2, Drive: Auto 2, Language: Russian 2, Language: Japanese 2



ASCENDED GHOSTS

While ghosts, especially poltergeists, can be quite dangerous, most of them are simply not very powerful. Some ghosts gain significant power and become a different order of being.

The form and structure of the Seepage is controlled by the collective unconscious of humanity. Everyone, even ghosts, has a connection to this collective unconscious and therefore a connection to every other human. Most ghosts can only use this connection to influence the emotions and perceptions of others. However, some ghosts are able to draw Seepage energy directly off of living people. A few ghosts may have learned to do this consciously, but for most this process is an accident of history and circumstance.

Generally the process of enhancement only occurs with the ghost of someone famous and important. As soon as people begin to see the ghost of someone famous, stories and rumors begin to circulate. Perhaps the person isn't really dead, perhaps the person has returned from the grave to aid people in need or bearing an important message. Whatever the exact circumstances, the minds and hearts of a large number of people create this ghost. The exact mechanism is unknown, but over the next few years, the collective belief of all of these people increases this ghost's power and stability. Ghosts become poltergeists, and poltergeists become capable of performing a wide range of feats which can usually only be performed by the Incarnate and demons.

Ghosts who are empowered by the beliefs of others are known by many names and are found in many cultures. CAPS researchers refer to such beings as "ascended ghosts", but the Queens Tome did not mention them. In Voodoo, such beings are actively worshipped and are referred to as Loa. While it has never been substantiated, some of the less religious occult researchers believe that many of the miracles performed by various departed Christian saints were actually the work of ascended ghosts. In the modern United States, the most well-known ascended ghost is that of singer Elvis Presley. For unknown reasons, after Presley died, he returned as a ghost. Within a decade after his death, the belief and love of his fans had given him the powers of an ascended ghost. Currently he can teleport anywhere in the globe, always appearing in the vicinity of his believers.

Like all ascended ghosts, this process has changed the ghost of Elvis. Not only do the beliefs of his followers grant him power and stability, they also alter his very nature. As time goes on, ascended ghosts increasingly become exactly what their followers believe them to be. Originally the ghost of Elvis Presley was simply a duplicate of the personality and memories of Elvis Presley created by the Seepage. However, most of his believers feel that he is young, slender, and helpful to those in need. Over time, his ghost has become young-looking, slender, and helpful.

Eventually, as everyone who knew the ghost in life dies, ascended ghosts begin to lose many of their original memories and personality and become more the reflection of the followers' beliefs. However, unlike demons, ascended ghosts never entirely lose their individuality. They are a combination of real people and legend, and in time the legends predominate, but they are more complex and individual than mere archetypes.

Recently another type of ascended ghost has become common. Legendary figures without any real basis, like Sherlock Holmes, Gandolf, or even Batman have become so widely known and popular that many people believe in them. This belief has brought a few such figures into existence. These being appear very seldom and generally no one but the people who actually saw them believe that they appeared. If enough stories and enough belief is generated, ascended ghosts can be formed out of the raw stuff of the Seepage, without needing to first accrete around a ghost.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ASCENDED GHOSTS AND DEMONS

Like demons, ascended ghosts have become creatures of pure magic and so are bound by the laws of magic. Like demons, ascended ghosts are incapable of breaking their word. Also, like demons, each ascended ghost has specific Banes and vulnerabilities based on the legends told about them. The ascended ghost of King Arthur might be vulnerable to betrayal by someone close to him, while the Voodoo Loa Legba can be more easily summoned at a crossroads.

GENERATING ASCENDED GHOSTS

Ascended ghosts are all essentially legendary figures. They are the legends of particular important or impressive people that have survived these individuals' deaths and now exist as animated legends. As such, they can be much more complex than demons, especially early in the existence of the ascended ghost, while it still has some connection to its original personality. The powers of an ascended ghost are largely identical to those of a demon. In addition to Form Body and Possession, most ascended ghosts possess Invulnerability, Phantasm, Telekinesis, Thrall and numerous other Incarnate powers. Those that can form corporeal bodies usually have all of their physical characteristics equal to 4 or 5, and sometimes even higher. The older and more widely known the ascended ghost is, the more powerful it becomes. When designing ascended ghosts look to the legends of the culture or cultures in which the party finds themselves. King Arthur, The Eight Chinese Immortals, The Voodoo Loa Eurzuli, Jesse James, Robin Hood, Jim Morrison, Elvis Presley and even the Incredible Hulk can occasionally appear in times of need. The best guide to their behavior and actions is the legends and stories told about these beings; these legends give ascended ghosts their power.



THE DUKE

When the weak are oppressed or injustice rules, the spirit of the eternal cowboy may show up to help save the day. Made larger than life through his many movies and the adoration of his millions of fans, his legend has endured long after his death. Today, empowered by the belief and admiration of his fans, the spirit of John Wayne enters into would-be heroes and helps save the helpless and punish the wicked. Only people who are attempting to combat evil, but are unprepared physically or mentally for the task, are likely to be possessed by this spirit.

Like all other possessing spirits, this being is fully in control of the subject's body until the possession ends. The spirit may use all of its skills and powers as if the subject's body was its own. Unlike many possessing spirits, the Duke avoids letting any permanent harm come to its host. The spirit will use its Regeneration power to make sure that the host is fully healed when the spirit leaves. While incorporeal, the spirit has no physical characteristics, but the bonuses listed below are applied to the body of anyone the Duke is possessing

Str +2 **Agl** +1 **Ref** +1 **Per** 5 **Wil** 5 **Int** 3 **Luck** 2/9

Powers: Thrall (charisma and fear), Possession, Regeneration (usable on host), Animal Control (domestic animals only), Frenzy (usable on host)

Skills: Brawling 5, Gun Fu 5, Small Arms: Pistol 5, Animal Handling: Horse 5, Throw 5, Tracking 5



AWAKENED BEINGS

The most mysterious type of supernatural creatures are the awakened beings. This term is reserved for any object or animal that has become infused with Seepage energy. In addition to collecting in humans and in places of power like Pools and Loci, Seepage energy can also naturally collect in objects and animals. It is unclear why a few objects and animals collect Seepage energy, but all known awakened beings have spent considerable amounts of time (years) in Pools or Loci.

AWAKENED OBJECTS

While the nature of the phenomena is similar, awakened objects are quite distinct from awakened animals. Awakened objects are items that have a Seepage Level, much like a Pool or a Locus. In effect, they are localized, often mobile, Pools and Loci. Most awakened objects have a Seepage Level of 1, but the oldest and most powerful objects have rating of 2. This Seepage energy is cumulative with the ambient Seepage energy around the object. A SL1 awakened object in a SL2 Locus would generate a location with a total Seepage Level of 3. Many magicians, corrupted beings and others greatly desire such objects given their obvious utility.

F O R S A K E N R I T E S

Awakened objects are much more than simply mobile Seepage batteries, however. Awakened objects all possess some rudimentary consciousness and motivations. In effect, each one has its own archetype. In almost all cases, the archetype of the object relates very directly to its form. All weapons have Predator archetypes, while an awakened microscope would have an Adept archetype. Only objects with no moving parts, like statuary, or simple mechanical devices, like guns or mechanical clocks, can be awakened. Also, only well-made, high-quality, usually hand-made objects ever become awakened. Occultists assume that only the care and emotion involved in making a specific well-made object triggers in it the possibility of becoming awakened.

Awakened objects can be profoundly dangerous because they are capable of independent action. Awakened devices sometimes operate independently in accordance with their archetype. An awakened gun might "accidentally" fire when some picks it up and looks down the barrel. Also, awakened objects are capable of producing spontaneous Invocations. While such events are quite rare, all of the supernatural manifestations associated with Invocations can occur in the vicinity of awakened objects. These manifestations extremely dangerous proposition. To make matters worse, when using such an object to perform rituals, the magician must make a Willpower test vs. the Seepage Level of the object. If the object is within the boundary of a Pool or Locus, the Seepage Level of the area is added to the Df of this test. If the magician fails this test, she temporarily comes under the control of the object's archetype. This possession generally lasts for D6 hours, but this time period varies among objects. While the magician is not actually corrupted and gains no Incarnate powers, she may have to perform horrific acts before she regains control of her body.



THE NEW ATHENS BIBLE

Archetype: Savior

Seepage Level: 1

This object is the bible in the Catholic Church in New Athens, Indiana. The bible is a large book, hand-bound in black leather. It was printed in 1857 and has since been imbued with the force of belief of the thousands who have seen it used in church services. At times, it will randomly flip itself to pages containing passages that relate to events occurring around it. The priest who owns it uses it occasionally as a form of divination. The book exudes an aura of holiness similar in many ways to the Thrall power. All who are in its presence feel somewhat closer to God. This effect will not make an atheist into a believer, but it can bolster someone's weakening faith. Also, the bible can occasionally produce Invocation effects. Some of these effects provide minor aid to a believer in need, such as money being teleported to a desperately poor person. Other effects serve to strike down anyone who attempt to harm the book, the church it is kept in, or the priest who uses it.



AWAKENED ANIMALS

Awakened animals also possess Seepage energy, but this energy is not available for use by humans. The animal can produce Invocation-like phenomena and often has one or more Incarnate powers. Awakened animals also seem to have archetypes. The vast majority of such animals are Predators, but a few are Prophets. Becoming awakened does not make the animal any more sentient, so many of the Prophet archetypes and all of the Adept archetypes are simply beyond the range of consciousness of the animal. Generally only wild or feral animals become awakened. Ordinary domestic animals like pets and livestock almost never become awakened. Most awakened animals belong to species which are of mythic importance to humanity like dogs, wolves, cats, bears, wild pigs, or horses. Awakened feral animals like wild dogs usually maintain a keen interest in humanity, which seems heightened by the Seepage. However, some awakened wild animals have little interest in humanity unless humans come looking for them. They lead their odd lives far from humans. Their powers are rarely recognized except by lone travelers, who often do not live to tell others about them.



BLACK DOG

Archetype: Stalker

Str 4 Siz 3 Agl 4 Ref 4 Per 5 Wil 3 Int 1 Luck 2/12

Powers: Mask, Teleport, Thrall (Fear), Regeneration, Divination

Black Dogs live in wilderness areas or deserted parts of cities and are rarely seen by humans. Like all Stalkers, they are only active at night. Some occultists believe that they may be entirely ordinary animals during the day. At night, Black Dogs have featureless black hides, like a large dog-shaped piece of night. They also have large eyes that glow red or green. Many are more strange than dangerous. They simply follow or watch humans and occasionally produce Invocations in their vicinity. A few will hunt the people who cross their paths. Like other Stalkers, Black Dogs relentlessly pursue their solitary prey, allowing them to grow increasingly afraid before they close in for the kill. The Black Dog's Divination power is limited to prophecies of harm or death.







CHAPTER 8

SUCCONING

INTRODUCTION

This scenario is designed to introduce characters to the world of the supernatural. While many supernatural scenarios require extensive planning and research, this scenario will be extremely fast-paced, the objective must be completed in less than 36 hours, and may be completed in 12 hours. Having a magician or at least a Sensitive in the party will be helpful, but not essential. One or more characters should have a high Occult skill. If none of the characters present have this skill, a knowledgeable non-player character should be introduced at some point before this adventure is run. Perhaps a strange, occult-oriented pawn shop broker, or wise old fortune-teller could be created as an on-going source of information.

THE REAL STORY

Malcolm Jeter has long viewed mystical studies as a means to increase his own power and wealth. In the guise of Brother Jade, Jeter joined the Montague Club in the mid-1970s. Steadily and rather quickly, Jeter rose through the ranks to become a member of the inner circle. With great power and influence came great confidence, and Jeter determined that he would ally with a demon, and eventually rule the world. Paranoid and unwilling to share, Jeter kept his plans from his comrades at the Montague Club. In early 1995, Jeter foolishly attempted the summoning ritual by himself and failed. As a result, he became corrupted and snapped. At present, Jeter is a Conqueror Adept Incarnate.

When the Montague Club learned of Jeter's activities and failure, they organized a team to eliminate him. The team failed and Jeter escaped. Jeter's prior failure and new independent status did not dissuade him, however. He simply began his plans for world domination anew. Since his ouster, Jeter has worked diligently to organize a group of followers to aid him when he next summons a demon. He has named his new cult the Red Circle. Jeter has been largely successful in his preparatory endeavors and is now ready to finish the task.

Jeter has decided he will again attempt summon the demon Halphas. He is well versed in the necessary summoning and binding rituals, as he has spent nearly a decade devising and studying them. Jeter found a Pool in or nearby the player character's locale, and has set up a base of operations there. This Pool is "agitated" two nights a month: the night just before, and the night of, the full moon. Jeter has exhaustively trained five disciples, and has recruited six neophytes. With some difficulty, the magus has also secured the use of the Tengri Skull, an artifact that aids summoning rituals. Finally, Jeter plans a human sacrifice. Given these preparations, Jeter should be able to generate the proper amount of Seepage energy, and to successfully cast the summoning ritual on at least one of the "agitated" nights.

Jeter's mystic power and desire for power combined with the demon's might and appetite for destruction will cause untold havoc. The player characters must stop this alliance from forming, or fight to hold it in check until other forces can be arrayed against it.

THE HOOK

The morning of the day before the full moon, one of the Cell members (preferably one with an Occult skill) will notice the following article buried deep inside the local paper. The exact time and date are not important, but the day is Friday. Thus, the full moon will fall on a Saturday.



Ornate Skull Draws High Bid

by Thomas Umar

A delicate, silver-inlay skull drew the highest bid in yesterday's auction of treasured artifacts at the Wright-Davis auction house. The skull, described as the Tengri Skull in the auction guide, purportedly grants its owner good luck in business and procreation.

The skull and numerous other exotic artifacts were collected by Stuart Peabody, Jr., the eccentric scion of wealthy industrialist Stuart Peabody, Sr. The junior Peabody died several months ago after a long illness. The family has fallen on hard times recently, and Mrs. Peabody decided to auction the collection to raise funds.

Mrs. Peabody also confided, "Most of the stuff that my husband collected was, frankly, disturbing. I loved him, and will always treasure his memory, but I was just as glad to get the items out of my house."

Although no item was well known enough to draw crowds of bidders, several of the city's cultural leaders were present and they all bid aggressively. Even so, the escalating bidding on the Tengri Skull surprised many. The two interested parties were Ricard Bens, CEO of Softcare

Products, and an unidentified younger man. Only when Mr. Bens pledged \$51,000 did the ardent young man concede the prize. The other high bids were \$36,500 for a small 16th Century triptych, and \$27,800 for ceremonial sabre. In all, it is estimated that the bidding garnered Ms. Peabody over \$230,000.

As an odd postscript, the young man who lost the bidding for the Tengri Skull accosted Mr. Bens outside the auction house. Witnesses report that the young man was obviously enraged, and warned Mr. Bens, in an expletive-filled tirade, that no good would come of his ownership of the skull. Although the young man made no threatening gestures, two Wright-Davis security officers restrained him until Mr. Bens drove off in his chauffeured limousine.

OPENING MOVES

The character reading the Tengri Skull article should decide to do some investigating. If that character is an occultist, they will dimly remember the name. A successful Occult skill test (minor research takes 2D hours) about the Tengri Skull will reveal that it is purportedly a magical artifact from Tibet and that it is supposed to aid in summoning spirits and demons. Until ten years ago, it was in the possession of an elderly and recently deceased occultist Julianne Sforza. Its location for the past decade has been unknown. A Df2 Research test will reveal that Sforza died of a heart attack in Chicago three months ago. Sforza lived in Baltimore, Md., and had no known connection to Chicago. Given her age, 79, her presence in Chicago is something of a mystery. It is also a red herring for purposes of this mission, unless the GM decides otherwise.

The reporter, Thomas Umar, is a struggling society columnist. He is very pretentious and will object strenuously to revealing his sources or compromising his journalistic integrity by speaking with the party members. He can be flattered and cajoled if any party member has a connection to the media. Whether charmed or forced, Umar knows nothing beyond what he wrote. He may give the Cell a reference for a friend, Mary Baker, at the Wright-Davis auction house.

The Wright-Davis auction house is elegant, reserved and very upper crust. The business has an internal network, which is hooked to the Internet (Df3 Computer Programming test and D6 hours to access). The auction house receptionist and manager will politely but firmly refuse to discuss anything about clients or bidders. Physical threats will be ineffective, and the house employs several competent security guards (as many as needed to handle to situation). Legal intimidation (including a search warrant) or computer access will grant the party an item list, sales total and bidders list. This information can be obtained more easily and discretely by dropping Mary Baker's name at the reception desk and indicating to her that the party is friendly with Thomas Umar.

Other than Henry Connors, the list from the auction house shows a healthy cross-section of the city's cultural elite. Connors was the man who accosted Bens outside the auction house. One of the Wright-Davis security guards can provide this information, if asked. The remainder of the list can be investigated in great depth, but will lead nowhere. Each should be relatively hard to approach, very upper crust, and seemingly solid citizens. A few will have dark secrets at the GM's discretion.

If the Cell contacts Linda Peabody, she has little to add. Her husband suffered from prostate cancer and was ill for over a year before he died. Stuart Peabody, Jr. had always been interested in exotic artifacts, particularly those of a mystical origin. His collection was gathered over his lifetime, and was his only passion, other than expanding his father's fortune. He purchased items from as far away as Shanghai, China and Buenos Aires, Argentina, but also shopped regularly at Mendelson's Temple Secrets, Raymonds' Art Delux and Gruber's Tomes and Manuscripts in town. As far as she knows, he had no connections to mystical societies. If questioned about Ricard Bens, she will reveal that he practically begged to come to the auction. This varies sharply with Bens' story. Linda Peabody is telling the truth.

Peabody Antiques Auction

<i>Item</i>	<i>High Bidder</i>	<i>Sale Price</i>
<i>Tengri Skull</i>	<i>Ricard Bens</i>	<i>\$ 51,000</i>
<i>Jager Tryptich</i>	<i>Dagmar Ruus</i>	<i>\$ 36,500</i>
<i>Wilks Sabre</i>	<i>Joseph Clark</i>	<i>\$ 27,800</i>
<i>Carved Throne</i>	<i>Pamela Jensen</i>	<i>\$ 22,980</i>
<i>Necromicon</i>	<i>Ricard Bens</i>	<i>\$ 18,800</i>
<i>Zandar's Grimoire</i>	<i>Hans Gruber</i>	<i>\$ 15,300</i>
<i>Dark Eroticism Print</i>	<i>Lee Avery</i>	<i>\$ 14,800</i>
<i>Blood Mirror</i>	<i>Thomas Turndon</i>	<i>\$ 12,760</i>
<i>Crystallite Decanter</i>	<i>Ursula Harper</i>	<i>\$ 11,900</i>
<i>Bone Pens</i>	<i>Lee Avery</i>	<i>\$ 9,800</i>
<i>Bone Dagger</i>	<i>Joseph Clark</i>	<i>\$ 9,500</i>
<i>Silk Altar Cloth</i>	<i>Dagmar Ruus</i>	<i>\$ 6,700</i>
<i>Silver Inkwell</i>	<i>Adam Glancy</i>	<i>\$ 4,200</i>
<i>Carved Box</i>	<i>Donald Raymond</i>	<i>\$ 2,800</i>
<i>Mechanical Sketches</i>	<i>Bernard Mendelson</i>	<i>\$ 1,840</i>
<i>Beaded Necklace</i>	<i>Helena Ruus</i>	<i>\$ 220</i>
<i>Total</i>		<i>\$246,900</i>
<i>House Commission</i>		<i>\$ 24,900</i>
<i>Peabody Payout</i>		<i>\$222,000</i>

Bidders List

Lee Avery, Erotica Magazine
Ricard and Tracy Bens
Peter and Jennifer Chung
Joseph Clark, Grand Arms Emporium
Henry Connors
Adam Glancy, Pagan Performances
Hans Gruber, Tomes and Manuscripts
Ursula Harper, Fine Furnishings
Timothy and Pamela Jensen
Bernard Mendelson, Temple Secrets
Donald and Douglas Raymond, Art Delux
Dagmar and Helena Ruus, Museum of History
Thomas Turndon, South Bend Gallery
Brian Welsh, Welsh Collectibles

THE CRIME

Ricard Bens lives in a very exclusive section of the city. The houses are enormous and have walls and guards. The day of the article, however, the Bens estate is more accessible than usual. When the character's arrive, they find two police cruisers and a van inside the compound, and a team of forensic experts combing the grounds. Two city detectives oversee the forensic team and four uniformed officers.

If sufficiently impressed with the party's credentials, the police will indicate that the house was burglarized last night. Oddly, the security system developed a short and was inoperative when the burglar, or burglars struck. The window to Bens' study was cut with a glasscutter and unlatched. Several expensive and portable items were stolen as well as something called the Tengri Skull. Finally, the police have found a featureless footprint outside the study window, and black cloth fibers on the windowsill. While the thieves appear to be professionals, they appear to have made no attempt to bypass the security system. Thus, the shortage in the security system was extraordinarily lucky for them.

Tracy Bens is obviously an aging trophy wife, has little on her mind but the violation of her home. She is distraught at the loss of a family heirloom, a set of gold candlesticks. She will have no information for the Cell.

Bens is at the Softcare headquarters downtown. Softcare makes beauty care products, and was formed eight years ago when Bens' former company, Beauty Performance, purchased an established, but financially troubled Avolon Products. The company has experienced substantial growth and is close to Fortune 500 status. Bens is very busy and will have no time for the Cell unless serious pressure is brought to bear. Even so, he will have little to say. He knew Peabody slightly and when he received an invitation to the auction, he decided to go purely out of curiosity's sake. Once there, he felt an odd, but irresistible attraction to the skull, and decided he must have it. In truth, Bens is a regular member of the Montague Club, and was instructed to secure the Skull. He suggests the party track down the angry young man who challenged him outside the auction house. He is convinced the man stole his artifact.

THE ANGRY YOUNG MAN

The Cell can find Henry Connors in the phone book. His address is a relatively cheap apartment in a complex just outside the downtown area. No one answers the door, and if the party enters, the place is empty. The apartment is scarcely furnished, and what furnishings do exist appear to be all corporate give-aways.

While the Cell is at the apartment, they will encounter Rosa Hernandez, an elderly, nosy next door neighbor. Hernandez is somewhat lonely, and very talkative. She will attempt to engage the characters in a long, tangent-filled conversation. Among the facts about her life, her kids, her pets, her past and her opinions on current events, Hernandez will reveal that she saw Connors and his sister Joan leaving the apartment yesterday late afternoon. Connors was carrying an overnight bag. Both talked with her a bit, and told her they were heading out of town. Both are such nice people.

Connors and Vincinness are siblings, but they did not leaving town. Brother Jade sent Connors to secure the Skull, but he was outbid. Vincinness was then ordered to bring Connors to Brother Jade and keep him under wraps. Jade realizes that Connors made a scene at the auction house, and is paranoid enough to want him out of sight until Halphas has been summoned. Of course, Hernandez knows none of this.

Hernandez does not know Joan's last name, but she can describe her -- blond, slim and attractive. She is almost always professionally dressed in beautiful suits. Joan often wears a cravat with a symbol or logo of some sort on it. Mrs. Hernandez has a hard time describing it, but will recognize it if she sees it. Several note pads in Connors apartment bear the logo, and the name Bartow and Applegate, a brokerage firm in town.

The real property managing firm for the apartment is located down the road a bit. If the receptionist or manager there is questioned, they will be resistant to discussing their tenants. If sufficiently intimidated, they will reveal that Connors moved in about six months ago, and his rent is paid each month by check signed by a Joan Vincinness.

If the party proceeds to the Bartow and Applegate firm, the receptionist will be able to do little with just a first name. If the party guesses and calls her Joan Connors, the receptionist explains that no one by that name works at the firm. The characters will have to do some fast-talking, or give a compelling reason to get access to a phone list at the firm. If so, there are five Joans. Getting to see all of them will take several hours, and Vincinness is out for the day. There is a picture book of stockbrokers on the coffee table in the reception area, and the party will recognize Vincinness from Rosa Hernandez's description. Vincinness' address is in the phone book.

Surveillance will reveal that the house is empty. Searching the house will turn up a number of books on the occult, mythology and martial arts. In the back of her closet, careful investigation (a successful Df3 Perception test) will uncover a voluminous hooded scarlet robe and a box of ritual supplies. Psychic or supernatural investigation will be able to determine that these items have actually been used in powerful rituals.

No unusual correspondence will be found, but checking her computer will reveal that she has a number of highly encrypted files. A successful Df3 Computer Programming or Cryptology test will open a series of files about The Red Circle, including a great deal of email. She joined the organization only 8 months ago. The messages reveal that Vincinness is highly ambitious and desperately wants the power the Red Circle is willing to offer. She is clearly a new member and acts as a neophyte in the rituals. Several of the files will give detailed instructions on her basic duties in a ritual. Any player who reviews and memorized these files (2 hours) can take Vincinness' place as long as they succeed at a Int3 test.

No clue as to the identity of Brother Jade will be evident without 1D hours work, and a successful Df4 Computer Programming test. If this test succeeds, the Cell will have accessed Jade's email account's server and will find the name Malcom Jeter attached to the account. This test will also, if desired, reveal the credit card number Jeter uses to pay for his account. Unfortunately, the credit card bill is mailed to a Post Office Box and Jeter isn't checking his mail today. Also, his house is on loan from another member of the Cell and his phone number is unlisted and not in his name. If the members of the Cell use his credit card number to get a record of Jeter's charges for the last month (either a Df4 Computer Programming test, or pulling strings with any Federal Law Enforcement agency), they will discover that he charged some large pieces of furniture three weeks ago. Checking into this lead will reveal that the furniture was actually delivered to a large suburban house. This investigation will take several hours. The GM should handle the timing as necessary to enhance the storyline.

If members of the Cell instead capture and interrogate Vincinness, they will discover that she is quite stubborn, but sufficient threats should eventually prevail. She does not know Jade's actual name, but she will tell the Cell his address and the fact that she is needed for an important ritual being held tonight. She will explain that they are summoning a powerful spirit to aid their cause. Vincinness will tell the party that her brother is staying at Jade's house for the next several days. Especially clever Cells may hit upon the idea of having one of their members impersonate Vincinness in the ritual. The large hooded robe will make this especially easy, as long as they can get past the guards at the front door.

Simply waiting until 4:45 PM will result in a phone call being made to Vincinness reminding her that she should arrive at exactly 9:15 PM. This call is made by Jeter, and tracing it will reveal his address.

If the Cell takes none of these options, Vincinness will drive over to Jade's house at 8:55 PM. She will not expect to be followed unless the Cell has been extremely careless.



Joan Vincinness

Age: 36

Willpower 4
all other attributes 3
Luck 2/12

Traits
Impulsive

Skills

Brawling 1 Computer Use 2 Diplomacy: Persuasion 3
Drive 2 Humanities: Business 3 Martial Arts 3
Mediation 2 Occult 2 Research 3 Ritual: Taoist 2

Training

Ritual: Blessing of Prosperity
Ritual: Summon Demon
Ritual: Warding Circle

Joan Vincinness is a wealthy young stockbroker who is also a passionate martial arts enthusiast. She first met Brother Jade during a martial arts competition. His talk about the more esoteric side of marital arts practice intrigued her, especially his description of the power that could come from this learning. Vincinness is extremely competitive and loves to win. She sees magic primarily as a way to gain even more wealth, power, and prestige. She does not truly understand the dangers of dealing with the supernatural and is entirely unfamiliar with the concept of corruption. She has no personal loyalty to Brother Jade, or to anyone else -- she largely sees people as things to be used. When questioned, she will refuse to answer unless either serious threats are made, or the members of the Cell manage to convince her of the reality of corruption and the danger Brother Jade poses.

CONFRONTATION

Regardless of how they get there, the Cell should arrive at a large house in a wealthy neighborhood on the edge of town. The house has approximately an acre of wooded grounds, with a 7-foot high wall, and several guard dogs. None of this should cause any problem for a well-prepared Cell. Any Sensitives in the party will quickly notice that the house is built upon a Pool, which seems to emanate from a particularly spooky-looking grove of trees in back of the house. On nights before, and of, the full moon, the Pool has a Seepage Level of 2.

Lockpicking Skill
 A skill in Repair/Build: Electronics or Engineering: Electronics is required to open electronic or magnetic locks. For such locks, a character may use the higher of either the Electronics or the Lockpicking skill.

The house has a sophisticated alarm system (Df3 Lockpicking to bypass) and four highly trained, well-armed bodyguards are waiting inside (adjust the numbers so they are roughly equal to the numbers of the Cell). The guards are aware they are working for a dangerous, possibly insane boss, but they are well paid and have no complaints. A pair of guards will greet every guest at the door. The door has a metal detector built into it. Any character with Surveillance training will notice the detector if they examine the house at all carefully. Anyone who attempts to enter the house with a gun or any similarly large mass of metal will be stopped and searched. Most of the guests will arrive carrying ceremonial daggers, which they will present to the guards as they arrive. The guards patrol the first and second floor of the house and are instructed to make sure that no one enters the basement until Brother Jade comes up and escorts people down. They know the disciples and neophytes by sight. Any intruders the guards do not know will be asked to leave, and if they refuse, they will be restrained until the police arrive.

If the party somehow manages to get a search warrant, or convince the police to search the house, they will find nothing unusual. The gathering ritualists will be explained as a small cocktail party. Even if they have progressed to the point where they are in their robes, this is unusual but not illegal. The security personnel are licensed and legitimate.

The house is two stories, with a basement. The rooms are ornately, near obsessively decorated. Dark woods, richly colored fabrics and dull metals predominate. The rooms appear to have turn-of-the-century wiring, and the light from the fixtures is feeble. Most rooms have candles. A strange, musty smell fills the place.

Concealed under a rollaway cabinet (Per4 test, but the guards know) in the basement is a locked, metal trap door. Stairs lead down to a large wine cellar with more than a dozen massive bottle racks. The racks are arranged into a small maze, requiring several bends and loops to get to the far end of the room. Three weak lights struggle to illuminate the area. There, a large, sturdy door is recessed into the wall. The door has no handle.

The cellar is Dane the Predator's domain. He is at home on top of the bottle racks where he can watch any who enter and drop on them from above. Dane uses his Mask ability to appear as a large panther. Brother Jade created Dane and then used the Bind Zombie ritual on him. Once Jade and the cultists enter the ritual space, Dane is to kill anyone, including the guards, who enters the cellar. Dane is Jade's last line of defense against intrusion.

Even though Brother Jade is already corrupted, having one of his rituals fail could still be disastrous. Brother Jade regularly works extremely powerful magics and the energy released when such a ritual fails could easily kill everyone involved. The guards and the Predator are there to make sure that absolutely nothing disturbs him when he is performing a ritual. In addition, the door into his workspace has no exterior door lock. The door can only be opened from the inside. Before Brother Jade opens the door, he will look through the peephole and make sure that there are no surprises waiting for him. Unknown to anyone else, including both of the guards and Joan Vincinness, the ritual space also has a concealed trap door leading down into the storm sewers under the city. Brother Jade is paranoid enough to never work in a ritual space with only one exit.

The Guards		The four guards are highly compensated private security personnel. They are paid to be loyal, but threats of death will cause them to surrender. In fact, the guards are all hired thugs with past criminal records, and are willing to commit almost any crime if Brother Jade pays them enough. All guards are armed with auto pistols, knives, Kevlar vests and tasers.
All attributes 3 Luck 2/12		
Skills Autofire 2 Brawling 2 Drive 2 First Aid 2 Martial Arts 2 Melee Weapon: Knife 2 Small Arms: Pistol 3 Small Arms: Rifle 3 Stealth 2	Training Awareness: Concealed Weapons Surveillance	
Traits		
Physical Training Secret (Criminal records)		

Guard Dog	
Str 2 Agl 3 Int 2 Per 3	Siz 2 Ref 3 Will 2 Luck none
Traits	
Strong ESP: Sixth Sense 1	
Combat	
Savagery 2 Bite(Wn3) Pounce	

THE ORDER OF EVENTS

Exactly when the members of the Cell arrive at Brother Jade's home will be of extreme importance to the outcome of the scenario. Because people have a chance to throw off ordinary possession Brother Jade is going to make sure that Oswald is permanently under the control of Halphas by first making Oswald into a zombie. The Bind Zombie ritual takes four hours to complete. Brother Jade is performing that ritual alone on the night before the full moon, from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Brother Jade will use Wendy Oswald as a human sacrifice in the ritual to summon Halphas. He is also using extra assistants to minimize the possibility of failure, so a total of five disciples and six neophytes will be present. They will arrive before 9:30 PM on both nights. Anyone who arrives after 9:45 PM will not be admitted. The ritual to summon Halphas must begin at exactly 10:00 PM.

If the party does not discover the location of Brother Jade's house before 9:45 PM on the first night of the adventure, the ritual will fail due to a shortage of Seepage Points. Brother Jade will send everyone home and they will regather the second night. The Bind Zombie ritual will not be repeated the second night. Unless the party acts, the summoning ritual will be successful that night.

BEFORE 5:00 PM ON THE FIRST NIGHT

If the Cell uncovers Jade's address before he calls Vincinness, they will be able to arrive at his place before he starts the Bind Zombie ritual. They will find Dane helping Brother Jade carry equipment into the basement ritual space while the guards patrol the rest of the house and endeavor to stay out of the way. Oswald and his daughter will already be strapped to tables in the ritual space, and the Tengris Skull will be sitting on the altar in the center of the ritual space. If the Cell is careless or unlucky, they may face an hostage situation in which Oswald and his daughter are threatened. The only way the Cell can arrive before 5:00 is to break into Vincinness' computer files or to question her. In either case, the members of the Cell must act with great speed. If they pursue false leads or take excessive time to plan their actions, they will arrive after 5:00 PM.

BETWEEN 5:00 AND 9:00 PM ON THE FIRST NIGHT

After 5:00 PM on the first night, the Bind Zombie ritual will be in progress. If the Cell breaks in, they can overpower the guards with no possibility of alerting either Dane or Brother Jade. However, they must still face Dane, who will be on guard and will fight until he is dead. Even if the members of the Cell dispatch Dane, there is still the problem of entering the ritual space. Explosives or a Df4 Lockpicking test will allow the group in, but will disrupt the Bind Zombie ritual. Everyone, including Oswald, his daughter, who are present will have to make a test to resist corruption. If any of the guards are taken alive and questioned they will inform their captors that Brother Jade is performing some weird ritual in the basement, and will mention that he made some sort of sick joke about zombies. Dane will also shout something like "No go, ritual!" when the Cell members first open the basement trap door. Anyone with any Occult or Ritual skill will realize that disturbing an ongoing ritual is a remarkably poor idea.

At this point, the characters must wait outside the door of the ritual space until Brother Jade exists around 9:05 PM. Brother Jade will look out the peephole before leaving, and if he does not see Dane, he will call through a small opening beside the door. While Brother Jade is paranoid, he is feeling pretty confident after the ritual and any rough, gravelly voice saying something similar to "Yes master" will allay his suspicions. If he does not receive a satisfactory answer he will take the skull, Oswald and his daughter, who are now will-less zombies, and leave. Unless the Cell already has previously wired the door to blow, Brother Jade will escape before they can unlock or break down the door. A successful Df4 Perception test will discover a concealed door in the floor.

If the Cell takes too much time, eleven devoted, power-hungry cultists will arrive at 9:15 PM. A minor show of force, such as firing a gun in the air, will serve to disperse the cultists if Brother Jade is not present. Otherwise the cultists will fight to protect him.

AFTER 9:15 PM ON THE FIRST NIGHT

If the Cell arrives with the cultists, they should be able to sneak into the compound more easily since two of the guards will be stationed at the front door checking people as they enter. Again, the guards have pictures of all the cultists. Brother Jade will be in the living room talking to the cultists, explaining the importance of what they are doing tonight and how mistakes will not be tolerated. In the basement the door will be unlocked, and Dane will be standing in front of it guarding Oswald and Wendy.

At 9:45 PM, everyone will don their robes, with hoods up and slowly go down the stairs. Brother Jade will take the lead. If the Cell members can manage to incapacitate a few of the cultists, they will have a perfect opportunity to sneak down into the ritual space. Once in the ritual space, a successful Df2 Occult or Df1 Ritual test will reveal that the ritual will involve human sacrifice and that this ritual is the one where a demon will be summoned. It will also be obvious that the ritual may be safely interrupted up to the point where the sacrifices are performed. However, unless all the Cell members who are in the ritual space have at least 2 levels in Ritual: Taoist skill (or have memorized Vincinness' files), the ritual will not reach that point before Brother Jade and the Disciples realize that several of the participants have no idea what they should be doing.

At this point Brother Jade will become furious, and the Cell members will have to act rapidly. As long as at least one of them blocks access to the door, the werewolf and any guards will not be aware that anything is wrong since the ritual space is carefully sound-proofed. However, the cultists will fight for Brother Jade. Brother Jade will use the cultists as cover and attempt to escape with the Oswalds and the skull down the trap door.

If the Cell arrives after summoning ritual has begun, kind GMs should inform them that interrupting the ritual will likely result in everyone nearby being killed or corrupted. The ritual will be completed at 6:00 AM the next morning. At this point, the Cell will also have a Demon to fight. If they merely kill Oswald, it will possess one of the cultists, or if possible, a member of the Cell.

THE PRICE OF FAILURE

If the group does not stop the summoning, the demon will possess Oswell. Brother Jade does not plan to perform a Binding ritual on it. He believes that he can strike a deal with the demon. Brother Jade will perform an Oath-Binding ritual to cement the deal.

Halpha will then begin using Lentronics as a front to funnel money to Brother Jade's Red Circle as well as selling various military secrets, including information on alien technology to a wide variety of governments and wealthy terrorist organizations. Halphas' goals are basically the accumulation of power for itself and for the Red Circle and increasing the amount of violence and conflict in the world. A Montague Club strike team will be formed, and may even ask the Cell to accompany them. At the GM's discretion, this could lead to significant future missions.

Unless the Cell has access to powerful binding or banishing rituals, the only way to stop Halphas will be to kill Oswell. Any attempt to capture him will simply result in the demon possessing someone else. Unfortunately, so will any attempt to kill Oswell or another host, unless the killing is done when the demon and host are in a Warding Circle, or if the Cell can persuade one of Lentronic's employees to actually perform the killing. Several employees could be bribed into performing the killing, but none have any useful skills relating to assassination. The Cell will need to work closely with them for the plan to have any chance of success. Halphas is very cunning and attempts on the life of its host will be extremely difficult and risky.

THE COMPLICATIONS OF SUCCESS

Even if the party stops the ritual and keeps Halphas from being summoned, they will have to clean up their mess. Dead bodies and other evidence must be concealed. The fate of any live cultists must be debated. The guards will have to be bribed or intimidated. Some attempt to ensure that Dane is not reborn as a demon would be advisable. The GM can make these clean up efforts as difficult or easy as desired.



Brother Jade
 Malcolm Jeter
 Conqueror Adept
 Int 4 Will 4
 all other attributes 3
 Luck 2/12

Traits

Cautious
 Paranoid Delusions
 Sensitive
 Supernatural Focus

Powers

Trall (Charisma)

Skills

Brawling 1 Computer Use 3 Diplomacy: Intimidation 2
 Drive 2 Martial Arts 3 Meditation 3 Occult 3
 Ritual: Taoist 4

Trainings

Ritual: Basic Blessing Ritual: Basic Curse
 Ritual: Bind Demon Ritual: Bind Zombie
 Ritual: Blessing of Prosperity
 Ritual: Blessing of Protection (currently in effect)
 Ritual: Induce Cardiac Arrest Ritual: Infection
 Ritual: Malfunction Ritual: Oath-Binding Ritual: Scrying
 Ritual: Speed Healing Ritual: Summon Demon
 Ritual: Summon Ghost Ritual: Summon Human
 Ritual: Warding Circle Savoir Faire

Brother Jade wants to rule the world and is convinced that he will succeed. He would prefer to work alone, but realizes that he needs assistants to perform the more difficult rituals. Even before his corruption, Brother Jade had an excessive love of power. While he was in the Montague Club, he learned that Lentronics was involved in researching alien technology. Brother Jade hopes to use a combination of his magical power, demonic aid and alien technology to rule the world.

While he is quite mad, he is also extremely cunning and none of his assistants are aware of the true nature of his plans. When recruiting new aides, he looks for greedy people with few morals and plays on their desire for power, never telling them the dangers involved or the insane nature of his true plans.

The supernatural chaos which occurred the last time Brother Jade attempted to summon a demon have convinced him of the necessity of caution in such endeavors. When he heard of the Tengri Skull auction, he sent Henry Connors to buy it. Outbid, Jade caused Bens' security system to malfunction and sent his guards to steal it. The guards and Dane also kidnapped Mr. Oswell.

When he heard about Henry Connors' encounter with Mr. Bens, he instructed Vincennes to collect him and deliver him to the ritual house. Connors has been under strict orders to stay put, and inconspicuous until the ritual is over.



Dane

Destroyer Predator

Str 4 Size 4
all other attributes 3
Luck 4/12

Skills

Brawling 3 Martial Arts 3 Occult 2 Stealth 3

Powers

Frenzy Mask (huge panther)
Regeneration Thrall (Fear)

Traits

Homicidal Tendencies Impulsive
Killer Instinct

Dane is Brother Jade's first project. Brother Jade recruited a large, highly dangerous martial artist as a student. He then made this student into a zombie and turned him into a Predator. Dane's will, intellect, and personality have all been almost entirely suppressed by the Bind Zombie ritual. Currently he will obey his master's commands without question and is incapable of speaking anything other than very short simple sentences. If Brother Jade is killed, Dane will be freed from the effects of this ritual and will become a cunning and dangerous killer.

Disciple

All attributes 3
Luck 2/12

Skills

Brawling 1
Drive 2
Martial Arts 3
Mediation 2
Occult 2
Ritual: Taoist 3

Training

Ritual: Basic Blessing
Ritual: Basic Curse
Ritual: Blessing of Prosperity
Ritual: Summon Demon
Ritual: Warding Circle

Neophyte

All attributes 3
Luck 2/12

Skills

Brawling 1
Drive 2
Martial Arts 3
Mediation 2
Occult 2
Ritual: Taoist 1

Training

Ritual: Basic Blessing
Ritual: Basic Curse
Ritual: Summon Demon

Red Circle Martial Arts

The members of the Red Circle all belong to the same Karate dojo. Their moves are as follows:

Level 1: Punch, Block-Punch, Kick, Dodge

Level 2: Punch-Punch, Block-Punch, Kick-Kick, Dodge-Kick, Grab, Break

Level 3: Punch-Punch, Block-Punch, Kick-Kick, Dodge-Kick, Grab-Throw, Break-Punch, Dodge-Disarm-Punch

While the newer cultists are as mercenary in their outlook as Vincinness, the disciples are totally loyal to Brother Jade. The longer the cultists have been exposed to his supernatural charisma the more loyal they become. When Brother Jade is present, the five disciples literally will be willing to die for him. Vincinness and the other five neophytes will endeavor to aid Brother Jade in any way they can, but are unwilling to actually risk their lives for him. Two of the disciples have already been corrupted in earlier rituals (GM should choose one Adept corruption level for each), but all of the other cultists are currently untainted. Treat Henry Connors as a neophyte.



Halphas the Demon

God-King Prophet

Int 4 Will 5 Per 4
no physical attributes
Luck 2/12

Skills

Brawling 2 Diplomacy 3 Melee Weapon: Sword 4 Occult 4

Powers

Divination Mask Mesmerism
Possession Telepathy Thrall

Training

Politics Savoir Faire

Halphas enjoys raising tyrants into positions of power. It will happily help Brother Jade gain power and influence. However, it also thrives on conflict and strife and will endeavor to use its position of power to make the world a more violent place. Halphas is extremely intelligent and that, combined with its Telepathy and Divination, will allow it to impersonate Oswald with great skill. Only Oswald's closest associates will have any idea that he has changed in any way.

THE TENGRI SKULL

The skull appears to be from a small human and is decorated with large amounts of finely made, intricately carved, silver inlay. The largest piece of inlay work is a silver skullcap that covers the skull down to the level of the brow ridge. Anyone who succeeds in a Df2 Humanities: Anthropology or Occult skill test will realize that the work on the skull is Tibetan in origin. A careful examination of the skull followed by a successful Df4 Science: Biology test will reveal that the skull does not appear to be that of a modern human. Instead, it appears to come from a small hominid vaguely similar to an early Neanderthal. However, the skull is clearly no more than 50 to 150 years old. Examination by X-rays or similar means will modify this Biology test by -1Df. The skull actually comes from a Pilosi (Df4 Cryptozoology test) who lived as an honored guest in an isolated Tibetan monastery for many years and died there in 1904. Shortly after its death, the monks adorned its skull to honor its memory and to attempt to retain some of its magic. The monk who adorned the skull was an Adept and used it as the basis for a powerful enchanted item.

When the Chinese invaded Tibet in the 1950s, the skull was smuggled into Pakistan. There, bandits stole it from the monks and it has since been passed around between occultists and private collectors.

POWERS: The skull helps protect everyone near it from becoming corrupted. If it is used in a ritual, everyone involved in the ritual will have a +2t bonus to resist any tests to avoid Corruption. This bonus is cumulative with any other similar bonuses. In addition, the skull lowers the difficulty of all Summoning rituals by -1Df. Unknown to anyone but the monks who made it, this object has another, even more important, property. If it is ever used as the psychic connection for a Summon Ghost ritual, the ghost of the Pilosi will appear. This being worked closely with the monks and frequently taught some of the more promising novices.

If the Pilosi ghost is summoned by an evil mage, such a member of the Red Circle, it must be bound. Otherwise, it will either flee or attempt to possess the summoner and disrupt his plans. If summoned by the player characters, its reaction will depend upon how it is treated. Like its entire species, it is quite shy and secretive and gaining its trust may take weeks or months. However, it will be quite curious and will attempt to discover everything it can about its summoners. Using Telepathy, it will read the mind of those around it and will react badly to lies and deception. If any of the people present is a devout Buddhist, it will be much more well-disposed towards its summoners. It may be persuaded to teach some of its secrets to the party, but will probably ask to be returned to a Tibetan monastery in return for a month or two spent teaching. The spirit will answer questions about magic, but unless the members of the Cell have previously discovered that the skull is non-human and ask pointed questions, it will reveal nothing about the Pilosi.

All attempts to bind, banish, or control this ghost are at +1Df due to its unusual nature.

The Pilosi Ghost

Int 4 Per 4 Will 5

Skills

Humanities:
Buddhist Theology 3
Mediation 3 Occult 4
Ritual: Taoist 4
Teaching 3

Training

The ghost knows numerous rituals as determined by the GM.

Powers

Mirage Possession
Telepathy



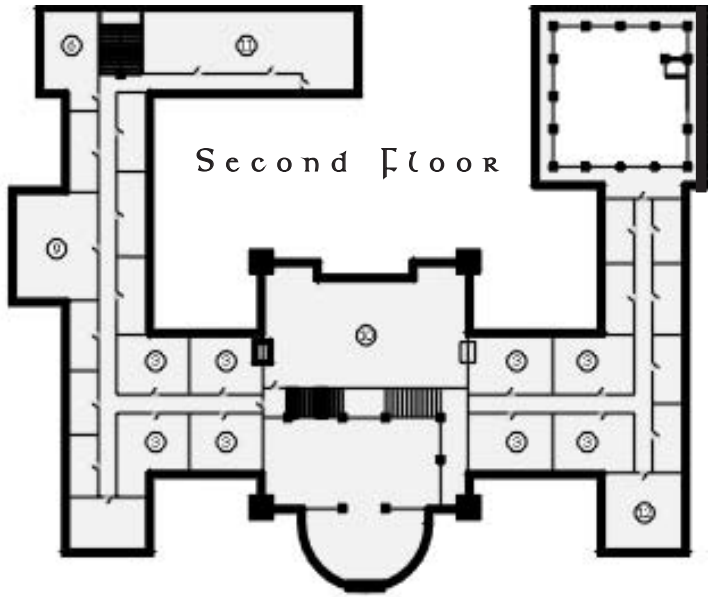
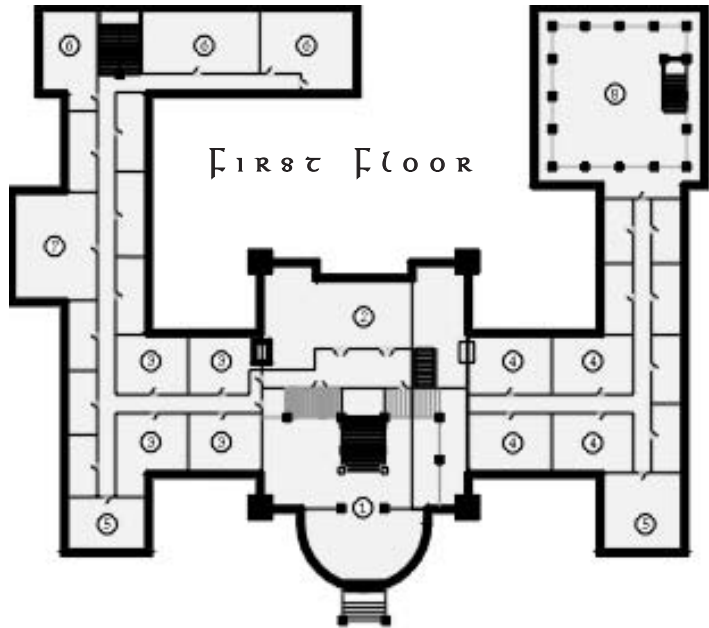
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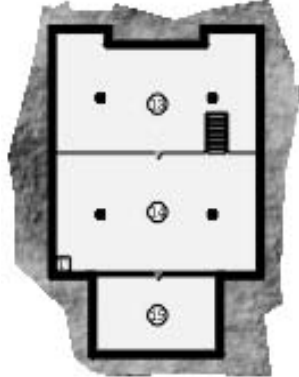
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FORSAKEN RITES



Basement



- 1 Entry Hall
- 2 Master Kitchen
- 3 Bedroom
- 4 Gallery
- 5 Lesser Library
- 6 Servant Quarters
- 7 Servant Kitchen
- 8 Ballroom

- 9 Greenhouse
- 10 Trophy Room
- 11 Greater Library
- 12 Master Bedroom
- 13 Laundry Room
- 14 Workshop
- 15 Storage

16 ^τ Trapdoor
17 Maze and Summoning Room

Mansion Grounds

