

# SUMMONERS™

the World of Darkness

MAGE®  
THE AWAKENING





# SUMMONERS™



*By Chris Burns, Bethany Culp, Stephen Michael DiPesa,  
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# THE WHEEL

He sleeps. In his dreams he sees the bloated shape of the prayer wheel spinning, ever spinning, propelled by the wind. Bolted to a rocky precipice, overlooking the sea, its rusting metal body tattooed with glyphs. A storm moves across the coast, all lashing rain and howling wind. The wheel spins faster and faster, its clotted axle sending metallic screams into the leaden skies like blasphemous paeans to the gods. Faster and faster it turns, the glyphs glowing red from the friction and merging into a single word. The word is wrong, somehow, written in a language never devised by men and it hurts his eyes. He approaches the wheel, drawn to it involuntarily, the word burning in his mind. The wheel spins faster still, growing hotter. Raindrops evaporate from the heat, sending up clouds of hissing steam. He hears voices on the wind, wailing in harmony with the shrieking of the wheel. They call to him, whispering his name, urging him to quench the heat with his blood. The phone rings.





Kale woke with a start, tangled in his sheets and sweating through the cool of the AC. He fumbled for the phone, dropped it and, swearing, snatched it off the floor. Out of the picture window in his bedroom he could see the rising sun reflecting off the stately progression of ocean waves. The morning sun illuminated the room in a ruddy glow just bright enough to make him squint.

"Hello?"

"Hey buddy! Did I wake you?"

"Yes. Don't worry about it," Kale said, cutting off the apology he knew was coming. "Was having a nightmare anyways."

"The wheel *again*?"

"Yeah. That fucking wheel. I always hated that god-damned thing. Tell me again why I shouldn't just melt it down," said Kale, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

"Well, for starters, the Historical Society would have a fit. That hunk of metal is a piece of genuine Americana, cobbled together by your great-grandfather. It might be junk to you, but to them it's art. Then there's the whole legacy issue to contend with..."

"Alright, alright. I know," Kale interrupted. "What do you want, Jimmy?"

"I have some papers here for you to sign. You coming down to the office today?"

Kale swung his legs out of bed. "Yeah, later though. Say around three?"

"Swell," said Jimmy, cheerfully. "See you at three."

Kale hung up the phone, got out of bed and walked towards his closet. Kicking off the boxers he'd slept in, he threw on a pair of gray sweats and a ragged black T-shirt that said "The Ramones" in fading letters. He dug out a pair of white athletic socks and padded down to the kitchen. Like every other room in the house, the kitchen looked shiny and new. The stainless steel counters were free of dents or scratches and the appliances looked fresh out of the box. After his father had died and Kale returned home for good, he'd had the entire place redecorated. It wasn't just that his father's taste had been bad (it had) or that the house was decades out of style (it was); living among the detritus of his father's life had been like living with a ghost. Before it was redecorated, every time he came home, Kale had half-expected to encounter his father's slightly disapproving face around every corner. So he'd cleaned out the place, even renovating the grounds. Anything that reminded him of his father was removed, replaced or refurbished. Except the wheel.

"That fucking wheel," he said aloud as he started up the coffee machine.

• • •

After breakfast he slipped on his running shoes and headed outside. The wind blowing off the ocean was cold in the morning air and he picked up his pace to stay warm as he jogged along the cliff's edge. As he ran, his thoughts returned to his father. The old man had never understood Kale's drive to become an artist. Even the fact that the family fortune was founded on the money generated by great-grandfather's art hadn't swayed his father's mind. He had wanted Kale to follow his footsteps in the company. Kale only wanted to paint. Their arguments eventually drove Kale from the house and only when his paintings began to gain some recognition, when he proved his art wasn't just a rich kid's hobby, had his father relented.

Other than holidays and the occasional family get-together, he hadn't spent much time around his father for the last 20 years. The old wounds scabbed over slowly. In a bit of irony, he was painting when he got the phone call telling him his father was dead. The maid hadn't been able to find the old man when she got to work, the car was still in the garage and the back door was open, banging back and forth against the house in the wind. She called the police and the sheriff's deputy that responded found the body. The coroner's report said the old man had died from a heart attack. The police had asked him if he knew why his father would've gotten up in the middle of the night and wandered the grounds (the body had already begun to display signs or rigor mortis when it was found) and Kale had said no. Sure he already knew the answer; he asked where exactly the body had been found. His father had died beside the wheel.

"That *fucking* wheel," he said, absently.

He was jolted out of his reverie when he realized he was standing in front of the wheel, like he had conjured it by speaking its name. Panting slightly from his run, he walked around the wheel, eyeing it with distaste. According to family lore, his great-grandfather had begun construction of the wheel after visiting Tibet, inspired by the wind-driven prayer wheels of that country. The wheel itself looked like it had been constructed from an oil drum and was set horizontal to the ground with an axle running through it. Wind was captured by a series of bent fins, which turned the wheel smoothly on its axle if it had been oiled recently or jerkily, accompanied by screeching metal, if it hadn't. The entire thing was constructed from galvanized steel and was



supported by matching struts, bolted into the stone of the cliff. Taken as a whole it looked, to Kale at least, like a giant paper towel holder, set upright, that had been attacked by a windmill.

Great-grandfather had known next to nothing about the Tibetan language, so he had decorated the wheel with glyphs of his own devising, searing them into the metal. No two glyphs were alike and (according to every expert who had examined the thing) were completely decorative in design, conforming to no known or guessed-at language. In his will, great-grandfather had declared the wheel a legacy of the estate and forbade its removal from the grounds. Every couple of weeks, the people from the Historical Society would come out to oil the thing and polish it clean of rust. It had remained in the same spot for nearly a century.

Kale had a very clear memory of when simple distaste for the wheel had turned to outright hatred. At his 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, buzzing on a sugar high of cake and ice cream, he and his friends had roamed the grounds of the estate until they ended up by the wheel. He remembered his friends looking at the thing in awe, daring each other to touch it. The wind was calm that day and the wheel was turning in lazy revolutions, glinting innocently in the noon day sun. Finally, one of his friends from school, a boy named Niko, reached out to touch it. Kale had wanted to shout at him to stop, had wanted to smack his hand away like Niko was extending it toward a rabid dog. Only the fear of being labeled a “sissy” or “puss” kept him from acting on his growing sense of unease. Just as Niko placed his fingers on the wheel, a hard gust of wind blew in off the ocean and, *snicker-snack*, the tips of Niko’s index and middle fingers were lopped off by the sharp edges of the metal fins. He remembered with a crystal clarity Niko’s screams and the bright red blood running in the grooves of the wheel, filling the incomprehensible glyphs.

He shook himself mentally and begun to jog back to the house. *Spending a lot of time today down memory lane*, he thought, which was immediately followed by, *Maybe Jimmy is right. Maybe I should get out more often*. He’d get out this weekend, he promised, just as soon as the painting was finished; and hey, he was going down to the office today. *That* was a social occasion not to be missed. He snorted. Behind him, forgotten for the moment, the wheel continued to turn, its revolutions not quite matching the steady beat of his heart.

• • •

Kale stepped back from the canvas to take a look at his work. In leaner times he’d painted dull landscapes for hotels and restaurants, always to the exact specifications requested by the client. Once his work had grown more popular he’d sworn to never take another commission and to only paint what he wanted to paint. He’d always painted from instinct, rarely planning out exactly what his next project would be. Commission work was the antithesis of that kind of spontaneity and he was glad he’d never signed his real name to any of the commercial paintings. The painting he’d just spent the last several hours working on was nominally a traditional sunset. In it, the sun sank slowly into the waves of the ocean, infusing the water with an orange glow. The twilight sky was still lit by the last rays of the sun, the horizon a luminous pink.

Disrupting all that mundane tranquility was a black keyhole, larger than the sun, floating near the right border of the painting. The keyhole was pitch black for now – though Kale thought he might end up lighting the darkness with stars– and the edges of the keyhole glowed with a strange gray, eldritch light. He had the oddest sensation that there was something moving behind the keyhole, something very large and very old. He had an idea that, whatever the something might be, he’d only capture a portion of it in the painting; only an eye. An eye peeking through the keyhole like a child might on Christmas Eve to spy out her presents.

The inspiration for this work was no great mystery. He’d painted the view from his living room balcony, though he’d worked indoors to avoid the erratic ocean winds. Kale wasn’t sure why he’d added the keyhole, either. It just seemed to fit. The location of the keyhole in the painting nagged at his mind. It reminded him of something, but he couldn’t think what. Shrugging his shoulders, he attempted to banish the idea from his mind and began to put away his tools. Brushes were carefully washed out, paint lids screwed firmly in place and everything was packed away into his kit. Even though he was sure he’d work on the painting again tomorrow, he always followed the same routine. In its own odd way, returning everything to its proper place was just as much a part of his creative process as the actual painting was.

He’d nearly forgotten about his earlier fixation on the keyhole’s location until he began to carefully cover the painting. Frowning, he secured the cover, wondering



anew what bothered him about its placement. Vaguely irritated by this disruption to his normal routine, Kale moved the easel to the side of the room and marched over to the double glass doors that led to the balcony. Sliding them open, he stepped out into the evening. The real sunset taking place was far more prosaic than the one he'd just been working on, albeit still quite lovely. The wind tugged gently at his hair as he surveyed the view, his hands resting on the railing. Intentionally sweeping his view from left to right, he tried to guess at what seed had germinated in his imagination into the keyhole of the painting. Moving his head only a fraction at a time, eyes straight ahead, Kale tried to mimic the viewpoint of the painting. Nothing, nothing, nothing; he continued to scan. Then he stopped. This view, this vantage of the grounds was exactly the same as the one he'd captured in the painting. The wheel. That *fucking* wheel was in the exact same position in his point of view as the keyhole was in the painting.

"Son of a bitch," he whispered.

The goddamned thing had begun to invade his work! Furious, Kale slammed the side of his fist into

the railing. Turning on his heel, he strode with quick steps back into the house and grabbed the painting from the easel. He ripped the covering off it and stared. There could be no doubt. The keyhole and the wheel were in the same place. Angrier than he'd been in years, he walked back out to the balcony and hurled the painting over the edge.

"Fly motherfucker," he said and watched as the painting caught an updraft and sailed over the cliff edge.

Slamming the door behind him, Kale stomped over to the bar and poured himself a glass of brandy. He downed it in two quick gulps and poured another. Still fuming, trembling from the shock of adrenaline that had surged through his body in his anger, he downed that one as well and poured a third. Forcing himself to relax, he picked up his drink and shuffled over to the sofa. The leather of the cushions creaked as he sat down. He idly picked up the remote and turned on the flat-screen, plasma television that hung from his wall. He flipped through channels at random, not really even seeing the pictures on the screen as they flashed by; his mind filled with images of prayer wheels and keyholes.

*He sleeps. The storm has come again and he stands beside the wheel, wet hair plastered to his head. The glyphs on the wheel are gone and, in a flash of lightning, he sees keyholes painted in their place. One by one, stars appear in the keyholes, shining dully, leaving streamers of light as the wheel turns. The winds screams in his ears, the voices gibber and laugh insanely. In slow motion he sees himself reach out to stop the wheel, just like poor Niko reached out to touch it. His mind screams with the danger, visions of Niko's fingers spurting blood flickering through his sight like film on a faltering projector. The fins slice through his hands, snicker-snack, and he feels nothing, only an icy-cold that seeps up his arms. Impossibly, the mauled remains of his hands obey his commands and grasp the wheel, sliding on its wet surface before catching it and holding it still. The wind dies, the voices stop and the storm abates. All is quiet. The cold moon stares down at him and he begins to shake, the chill from his arms spreading to his chest. He stares at the wheel and sees a shadow pass over the stars twinkling out of the keyholes. The cold has spread its icy fingers to his heart, the chill freezing the blood in his veins. His shakes become more violent, his body spasms, dancing a lunatic jig. Eyes appear at the keyholes, starkly white against the black, pupils a putrid yellow. The eyes stare at him and he screams.*



Still screaming he awoke. The room was freezing cold and, for a moment, he could see his breath fogging in the air. He could see frost lining the edges of the windows. His skin was painful with gooseflesh and he realized that he was naked. At some point in the night he'd thrown his sheets to the floor and stripped free of his boxers. Reaching out with a trembling hand he pulled the sheets over his body and huddled in their warmth. Slowly, the room lost its chill and, still wrapped in the sheets, Kale rose from his bed. He staggered, body aching, to the bathroom and stepped into the shower, not bothering to remove his cocoon of sheets before turning on the hot water. The pounding spray of the shower jet, combined with the heat and steam finally drove the chill and stiffness from him. When he felt almost human again, he turned off the shower and rang out the sheets as best he could before hanging them in the stall. Toweling off, Kale stared at his reflection in the fogged mirror and asked himself a question.

"What the hell is going on?"

The bedroom was back to a normal temperature when he left the bathroom. Dressing quickly in jeans and a button-down, blue and white striped shirt, he hurried downstairs and set the coffee to brewing. He plucked the phone from its wall mount and dialed Jimmy's cell. He wouldn't be in the office on a weekend. It rang five times before he got Jimmy's voice mail. Kale snarled, hung up and immediately called back.

"Answer the phone you asshole," he muttered, digging in the fridge for the cream.

On the third ring he heard a click and a tired-sounding voice said, "Hello?"

"It's me Jimmy. I need an answer. Does the Historical Society have great-grandfather's papers?"

"What?"

"Wake up dammit! Listen. Does the Historical Society have great-grandfather's papers? You know; original designs for his sculptures, journals, that sort of shit?"

"Christ, Kale. I don't know. Why?"

"Never mind why. Can you find out for me?"

"Does this have something to do with the wheel?"

"I told you never mind why! Can you find out?"

"You know you can't get rid of that thing!"

Kale almost screamed into the phone. "I don't give two shits what you think, Jimmy! Can you find out or not?"

"Whoa, whoa! Calm down, man. Yeah, sure. I can find out. If they do have that stuff, what then?"

"I wanna see it," said Kale.

"Ok, sure. Right. I'll call on Monday and find out."

"Today, Jimmy! You find out today. I don't care if you have to hitchhike to the director's house to ask. Find. Out. Now."

An exasperated sigh. "Fine. I'll call you back when I know."

"Good," said Kale, hanging up.

• • •





Kale sifted through the small mound of books, drawings and journals laid out before him on a desk in the back of the Historical Society building. It had taken Jimmy four hours to track down the director and convince her to allow Kale to look through his great-grandfather's memorabilia. The large cash "donation" Jimmy had offered hadn't hurt either. The documents smelled faintly musty, as though they'd been kept in a basement with poor ventilation for years, which was probably the case. At first, he had found great-grandfather's spidery handwriting difficult to decipher, but after staring at it for over an hour now he was able to make out what the man had written without too much difficulty. It hadn't taken him long to find the original design for the wheel. Great-grandfather had made several pencil sketches of the general shape of the thing and across the bottom of one of the pages were drawings of all 29 of the glyphs that had been seared into the metal body of the wheel. Viewed as a whole, the glyphs were disconcerting to look at, the angles seemed wrong and, not for the first time, Kale wondered exactly what they represented.

He continued to pour over the materials and after another hour had passed, he thought he'd found something interesting in an old ledger. Before the construction of the wheel, great-grandfather had been considered something of a local eccentric. His pieced-together metal sculptures were seen as curiosity pieces rather than legitimate works of art. All that changed following the wheel's creation. Suddenly, art critics who had previously sneered — often publicly — at great-grandfather's work had a change of heart. They proclaimed the works the product of a visionary in the field and, consequently, demand for the sculptures had skyrocketed. A year prior to his construction of the wheel, great-grandfather had been nearly bankrupt. A year later he was flush with cash and nearly overwhelmed with orders for his work. Somehow the wheel and great-grandfather's sudden success were tied together, but Kale was at a loss to explain how.

Setting the ledger aside, he picked up the drawings of the glyphs again and stared at them. A quick scan of the room turned up a notebook, which he brought back to the desk. He began to copy the glyphs, looking for a connection. He reversed their images, transposed one over the other and tried to deconstruct them to their most basic elements. Nothing he tried made the glyphs any more intelligible and he eventually admitted defeat, his head pounding from staring at the odd symbols. Frustrated, he went back to shuffling through the rest of the collection, flipping through pages, looking for anything out of place. Every single book was filled from front to back with great-grandfather's writing, notes and sketches. Except that wasn't true was it? He remembered leafing through one book with several blank pages in the back. It hadn't struck him as unusual at the time, but now it definitely seemed strange.

He dug through the stacks around him until he found it. The book, large and sturdily bound in rigid leather, was one of great-grandfather's personal diaries. Kale flipped to the back and found the blank pages. He held one of the pages up to the lights, cracking the spine as he did so. Nothing. Disappointed he began to close the book when he caught a whiff of something other than the musty smell he'd become accustomed to. Putting his nose to where paper met binding he took a sniff. The crevice held the ghostly faint smell of lemon. Excited now, he hurried over to one of the bright lamps the staff used for restoration projects and removed the hood. He turned the lamp on and held the page close to the heat of the bulb. Slowly, excruciatingly, brown words began to appear on the page. He subjected the remainder of the pages to the same treatment, then sat down to read what he had discovered.

The first few pages were written in a language he didn't recognize. He skipped past these until he came to writing in plain English:



March 9

I keep this secret accounting of my work and the summoning ritual, as a testament. You, who have discovered this secret, will bear witness to my triumph, to the ascendance of the ancient. It calls to me in my dreams, promising me immortality, riches and more. I will be the first disciple and rule over the Earth as a god. Those of my line will become prophets to my glory, walking among the herds in forms of terrible splendor. I begin.

March 12

The summoning was a success. I have spoken to the ancient and forged a pact. Upon the morrow I'll begin construction. Glory to the name I dare not write! He who is Lord of Nightmares, King of Fever Dreams, Prince of Insanity!

April 16

The Wheel is done.

April 20

The thing is finished. I have inscribed the 29 names of the ancient onto the Wheel and anointed them with my blood, binding the turning of the wheel not only to me, but to my family line. Tomorrow I will place the Wheel on the highest point of the cliffs where it will catch the ocean winds. In accordance with the pact I have made, the Wheel will turn for 100 years and for every second of every day of every year it turns, me and mine will be rewarded with fortune and glory. Each time the Wheel turns the names of the ancient will be shouted to the heavens, defying the banishment that traps it out of space and time. When I die my soul will be drawn through the Wheel to the ancient's side where I'll bask in its splendor and be rewarded with a new body, not of flesh but of the Void: vast and eternal. The souls of my descendants will enhance the hideous strength of the Wheel as it turns, like a key in a lock, sacrifices for my godhood. They will die for me, and the ancient will return, I at his side.



Kale stared in horror at what he'd just read. It was unbelievable, insane and yet he believed it all the same. He remembered the unnatural chill of his bedroom, his nightmares, his instinctual loathing of the wheel all his life and the blood from Niko's fingers. He ripped the formerly blank pages out of the back of the book. No one could be allowed to see them. He folded the pages up in the drawings of the wheel and stuffed the bulky papers in the waistband of his jeans, nestled in the hollow of his back. He pulled his shirt down over the bulge, disguising it from view. Hopefully no one would notice they were missing until he could burn them. He walked out of the room, down a hall and past a volunteer who was manning the front desk, forcing himself not to run. He nodded at the man, mumbled a word of thanks for his patience and was out the front door. Continuing his feigned calm, just in case the volunteer was watching him out the window, he walked slowly to his car and got in. Once the Historical Society was out of sight, Kale gunned the engine and sped for home. Home and that fucking wheel.

A storm was brewing by the time he reached the house. Fat raindrops splashed against the car's windshield and streaks of lightning split the cloudy sky. Thunder boomed and rattled the windows as he pulled into the garage. Wasting no time, he vaulted out of the car like it was on fire, great-grandfather's papers clutched in his fist. He hurried into the house, nearly running by the time he reached the kitchen. Slamming a cupboard door open with a crack that was echoed by the thunder outside, he reached inside for a stainless steel pot. His mind had raced all the way back from the Historical Society. How much time did he have? Did the world have? The entry had only been dated by month, not year. There wasn't any official date for the day the wheel was bolted into place. Grabbing up a book of matches from beside the stove, he sprinted back to the garage. He set the pot on the concrete floor of the garage and tossed the papers in it. Kale picked up the gasoline can he kept for the lawnmower and doused the papers. He lit a match and dropped it in. The gasoline lit with a whoosh and the papers began to burn. Soon the drawings, the notes and great-grandfather's insane ravings were nothing more than ash. He left the remains smoldering in the pot and searched through the tools he kept in the garage. It didn't take him long to find what he was looking for and, crowbar and tire iron in hand, he stepped out into the storm.

The storm raged around him, rain lashing his body. The wind screamed in his ears and he could hear

voices mixed with its howls, moaning and tittering madly. He leaned forward as he struggled along the cliff, fighting against the gale. The skies had darkened to near black, lightning flashes and thunder cracks disorienting in the gloom. He was so intent on reaching his goal he almost walked into the wheel before it registered in his consciousness. It was spinning so fast its shape was a blur of motion. St. Elmo's fire danced and skittered around the metal, lighting the wheel with an eerie luminosity. The glyphs glowed with the light, seeming to combine into one monstrous Name. Unnoticed by Kale in the rain, blood had begun to stream from his nose. The Name reflected in his eyes and he felt his stomach churn, his mind reeling. The voices whispered words of nameless dread in his ears; they cajoled him to throw himself on the wheel, to feed its hunger with his blood and soul. With one swift motion he slammed the tire iron into the wheel, metal against metal, and, screeching with protest, the wheel ceased to turn. The voices in his ears roared in anger, then ceased.

Kale dropped to his knees and hefted the crowbar. Blood dripped from his nose onto the stone as he attacked the bolts that held the thing in place. The wheel was rocking back and forth in the wind, groaning against the tire iron that held it still. Grudgingly, the first bolt pulled free of the stone. His hands tingled from the static charge of the metal. Ignoring the increasing intensity of the storm, he worked the other bolts free, each one more stubborn than the last. He felt dizzy from the exertion, from the blood loss he'd just noticed and from the power of the storm. Summoning up the last of his strength, he stood up, defying the wind and kicked the wheel over the cliff. His last sight before he staggered back from the edge and passed out was of the wheel, bouncing down the stony cliff face into the churning waters.

He awoke. The sky was blue and the sun shone down on him, warm and comforting. Kale crawled to the cliff edge and peered over. Below him he saw the ocean waves pounding against the cliff. The wheel was gone, sucked into the belly of the sea. Muscles protesting, he got up and staggered toward the house.

The wheel tumbled along the ocean floor, mangled and broken, caught in the flow of a current. Its motion was arrested when one of its twisted struts snagged on a rocky outcropping on the ocean floor. The current pulled against it, wedging the strut more firmly in place. One fin, less damaged than the others, caught the pull of the current. The wheel began to turn.







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# SUMMONERS™

## *Table of Contents*

<i>Prologue: The Wheel</i>	2
<i>Introduction</i>	14
<i>Chapter One: From Distant Shores</i>	18
<i>Chapter Two: From the Five Towers</i>	64
<i>Chapter Three: From the Endless Dark</i>	112
<i>Chapter Four: From Stranger Spheres</i>	142
<i>Chapter Five: Otherworldly Compacts</i>	164



# INTRODUCTION

*The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all of its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of the black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far.*

—H. P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*

Some of the oldest recorded forms of magic in human history are invocations of otherworldly powers: gods, spirits, demons, ghosts, and the like. Since the dawn of time, people have been fascinated by the beings of those other worlds, as evidenced by the most ancient religions, going back to the fanciful creatures — clearly of no earthly origin — painted on cave walls and carved into stone. While the reality that people see is the place where the human experience unfolds, few things have captured humanity's collective imagination quite like those worlds that we *cannot* see.

Among the Awakened, these truths endure in a long tradition of summoning. From the transcendent magnificence of the Realms Supernal to the endless darkness of the Underworld, mages call out to beings foreign to the material realm, searching for power, lost secrets, new knowledge, and other, far more bizarre commodities. Sometimes, they find what they're searching for and, sometimes, they find death (or worse), but, always, with each new generation, new seekers emerge, delving into the mysteries of this universe and every other, hungry for the lore that they encompass.

## *Theme and Mood*

Profound perils and terrifying splendors await those who inscribe the ancient circles and call out to names that echo down through the endless ages of the worlds beyond. The way of the summoner skirts a razor-thin edge of hubris; for what else can it be to command powers beyond even the vast might given to the Awakened? Too often, mages call up what they can-

not (or will not) put down, to the detriment of many, and, yet, despite their many dangers and the horrors they all too often unleash, these magical practices persist. This is because tremendous sorcerous might awaits those who master this treacherous species of willwork. Few feats of Awakened magic so clearly assert the mage's dominance over creation, itself, as reaching through the weave of worlds and binding what lay beyond to the fetters of one's will.

The entities with which summoners converse are more and less — and *other* — than human, and these truths are poised like a sword of Damocles above the head of every summoner. In the end, one can forge pacts with these creatures, make allies of them, and even tame them, but one cannot genuinely *understand* them, any more than they understand those who call them forth from the thousand realities from which they hail. In the end, a mage never knows what she's going to get when she engages in summoning; not even from a being that she's called a dozen times before. What if the spells don't work correctly, this time? What if the spirit has just been setting her up for some awful fate? The other realms of the Tapestry (and those beyond) cannot be trusted, and only foolish summoners — and those who do not survive long enough to claim the title of summoner — allow themselves to forget that.

## *How to Use This Book*

**Summoners** is intended to supplement the existing body of Awakened magic by codifying and expanding upon certain existing magical practices (like dealing with Acamoth or summoning spirits from the Under-



world), while also presenting entirely *new* forms of willwork pertaining to otherworldly entities and the ways in which mages interact with them. The various forms of summoning presented here all fall under the common umbrella of Awakened willwork, but most of them are very different from one another, in terms of execution; some don't even use the Arcana. Certain of these summonings are relatively easy to perform, while others require potent command of magic, strange correspondences and uncommon circumstances, or other factors that contribute to their difficulty and rarity.

**Summoners** can be used whole-cloth or in as modular a fashion as you like; simply decide which sorts of summonings mages can perform in *your* chronicle, which are just rumors or traps to lead the unwary astray, and which simply don't exist, even in myths and legends. The same applies to the other systems and setting information written here, as you may have a great deal of use for, say, the People of the Hour, but little interest in allowing mages to call down beings from Arcadia or the other Realms Supernal. Use what works for you, modify what you like, and discard the rest.

What **Summoners** is *not* is a guide to the other worlds whence these strange creatures originate. The great struggle of the Awakened unfolds *here*, in the Fallen World, rather than in alien realms outside of the comprehension of the human mind. Most mages, no matter how powerful, could no more survive in those bizarre planes than a moray eel could thrive in a pine forest, or a housecat on the surface of the sun. The significance of the entities that summoners call is to be found in the ways in which they enrich and inform the Awakened experience in *this* realm (or in which they fail to do so).

## Contents

In Chapter One, **From Distant Shores**, we discuss the numerous unusual beings that may be summoned from the various far corners of the Fallen World, itself; creatures that dwell in the Shadow Realm, Twilight, the astral reaches, and stranger places, still. Though native to the same world as the Awakened, many of these creatures are most assuredly inhuman in their thoughts and perspectives, and in what they desire in exchange for their services.

Chapter Two, **From the Five Towers**, reveals the secrets of Supernal summoning, illuminating the odd

entities and powerful secrets concealed within the higher world. Mages who long to know the hidden truths of the Watchtowers, however, are in for a rude shock, as these entities come not to speak of their homeland, but instead to test those who presume to rouse them and to bestow the gifts of the Supernal upon those who meet with their approval.

In Chapter Three, **From the Endless Dark**, the Abyss gets its due. The Acamoth — Void-born prisoners of the earthly realm — are discussed, as well as their kin, the Gulmoth, and the means by which the latter sort of spirit may be called down from the Abyss and into the Fallen World. The investments offered by the Acamoth are explored and darker bestowments, still, await those who dare to pursue the quicker path of the Void, itself, by opening a door for the things that lurk within the Abyss.

Chapter Four, **From Stranger Spheres**, lights the way into the unknown; proof that there is more in Heaven and Earth than is dreamt of in Awakened philosophy. Discussed within this chapter are creatures from outside the known realms and the means by which they intrude upon — or are invited into — this one. Some of these beings bear gifts and others, only death. Some, strangest of all, are little more than terribly dangerous curiosities; terrifying and compelling, all at once.

Lastly, Chapter Five, **Otherworldly Compacts**, contains most of the systems appropriate to summoners and summoning. Perhaps most important is the system for pacting with otherworldly entities, though many other rules are included, such as Merits, Flaws, Derangements, spells, various sorts of objects of power, and Legacies that call upon the summoner's craft (sometimes in *very* unusual ways). These systems add a great deal to the repertoire of the dedicated summoner and many of them are useful to *any* mage; even those who are only interested in dabbling in this hazardous school of mysticism.

## Lexicon

Summoners have their own terminology, with which they describe their art and through which they keep its secrets out of the hands of the unworthy. Many of these terms are familiar even to Sleepers, though most fail to grasp their significance in the tongue of the practiced summoner.

**Acamoth:** An Abyssal spirit imprisoned in or otherwise confined to the Fallen World on a long-term basis. These spirits aspire to tear a rift in the Tapestry,



so that the Void might flood in through it and annihilate all of reality.

**Aetherial:** Of or pertaining to the Supernal Realm of the Aether.

**Aletheian:** An Astral being encompassing a concept or ideal.

**Alien:** Specifically as it applies to an Awakened summoner, *alien* is a term occasionally used to describe an entity — spirit or otherwise — stemming from outside of the known realms of existence.

**Anachronism:** A manifest Arcadian entity, embodying the Time Arcanum.

**Angel:** Specifically as it applies to an Awakened summoner, an *Angel* is a creature from the Aether. Aetherial Angels are either *Cherubim* or *Seraphim*.

**Apeiron:** A manifest Stygian entity, embodying the Matter Arcanum.

**Arcadian:** Of or pertaining to the Supernal Realm of Arcadia.

**Atavism:** A manifest Primal entity, embodying the Life Arcanum.

**Beast:** Specifically as it applies to Awakened summoners, a *Beast* is an entity native to the Primal Wild. Beasts come in one of two forms: *Atavisms* and *Totems*.

**Boon:** One of the services standardly offered by a summoned Abyssal spirit; its particular specialty. The *boons* of such beings are frequently catalogued by those that know of them and researched by would-be summoners.

**Cherub:** A recondite Aethial entity, embodying the Prime Arcanum (pl. *Cherubim*).

**Chthonian:** An entity of the Underworld, dead but never born. Possibly somehow related to the *Specters* of Stygia.

**Cost:** The commodity (goods, services, or whatever) that a mage exchanges for the *request* of a *pact*.

**Daimonic:** Of or pertaining to the Supernal Realm of Pandemonium.

**Dementia:** As the term applies to summoners, a *dementia* is an Astral being embodying a given derangement.

**Demon:** Specifically as it applies to Awakened summoners, a *Demon* is a denizen of Pandemonium. Demons come in two varieties: *Imps* and *Shades*.

**Esoteric:** An Astral entity embodying an aspect of the conscious self.

**Exemplar:** An Astral being embodying a virtue.

**Fae:** Specifically as it applies to Awakened summoners, a *Fae* is a being native to Arcadia. Fae come in two different types: *Anachronisms* and *Moirae*.

**Forfeiture:** The consequences of renegeing on the *cost* of a *pact*.

**Gulmoth:** An Abyssal spirit called down from the Void by a summoner, into the Fallen World (as opposed to an *Acamoth*; an Abyssal spirit trapped within the earthly realm).

**Imp:** A manifest Daimonic entity, embodying the Space Arcanum.

**Iniquity:** An Astral entity embodying a vice.

**Manifest:** A term referring to a Supernal entity tied to a Gross Arcanum (Forces, Life, Matter, Space, or Time).

**Moirae:** A recondite Arcadian entity, embodying the Fate Arcanum (pl. *Moirae*).

**Morphean:** An Astral entity originating within an *Oneiros*.

**Pact:** A mystically-fortified agreement between a willworker and an otherworldly entity, typically a spirit of some sort, which entails an exchange of goods and/or services. Some *pacts* last a matter of days, while others may persist for a lifetime (or even longer).

**Primal:** Of or pertaining to the Supernal Realm of the Primal Wild.

**Recondite:** A term referring to a Supernal entity tied to a Subtle Arcanum (Death, Fate, Mind, Prime, or Spirit).

**Request:** The service (of whatever sort) acquired by a summoner through means of a *pact*.

**Royal Avatar:** An ephemeral shell containing a portion of the power and consciousness of a spirit of Prince/Princess (Rank 6) standing or greater.

**Seraph:** A manifest Aethial entity, embodying the Forces Arcanum (pl. *Seraphim*).

**Shade:** Specifically as it applies to Awakened summoners, a *Shade* is a being native to Stygia. Shades may be either *Apeirons* or *Specters*. Also, frequently used to refer to ghosts.

**Specter:** A recondite Stygian entity, embodying the Death Arcanum.

**Spirit:** Any ephemeral entity native to the Shadow Realm. Also, frequently used for *any* being comprised of ephemera or similar substances (such as Supernal entities, *Acamoth* or *Gulmoth*, and sometimes even ghosts).



**Stygian:** Of or pertaining to the Supernal Realm of Stygia.

**Term:** The period of time during which a mage benefits from the *request* of a *pact*.

**Tithe:** The price requested by a summoned Abyssal entity in exchange for its services. Distinct from a *pact* in that a binding agreement is not necessary.

**Totem:** A recondite Primal entity, embodying the Spirit Arcanum.

**Trial:** The ordeal demanded by a Supernal entity of its summoner. In some cases, the *trial* is preemptive — a task that must be performed before the spirit can be called or interacted with — while, in others, it outlines behaviors that must be observed during or even after the summoning.

**Void, the:** The Abyss.

**Wraith:** A recondite Daimonic entity, embodying the Mind Arcanum.









# CHAPTER ONE: FROM DISTANT SHORES

"Dad, you always have to complicate things. Why do you do that?"

Ikon's tone was one of pure exasperation. The young willworker paced anxiously; he hadn't seen his father in nearly half a decade, but the old man still knew how to get his goat. For his part, Charon chuckled, his voice sonorous and deep, "Fine. We'll change the subject. Have you been practicing the summonings I taught you?"

The younger Moros quirked an eyebrow. "Seriously, Dad, what kind of a dumbshit question is that? This is the first time we've seen each other in years and that's the best thing you can think to ask?"

"Frederick Thomas Alcott, you will mind your language in my presence."

Inwardly, Ikon cringed, just a bit. Even after all this time, those three names — recited in precisely that tone of voice — had the power to make him feel like a four-year-old who'd just knocked over an antique vase. He looked away, unable to meet Charon's steely gaze. The Necromancer focused, instead, upon a single, indelible reality: *this is not my father. My father is dead. That is just his reflection.*

"Sorry, Dad," Ikon muttered, turning once more to face the shadowy figure seated before him. "These past few years have been hell. I'm not the man you remember, anymore."

Charon smiled warily. "You're still my son, Freddie. That's all that matters."

The younger Alcott frowned. "You don't understand. The Consilium's falling apart; has been since you and Ascalon were killed by those Banishers. After that, the Scarlet Mages withdrew their support from the Council and skipped town. About a year later, the Harbingers overthrew the Hierarchy—"

"Giselle?" Charon interjected, incredulously.

Ikon nodded once. "Yeah. We've been without one, ever since." Of course, he would've never dared to refer to the former Hierarchy — even now — by her first name, even if it was an alias, but she and his father were... close, once.

"So," the old man huffed, "you need my help, then?" His features set in that stubborn way he had, and which Ikon remembered so well. "What do you need me to do, son?"

"Everything," Ikon whispered hoarsely, "and nothing, at all."

The seals under the Persian rug flared to life, surrounding Charon's shade on all sides. The ghost cried out in obvious pain and fear, but the young Moros kept his will sharp and focused. The elder Alcott called to his son in a panic, "Freddie? What are you doing?"

Unshed tears burned in Ikon's eyes as he replied, "You're not my father. You're a *thing* that I summoned from the Underworld. Like a chair... a car... a *weapon*."

Charon toppled from his seat, upending it with a crash. "You don't understand, Freddie: what I taught you was wrong. It's me. It *really* is me."

"No, it's not." Ikon's voice grew stronger, steadier, "You still carry the echoes of my father's magic, though, and this Consilium needs a new Hierarchy; a *strong* Hierarchy. Alone, I can't take the seat, but with your power at my disposal..."

The ghost screamed again, as yet another ring of binding sigils began to glow.



***Not only is the universe stranger than we imagine, it is stranger than we can imagine.***

**—Sir Arthur Eddington**

The four known realms of the Fallen World — Shadow, the Underworld, the Astral, and the material — are usually viewed by many willworkers as symptoms of the sickness that is the Quiescence. Spirits are known to wander from Shadow to the material, crossing where the Gauntlet is weak. The influence of these creatures, foreign to the material realm, eventually begins to color everything — and everyone — with which they have contact. Ghosts, the restless shades of the dead, sad afterimages of souls that have moved on to some uncertain Fate, are trapped in the Fallen World, lingering intangibly in Twilight, until they finally descend to the Underworld, there to spend the remainder of eternity amongst their own... and amongst *things* that may never have lived, at all. The Astral Realm — pure thought, emotion, ideal, and desire — remains a remote world, cut off from all save the most transitory contact with the material and its native creatures. The material realm itself is degraded and incomplete, separated from a higher order of reality by the vast gulf of the Abyss. Before the Fall, there was a place for everything and everything was in its place. Now, the different realms rest in an uneasy heap, leaning against and atop and even *within* one another; the irreparable ruins of the world that came before.


It is clear that before the Ladder fell, mages interacted with ghosts and spirits. The Mysterium boasted the Cenacle of Sighs, a repository of knowledge and lore that would have died with those masters who had passed from the material plane if not for the skill and power of the *Alae Draconis*. The *Thyrus* of the day communed with small gods and the beings that resided within objects, places, and ideas, forging pacts of mutual benefit — though usually far more beneficial to the mages than the spirits, if the old texts are to be believed — with the ancestors of those creatures that now reside in the Shadow Realm. While many records of Atlantis are lost, many willworkers believe Twilight

and Shadow were parts of the ancient world, though they may not have always been referred to by those names and likely occupied a far different position in the metaphysical framework of the world. Almost no records survive from those days of encounters with beings from what modern willworkers call the Astral Realm or the Underworld, leading many Awakened scholars to believe those realms did not exist, then, or, if they did, it was in so radically different a form as to be unrecognizable to modern mages.

Many of the rules of Twilight and Shadow are fairly well chronicled, their basic laws understood and ably navigated by those familiar with the appropriate mystic arts. The Astral and the Underworld, however, are less well documented: the former on account of its eternally protean nature and the latter because it remains one of the last true unknowns of the Fallen World. For long ages, willworkers have aspired to understand and codify these two strange worlds, but they remain, fundamentally, mysteries to even the sagest Awakened. Even the proliferation of more readily available (and entirely mundane) communication hasn't helped to settle the arguments; if anything, it has only served to fan the flames of intellectual debate.

Theories abound as to the precise nature of the Astral and why it functions as it does. Perhaps the most persistent, however, are those with their roots in Atlantean orthodoxy, and they serve for summoners to explain much about why these worlds remain the province of the strangest entities in the Fallen World. While variations exist (and are hotly contested between the various would-be sages of the unseen worlds), the most commonly accepted explanation dates back to the Ladder to Heaven and the catastrophic damage done to the nascent Fallen World in its collapse. Caught within the rungs of the Ladder, wisps of Supernal substance, too rarified to long survive within the profane reality below, drifted





upward, eventually settling in a layer between the Fallen World and the Abyss, and giving rise to the Astral Realm.

Of course, this argument has its detractors, often derided as wishful thinking on the parts of mages who yearn for the lost days of Atlantis and an easy route back to the higher worlds. If the Astral Realm was truly of the Supernal, critics argue, then mages could bypass the Abyss entirely and access the Oracles and their Watchtowers directly. Indeed, these skeptics go so far as to argue that souls, even without initiation into the Mysteries, would be able to ascend to the Supernal without traversing the Abyss. Regardless of the truth of the matter, those who study the Astral Realm agree that the creatures that inhabit it are not properly life — even ephemeral life — in the traditional sense. Rather, they are incarnations of ideals, concepts, and even aspects of the self; forms that embody the formless.

The Underworld, on the other hand, does not often stir up the fiery debate as the Astral. So many cultures seem to agree upon the fundamental nature of the domain of the dead that even the most uninitiated are capable of hearing stories that agree with certain Awakened perspectives on the matter. Those who study the subject, however, often tie their speculations on the Underworld's existence to the selfsame Ladder mythology ascribed to the Astral. These mages believe the largest pieces of the Ladder crashed — metaphorically — *through* the Fallen World, descending into a bottomless nothingness, below, and creating the Underworld. Thus, that realm can be thought of as a place of absence. The absence of God. The absence of hope. The absence of self. This thread runs through the center of many cultures' beliefs. For the mage, however, it is the absence of the Supernal, perhaps the greatest possible metaphysical distance between the individual and the higher world; even the Abyss, for all of its myriad horrors, is far closer to the Watchtowers than the Underworld, potentially the most telling symptom of the sickness that is the Fallen World. In the Underworld, death ceases to have meaning as part of the soul's journey. It is, instead, a dumping ground for all that remains of the individual consciousness after the end, while the soul itself continues on to an uncertain destiny.

It is out of these worlds — the Shadow Realm, the Astral Realm, the Underworld, and the material realm (and its immaterial Twilight) — that Fallen World summoners call forth spirits, ghosts, and other entities to attend them.

## *Summoning and the Fallen Realms*

Just as the beings of the Fallen World's realms are many, so, too, are the purposes to which they are called from their homes and made to manifest before the summoner. Perhaps the most common reason is knowledge; of a given realm and its denizens, of something that the entity knows (or is purported to know), or whatever else. Of course, many of these beings can only see the world through their own eyes, largely devoid of the human capacity for perspective. Even the most recently-minted ghost of the dead is a static thing, the sum total of the qualities that define it. Thus, experienced Fallen World summoners caution those newer to the art, warning them against putting too much stock in what such entities have to teach. Always, such veteran summoners warn, those that call these beings must question the creature's agenda (for they *all* have one) and, just as importantly, the limits of its experience and frame of reference. While these beings can change, most of them cannot truly *grow*, and that is a critical distinction.

Naturally, while knowledge for its own sake is well and good, most summoners desire information for a reason and that reason, more often than not, boils down to *power*. The Influences of Shadow Realm spirits or the strange Numina of Astral beings are a tempting prize for the aspiring Fallen World summoner; abilities that are not easily countered, even by one's fellow Awakened. Indeed, some few tales — tucked away in the deepest vaults of Mysterium Athenaeums and Guardian strongholds — speak of whole armies of spirits or ghosts, bound to the will of a summoner whose ambitions vastly outstripped her good sense. The Awakening, sadly, often brings with it a sense of entitlement and the sense that one's connection to the higher world of the Realms Supernal conveys a fundamental right to mastery over “lesser” worlds and their creatures is pervasive among many summoners, particularly those who work within the realms of the Fallen World. The fact of the matter, however, is that these realms carry their own dangers and bring their own powers to bear against those that presume too much of them.

Of course, many Fallen World summonings are, relatively speaking, quite *easy*, and therein lies much of their peril. Any willworker who achieves even a



middling proficiency with, say, the Death or Spirit Arcana can call the appropriate entities to her. Likewise, the Mind Arcanum grants access to many (though perhaps not all) of the odd beings native to the Astral Realm. While the Underworld remains remote, it, too, is certainly easier to contact than certain of the bizarre planes that exist beyond the reaches of the Fallen World. And familiarity breeds contempt, among willworkers as surely as among Sleepers. Those who practice these summonings frequently become inured to their wonders and horrors. They start to see it as “just another ghost summoning.” Thereby, these mages become a danger to themselves and those around them.

The simple fact is that each of the realms presents its own unique trials and pitfalls, to the summoner. While it is certainly possible for a mage to study and practice the art of summoning across all the Fallen World’s realms (and many dedicated Fallen World summoners do just that), rarely will he ever master all of the myriad nuances of even *one* such realm. Certainly, all of these places share the underlying connection of a central position within the Tapestry — as mages see things, anyway — but they can be as different from one another as night and day.

## *Through the Gauntlet — Shadow Summonings*

Denizens of the unseen Shadow Realm, existing on the far side of the Gauntlet that severs the material from the ephemeral, spirits are animistic entities, comprised wholly of the Resonance out of which they arise. They adopt the qualities of the circumstances and substances that define them: a spirit that wakes within a properly-used steak knife cuts to a particular end: it slices food into smaller pieces. It doesn’t cut paper or wood, and it doesn’t stab people. One that is used improperly, however, may give rise to a murderous spirit, having more in common with instruments of pain and death than other utensil spirits. The spirit of the knife, just like any other, *becomes* that which creates it.

Before the sundering of the worlds, many Awakened believe, the material and the ephemeral coexisted perpetually, if not always harmoniously. While spirits and humans were not of the same flesh, they were of the same *world*, and each tree, river, mountain, or season

was known by both its mundane manifestation and by the consciousness that inhabited it. When battles were fought, people knew the cosmic consequences of their actions by the spirits of violence and suffering that were spawned in their wake. When famine struck, the crops withered under the blighted touch of entities incarnating want and hunger. Conversely, when a child was born into a happy home, spirits of love and family bestowed their blessings, while spirits of the smithy labored alongside the craftsmen who forged soldier’s sword and farmer’s scythe, alike. In those days, say the willworkers who believe in such tales, gods and human beings walked the Earth, side by side; not always as equals, but in a balanced symbiosis.

Regardless of the truth of the story, the proportioned universe of which such Awakened speak is surely no more. Spirit and flesh are divided from one another by a wall that conceals the truth of human greed, hatred, cruelty, and despair. So, too, does it hide the spirits that arise out of rare acts of selfless kindness, genuine heroism, or unswerving compassion. People don’t see the truth of what they do, anymore, and so many of them simply cease to care. Out of sight, out of mind. Not so for the Awakened, however, who are given the sight with which to know this invisible realm, concealed within the Fallen World. Those who practice the summonings of the Shadow Realm are, perhaps, more aware of all, for they call these coalesced Resonances, to learn from them, bind them, or even pact with them.

## *Spirit Summoners*

Mages of all sorts practice the venerable art of spirit summoning. Regardless of affiliation, willworkers invariably find uses for the diverse powers, unusual perspectives, and inherent ruggedness of the native creatures of the Shadow Realm. Below are examples of what reasons mages of the different Pentacle Orders (and beyond) might have for summoning spirits:

**The Adamantine Arrow:** Spirits of protection, war, strength, honor, or other concepts that resonate with the Arrow’s mission may be called to lend their aid to the willworker’s cause. Some may be invited to offer counsel, while others are paid in Essence as mercenaries, still others are sent out to study the enemy’s position, and still others are forged into deadly fetishes. Depending upon the individual Arrow’s beliefs, the summoned spirit may be treated with respect or as just another weapon in the armory.



## Summoning Spirits

Many resources already exist for the dedicated Shadow Realm spirit summoner. The Spirit Arcanum spells, "Spirit Tongue," "Ephemeral Shield," "Lesser Spirit Summons," "Peer Across the Gauntlet," "Place of Power," "Control Spirit," "Familiar Pact," "Greater Spirit Summons," "Numinous Shield," "Spirit Road," "Bind Spirit," "Create Fetish," "Essence Gift," "Grant Familiar," "Sacramental Chain," "Spirit Guardian," "Road Master," "Control Gauntlet," "Materialize Spirit," "Shape Spirit," "Spirit Court," and many others are all potentially vital tools in the spirit summoner's arsenal. With these magics, the willworker can call out to the creatures of Shadow, create a hospitable (or hostile) environment for a summoned entity, bind a spirit to service in a variety of ways, and guard against the retaliation of a spirit unwillingly called.

Many of these magics can also be employed upon a spirit presently existing in the immaterial state of Twilight (indeed, some, such as the "Spirit Tongue" spell, are largely intended for interaction with spirits in such a state). Regardless of the spirit's current location, however, the wise mage prepares extensively before such a summoning — or *any* summoning, for that matter. Better, experienced summoners say, to be overly prepared than insufficiently protected. Spirits are volatile creatures, at times, and must be handled with the same sort of caution as a hungry feral animal or raging brushfire.

**The Free Council:** In the search for freedom from the old Atlantean hegemony, Libertines seek new ways of defining the Awakened relationship with spirits, and new attitudes on summoning go a long way to rising above the Diamond's often-unpleasant past with the denizens of the Shadow Realm. When a mage of the Free Council can discern no way around or through her current problem, she may consult a spirit for its unique insight. Those whose techné focuses intently on a given subject may summon spirits aligned with such forces, hoping to gain a bit of otherworldly inspiration.

**The Guardians of the Veil:** Behind the Masque lurk many uses for the creatures of Shadow. Guardians summon spirits to aid in infiltration and counterintel-

ligence. When magic alone fails to suffice, summoned spirits may aid in interrogation, bypassing psychic shields with powers that never touch the mind. Fetishes enable Guardians to smuggle much-needed enchanted objects into places that might otherwise register Artifacts or the more common Enhanced or Imbued Items. And, when all other options have run out, a summoned spirit can be sent to deliver the order's final judgment upon one who offends against the Veil.

**The Mysterium:** Many spirits are ancient creatures, possessed of a wealth of strange knowledge. Some mystagogue spirit summoners simply enjoy converse with such entities, often learning dire secrets from them that the spirits happily divulge, whether out of lack of understanding of the lore's power or, indeed, a lack of concern. Occasionally, enterprising Censors use summoned spirits to sniff out dangerous relics for containment, while other willworkers of the Dragon's Wing bind them as sanctum guards.

**The Silver Ladder:** Théarchs have a longstanding relationship with the spirits of Shadow. Some of the oldest histories of the Voice of the Dragon tell of bargains that kept the island nation of Atlantis at peace with the spirits that coexisted with its people. Traditions of diplomacy and even goodwill may encourage a mage of the Silver Ladder to summon spirits and discourse with them. Some théarchs hand down the lore of ages-old pacts to their apprentices, teaching the secret words by which allied spirits of the Shadow might be called forth from their resting-places.

**The Seers of the Throne:** Seers deal warily with spirits, aware that such creatures are, at best, temperamental, selfish, and deeply inhuman. Spirits can't often easily be subjugated and discarded, so many Seers of the Throne try to keep them at a distance, when possible. Of course, any completely disregarded resource becomes an asset to one's enemies, so certain Seers practice the arts of spirit summoning, merely to deprive the Pentacle Orders of a dangerous edge in the long conflict between the two factions.

**Banishers:** Those that aspire to the end of magic tend to view the spirits of the Shadow Realm as merely another sort of demon. As so many Banishers reckon themselves damned for the "sin" of magic, they turn the tools of the enemy against him, summoning and binding spirits with what skill they can muster. Of course, lacking as they do in any formal training, many Banishers end up destroying themselves through



the gross mishandling of spirits too powerful for such uncivil treatment. Those that do survive long enough to become skilled spirit summoners, however, are invariably *quite* dangerous.

## *Spirits of Shadow*

After ghosts, the spirits of the Shadow Realm are the entities most commonly called upon by Awakened summoners; only the somewhat greater danger inherent to the art of calling upon spirits (as compared to the shades of the dead) keeps them from being the most consistently summoned of any ephemeral entity. Some sample spirits follow, to be summoned by willworkers and perhaps tasked with the protection of a sanctum, sent as emissaries to others of their kind, or even bound into fetishes.

### *Sample Spirit: Silver-Skin*

Silver-Skin has only recently Awakened to sentience. Once, its physical reflection was owned by a powerful man. In time, that man passed on its corporeal vessel to his younger brother and the combination of the elder's pride and the younger's gratitude has stirred the long-dormant consciousness within to wakefulness. Silver-Skin knows that it must protect all of the things that its keeper places inside its physical form: papers, pens, a calculator, his iPod and ear bud headphones, and whatever else fits inside the sturdy aluminum briefcase.

The spirit known as Silver-Skin appears, to those that can peer through the Gauntlet, as a slightly more heavily armored version of the physical object that is its mirror: a somewhat outmoded, but nevertheless serviceable lightweight aluminum briefcase. When it needs to move, the spirit extrudes dozens of limbs made of thin strips of paper from its closed seam and scampers along with surprising alacrity. If it needs to attack something, it opens, revealing teeth made from broken pens, half-straightened paperclips, and the like, and bites down. Silver-Skin is literal-minded and takes very seriously its duty as a protector of important things.

Silver-Skin uses its Protection Influence to prevent anyone but the briefcase's owner from opening it, though it would probably let his older brother into it, as well. Of course, Silver-Skin is not terribly bright and could certainly be tricked (or compelled) to relinquish something that it is protecting, or to guard something else. While not a powerful spirit, it will doggedly

## Summoning in Shadow

Given Shadow's properties with respect to vulgar magic (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 283), coupled with the vulgar Aspect of a number of summoning spells, many summoners — regardless of the worlds into which they delve — prefer to attempt their magics from that realm. This approach has its own benefits and hindrances, of course.

Working for the mage is the Shadow Realm's mitigating effect on Paradox. Mages casting within this unseen world can breathe just a little bit easier while they work, knowing that the teeth of the Abyss are somewhat blunted by Shadow's influence. Further, as Sleepers within Shadow are rare to the point of being virtually unheard-of, such mages have little concern for random passersby stumbling upon a delicate summoning and ruining the entire process (likely, catastrophically). Free from the distractions of the mundane world, the summoner can practice her arts, away from the scrutiny of those blinded by the Lie.

On the other hand, the willworker is decidedly *not* free from the distractions of an extraordinary world. Spirits can be curious creatures, particularly with respect to things that will or might disrupt their comfortable routines. Some spirits are simply opposed to *any* interlopers upon the territory that they claim, human or otherwise, and drive out a summoner the same way that they would any other being. Some spirits might wish to see a summoning go awry, according to their natures. Still others may be hostile to the specific entities that the mage wishes to call (this is often the case with Abyssal spirits and beings originating in the alien planes outside of the known limits of the Tapestry).

In the end, each summoner must, as they say, pick her poison. Either option comes with its own dangers and its own perks. Neither is perfectly safe or even close to it, and mages on both sides of the Gauntlet have certainly lost their lives (or worse) in the course of casting summoning magics.



defend anything placed in its charge by whomever it considers to be the owner of the briefcase.

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 1, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 13 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 2

**Corpus:** 6

**Influence:** Protection 1

**Numina:** Material Vision

**Ban:** Silver-Skin can never allow an unauthorized individual to access the materials inside the briefcase that is its physical reflection.

### *Sample Spirit: No Entry*

Its existence began simply: one too many thuggish bouncers had beaten the living shit out of one too many guys who were wondering about that room that their girlfriends were invited into in the back of the club. The sign on the door simply said, "No Entry," and the bouncers saw to it that no one who wasn't personally requested by the owner and his friends got back there. The spirit lingered, in the club, until three consecutive rape convictions put the owner behind bars and the club into the hands of someone else, who tore the place down to build a small parking garage. Unhappy, No Entry wandered off, eager to find more opportunities to indulge its purpose.

No Entry looks like a squat, hulking man made of cinderblocks painted dark red (the walls of the club) and heavy riveted steel, with flaking black paint (the door to the back room). For the most part, the spirit moves ponderously, but it can explode into motion if the opportunity for violence presents itself. When the spirit speaks, it does so with the overly-loud and boisterous voice of every macho asshole who ever got a gig as a bouncer in an attempt to impress chicks by beating down scrawny drunk guys.

No Entry wants to be given a job; it wants to limit access to a place on the far side of a door. It wants a boss, someone to say who gets in and who doesn't. An enterprising summoner might make No Entry an offer to serve as a sanctum's doorman, or to protect some valuable arcane relic in a vault. Alternately, something that the characters need might be on the far side of a door over which No Entry stands guard.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 7, Finesse 2, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 12

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 7

**Speed:** 17 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 11

**Influence:** Access 2

**Numina:** Blast, Gauntlet Breach

**Ban:** No Entry may not pass through any doorway without first receiving permission to do so. The individual giving permission need not possess any legitimate authority to allow entry; the spirit just needs to be allowed through by *someone*.

### *Sample Spirit: Tanglespeak*

Tanglespeak has existed for so many centuries, now, that it forgets its beginnings. Perhaps that is for the best, though, as the spirit's strange wisdom would only be needlessly clouded by the burden of long memory. As it stands, the riddle spirit would likely just confuse itself with meandering puzzles about impossible origins.

Tanglespeak skitters along on seven spindly limbs, each about as long as a grown man is tall. These odd legs fold ever inward, upon themselves, into an ever-tightening cluster that forms the center of the spirit's ephemeral mass. In the middle of the spirit, only barely visible through the thicket of its form, is a faint light; like a candle's flame, only glowing a pale, ghostly green. For those that can hear it, Tanglespeak's voice has a vaguely feline quality — all purrs and languid growls — and is almost hypnotic.

Characters who need to solve a riddle, puzzle, or some other intellectual conundrum might summon and consult with Tanglespeak. In its customary manner, the spirit will attempt to offer any advice in the form of a riddle, but it can be forced to speak plainly by a powerful enough willworker. Conversely, a character hoping to confound an investigation or other cerebral predicament might send Tanglespeak to do so.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 9, Resistance 7

**Willpower:** 12

**Essence:** max 20

**Initiative:** 16



**Defense:** 9

**Speed:** 24 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 12

**Influence:** Riddles 3

**Numina:** Claim, Discorporation, Reaching

**Ban:** Tanglespeak must attempt to solve any riddle presented to it, without resorting to the use of its Influence.

### *Sample Spirit: 6<sup>th</sup> and Lake*

It's been a bad intersection since day one. Over the years, 27 people have died in auto accidents at the intersection of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lake Street. No one is quite sure why; the visibility is just fine, and there are no more potholes or other safety hazards than at any other corner for a mile in every direction, but that's just how it is. All of that dying and the persistent local dread attached to the intersection have given rise to a potent spirit, whose powers and interests now go well beyond fatal car crashes.

Possessing a vaguely humanoid shape, 6<sup>th</sup> and Lake is comprised of twisted metal and broken windshield glass, spattered, here and there, with fresh blood. The spirit smells of leaking gasoline, burning rubber, and smoldering upholstery, as well as a faint odor of fear. The metallic components of its form shriek loudly on one another when it moves, while the glass continually crunches. No matter what it says, 6<sup>th</sup> and Lake's voice sounds like a chorus of frantic pleas for help from within the acrid smoke billowing out of a car on fire.

A summoner who desires insight into any sort of misfortune (her own or that of others) might call 6<sup>th</sup> and Lake, though only the most powerful do so lightly, as the gruesome mythology which has sprung up around the spirit's intersection has made it powerful, indeed. For the right price, 6<sup>th</sup> and Lake would certainly be willing to inflict its Influence upon someone of the summoner's choosing. An incredibly powerful mage

(or a whole cabal of them) might call 6<sup>th</sup> and Lake with the intent of binding it into a ruinous fetich.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 11, Finesse 8, Resistance 10

**Willpower:** 21

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 18

**Defense:** 11

**Speed:** 28 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 15

**Influence:** Misfortune 4

**Numina:** Discorporation, Harrow, Psychic Torment, Soul Snatch





**Ban:** 6<sup>th</sup> and Lake cannot cross any barrier made from undamaged car parts; even so much as an unbroken line of brand-new hubcaps bars the spirit's path.

## Greater Mysteries — Spirit Royalty

While spirits of Rank 6 and greater are still denizens of the same Shadow Realm as the lesser beings with which the Awakened more regularly interact, their power and the sheer vastness of their respective natures put them on a different plane, entirely. As the Archmasters are to Awakened of lesser prowess, so, too, is Shadow's royalty to those that serve its myriad of Princes, Duchesses, and the like. These gods — for, surely, such is what they are — cannot be summoned, bound, compelled, or in any way meaningfully opposed, save perhaps by the elusive Archmasters. Still, these entities are not wholly beyond the ability of lesser Awakened to contact and perhaps even bargain with.

Of course, any mage less than an Archmaster cannot hope to encompass the totality of such a being with the known lore of the Arcana, and so such willworkers instead use Spirit Arcanum magics to build a shell suitable for hosting a miniscule portion of the spirit's power, through which it might interact, by way of extending an invitation to the royal. Such "royal avatars," as they are called, act in virtually every way like the gods out of which they are summoned, save for the far more limited (though still immense) scope of their capabilities. For all intents and purposes, a royal avatar is the spirit that gives rise to it, for all that the avatar says, thinks, and does is directed by the greater entity in which it has its origin. Naturally, such spirits expect to be treated with deference, unto the point of worship; by their reasoning, any willworker who wishes an audience should pay the proper homage to one of the fundamental forces of the universe. Those who fail to show such respect as these being feel they are owed often receive appropriate chastisement. Depending upon the deity in question, this may mean a long lecture, a penance to which the willworker is irresistibly bound, a swift but agonizing death, eternal imprisonment in an unknown realm, or just about anything else.

Spirits of the station of King or Queen (Rank 8) or greater almost never answer such a summoning, as the concerns of an individual mage — or almost any

number of mages, really — are largely inconsequential to such inconceivably potent entities. Frequently, the summoning mage's spell simply fails, with no sense that the desired spirit has even so much as noticed the call. At no point in known Awakened history has an entity of the greatest possible spirit Rank (10) ever answered a summoning. It may be that such beings lack the ability to interface with reality on such a limited scale.

### *Summon Royal Avatar (Spirit ●●●●●)*

Since the most ancient times, mages have aspired to commune with the gods. Indeed, in ancient Atlantis, the Ladder to Heaven was constructed for the very purpose of converse with the powers that moved (and were, in turn moved by) the most expansive processes of the cosmos. The Celestial Ladder is gone, but beings still dwell within the Fallen World possessed of such immense power as to be considered divinities in their own right. Masters of the Spirit Arcanum who wish to have contact with such entities make use of this spell to do so.

**Practice:** Making

**Action:** Extended (target number = 25 successes)

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 10 Mana

Successful casting of this spell summons a royal avatar to the mage's location. Because of the transcendent nature of spirits of Rank 6 or greater, no Space Arcanum component is necessary to contact the spirit; it simply knows that it is being contacted and either chooses to extrude an avatar or not. If the spirit is unwilling to speak with the summoner, then the spell automatically fails, regardless of successes accrued and Mana spent. Successes equal to five times the avatar's effective spirit Rank (of 5) are necessary to build the ephemeral shell to be inhabited by a fragment of the royal's consciousness and power. The caster has no control, whatsoever, over the final Traits of the royal avatar; the royal assigns them, instead, according to its wishes.

If, at any point, the royal wishes to terminate contact with the summoner, the spell automatically ends, with no roll necessary. Should the royal wish to communicate *directly* with the willworker, then it may simply shift the totality of its presence to the mage's location, though such is surpassingly rare. Not only do most spirit royals have no inclination to deal so directly with mortals, but the unscheduled arrival of



so potent a being can inflict disastrous incidental consequences on the local Shadow and material realms. Further, entities of equal or greater standing to the royal may view such a move as an infringement against territorial boundaries and retaliate accordingly.

Casting this spell is an act of hubris, requiring any mage with four or more dots of Wisdom to roll three dice against degeneration.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Descent of Kings**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression + Spirit

As they did in times of old, modern thérarchs still dare to summon individual facets of the gods, themselves, when the need is dire. Throughout the ages, this incredibly dangerous spell has passed out of the exclusive lore of the Silver Ladder and into the hands of willworkers of all orders.

*Sample Royal Avatar: The Thunderer*

Thor. Perun. Susano'o. Indra. Shango. He has worn all of these names and many more, besides. From the first moment that humans looked up to behold lightning splitting the sky, he was there, hurling bright spears and smiting the vault of the heavens with his cudgel. With a temperament as dynamic (and, often, wrathful) as the elemental fury that he embodies, the Thunderer is a powerful, masculine deity, venerated by countless societies — from fearful clans of Neolithic hunter-gatherers, to some of the strongest empires in history — throughout the long ages of the world. The Thunderer is a warrior and, just as often, a troublemaker. Sometimes, he is steadfastly loyal and, at other times, he is fickle, with all of the tact and decorum of a spoiled child. He is unimaginably intimidating, but possessed of the demeanor of royalty; frequently, he is either the son of a pantheon's Sky Father or else he, himself, fulfills that lofty role.

The Thunderer's avatar towers over mere mortals. His massive, muscular frame is wreathed in roiling dark clouds and his wild hair and long beard are woven of writhing strands of lightning. His eyes reflect the raw power of every storm ever to shake Heaven and Earth since the dawn of time. He is always armed: with a spear, warhammer, club, or other weapon indicative of thunder, lightning, or both. When he speaks, those before him are whipped by gale-force winds and lashed by driving rain. When he raises his voice in anger, glass shatters

from his unearthly bellow and thunderbolts strike down from on high.

Summoners who desire insight into the nature of storms — whether literally or conceptually — may appeal to the Thunderer for an audience with a royal avatar. Likewise, those who need assistance in time of conflict, who wish to strike fear into their enemies, or who require illumination in the darkness might dare to inscribe the ancient seals and call out to him. Those who presume to summon the Thunderer, however, must beware his legendary temper and many seek to placate him with gifts appealing to his nature: weapons of war, for example, or Essence harvested under stormy skies.

**Rank:** 5

**Attributes:** Power 15, Finesse 15, Resistance 15

**Willpower:** 30

**Essence:** max 50





**Initiative:** 30  
**Defense:** 15  
**Speed:** 40 (species factor 10)  
**Size:** 20  
**Corpus:** 35  
**Influence:** Storms 5, Strife 4, War 4

**Numina:** Blast, Harrow, Materialize, Material Vision, Psychic Torment, Reaching, Wilds Sense

**Ban:** The Thunderer must not depart a place without leaving it in some way scarred by destructive elemental force.

## *Evolution's Exiles — Cryptids*

At the edge of Shadow, lurking around the Verges between worlds (or other similarly chimerical locales), dwell the creatures that once were, and still are, but which cannot be: cryptids. Driven, perhaps, by some subtle and ill-understood sense to places as impossible as themselves, cryptids stake out territories on the fringes of the known world. Some few are intelligent enough to attempt to build and to thrive, but most are essentially extraordinary animals, desiring merely to eat, to mate, to hide from the sight of humanity, and to live free. These bizarre entities, not quite flesh and not quite spirit, can be called by mages who learn the secrets of summoning them.

### *Summon Cryptid* (Life ●●● + Space ●● + Spirit ●●●)

Willworkers interested in seeing the Mothman, the Jersey Devil, the Fiji mermaid, or the Mongolian death worm often find nothing but fanciful tales and badly-crafted fake corpses for their efforts. Those who learn *this* spell, on the other hand — and who dare to wander into some of the loneliest and remotest places on Earth — sometimes find a great deal more. This spell calls a cryptid out of the Verge or other impossible space in which it dwells.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

The willworker must be physically present at the site of the Verge or other “impossible space” that contains or encompasses the cryptid’s personal domain in order

to cast this spell. Summon Cryptid may not be cast at sympathetic range, even if the mage otherwise possesses a sympathetic connection to the creature that she is attempting to summon.

Success in casting this spell summons a cryptid out of its hiding place and compels it to present itself before the caster. The creature may or may not be peaceful; the spell offers no protections of its own against a hostile cryptid. A cryptid may willingly forego its roll to contest this spell if it actually desires to make contact (out of curiosity, loneliness, or even hunger).

**Mysterium Rote:** Fortean Bestiary

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Spirit

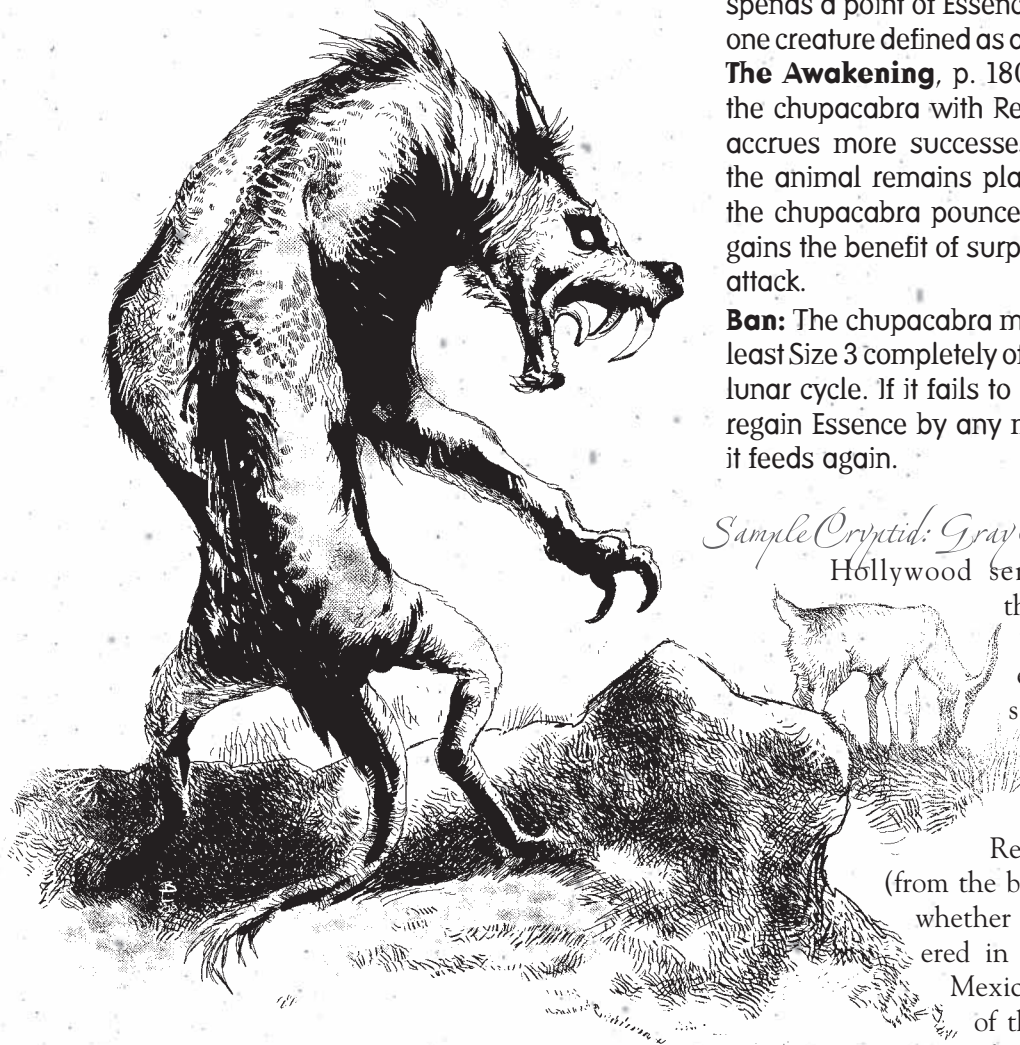
Mystagogues often have occasion to encounter aberrations of the natural world. Those that make a habit of such unusual adventures sometimes wish to be able to call up a particular specimen for study, rare sacramental components, or even just a pleasant chat. This rote is ancient, indeed, and has long since passed into the hands of mages outside of the Mysterium.

### *Sample Cryptid: Chupacabra*

Many different sorts of entities get branded with the moniker of the *chupacabra* (“goat-sucker”); a beast alternately described as resembling a bear, a reptile, a dog, or some combination of the three (often bipedal or semi-bipedal). Tales of the creature originate in 1990s Puerto Rico, though they have since been reported — with all of their varied appearances — all over Latin America, the United States, and even further abroad. Some say that the creature is shy and, others, that it is aggressive in the pursuit of livestock upon which to feed. Some chupacabras have even been seen in broad daylight, along roads or otherwise well out in the open, and at least a few have allegedly been filmed or killed. Most of the videos and corpses have been written off as perfectly mundane animals, such as mangy coyotes, but *some* aren’t so easily classified by science.

This particular specimen looks like an awkwardly proportioned hyena, with the scaly hide of a dark brown monitor lizard and only the odd tuft of beige fur poking out at its joints, from inside its ears, and at the tip of its stubby tail. The creature has a loping, uneven gait that, nevertheless, allows it to cover a great deal of distance quickly. Its oversized head hangs low to the ground and sways from side to side when it walks, sniffing the ground for the scent of prey. Its mouth bears only two teeth, which fold out like a co-





spends a point of Essence when closing in on any one creature defined as a median life form (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 180). The creature contests the chupacabra with Resolve. If the chupacabra accrues more successes than the animal, then the animal remains placid and motionless until the chupacabra pounces; effectively, the cryptid gains the benefit of surprise on the first turn of its attack.

**Ban:** The chupacabra must drain an animal of at least Size 3 completely of blood at least once every lunar cycle. If it fails to do so, the cryptid cannot regain Essence by any means until such time as it feeds again.

*Sample Cryptid: Gray Alien*

Hollywood sensationalism has made them famous: the so-called “gray aliens” of urban legend. These beings are also sometimes called “Zeta Reticulans” (after their alleged home star system of Zeta Reticuli) or “Roswell aliens” (from the belief that several of them, whether alive or dead, were recovered in or around Roswell, New Mexico, on July 7, 1947). Most of the stories about them tell

of suppressed emotions, vast intelligence, and travel between the stars. Some believe that the grays are peaceful scientists, while others maintain they are bent on conquest. Since the Roswell incident, however, gray aliens have been spotted all over the world, with thousands of sightings on record, many of which have never been successfully debunked.

- Rank:** 2
- Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 5, Resistance 4
- Willpower:** 8
- Essence:** max 15
- Initiative:** 9
- Defense:** 5
- Speed:** 24 (species factor 15)
- Size:** 4
- Corpus:** 8
- Influence:** Hunting 2
- Numina:** Trill (dice pool 9). The chupacabra

of suppressed emotions, vast intelligence, and travel between the stars. Some believe that the grays are peaceful scientists, while others maintain they are bent on conquest. Since the Roswell incident, however, gray aliens have been spotted all over the world, with thousands of sightings on record, many of which have never been successfully debunked.

These particular cryptids stand about three feet tall, with willowy bodies that seem almost incapable of supporting their oversized heads. Huge almond-shaped, steeply sloping black eyes dominate the gray-white faces of the entities. Their mouths are tiny and toothless, while their noses are nothing more than a small bump with nasal slits. They dress in form-fitting black suits that cover them completely to the neck. The grays have no discernable genders. Their small, four-fingered hands are dexterous, though they tend to move slowly and deliberately. Some carry strange technologies, which they use for various



(typically uncertain) purposes. These cryptids often travel from out of strange Verges that occur far above ground level.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 6, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 12 (species factor 3)

**Size:** 3

**Corpus:** 6

**Influence:** Travel 4

**Numina:** Impossible Technologies (dice pool 9).

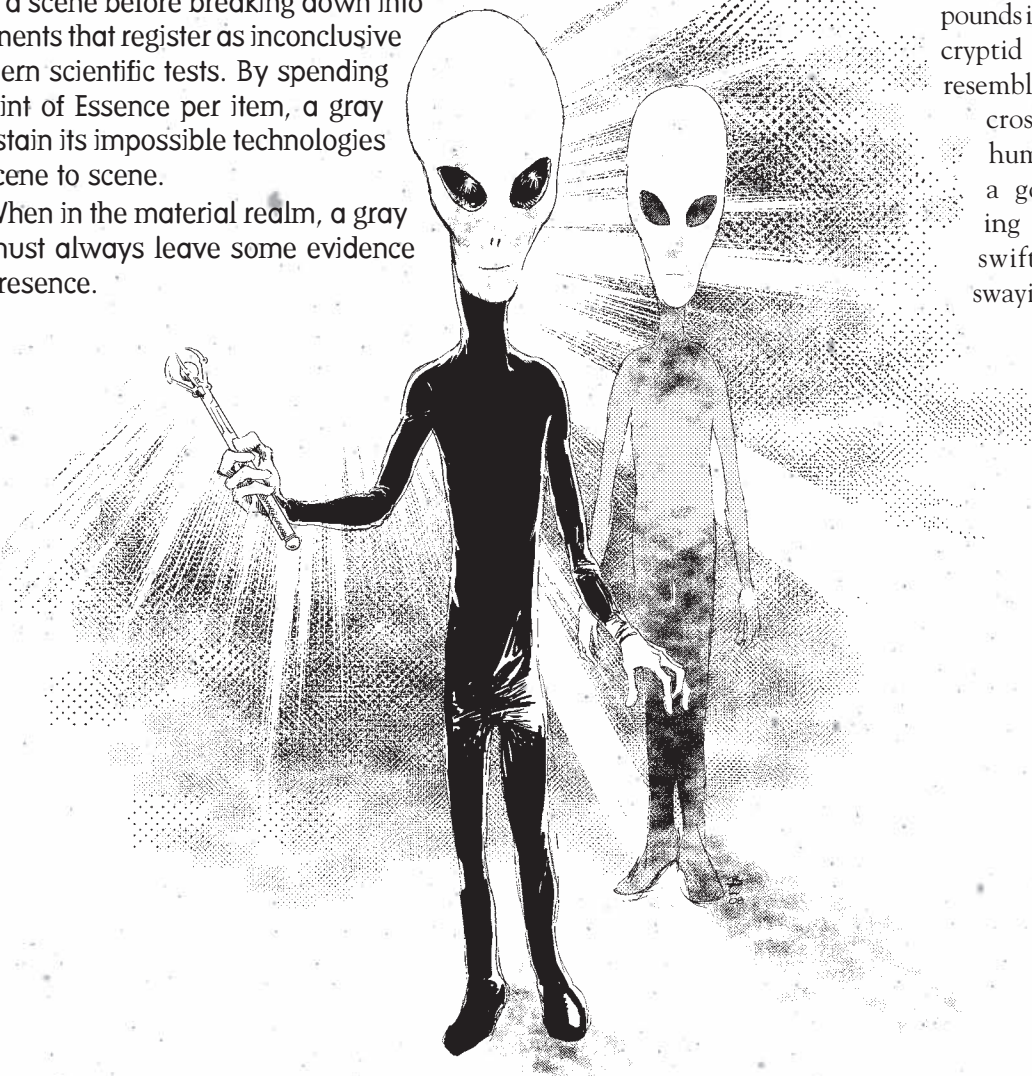
The gray spends a point of Essence to temporarily craft a piece of impossible machinery: devices for telepathic communication, the generation of anti-gravity fields, and the like. These devices last for a scene before breaking down into components that register as inconclusive to modern scientific tests. By spending one point of Essence per item, a gray can sustain its impossible technologies from scene to scene.

**Ban:** When in the material realm, a gray alien must always leave some evidence of its presence.

### *Sample Cryptid: Sasquatch*

The *sasquatch*, also known as the “skunk ape” (for what some claim is a telltale unpleasant smell) or Bigfoot, is a cryptid believed native to the area around the western border between Canada and the United States. Perhaps related to the also-famous yeti or other “hairy men” of myth and folklore, the sasquatch is a shy, retiring cryptid. Only rarely are accounts given of violent behavior on the part of sasquatches, which are usually more afraid of humans than humans are of these looming creatures. Some stories, however, tell of curious sasquatches who seek out lone humans or small groups, perhaps drawn by the scent of cooking food, or even to study the small, noisy beings that so closely resemble them.

An adult sasquatch allegedly stands anywhere from six to 15 feet in height, though most accounts tend toward the smaller end of that scale; eight to nine feet or so, and about 500 pounds in weight. The cryptid most closely resembles a hulking cross between a human being and a gorilla, walking with a long, swift stride and swaying arms. The





sasquatch's matted hair is often dark brown in color (enabling it to blend in with the trunks of trees and the shadows cast by their leafy boughs), though lighter shades have been reported. Only in the rarest of instances does this cryptid evince aggression, preferring instead to flee into the depths of the wilderness, away from most any creature of approximately its size or larger. Sasquatches occasionally roar, but they are also capable of vocalizations that may, in fact, be primitive speech, used to communicate among the small family groups in which they often travel.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 4, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 11

**Essence:** max 20

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 25 (species factor 15)

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 11

**Influence:** Concealment 1, Wilderness 2

**Numina:** Wilds Sense

**Ban:** The sasquatch may not initiate aggression against any living thing, though it may act in self-defense or the defense of its family group.

## Restless Shades — Summoning Ghosts

Emotional echoes left behind when a soul departs the world — afterimages invisibly burned onto the Tapestry of reality — ghosts are the commonest beings native to the immaterial state of the material realm, known as Twilight. Certainly, other entities exist within that slightly different metaphysical “energy state” of the material, but they are either surpassingly rare (such as the projected consciousnesses of corporeal beings) or else native to other realms (like Twilight familiars). Thus, ghosts are effectively the uncontested inheritors of this insubstantial reflection of the physical world. And they are *everywhere*: exact numbers are hard to track (for obvious reasons), but the number of people, worldwide, who die each day is presently in the low hundred-thousands, and many of those people leave behind ghosts when their souls depart the Fallen World in the attempt to migrate back to the Realms Supernal. They walk the halls of the homes that once sheltered them, aimlessly

## Taming the Beast

Some mages look at the cryptids of the Fallen World as a source of endless information, strange creatures that need to be researched and catalogued. Others see them as sources of strange poisons and miracle elixirs, or even just as prey to be hunted. Some few, however, set eyes on a cryptid and start thinking about care and feeding.

Perhaps the most significant difficulty in doing so is the need to keep the creature in proximity to the Verge or similar “impossible space” to which it is drawn. While cryptids don't necessarily start to die without these places (though some do), most soon begin to show signs of anxiety when deprived of them, eventually turning unpredictably violent. Further complicating the matter is the fact that unintelligent cryptids are, effectively, supernatural wild animals and intelligent ones invariably object to being kept as pets.

Ultimately, these creatures really aren't meant for cages, no matter how well appointed. They are magnificent oddities of the Fallen World, meant to exist in the wild, where they serve to demonstrate that reason has not yet triumphed over wonder.

pace the places where they died, and haunt the steps of those important to them (for good or for ill) in life.

On the subject of ghosts, the old lore of the Awakened is clear: ghosts aren't people; they are not even truly sentient (though many believers — as well as many ghosts, themselves — certainly think they are). Instead, they are nothing more than elaborate sets of programmed responses, derived from the personality templates of the individuals of whom they are nothing more than pale copies. Interestingly, this necessarily implies that ghosts existed during the time of Atlantis, despite the fact that many Awakened point to their existence as one of the cruelest symptoms of the Exarchs' Lie. Those willworkers who uphold both orthodoxy and the theory that ghosts are a sign of the damage done to the Tapestry during the Fall believe that it is the inability of the human soul to readily ascend to the Supernal at the moment



## Spectral Summonings

Any mage aspiring to practice the ways of the summoner with respect to the shades of the departed has a ready repertoire of spells at her disposal. The Death Arcanum spells, "Speak with the Dead," "Ghost Summons," "Touch of the Grave," "Control Ghost," "Ghost Gate," "Restore Corpus," "Haunting," "Twilight Shift," "Quicken Ghost," and still others are all potentially useful for dealing with ghosts still existing in the Twilight state.

Once a ghost has been called from the Underworld (see pp. 41) with the Death 5 spell, "Summon the Dead," it can be targeted with any or all of these spells, as well. A word of caution, however: those unquiet spirits that descend to the Underworld are occasionally *far* more powerful than the ones lingering, unseen, in the material realm. Further, such ghosts are frequently deeply degenerate, having lost much of their Morality while dwelling on the invisible fringes of the world.

of death that somehow causes the disconnect that makes ghosts "wrong" in the present configuration of reality. Such theorists go on to say that death was, in those days, accepted as a natural part of the cycle of the soul's journey, making ghosts more keepsakes of the dead than objects of fear. The argument doesn't really stand up under the weight of the innumerable tales of ancient willworkers seeking the means to cheat death, but the facts, scarce though they may be, do seem to imply that *something* changed in the fundamental nature of the restless dead in the severing of the worlds.

Ghosts are probably the most commonly summoned entities from any part of the Tapestry, or beyond. In fact, most mages don't even really think of the spells used to call ghosts and command their services as truly being a form of summoning, so pervasive and accepted is the practice in Awakened society. Certainly, the belief in the non-sentience of ghosts plays into this, but it also has a great deal to do with the virtual inability of the overwhelming majority of ghosts to defend themselves against various applications of the Death Arcanum; on average, ghosts are the weakest of the ephemeral entities of the Fallen World, making their subjugation through magic a relatively simple

task for those with even a modicum of training. Exceptions exist, of course, but exceptionally potent shades are rare, as all but a scant handful of ghosts slip away, into the Underworld, within a decade of death, at most.

## Ghost Summoners

Mages of all sorts call ghosts to service, every day. While the ends to which these entities are put remain many and varied, certain commonalities emerge within the different Pentacle Orders, as well as the other Awakened fellowships — organized or otherwise — throughout the world. Some examples of the purposes to which various willworkers might summon the restless shades of the dead lingering within Twilight:

**The Adamantine Arrow:** The ghosts of Fallen warriors often have useful counsel to impart to the living. Skilled tacticians, for instance, may be willing (or may be compelled) to share the knowledge of their strategies with those who call to them. Likewise, a deceased master of a rare and exotic weapon can be engaged as a tutor by an Arrow or a slain courier can be given an opportunity to impart the vital message that she died carrying. Some Arrows are also known to use the ghosts of the dead as soldiers against enemies ill-prepared for such an unconventional vector of assault.

**The Free Council:** Even after freedom fighters, innovators, and revolutionaries of all sorts shuffle off the mortal coil, they may well still have lessons to teach. Libertines summon such ghosts to hear their incendiary speeches and unorthodox methods. Other mages of the Free Council approach ghostly summoning as a science unto itself, performing all manner of experiments to discern the outermost parameters of the practice and, potentially, to create entirely new applications for an ancient mystic art.

**The Guardians of the Veil:** While it is sometimes said that "dead men tell no tales," Guardians of the Veil who practice ghostly summonings often beg to differ. Even the grave cannot hold a secret against a persistent Guardian's inquiries. Furthermore, ghosts make for phenomenal spies and, sometimes, even assassins. They can be also used as deterrents, scaring Sleepers away from something that they are not meant to see. Alternately, they can entice parapsychologists, occultists, and other such nosy sorts *toward* some readily debunked phenomenon, sabotaging the already paper-thin credibility of paranormal study.



**The Mysterium:** Mystagogues have a long-standing tradition of using the shades of the dead for all sorts of purposes. Ghostly teachers lecture away in the dark corners of Athenaeums, imparting knowledge upon young willworkers that might otherwise be lost, while other ghosts are bound to dangerous relics by the magics of paranoia Censors, standing an endless vigil. Still other shades are interrogated for what they know of a given old ruin or lost grimoire, or else sent into dangerous territory, to return and report on what they've seen, before living souls dare to venture in.

**The Silver Ladder:** The théarchs of the Silver Ladder occasionally look to the inspiring leadership of those who have gone before, summoning ghosts to learn the nuances of their patterns of speech, the gestures that they make when addressing the constituency, or other small details that help to turn a competent leader into a great one. Likewise, in their endless search for the Imperium Mysteriorum, mages of the Ladder look to the examples of those Fallen who have spent their lives reaching for the Supernal destiny of humanity, to discover what secrets they have to teach. Indeed, along with willworkers of the Mysterium, those of the Silver Ladder rank among the likeliest to summon and converse with ghost mages.

**The Seers of the Throne:** Like everything else, a ghost is a commodity to a Seer of the Throne, to be acquired, used as desired, and thrown away when its production no longer exceeds its upkeep. Seers freely summon ghosts for information-gathering purposes, for extended guard duty, or even just to have something disposable to throw in the way of Pentacle mages in hot pursuit. More versatile ghosts are, of course, preferred, but these are also typically stronger and, thus, a bit harder to summon and—more importantly—control. When possible, though, a ghost-summoning Seer is happy to get his hands on a ghost mage, particularly one who, in life, studied Arcana other than those possessed by the Seer, himself.

**The Banishers:** The destruction of magic requires many sorts of weapons and the Awakened can be sure that at least some Banishers out there are willing to employ any one of them. Ghosts are merely another weapon in the arsenal of the dedicated Banisher, and yet another unwelcome reminder of the invisible struggles to which such misguided willworkers wish that they could blind themselves. A Banisher stalking a given mage may summon ghosts close to her (whether emotionally or by simple proximity)

## Ephemeral Slavery

The old ways still hold sway among many willworkers. Even now, the "laws and traditions of Atlantis" are looked to in awe by the modern Awakened who quibble over what, precisely, those laws and traditions were. On the subject of ephemeral entities, however, many of the ancient tomes agree: ghosts, spirits, and the like are not inherently deserving of freedom, in the manner of a human being. Instead, they are commodities, to be used as required by any willworker with the power to command their service. In fact, many of the oldest texts recount that humanity is *owed* the service of these beings, whether they wish to give it or not.

Others, however, believe this attitude to be provincial and outmoded; self-aggrandizing bigotry in its truest form. Libertines of the Free Council are often the mages most responsible for spearheading this notion that ghosts, spirits, and such deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Just as many modern people recognize that humanity must not use the Earth and its creatures without any sense of mercy or restraint, these willworkers propound a more tolerant, charitable perspective on the beings that Fallen World summoners call up and bind to service. This perspective sits poorly with most mages hailing from the traditional Diamond Orders, though it finds some purchase among Arrows and a handful of théarchs. Guardians of the Veil and mystagogues, however, are, for the most part, simply far too entrenched in a system that gives them license to use and dispose of these entities, as needed, to embrace some sort of "Libertine nonsense" that preaches "ephemeral rights."

In a number of Consilii throughout the world, though, this debate rages and the summoners who inhabit them pay close attention to the theater of public opinion, aware that the accepted practices of today can readily become the reviled acts of tomorrow.

for information, turning them against her when the time comes to strike, hoping that a moment's hesitation from seeing a familiar face will set her up for a killing blow.



**The Left-Handed:** Left-Handed willworkers put ghosts to some of the most abhorrent uses to which these entities can be bent. Tremere liches, in particular, often being quite skilled in the arts of the Death Arcanum, are particularly egregious offenders. Some such mages summon ghosts for use as sex slaves or victims of pointless tortures, enacted simply for the amusement of the summoner. On a more pragmatic level, Left-Handed mages sometimes compel ghosts to terrify, harm, and even kill the living; sometimes in the body of the beloved family dog or a trusted friend, and sometimes as nothing more than a disembodied presence that batters flesh with unseen fists. Likewise, they are as hungry for knowledge as any other willworkers and occasionally call ghosts for the knowledge that they possess.

## Ghosts

As described in the *World of Darkness* rulebook, pp. 208–16, ghosts are immaterial entities, dwelling within the Twilight state of the material realm, on account of some manner of unfinished business. Presented below are four sample ghosts: two that might be used as quick resources by a mage (whether a player character, a friend, or even a foe) in need of spectral assistance, one with which characters might sympathize and attempt to aid, and one — a ghost mage — that is definitely a power (and, potentially, a threat) in her own right.

### *Sample Ghost: Frightful Shade*

Sometimes, a mage needs to get rid of somebody. She's not looking for a fatal solution, just something to make a person leave a place. Maybe she wants a particular house for her sanctum, because of the *Hallow* that sits on its roof. Or, perhaps she's a Guardian of the Veil who needs to make sure that a Sleeper journalist stops sniffing around a particular paranormal site. Then again, maybe she's just interested in horrifying a victim into madness. The frightful shade is useful for any or all of these pursuits.

This ghost is pale and faded, even when viewed by those capable of looking into Twilight. Its eyes and mouth are black pits. Long years have worn down its attachment to the material and the shade will almost certainly vanish into the Underworld within the next few years, if not sooner. Even the ghost's gender has become difficult to discern; perhaps it

## Anchors

In terms of the shades of the dead, an anchor is any person, place, or thing that serves as a ghost's tether within the material world: effectively, the points upon which its safety net over the Underworld is secured. When all of these things are gone, whether through the simple processes of time or deliberate destruction, the ghost has nothing further to hold onto, and it descends into the realm of the dead, from which very few ghosts ever return, however briefly.

For a willworker, however, a ghost's anchor fulfills another highly useful purpose. Such an item constitutes an Intimate sympathetic tie to the shade (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 114–6). Through this connection, a mage with the Space Arcanum can easily target the ghost with scrying (or other) spells at great distance. Granted, few willworkers have much interest in what a random ghost does with its spare time, but one sent into the sanctum of an enemy, and *then* spied upon with magic is another matter entirely...

was simply androgynous in life, but it's just as likely that the frightful shade no longer remembers. Trails of insubstantial mist follow the ghost as it moves, obscuring the already hazy lines of its form.

The frightful shade's only remaining anchor is a chipped and worn porcelain doll's head, about the size of a softball. One of the blue glass eyes is missing, as are patches of its fraying golden-yellow hair. Its rosy pink lips are quirked in a subtle smile, dimpling its cherubic cheeks. The head may have belonged to the ghost in life, though it might also have been a gift given to a beloved child, now long since gone.

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 3, Resistance 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** max 10

**Morality:** 3 (Depression, Fugue)

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 4



**Speed:** 17 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 7

**Numina:** Phantasm, Terrify (*The World of Darkness*, p. 212)

### *Sample Ghost: Shock Troop*

When fear alone is insufficient to the task, more direct methods are sometimes required. Certain ghosts, overwhelmed by the horror of their Fates, turn vicious and violent, resentful of the living, targets for their oftentimes indiscriminate rage. When a willworker is simply looking for an attack dog to stick on her enemies, he could do a lot worse than to summon and bind such as a ghost to his service.

The shock troop died badly, and it's apparent in his mangled form: he looks as though he was mauled to death by a big dog. Ragged strips of skin and even muscle hang limply from exposed bone, in places, and his throat should be is a wet, gaping hole, from which a bit of his severed windpipe dangles. The ghost's face is half missing. He still wears the janitorial jumpsuit in which he died, as torn to shreds as the rest of him.

Two anchors still connect the shock troop to this world. The first is his father's gold wristwatch, recently restored and presently under the glass countertop in a secondhand store. The other is the skull of the feral dog in whose jaws he perished: a hulking, black English mastiff. The dog died (of natural causes, having never been found after the janitor's death) in an abandoned junkyard outside of town. Its sun-bleached skull still sits at the foot of the unstable pile of rusty scrap metal where the mastiff lay down and breathed its last.

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** max 10

**Morality:** 5 (Irrationality)

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 16 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

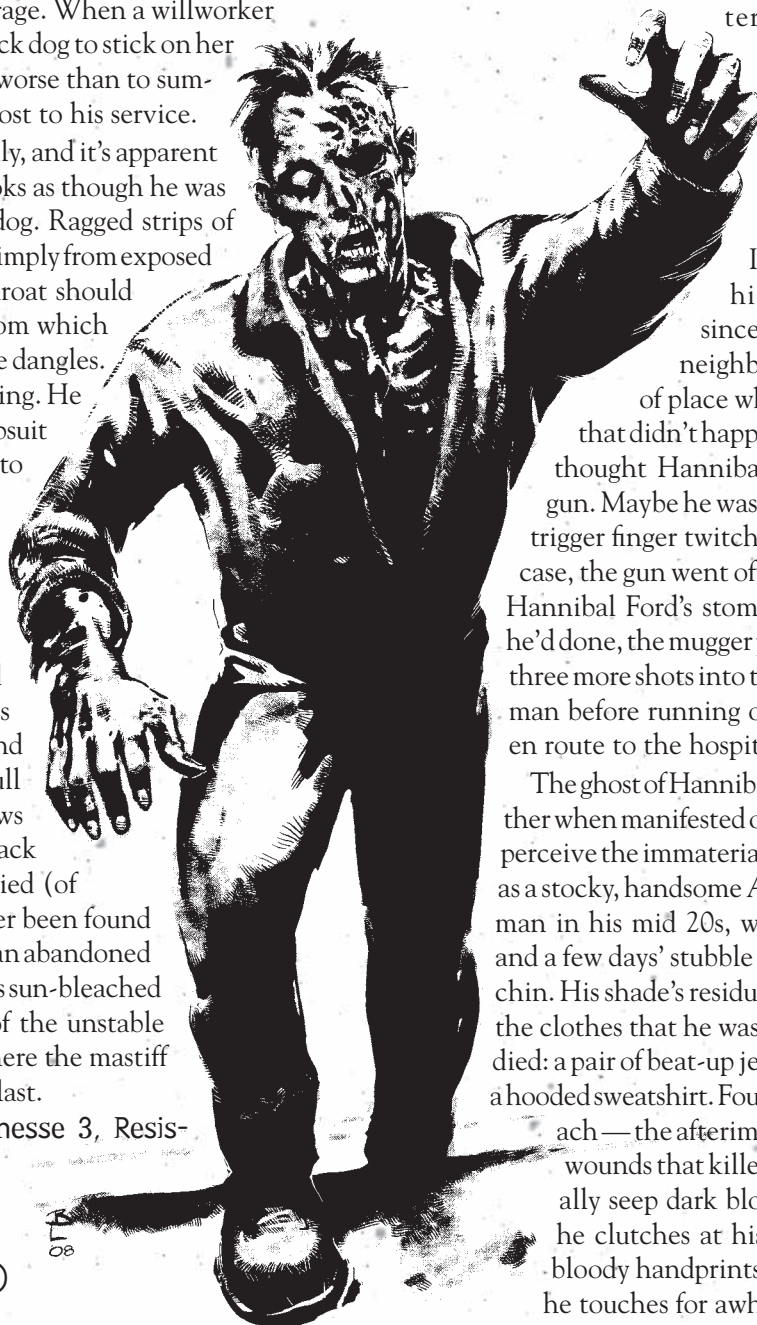
**Corpus:** 8

**Numina:** Animal Control, Telekinesis (*The World of Darkness*, p. 211)

### *Sample Ghost: Hannibal Ford*

Hannibal Ford was a good man. He worked hard and took care of his twin toddlers; a son and a daughter. His wife and children loved him dearly. He was on his way home from the mini-mart when he got mugged. It was unusual for his part of town, since he lived in a nice neighborhood, the sort of place where stick-ups like that didn't happen. Maybe the guy thought Hannibal was going for a gun. Maybe he was strung out and his trigger finger twitched. Whatever the case, the gun went off, discharging into Hannibal Ford's stomach. Seeing what he'd done, the mugger panicked and fired three more shots into the badly wounded man before running off. Hannibal died en route to the hospital.

The ghost of Hannibal Ford appears (either when manifested or to those who can perceive the immaterial state of Twilight) as a stocky, handsome African-American man in his mid 20s, with close-cut hair and a few days' stubble on his cheeks and chin. His shade's residual memories are of the clothes that he was wearing when he died: a pair of beat-up jeans, sneakers, and a hooded sweatshirt. Four holes in his stomach — the afterimage of the gunshot wounds that killed him — continually seep dark blood. Occasionally, he clutches at his injuries, leaving bloody handprints on anything that he touches for awhile afterward.





Hannibal's wife and children are his only anchors; they mean the world to him, even in death. Sometimes, it's hard to see how much the kids have grown over these past two years, because they did it without their father, but he stays out of a fierce devotion to his family. He desperately wants revenge on his murderer, but never really got a good look at the guy. If Hannibal ever heard the killer's voice again, though, he'd remember the man in an instant.

**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 2, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** max 10

**Morality:** 7

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 14 (species factor 10)

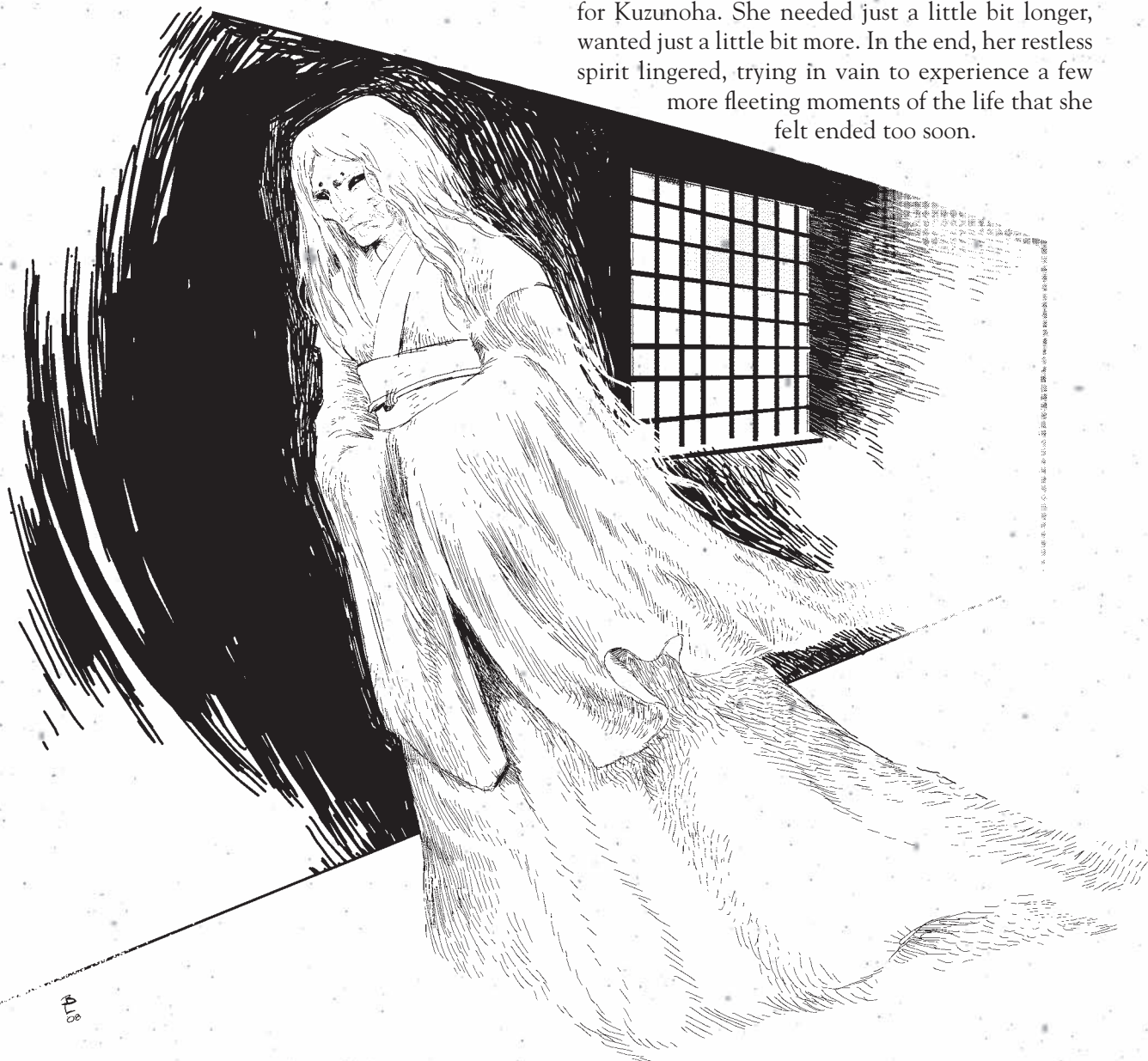
**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 8

**Numina:** Ghost Sign (*The World of Darkness*, p. 211)

*Sample Ghost Mage: Kuzunoha*

She had been many things to many people over the course of her long life, but Kuzunoha — named for the foxwife who was mother to the famous sorcerer, Abe no Seimei — was certainly not as immortal as her namesake. She passed quietly in her sleep at the age of 103, having lived what was, by all accounts, a splendid life; full of all of the joys and pleasures that anyone could hope to ask for. But it wasn't enough for Kuzunoha. She needed just a little bit longer, wanted just a little bit more. In the end, her restless spirit lingered, trying in vain to experience a few more fleeting moments of the life that she felt ended too soon.



418



A tiny slip of a woman, Kuzunoha's great-grandmotherly face is offset by the cascading silvery-white wave of her ankle-length hair. The ghost doesn't walk, so much as she glides, her feet seemingly lost (and, perhaps, invisible) in the billowing folds of her long, traditional kimono. She speaks softly, for the most part, though her voice takes on a terrible aspect when she is angered. Kuzunoha's eyes are entirely black, reflecting everything that she sees with eerie perfection.

The chambers in which the Council used to meet, before her death, are one of Kuzunoha's anchors; she once spoke for the Acanthus of her Consilium. So, too, is one of her antique kimonos (the very one in which her ghost appears, in fact). More than anything, Kuzunoha's spirit wants to be alive, again, even if only for a few moments, so as to savor just one more taste of all that life has to offer.

**Real Name:** Yamada Chiharu

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 7, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** max 20

**Initiative:** 13

**Defense:** 7

**Speed:** 16 (species factor 5)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 10

**Influences:** Fate 5, Life 2, Mind 3, Prime 3, Space 2, Spirit 4, Time 4

**Numina:** Fate, Life, Mind, Prime, Space, Spirit, and Time Arcana (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 327–8, for more information on ghost mages and their Influences/Numina)

**Ban:** Kuzunoha cannot directly target her own anchors with any of her abilities, and any Paradox that she would normally accrue for using her Influences instead damages her anchors.

## *Ghost Familiars*

Many mages consider the practice of taking ghosts as familiars to be one of the more unusual among summoners specializing in the material realm, but those who bind such entities to service in this manner hold it to be an intuitive extension of the summoner's craft. While the process requires somewhat more skill in the lore of the Death Arcanum than is necessary for a mage skilled in Spirit to bind a more conventional familiar, those who take on such beings often believe

the extra effort to be well worthwhile, as ghost familiars are often easier to work with than the capricious and alien entities of the Shadow Realm.

Of course, only ghosts of the lowest order can be bound to a mage's soul and will in this way, the same as with the spirits customarily adopted as fetches and embodied familiars, alike. For unknown reasons, more potent shades do not take to the process; perhaps their remoteness from life makes them unsuitable for use as ghostly familiars. Likewise, ghosts that have descended to the Underworld, no matter how weak or recently deceased, cannot be bound in this way. The Underworld is a jealous realm and it invariably reclaims all that which belongs to it.

### *Ghost Familiar Pact (Death ●●●●)*

With this spell, a willworker forges the familiar bond between himself and a ghost of Twilight.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended (target number = Merit dots)

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

See the Ghost Familiar Merit, below, for more details. The target must purchase the Ghost Familiar Merit to secure the bond, which cannot be dispelled. As normal, only one familiar (ghostly or otherwise) may be pacted to one person at any given time.

The caster must be able to see and speak to the desired ghost (see the Death 1 spell, "Speak with the Dead" (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 135), and he must be able to touch it with each extended roll (see "Touch of the Grave"; **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 138). If the ghost is physically manifested during the casting, however, then the willworker need not be able to communicate with or touch entities in Twilight to cement the familiar bond. As with conventional familiars, a ghost familiar must be willing to accept the mage's pact.

**Mysterium Rote:** Forlorn Pact

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Death

Sometimes by way of threats, bribes, or other forms of coercion, and sometimes on account of sincere offers of aid and companionship through the long, lonely years of restless death, mages of the Mysterium occasionally enter into the familiar bond with the shades of the departed. At least a few willworkers of all orders, however, know of and employ this grim magic.



### *Grant Ghost Familiar (Death ●●●●●)*

The willworker is capable of forging a familiar bond between a ghost and another mage. By way of this magic, mages unskilled in the secrets of the Death Arcanum might gain ghostly familiars of their own.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended (target number = familiar dots)

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana

See “Ghost Familiar Pact,” above. The subject pays the Merit cost. As above, the familiar bond may not be forced onto an unwilling ghost. Also as above, this spell may not be cast upon a mage who already possesses a familiar, ghostly or otherwise.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Aid of the Departed**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Death

Through the use of this rote, willworkers occasionally bestow ghostly familiars upon friends, allies, and students.

## Merit: Ghost Familiar (…)

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

**Effect:** The willworker has a magical bond with a ghost within the immaterial state of Twilight.

Unlike a normal familiar, ghost familiars *may not* be embodied, though they can attempt to manifest (**The World of Darkness**, p. 210), as normal. Even while insubstantial, however, a ghost familiar may touch, and be touched by, the mage to whom it is bound. Likewise, the bound shade may speak with the willworker and hear her words, without the need for any other magics. Ghostly familiars exist on the material side of the Gauntlet, but can travel with their masters into Shadow, or go there themselves, if they possess the appropriate Numina.

The act of bonding with a ghost in this way frees the restless shade from reliance upon its anchors: it may still travel to them, as normal (**The World of Darkness**, pp. 209–10), but it no longer *needs* them.

Even if all of its anchors are destroyed, the ghost remains within the material realm, rather than descending to the Underworld. Further, the ghost may now range as far from its master as a normal familiar might, and the familiar bond bestows a modicum of self-awareness upon even the dimmest residual shade. Such ghosts regain a bit of personality (through proximity to the Supernally-fortified souls of the mage to whom they are bound); enough to interact on the same level as a more conventional familiar.

A ghost familiar spends and receives Essence in the same manner as a fetch, though the ghost familiar can only gain Essence from its bonded willworker or through proximity to a place resonant with death. The empathic connection conveyed by a normal familiar bond exists between a mage and her ghost familiar. Likewise, the ghost familiar constitutes a Sensory sympathetic tie for its bound mage, and the willworker can spend the shade’s Essence as points of Mana.

Ghost familiars are built as fetches, with the following exceptions:

- A ghost familiar retains its Virtue and Vice, and benefits from them, as normal. (Note, however, that the ghost familiar’s Morality score, and any derangements associated with degeneration, are lost when the familiar bond takes hold; the ghost no longer needs its Morality trait to function normally.)
- A ghost familiar has no Influence or Ban.
- A ghost familiar has two ghost Numina (**The World of Darkness**, pp. 210–2), rather than one spirit Numen.
- As above, ghost familiars attempting to manifest do so according to the rules that govern ghosts, rather than those for normal fetches.





*Sample Ghost Familiar: Lily Kenzie*

Lily Jennifer Kenzie was six years old when she fell down that flight of stairs in her grandmother's house and broke her neck. She was dead the very moment she hit the hardwood floor. Despite that, Lily still remembers hearing her Grammy scream, and then her parents, and then everything turned into a blur of strangers, and a funeral, and sadness that destroyed her family. Mommy and Daddy stopped loving each other when she died. Grammy passed away of a broken heart, not long after, but Lily never found her among the shades of the dead. Maybe she just didn't have the will to hold on. When someone came along who could actually see the little ghost and was willing to be her friend, Lily was all too happy to accept his offer.

Lily's head is permanently skewed at an angle from her broken spine. The snapped vertebrae bulge grotesquely at the back of her neck. Despite this, she'd be a cute kid, if it weren't for how eerie she now looks, with a wan, wasted complexion that was clearly once healthy and rosy. Her blonde curls have faded to ivory, while her lips are dark and her eyes, shadowed.

Lily's still wearing the Sunday best that she had on when she fell, though it, too, is faded. Despite being a ghost, Lily has a cheerful demeanor and is prone to giggling like the six-year-old she was when she died. Sometimes, her voice and laughter echo distantly as she skips along, heard but only rarely seen by those who cannot look into Twilight.

Mommy (Rose) and Daddy (William) are Lily's two remaining anchors, but she never visits them, anymore. They're separated and waiting for the divorce to be finalized. Mommy spends a lot of time crying, while Daddy spends a lot of time drinking and *then* crying. Both of their lives completely fell apart when their little angel died in a freak accident. It breaks Lily's unbeating heart to see them this way, so she stays away from both of them, as much as possible.

**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 3, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** max 10

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 15 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 3

**Corpus:** 6

**Numina:** Animal Control, Ghost Speech (**The World of Darkness**, pp. 210–1)

*Sample Ghost Familiar: Heroin Johnny*

When Johnny died, it was with the needle still sticking out of the crook of his inner elbow. It was no surprise, really; *no one* stays on the horse for that long without eventually paying the piper. It was a bad, *bad* batch of heroin, to be sure, but all it did was hasten the particularly ugly end that was inevitably coming for him. For years, he semi-mindlessly stalked the second floor of the crumbling derelict apartment building in which he died, driving off any interloper without thought or compunction. Then, some concerned soul managed to get through to whatever dim part of Johnny's mind still flickered inside the hollow shell of his ghost, and he agreed to the familiar bond. Sadly, that "concerned soul" was a Tremere lich, and being dead has gotten a whole lot worse, since then.

"Heroin Johnny," as his master calls him, certainly looks the part of a strung-out junkie. He'd stand six feet tall if he didn't slouch nearly six inches of it away, and his gauntness borders on the appearance of severe



anorexia. The scores of holes in his arms, legs, and elsewhere continually weep what looks to be a mixture of blood and heroin. Johnny's ghost is dirty and his hair is a clumpy dark tangle that perpetually hangs in his face. He smells of old sweat and the faintest whiff of the piss and shit that soiled his threadbare jeans when his insides let go, while his shirtless torso is adorned by a small, faded tattoo of a four-leaf clover on the right side of his chest.

The old apartment building's second floor (where Johnny was squatting when he died) is still an anchor for him, though he's never allowed the time to visit it; not that he'd particularly want to. Johnny has no other ties to the material world, though the building and the lich are two too many. At this point, he'd much prefer the sweet release of oblivion.

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** max 10

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 16 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 7

**Numina:** Magnetic Disruption, Phantasm (*The World of Darkness*, pp. 211–2)

## *The Dead Amongst the Dead — The Underworld*

Doors. Corridors. Archways. Shadowy chambers; ranging from caves, to vast mausoleums, to vaulted cathedrals, and more. These are the things that ghosts speak of when they are summoned up from the Underworld. So, too, do they tell of societies of the lost and forgotten dead, most of whom have long since given up hope of being claimed by the heavens — or even hells — of which they were taught. Then again, many of them believe they *are* in Hell, having been judged and found wanting, and cast into exile from life, along with countless millions of others.

And when, at last, a ghost in the Underworld has dwelt for too many interminable centuries among her



kind, she is taken by an urge to wander downward, ever downward, into the parts of the realm of the dead never chronicled by its unhappy shades, there to open one last door and step through, into a Fate that not even the wisest know. Some few, extraordinarily strong-willed, ghosts manage to stave off this calling, but rare, indeed, are those who last more than a handful of centuries, let alone stand fast against the crushing tide of a millennium... or longer. Those that do are rightly accounted among the most potent ghosts in the Fallen World and powers to be reckoned with, even when measured against the magics of a Master of the Death Arcanum.



## Grave Goods

Summoning ghosts and other entities from the Underworld is a dangerous undertaking, far more so than calling up the overwhelming majority of the shades wandering the material realm. Given that (for the most part) a ghost is a ghost, is a ghost, why would a summoner be willing to take the risk of dealing with a potentially much more powerful being, when she could easily get the job done with one more easily controlled?

Among the many reasons for calling ghosts up from the realm of the dead is the presence of enchanted objects that exist within the Underworld. Ghosts from that realm can be consulted for information on such items and, eventually, sent to procure them for the summoner. A number of Stygian Artifacts, for example, have at times turned up inexplicably within the Underworld, leaving mages to wonder if they've been there since the time of the Fall. In other cases, ghost mages actually *create* Enhanced and Imbued items within the realm of the dead, both for their own use and for the use of their friends, allies, and servants (or masters). In some cases, these objects can be smuggled out of the Underworld by a cunning summoner.

Naturally, as with *any* pursuit of ensorcelled items, attempting to traffic in the Underworld's works of mystic artifice is an iffy proposition. But, for mages who need or want a particular Artifact, the truth of the matter is that there may simply be no other way to acquire it. The dead, however, covet what little they have and are sometimes known to take vengeance upon those who steal from them.

## Underworld Summoners

For the most part, willworkers of various affiliations summon the shades of the Underworld for many of the same reasons to which they call them in the material realm: knowledge, counsel, ready supplies of expendable soldiers, and the like. These ghosts tend to be more powerful, but a sufficiently potent practitioner of the Death Arcanum can often (if not always) cow many of them into submission.

Of course, things *other* than ghosts dwell within the benighted depths of the realm of the dead and these beings, too, command the attention and even fascination of summoners. Necromancers of all stripes — from freewheeling Libertines, to stoic Guardians of the Veil, to the most cruelly selfish Seer of the Throne — can find reasons to have dealings with these morbid powers, as do others who deeply pursue the lore of Death. Ultimately, many mages summon from the Underworld because it is a place of mystery, barely understood by the living and only slightly better studied by the dead who inhabit it. The Underworld is one of the last true frontiers of the Fallen World and so willworkers both intrepid and foolish draw their seals and speak the words of binding, in the hopes of being among the first to unravel its secrets.

## Underworld Ghosts

For all of the shades that dwell, unseen, within Twilight, far more reside in the dark realms of the Underworld. The inevitable Fate of any ghost not utterly obliterated within the material realm or somehow deliberately bound to another purpose, the ghosts of the realm of the dead are a grim host, many of whom have long since surrendered to the crushing despair of their unenviable circumstances. They band together in mockeries of living societies and try to keep one another company against the endless night, but theirs is a sad lot and all save a handful are eventually compelled to seek out a new destiny — or total obliteration — among the deepest corridors and further doors of the Underworld.

### Sample Ghost: Reginald Lawton

Despite being relegated to the Underworld, Reginald didn't die so very long ago. In fact, he's only been counted amongst the dead for about a year, now. He doesn't know how it happened, but something went wrong with the boiler in his palatial estate and he woke from a sound sleep to the entire place exploding into flames. Everything he had was in that house, and all of the few things that he loved. Everything that was of value to him, gone in a matter of minutes, as fire scoured the place down to the very last old painting, stick of antique furniture, or gilded heirloom. In the absence of any anchors to keep him in the material world, Reginald immediately fell to the realm of the dead, realizing with shock and horror what had become of him.



## A Sense of Self

When a ghost's anchors are finally gone (or when it otherwise loses its tenuous connection to the material realm), it falls, inexorably, into the Underworld. Upon arriving in the realm of the dead, however, a strange thing happens: the ghost regains some measure of its volition, becoming once more capable of thoughts, emotions, and deeds that are no longer defined by set responses imprinted at the instant of physical death. Theories abound as to why, exactly, this is, but some Awakened scholars believe the soul somehow "glances off" of the Underworld after the body dies, leaving a bit of its substance there, a fragment of the self that merges with the spiritually empty template of the psyche encapsulated within a ghost. This miniscule shard, say such willworkers, returns a measure of sentience to a restless shade when it finally descends to the realm of the dead.

Among its other, potentially staggering, implications, this means that ghosts in the Underworld are capable of a certain degree of growth and personal evolution. They can study languages that didn't exist when they died or hold opinions about events occurring centuries after their bodies have gone to dust. The dead talk amongst their own (in most cases, they have little else to do) and they *learn*. And that is — or *should be*, anyway — a potentially terrifying thought for those mages who believe that the ghosts of long-dead Atlantean Masters and Archmasters still dwell among the innumerable shades of the Underworld.

Now, Reginald Lawson's ghost looks like a blackened skeleton, with rough hunks of carbonized meat and shreds of burned clothing clinging to the bones, and a few uneven tufts of charred hair protruding from his incinerated scalp. Reginald has no eyes or, indeed, any facial features, at all, other than small bits of charcoal skin clinging to his fire-blasted skull. When he speaks (in a hoarse rasp), smoke pours from his skeletal jaws and

is surrounded at all times by the sickly-sweet smell of burning flesh. Reginald is an amazingly accommodating ghost, all too happy to do anything that he possibly can to have even a moment out of the Underworld. To one who promises a way to restore him to life (regardless of whether or not she lies), Reginald is a devoted slave.

**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 3, Resistance 1

**Willpower:** 3

**Essence:** max 10

**Morality:** 5 (Phobia: Fire)

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Greed

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 15 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 10

**Numina:** Magnetic Disruption, Terrify





### *Sample Ghost: Martha*

She knows that the events leading up to her death were traumatic, and that's why — even after all these years in the Underworld — she barely remembers most of her life. She has flashes of memory, but can't manage to put them together. She had children and maybe grandchildren. Or perhaps those were someone else's grandchildren, given to her to raise. Martha no longer recalls. And she knows that Martha was the name that was given to her when the master of the plantation purchased her as a girl. *That* memory is still quite clear, for whatever reason. She remembers a lot about the master; he was an ever-present figure at the plantation, all of her life. And, oddly enough, other *white men* called him “master,” too. But he wasn't there when the men from town savagely beat her, hung the noose over one of the boughs of that old tree out in front of the house, and killed her. And she never knew why.

Martha looks to be a smallish woman of late middle age, stooped by a lifetime of hard work. Her skin used to be the color of coffee, but time in the Underworld has left her with a gray-brown appearance. Her face is creased by innumerable wrinkles and what was, in life, light gray hair is now bone white. Martha moves slowly, for the most part, on account of the severe joint pain that plagued her in her later years, but which she no longer actually feels. On the rare occasion that she speaks, Martha's voice is deep, and her words are both carefully chosen and few. Out of a lifetime of ingrained instinct, Martha treats any white face with deference, keeping her head bowed and her eyes down. The ghost's garments appear sturdy and well-made, though simple.

A willworker who looks into the history of the plantation might learn that Martha knows more than she thinks she does. Those “grandchildren” that she raised *weren't* hers; they were, instead, members of a line of Proximi, cultivated by the théarch who owned Martha. The Seers had already murdered him when their Sleepwalker thugs came for her, but she — like the master of the plantation — died having never told her killers the names of the children, all of whom had been sent north weeks before. A summoner who calls Martha to the material realm *might* be able to restore her memories and, through the use of old genealogies, gain access to the unwitting heirs to a once-powerful house of Proximi.

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 5, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** max 15

**Morality:** 4 (Suspicion)

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 19 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 10

**Numina:** Clairvoyance, Phantasm, Possession  
(*The World of Darkness*, p. 211–2)

### *Sample Ghost: Chloderic*

A sixth-century Frankish soldier, serving under the Merovingian dynasty, Chloderic barely remembers what it was like to be alive, anymore. He's been dead for well over a millennium, now, and sometimes wonders if he ever *really* lived, at all. But he's seen too many shades wander down the deeper corridors when thinking those thoughts, only to open the doors furthest in the shadows, never to return; and so he puts those thoughts away when they trouble him and considers other matters, instead. When the dark thoughts plague him most, Chloderic thinks on the secret that his king told to him and which he was commanded *never* to repeat. In the three years that he lived with that secret and the nearly 1,500 since, he never has.

Chloderic was a tall man for his age, just shy of six feet in height. Though he isn't hugely tall in the Underworld, anymore, he looms with a presence conveyed by the raw power of long centuries. What was, in life, a pale complexion now appears as a deathly white tone to his ephemeral form. Once-blond hair — worn long both on his head and in his beard — is a washed-out ivory-gray. While his pupils are unfathomably dark, Chloderic's irises are white; whiter than the whites of his eyes, in fact. He still wears a ghostly reflection of the armor in which he died, but the ancient ghost now knows that it is nothing more than a fabrication of his self-image. The newest language he speaks is Medieval Latin; after that, the ghost lost any desire to keep up with the ever-changing tongues of the living.

Naturally, none of Chloderic's anchors remain in the material realm, but enterprising mages may learn something of the secret that he holds and attempt to summon him from the Underworld in order to have that lore. Conversely, if the secret is tied to an Arti-



fact, grimoire, or other enchanted item, a willworker might unwittingly call the ghost up from the realm of the dead, only to learn what a *truly* potent shade is capable of.

**Attributes:** Power 9, Finesse 6, Resistance 10

**Willpower:** 19

**Essence:** max 25

**Morality:** 2 (Depression, Fixation)

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 16

**Defense:** 9

**Speed:** 25 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 15

**Numina:** Animal Control, Compulsion, Ghost Speech, Telekinesis, Terrify (**The World of Darkness**, pp. 210–2)

## *Dead, But Never Born — Chthonians*

When willworkers first began to explore the Underworld, they discovered things that they did not expect: *inhuman* things, dwelling amongst the dead. These beings were powerful and jealous... and hungry. Mages who dared to ask questions of them (and who survived long enough to return to the living realm with news of their answers) reported that these entities had no recollections of having *ever* been alive. In fact, the Necromancers who managed to make relatively peaceful contact with these beings soon realized that they much more closely resembled the Specters of Stygia (see Chapter Two) than the shades of the human dead.

From that point, theories abounded among Underworld seekers and summoners, regarding the nature of these strange spirits. At last, a consensus among mystagogues and théarch scholars decreed that these beings were, in fact, casualties of the destruction of the Ladder to Heaven; natives of Stygia that had somehow “survived” (so to speak) the Ladder’s collapse. Perhaps due to their identity with death, these creatures, alone, were capable of weathering the transition from Supernal World to Underworld, transformed, though not destroyed. If such were the case, then they would, truly, be things dead, though never born. Further, such entities *might* contain within them the secrets of Supernal lore,

readily available to those that could persuade them to part with the knowledge.

Centuries of ill-advised summonings and even more ill-advised journeys into the realm of the dead ultimately proved the futility of that course. Whatever these beings were — whether creatures of the Underworld that predated the presence of the human dead there, or Specters of Stygia, forever cut off from their distant homeland — they had no memories of the time before the first human ghosts. At first, they dwelt among those dead, feeding upon those unhappy shades as they desired, but the sheers numbers of the dead eventually grew overwhelming and the entities fled deeper into the endless corridors of the Underworld, there to hide themselves from the ghosts that they came to fear and whom they envied, for having ever known life. Over the ages, the so-called *chthonians* delved so deeply into the realm of the dead that they became all but impossible to locate for any Underworld explorer and were forgotten by all save the most sagacious (and powerful) of summoners.

With the possible exception of some of the most unusual beings of the Astral Realm, chthonians may well be the strangest entities in the entirety of the





Fallen World. They are utterly without anything even remotely approaching a human perspective. While capable of feigning meaningful interaction with a willworker, those few mages who have managed to scan the thoughts of a chthonian (and not come away mad from the process) have discovered that these entities do not seem to actually process these communications within the core of what passes for their minds. Instead, dealing with a summoner is, for them, more akin to reflexively scratching an itch: the action addresses a momentary inconvenience, but occurs without conscious thought or effort and is soon after utterly forgotten.

Physically, chthonians are loathsome. One may take the form of a rotting blob of formless Corpus, for instance, or a soupy cloud of noxious gas. Another is a bubbling, greasy heap, comprised of a seething soup of decomposing organic matter, with the occasional jutting bone, half-putrefied organ, or leering skull jutting out of its otherwise undifferentiated mass. Yet another takes the shape of a festering, slimy, horse-sized hybrid of a housefly, a death's head moth, and a cockroach. Chthonians invariably adopt forms that call to mind the most grotesque processes of death, often coupled with the meanest sorts of life; particularly those associated with scavenging and mortality.

Mechanically, chthonians are created like spirits (though they are not) and range from entities of miniscule power (effective spirit Rank of 1 or 2) to stillborn gods (spirit Rank 6 or perhaps even greater). Only those corresponding to the first five spirit Ranks can normally be summoned into the material realm, though rumors exist of ancient relics, the physical manifestations of dark and terrible pacts that can call up the most potent chthonians. When called to the material, chthonians exist within the Twilight state and lack the ability to physically manifest; they cannot do so under their own power and cannot be *made* to do so by another. All chthonians possess an Influence of Death, at varying levels and may use this Influence, among other things, to accomplish the same feats that a willworker might with an equal number of dots in the Death Arcanum.

While the Spirit Arcanum is used to summon chthonians, the Arcanum otherwise does not interact with them. Instead, they can be targeted by any of the Death Arcanum spells that affect ghosts. Chthonians may be bound in the material world (with the Death 4 "Haunting" spell, for example; **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 143) but they are forever drawn

back toward the realm of the dead. At the precise moment of the next new moon, a bound chthonian is freed from its imprisonment, vanishing back into the Underworld, regardless of the magical precautions taken to hold it. Those attempting to read the thoughts of a chthonian must — whether successful or not — attempt to resist the overwhelming alienness of the entity's consciousness; a Resolve + Composure roll, penalized by the chthonian's effective spirit Rank. Failure results in the mind-reader immediately gaining a number of active derangements (of the Storyteller's choosing) equal to the creature's effective spirit Rank, persisting for *at least* a number of months equal to that Rank.

Chthonians *do*, both despite and on account of their totally inhuman natures, have incredible insight to offer into the matters of death. They may be able to recall information from ghosts that they have consumed and some of the most isolated and powerful — those of at least an effective spirit Rank of 4 — allegedly know at least a little about the doorways to the Lower Depths situated in the deepest parts of the Underworld. Some few are believed to possess knowledge of Artifacts or other precious commodities that have somehow ended up in the realm of the dead.

*Summon Chthonian (Death ●●●●● + Prime ●●● + Spirit ●●●)*

Mages who wish to learn the some of the strangest secrets of death sometimes discover this spell when perusing ancient grimoires in some of the oldest Awakened libraries in the world. Concealed within its arcane formulae is a summoning spell intended to call to the material realm one of the dread and alien chthonians.

**Practice:** Making/Unmaking

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 2 Mana per Rank (see below)

In order to summon a chthonian, a willworker must accrue five successes per desired effective spirit Rank of the entity: five successes for a Rank 1 chthonian, for instance, or 20 for a creature of Rank 4. Further, two points of Mana must be spent in the casting for each Rank of the chthonian. This spell is not contested as chthonians appear to lack the wherewithal to resist a summons to the material realm (though they are perfectly capable of contesting any other magics directed at them once



they are present). As specified, above, a summoned chthonian exists in the immaterial state of Twilight and cannot materialize, by any means. Further, no matter what steps are taken, the entity always returns to the Underworld at the next new moon, if not released (whether by the cast or under its own power) before such a time.

*Sample Chthonian: Worm within the Marrow*

Like the rest of its kind, it has no proper name, but willworkers have dubbed it Worm within the Marrow and whatever outer reflex of its consciousness deals with their kind recognizes that title as its own. Once, long ago, this chthonian devoured the shade of a powerful willworker and mages have periodically called it in the centuries since, hoping to glean some insight into her works; particularly certain spells that she never shared with even her most favored students and several Artifacts that she hid before her death.

Worm within the Marrow appears in the form of a hugely fat, writhing maggot, about the size of a couch, with grinding mandibles, surrounded by a ring of scores of tiny, round black eyes. It stinks of badly rotted meat and leaks

a stringy yellow-green fluid from its spongy hide. Its voice sounds like the buzzing of flies, just inside the ear, and is often accompanied by a crawling sensation, all over the listener's skin. Worm within the Marrow takes its time when it speaks, seemingly in no rush to answer whatever questions are put to it.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 2, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 11 (species factor 5)

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 12

**Influence:** Death 3

**Numina:** Harrow, Soul Snatch

**Ban:** Once Worm within the Marrow attacks any creature, even in self-defense, it must attempt to devour that creature.

*Sample Chthonian:  
That Which Is the Door*

No one really knows who first summoned or named That Which Is the





Door. Its title shows up in a few obscure libraries throughout the Awakened world, but few have any explanations as to why such a creature would be summoned, at all. The sole service that the chthonian purports to offer is already within the grasp of Masters of the Death Arcanum: That Which Is the Door opens gateways to the Underworld for those that request such a thing. Perhaps, though, it is capable of creating portals to particularly useful or interesting locales within the realm of the dead, enabling its summoner to access knowledge or items of power lost to the living world.

That Which Is the Door is a great, heaving mass of rotten flesh and bone, contained within a slick, transparent membrane. Gobs of putrid matter continually churn audibly underneath its thin "skin," as the entire thing continually consumes and replenishes itself. When That Which Is the Door speaks, it extends slender tendrils of its membrane toward whomever it addresses, allowing the rudimentary limbs to hang, quivering, in the air before the subject of its statements and inquiries. Its voice sounds like thick, slithering liquid, stirred by some relentless hand. If the chthonian opens a gateway to the Underworld, it does so by breaching its membrane and spilling its wretched, stinking mass out, onto a doorway or other portal, preferably a hatch or other passage down, through a floor. It then either coagulates once more or, itself, returns to the realm of the dead, as its summoner requires.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 10, Finesse 12, Resistance 11

**Willpower:** 21

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 23

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 32 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 9

**Corpus:** 20

**Influence:** Death 5

**Numina:** Psychic Torment, Soul Snatch, Underworld Gate

**Ban:** That Which Is the Door, despite its nature as a portal to the Underworld, may not cross through any door, archway, or other portal, or even over a threshold.


## Meanings Amidst Madness — Astral Summonings

While the Underworld may be the least understood of all the realms to which mages have access, the Astral Realm is perhaps the most perplexing. Other worlds are, in one way or another, at least somewhat quantifiable; they possess qualities that any mage so inclined can — at least in part — decipher and understand. But the Astral Realm is something different, entirely. It reflects (or, perhaps, creates) the dreams, hopes, imaginings, and archetypes that move through every mind, human or otherwise, throughout the Tapestry. No wonder, then, that its native entities are bizarre by even a summoner's standards.

The largest obstacle confronting any would-be Astral summoner is the problem of interpretation. A single mind is a complex enough thing, even for those who spend a lifetime studying its secrets. So much more so is the collective consciousness of the Astral Realm. The raw amount of informational input that a willworker can receive is staggering and, potentially, even harmful. Colors from the Astral, for instance, are not simply more vivid; they are essentially more what they are than is possible within the material world. The same goes for a scent, or a philosophy, or a fear. *Everything* within the Astral Realm is simultaneously far less substantial and far truer to its own nature: an ideal, unconstrained by the profane limitations of mass and flawed substance. The geography of the Astral is defined not by "where," but instead by "what," "how," "when," or even "who." Thus, those who traffic in these powers, calling them down from their rarified realm, must exercise the greatest caution, lest they become caught up in a reality too perfect, too *true*, to be real.

In summoning an Astral entity, of whatever sort, a mage might bear in mind that what he calls is not exactly a being as he knows it but, rather, the tiniest fragment of an ever-shifting mass of thought-stuff. While the entity may, in fact, be the one that he seeks, its existence within the Fallen World must, necessarily, be influenced by the innumerable stray thoughts that border the illimitable space in which it resides and which effect, and are in turn effected by, its only





vaguely individual qualities. Déjà vu and short-term memory loss might plague a mage who summons more powerful imagery, for example, making the truth of the summoning experience difficult to decipher. Likewise, when attempting to summon manifest concepts, the experience can be nearly blinding to the mage as he navigates stark, blatant symbolism, cast in fleeting shells of ephemera. These summoned aspects can distort the willworker's sense of time, place, or even the self, and he sometimes finds that the summoning process lasts for many hours — or even days — longer than he intends. Caught up in the surreal splendors of the Astral Realm's denizens, some Awakened have sickened or even died of malnutrition or other forms of bodily neglect before successfully disengaging from a summoning.

When the willworker attempts to call upon another individual's ego, or the archetypes that encapsulate that individual, seeing things from her target's perspective can grant potent knowledge of her target. The downside to this type of summoning is the obvious disassociation of self, for the mage risks believing she is the subject of her Astral inquiry; much like a practitioner of the Life Arcanum, without a proper anchor of identity, she will become lost in the sensation of this "summoned self," eventually staining her own self-image with external thoughts, feelings, and dreams. In this manner, more than one such summoner has walked down the road of total self-annihilation through misuse of Astral summonings, erasing all traces of the person who was and psychologically becoming someone else, entirely... whether real or imagined.

Of course, calling upon the inner self, through one's Oneiros, is no less dangerous than summoning down the Astral reflections of others. In many ways, in fact, this process is even more dangerous, as the willworker's psyche possesses fewer buffers to defend against the extremes of her own consciousness. Such a summoner might be overwhelmed by the lingering shadow of her seven-year-old self's sense of rejection when her father walked out on the family, or by some stray fragment of a nightmare that she experienced last week. Because these elements comprise, and are native to, the mage's own mind, her psyche accepts them. From there, these minute facets of the self can expand to overtake larger portions of a summoner's identity.

The most dangerous of all Astral summonings, however, are those of the fundamental archetypes of

the Fallen World (and, perhaps, those mirrored within the Realms Supernal), the overarching godforms of the Tapestry. By calling forth these, the deepest concepts of reality, the summoner tempts the destruction of his identity, as it is swept away by an ideal whose subjugation of the individual is no more malicious than a tidal wave that sweeps away a sandcastle. By their very nature, these pure icons of thought and idea interface with the consciousness of the summoner, who can easily be drawn into fantasies of godhood and even omnipotence, should she fail to anchor her sense of self through more forceful means. In the wake of such a summoning, many willworkers feel dull or listless, as though everything around them is devoid of true meaning and virtually unworthy of consideration. For the Awakened, it is a sobering experience; to connect with power as vast as it is impersonal, and then to be cast back into the smallness of a single consciousness, even one refined by a connection to the Realms Supernal. For this reason, masters often forbid these sorts of summonings to students who learn of them, lest their apprentices slip into an endless haze of remorse over the disconnection of the self and the All, the real and the true.

And that may well be the heart of the matter, with respect to Astral summonings. Just as with so many summonings, those called down from the Astral are used for the purposes of gleaning information; in this case, a very particular *sort* of information, and one that often exists in scarce supply within the material realm: truth. Somewhere within the Astral Realm lies the bared totality of every consciousness residing, whether in whole or merely in part, inside any portion of the Fallen World. The insight that willworkers can gain from such encounters is not only awesome in its scope, but also vast in its application. The subconscious realm of one's own Oneiros, for example, contains a wealth of answers and perspectives, realities of one's identity and true nature that the mage may hide even from herself. In dreams, as it is said, all things are possible, and mages who explore their Oneiroi learn to access and analyze those possibilities. Even when they cannot be realized within the material realm, they almost invariably offer valuable self-knowledge to the willworker who dares to call down the entities that thrive within her dream-world.

By accessing the deeper reaches of the Astral, however, a mage can summon more than merely the denizens of her own dreams; she can call forth the beings that reside within the dreams of others. While



only the most skilled and experienced students of the mind can make heads or tails of many of the things that reside in their own dreams — let alone those of others — such summonings can illuminate the secrets of enemies, rivals, and even allies. What often proves unrealistic, unfathomable, or impossible in the Fallen World can be a matter of course in Oneiroi. Often, mages delve for days into the seemingly endless pathways of the mind, searching for clues and solutions to the dilemmas they face. Sometimes, they are rewarded for their efforts and, sometimes, they find chaos, confusion, and even madness. For all of the power and information they contain, the ever present dangers of diving too deeply into the Astral Realm are a strong deterrent for most. The subtleties of the many-layered Astral are terribly easy to misinterpret, and just as easy to become lost within.

## *The Entities*

While Astral summonings are among the hardest to categorize, willworkers nevertheless make the effort, in the hopes of simplifying their interactions with this maddeningly diverse realm. Beings summoned from Oneiroi, for instance, are known to most Fallen World summoners as *morpheans*, after the Greek god of dreams. The terminology makes no distinction between those called from a mage's own dream-realm and those summoned from another's; fundamentally, they are the same sort of being, even if their points of origin are within the entirely distinct domains of self and not-self. These entities are largely colored by the personality and consciousness of the individual out of whose Oneiros they are drawn, though they often express marginalized — or deliberately concealed — facets of the subject's psyche. The further from the core of the subject's personality a given aspect of her consciousness is pushed (purposefully or otherwise), the more forceful it tends to become within her personal dream-realm.

Other manifestations of an individual's ego, as distinct from the dream-realm, are typically referred to as *esoterics*; literally, "those that pertain to the inward." These entities are ephemeral constructs created to house an aspect of conscious personality, as distinct from imagination or subconscious motivation. For example, while a summoned Astral being encompassing a mage's inability to confront his father is a morphean, one embodying his deliberate, waking desire to obtain his old mentor's grimoire of Prime Arcanum spells is an esoteric. These entities are

incredibly forthright and, often, tactless; they exist only to advance the drives that they represent. Unless confined, they will attempt (often futilely) to satisfy whatever motivations they embody. While this is not so dangerous when dealing with an esoteric derived from an individual's present desire for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, it can be decidedly more so with respect to one summoned out of his recent decision to kill the local Adamant Sage.

The strange Astral beings called down from concepts and ideals (the number seven or freedom, for example) are known to most Fallen summoners as *aletheians*, after the ancient Greek word for "truth." These are perhaps the most alien of the Astral entities, as most of them lack anything remotely approaching a human frame of reference; even an aletheian embodying the *ideal* of humanity — whether as a species or as a state of being — is decidedly inhuman. These creatures are the ones likeliest to overwhelm the summoner through direct contact with the consciousness, as the enormity of what they are and what they represent cannot be encapsulated within something as miniscule as a single sense of self.

Of course, other Astral beings are just as capable of compromising a mage's consciousness on as encompassing, if not quite as lofty, a scale. Only the bravest or most foolhardy of summoners call down the *dementias* — beings, unsurprisingly, representative of various insanities — from the Astral Realm. Just as every sublime thought holds its own Astral reflection, so, too, does every elaborate madness and passing hysteria. These crises of the mind are, to the Astral, no more or less valid than a boy's dream of being a famous baseball player or the ideal of tyranny. Dementias often seem malicious, but they are also among the most consistently predictable of Astral entities, once a mage manages to work out a given dementia's patterns; one derived from a legal secretary's obsessive-compulsive need to neatly arrange her desk is probably easier to work out than a being drawn out of the schizophrenia engendered by a willworker's Bedlam.

Lastly, *exemplars* and *iniquities* give form to virtues and vices; not merely the Cardinal Virtues and Deadly Sins, but *any* nobler aspiration or form of unworthy thought or behavior. These creatures rank among the more perilous to deal with, though — like the dementias — they can also be relatively easily controlled by those who manage to understand them. Important to note is the fact that exemplars are no more inherently



“good” than iniquities are “evil”; they are merely representations of a particular type of ideal, distinct from aletheians, in that they cannot exist independently from free will. In many cases, exemplars and iniquities exist for the *same* concept: suicide, for instance, was seen in certain societies throughout time as noble and honorable under particular circumstances, while it was (and is) repudiated as a sin by others.

Note that iniquities are entirely distinct from the goetic demons conjured by some mages. These entities originate within the Astral Realm — within the idea of a given type of sin — rather than within the personal sins of an individual. Those who study the matter are divided on whether to call goetic demons a form of Astral summoning, perhaps derived from somewhere between the Oneiros and the conscious mind, but no conclusive evidence exists to verify claims, one way or the other.

Lastly, while Astral summonings may be, mechanically, identical to spirits, they are not affected by the Spirit Arcanum. Instead, a mage who wishes to control, bind, or otherwise influence such an entity substitutes the Mind Arcanum at an equivalent dot level.

## *Astral Summoners*

For the most part, mages belonging to either the Pentacle Orders or the Seers of the Throne are the commonest sorts of Astral summoners. Banishers and Apostates frequently lack the training with which to call down such rarified entities; most of them don't even know that such arts are possible, let alone how to perform them. Some examples of the typical reasons why mages of different affiliations summon Astral entities:

**The Adamantine Arrow:** To best serve those around her, a warrior must first know herself, inside and out. Calling upon her own morpheans and esoterics, an Arrow can analyze her strengths and weaknesses, developing both as a member of the Dragon's Talon and as a person. Likewise, aletheians identifying with honor, courage, strategy, or other concepts or ideals revered by the Adamantine Arrow can light the way to victory. Also, exemplars of virtues shared among warrior cultures can put an Arrow in touch with the values of her ideological ancestors.

**The Free Council:** Libertines might contact the Astral reflections of their own conscious and unconscious minds in the pursuit of self-knowledge or while seeking to understand some external problem. Aletheians of

liberty, innovation, and the like appeal to the order's democratic, progressive spirit. Dementias can grant profound insights into aberrant psychology, while both exemplars and iniquities can educate the Libertine upon the nuances of the human condition.

**The Guardians of the Veil:** The morpheans and esoterics of others are of greater interest to many Guardians than their own. These Astral spirits, properly studied, can illuminate exploitable weaknesses in another's psychology, as well as revealing core motivations and providing a working personality template. Dementias can be of use in explaining away inexplicable phenomena, while exemplars and iniquities can help a Guardian to hold on to or abandon her sense of self, or to immerse herself within or manifestly deny the lure of sin, depending upon her present needs.

**The Mysterium:** While morpheans and esoterics — particularly one's own — are of interest to mystagogues, as well as dementias, exemplars and iniquities, it is the aletheians that most captivate the Mysterium as a whole. Some mystagogues reason that universal truth hovers within the Astral, waiting to be seized by one who unravels all of its secrets. Through the diligent study of aletheians, a mage of the Dragon's Wing might learn to grasp the true nature of the Tapestry.

**The Silver Ladder:** All of the Astral summonings are potentially of use and interest to thearchs. Whether one's own or those of another, morpheans and esoterics reveal the truth of the individual's self. Dementias can be used to aid those whose pursuit of magic has led them astray from the path of Wisdom and into madness, while aletheians embody the higher truths toward which the Ladder reaches. Exemplars and iniquities reveal moral truths and the ways in which they move from age to age, culture to culture.

**The Seers of the Throne:** Seers crave power and are conditioned to look to external authority in order to seek it out. Thus, they tend not to dwell overmuch on their own morpheans and esoterics, though they sometimes try to find advantage in those of others. Dementias are weapons for most of the Seers who practice Astral summonings, and little more, while most exemplars (save for those embodying, say, ambition or conquest) are typically just curiosities to them. Iniquities often appeal to the Seer mindset, while aletheians serve to remind them of the true reality they will inherit when they kneel, at long last, before the Supernal thrones of the Exarchs.



## Guidance from Dreams — Morpheans

Morpheans are among the simplest of Astral entities to call, provided that the mage wishes to access her own dream-realm and not that of another. These beings are almost formless, existing only as insubstantial ephemera in Twilight; they are incapable of manifesting, either under their own power or that of another. Mechanically, they function as spirits of the lowest order, being minute fractions of the subconscious mind of a human (or near-human) being. As it is not truly a spirit, however, a morphean simply vanishes back into the Oneiros of the individual who spawned it, when reduced to zero Corpus.

A Morphean that successfully manages to use its Influence upon an individual specifically manifests exaggerated elements of the Oneiros out of which it was drawn. For example, a mage who summons a cabalmate's unresolved enmity toward his deceased brother will, if successfully targeted by the morphean's Sibling Rivalry Influence, forcefully demonstrate the particular qualities of that cabalmate's anger and jealousy toward anyone she regards as a brother or sister, while under the Influence's effects. Even if she is normally given to subtle displays of vitriol, she might throw a punch or swear vociferously, if that is the sort of reaction that her cabalmate might evince.

### *Summon Morphean (Mind ●●●)*

This spell enables a willworker to call forth a morphean from the depths of her own dream-realm or, if she is powerful enough and her consciousness is somewhere within the deeper reaches of the Astral, that of another.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Successfully casting this spell upon oneself summons one of the mage's own morpheans as a presence in Twilight. The willworker may interact with this dream-fragment as she sees fit. Some simply call up dreams of aspects of the subconscious to explore (or enjoy) them, while others use this

experience as a crucible; relentlessly analyzing subconscious desires. The mage's most pressing present subconscious desire is drawn out of her, taking on ephemeral form. If the mage is dreaming or otherwise in direct contact with her subconscious, then she may choose the specific aspect of her Oneiros that she calls forth.

With Mind 4, a mage whose consciousness is presently in the Temenos or the Dreamtime (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 283–6) can spend a point of Mana to attempt to summon a morphean out of another individual who is physically present at the location of her body. With Space 2 and Mind 5, she may attempt to do so at sympathetic range (again, spending a point of Mana), though she must still be within the Temenos or Dreamtime, and the morphean will appear in Twilight near the summoner's body. Note that this process does not enable a willworker to actually enter the Oneiros of another; merely to call morpheans out of Oneiroi.

**Free Council Rote: Calling Through the Looking Glass**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Empathy + Mind

### The Dream Merit

Many mages are accustomed to using the power of the subconscious to derive inspiration in the waking world. Those with such a connection to the universal unconscious can use that tie to their advantage in summoning morpheans out of Oneiroi. For each dot a mage has in the Dream Merit (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 82), she receives a one-die bonus on all attempts to summon morpheans. Some speculate that a mage possessed of the Dream Merit encapsulates more of the universal unconscious within herself than one without it, Sleeper or otherwise.

This bond also serves the willworker when she wants to resist having her dreams called forth from her subconscious: she adds her dots of the Dream Merit to her Resolve + Gnosis roll to contest the use of the Summon Morphean spell when it is directed at her against her will. If she wishes to *assist* the caster, however, she may spend a point of Willpower to add her dots in the Merit to the casting roll.



Summoning dreams is a practice, some say, as old as Atlantis itself. While the Free Council is not nearly that ancient, they are no less dedicated to their arts than mages who came before. This rote, in particular, was crafted early in the Order's existence and was used extensively in the early days of the Free Council to help guide and direct the path of Libertines interested in the burgeoning field of psychology, drawing upon their common dreams. It remains a popular and well used rote to this day and is often shared amongst the ranks of the Free Council and beyond.

*Sample Morphean:  
Positive Pole Oedipus Complex*

The so-called Positive Pole Oedipus Complex is a facet of human psychology, in which a child in formative years sexually desires the parent of the opposite sex and hopes for the death of the parent of the same sex. It remains a subject of some contention as to whether the morphean embodying the Positive Pole Oedipus Complex is an inherent aspect of the personality, or merely a creation of the pervasiveness of said complex as an idea in the collective unconscious.

When viewed by those able to see unmanifested spirits in Twilight, the Positive Pole Oedipus Complex appears as an image of the subject's opposite-sex parent, often clothed (or unclothed) and behaving in a manner that suggests a desire to couple. The morphean carries some object indicative of the death of the subject's same-sex parent: a severed penis for the phallus of the father, for example, or the mother's severed head. Regardless of the sexual orientation of the subject, the Positive Pole Oedipus Complex invariably manifests with the opposite-sex parent as the object of desire, bearing a dehumanizing representation of the same-sex parent as the object of loathing. The morphean's interest is only for the child-lover who created it; upon that individual, it lavishes all of its perverse attention.

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 1, Resistance 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 3

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 10 (species factor 5)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 7

**Influence:** Oedipal Urge 1

**Numina:** Usurp Vice

**Ban:** The Positive Pole Oedipus Complex must *always* give its undivided attention to the individual out of whose dream-realm it was fashioned, if she is present.

*Sample Morphean:  
Jimmy Fisk's Test Anxiety*

Jimmy Fisk is the quiet young man who works in the mail room. High school was hellish for him: he was a scrawny kid with disfiguring acne, the faintest hint of a lisp, and a neurotic need to pull down straight A's. While he usually managed to wreck the curve in his classes (earning a swirly or two in the process), he never quite got over that irrational drive to perform. Every so often, he has a recurring nightmare about a test for an uncertain class, the material for which he *clearly* never studied.

Not quite properly a dementia — it's much more an occasional bad dream than a full-blown insanity — Jimmy's test anxiety appears in Twilight in the form of a small whirlwind of shredded pieces of blue-covered exam books, half-finished SATs, pencil shavings, pinkish-grey bits of used pencil eraser, and jagged fragments of the old, round clocks that hang in outdated classrooms the world over. It occasionally barks at those around it, with phrases like, "Pencils down!" or, "Pop quiz!" These statements are delivered in a harsh tone of voice, by what sounds like an unfriendly man of middling years.

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 1

**Willpower:** 4

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10 (species factor 5)

**Size:** 3

**Corpus:** 4

**Influence:** Anxiety 1

**Numina:** Psychic Torment

**Ban:** This morphean vanishes back into Jimmy Fisk's dream-realm whenever a test, of whatever sort, is successfully completed in its presence.



## *Ego Tripping — Esoterics*

The Astral reflections of the conscious self are strongly related to morpheans, though these fragments of the ego are distinct in that they are *driven*; they don't settle merely for being what they are — they need to accomplish whatever urge it is that they represent. Esoterics possess a greater degree of volition and self-awareness than morpheans, but only to the degree to which they require to motivate their intrinsically one-track minds. These entities may be accommodating toward their summoner, but only if his agenda mirrors their own. Those who are set to opposing ends — or even just ends that don't directly contribute to the esoteric's goals — are viewed as obstacles to be circumvented, at best, and enemies to be removed, at worst.

If prevented from working toward its objective (which, in its estimation, may require nothing more on the part of another than simply failing to facilitate those goals), an esoteric will attempt to manipulate the individuals around it through the use of its Influence. Similar to a morphean's Influence, this will cause the subject to manifest exaggerated qualities of the individual out of whom the esoteric is summoned. The key difference lies in the drive that esoterics embody; while either type of entity will only use its Influence to affect a living being when its senses an opportunity to advance or indulge its natures, an esoteric *always* feels the need to do so, unless others are already taking steps to do so. Like morpheans, esoterics cannot manifest, and remain within the immaterial state of Twilight for the duration of their existence, fading back into the ego out of which they were summoned. Most esoterics, like morpheans, appear as lowest-order spirits when drawn out of the conscious mind (though often a little more powerful than the average dream-realm summoning). A rare few, however, are more potent; typically the manifestations of exceptionally compelling conscious longings.

### *Summon Esoteric (Mind ●●●)*

By means of this magic, a mage can call forth an esoteric from the forefront of the human consciousness.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resolve + Gnosis reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged

**Aspect:** Covert

## Astral or Material?

Most summoners specializing in the realms of the Fallen World consider the summoning of esoterics to be Astral in nature — despite the fact that the entities are drawn out of the conscious mind of the subject — because esoterics are still the product of thought, imagination, and volition, which is traditionally considered to be the domain of the Astral Realm. In many ways, they serve as the pillar upon which the entire practice of Astral summoning stands; the step closest to the often-linear understanding of the conscious human mind.

Some theorists, however, prefer to place the summoning of esoterics in the same general category as ghosts: noncorporeal entities native to the material realm, normally visible only in the state of Twilight. Neither side is definitively correct, of course. As with most matters pertaining to the complex practice of summoning, much of what is considered "absolute truth" remains in the eye of the beholder.

### **Cost:** None

Just as a Disciple of the Mind Arcanum can summon morpheans from her own subconscious, she can also call esoterics from out of herself, learning about the nature of her motivations and her conscious desires. With a successful casting, whatever desire is presently at the forefront of the mage's consciousness takes on ephemeral form.

With Mind 4, a mage can attempt to cast this spell to summon an esoteric out of another individual within sensory range. With Space 2 and Mind 5, she may attempt to do so at sympathetic range, though esoteric will appear in Twilight near the summoner, rather than the subject.

### **Guardian of the Veil Rote: Arresting the Self**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mind

The oldest known use of this rote dates back to a Consilium in 13<sup>th</sup> century Spain. A Mastigos Guardian now known only by her Shadow Name, Lucia, was following the trail of a Tremere lich who had allegedly infiltrated the Consilium. Unable to piece together the fragmentary clues left by the Left-Handed Nec-



romancer, the Warlock turned to other options. In secret, she studied her fellow mages through scrying portals, calling their foremost conscious desires out of them, so they could be studied and the truth of the matter discerned. Lucia never found a lich, however, as none existed within the Consilium to find. Instead, she discovered that the rumor had been seeded by two Seers of the Throne who had quietly replaced Councilors, and that they were using the paranoia that the story engendered to gradually weaken any hope of concerted resistance when the time came for their allies to strike. Armed with this knowledge, Lucia petitioned for, and received, permission to eliminate the threat.

*Sample Esoteric: Christie Wu's Hunger*

The only thing on Christie Wu's mind at the moment is the fact that she hasn't eaten since six o'clock last night and it's three hours past her lunch break, with no sign that the phones will stop ringing long enough for her to so much as touch the granola bar stashed in her purse. Her boss forced her to work straight through lunch, with a promise that she could run out to grab a bite to eat at one, but — surprise, surprise — *that* never happened. Now, she's stuck on the phone with some jackass who's too damned stupid to understand what she's trying to tell him and all Christie can think of is that Mediterranean turkey focaccia sandwich at the place that just opened around the corner about a month ago.

When viewed by those capable of seeing into Twilight, Christie's Hunger appears as something of a gruesome caricature of Christie, herself: a pretty, trim, 20-something Chinese-American woman, dressed in comfortable office casual clothing. The esoteric's chin-length hair is unkempt and ragged, unlike Christie's own, and its ravenous maw splits her head nearly in half when opened, revealing row upon row of shark-like teeth. The esoteric's hands are long-fingered, with curving talons, meant to latch onto prey.

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 1, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 10 (species factor 5)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 8

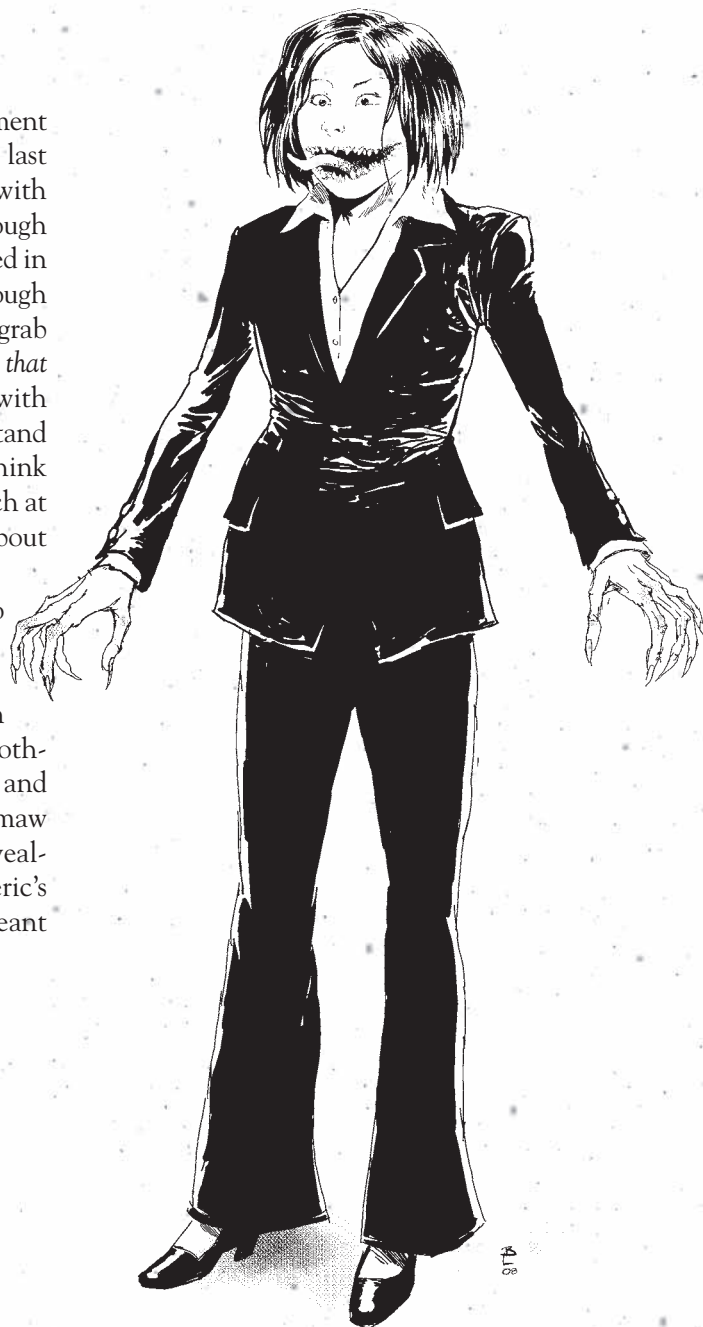
**Influence:** Hunger 2

**Numina:** Harrow

**Ban:** Christie Wu's Hunger must consume anything that is deliberately offered to it as food.

*Sample Esoteric: Uther's Bliss*

Facing down rogue Banishers and rampaging spirits was never the hard part for Uther, Thyrsus and Banner Warden of the Adamantine Arrow. No, *that* was the years-long struggle to work up enough courage to finally come out to Slingshot and confess that





his feelings for the Enchanter went deeper than just friendship. The moments leading up to that revelation were the longest and most difficult of the Shaman's life. When Slingshot replied with a passionate kiss, though, Uther knew that this uphill battle against his own fear was, at long last, over.

Uther's Bliss takes the form of an idealized image of Slingshot, a roguish Acanthus Libertine with a charming smile and a gymnast's body. The esoteric wears Slingshot's stylish clothing, though devoid of any wrinkles or ordinary signs of wear. Its voice is angelic and its laughter, infectious. Uther's Bliss moves with the sort of effortless grace that suffuses the limbs of one whose heart is soaring.

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 4, Resistance 2

**Willpower:** 4

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 10 (species factor 5)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 7

**Influence:** Bliss 2

**Numina:** Essence Conversion

**Ban:** Uther's Bliss cannot abide the presence of genuine sorrow; it flees from anyone in the throes of despair.

## *Astral Archetypes — Aletheians*

The archetypes that exist within the Astral Realm — shared by all humanity, within the Temenos and, deeper still, the Dreamtime — may well predate the rise of conscious thought. Some Awakened believe they are the templates for the earliest gods, and they might as well be deities, for all of the vast power they wield. But, despite their incredible might, these congealed concepts lack a sense of self; they simply *are* and cannot be anything else. Mages who wish to interact with them, then, must summon down a small fragment of all that they are, something actually capable of interacting on a level as limited as the human capacity for expression and comprehension.

The most ancient archetypes reveal themselves in such basic forms as the Fertility Goddess or the Trickster. These are the foundation stones of the human experience, the ideas that primitive peoples

painted on cave walls and carved into stone and bone. But the ideals that dwell within the Astral Realm are more versatile and numerous, by far: the concept of roads, for example, spawns its own aletheians for Astral summoners, as does sorrow, the color pink, or the stock market crash. Very nearly anything that can be conceived is reflected on a grander and more rarified scale in the Astral Realm.

Aletheians are most commonly called into the material realm to advise willworkers on the subjects that they encompass. An Arrow mage who desires to overcome his enemies in an upcoming battle might, for instance, summon an aletheian of the concept of victory, in order to hear its counsel. Likewise, one who wishes to develop some new strategy in an ongoing conflict might call down one representative of innovation. Important to note, however, is the fact that aletheians are essentially incapable of thinking outside of the narrow purview within which they exist and which they support by the virtue of their existence. An aletheian of fear knows nothing of wisdom, or mathematics, or magic, save in the ways in which these concepts are *directly* pertinent to the ideal of fear.

As beings originating from deeper within the Astral Realm than either esoterics or morpheans, aletheians are commensurately more difficult to summon into the material. They also tend to be more powerful entities, as extensions of the overarching concepts that bind the thoughtforms of reality together and so give substance to the universal unconscious. Aletheians, if destroyed, simply dissipate back into the infinite reaches of the Astral Realm.

### *Summon Astral Archetype (Mind ●●●●)*

With this spell, a mage can call down a small incarnation of a universal concept, giving shape to it within the immaterial state of Twilight.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Extended and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

An Adept of the Mind Arcanum wishing to summon a thoughtform (aletheian, dementia, exemplar, or iniquity) must accrue successes equal to five times the desired Rank of the entity, to a maximum Rank equal to the mage's dots in Mind. If the thoughtform, for whatever reason, does not desire to be drawn down



to the material realm, then it may roll Resistance to contest the summoning, with a target number of successes equal to five times the summoner's Gnosis. Note that the summoner has no real control over the specific potency or capabilities of the thoughtform that answers the call, beyond the ability to specify a given ideal and spirit Rank.

A mage whose consciousness is presently beyond the barrier of his Oneiros (either in the Temenos or the Dreamtime) need not spend a point of Mana to cast this spell, and its Aspect becomes covert. In such a case, the entity manifests within the Astral, at the location of the mage's consciousness.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Anima Mundi**

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Mind

This rote is an old account within the Dragon's Voice, dating back (some say) to the time of the Atlantean Diaspora. Seeking knowledge and guidance from the overarching concepts that bind the cosmos together, enterprising théarchs cried out directly to the Astral Realm and gave heed to its replies.

*Sample Aletheian: Indivisible*

It is the One, devoid of the possibility of multiplicity, or even duality. It knows nothing of the Other, for it is One, and only One. Indivisible's aletheian may be consulted on matters of unity (whether peacefully or by force; the entity cares nothing for such semantics), or summoned to help facilitate unification, one way or the other. It must be addressed with a single perspective, absolutely without even the faintest hint of dissent, and is thus most frequently summoned by a lone willworker.

Indivisible's aletheian takes a form representative of its nature: typically, a floating gray obelisk of unimaginable hardness. Its surface is not etched or marred in any way, and neither is it reflective (as reflection implies the possibility of otherness). Its voice is flat and neutral, utterly genderless; a monotone without accent or inflection. Observers are taken with the distinct impression that the aletheian's attentions are focused perfectly inward, and that they somehow do not register on its awareness or any of its senses, even while interacting with it.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 12, Finesse 9, Resistance 12

**Willpower:** 24

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 21

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 31 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 16

**Influence:** Indivisibility 4

**Numina:** Blast, Material Vision, Reaching, Versatile Energies

**Ban:** When deliberately confronted with its own reflection, Indivisible loses a point of Essence per turn.

*Sample Aletheian: Eco-Friendly*

Eco-Friendly exists in harmony with the forces of nature. It exists to preserve the balance of the environment; it takes no more than it gives and gives no more than it takes. The aletheian acts to counter deeds that despoil the natural world and can advise its summoner on how best to exist in equilibrium with her surroundings. It protects, but it is not charitable. It saves, but it has no mercy. It preserves, but it has no sense of compassion.





The aletheian appears in Twilight as a weird mishmash of tree, mammal, bird, fish, and reptile. It is forever damp with fresh water and smells of rich soil. Sometimes, its leaves are vibrant and green, while, at other times, they are the red and orange of autumn, or bare with winter. Recycled paper and glass protrude from its frame at odd angles, and clumps of compost occasionally drop from its body. Its voice sounds like the rustle of wind and the flow of water, as well as the howling and squawking or wild things.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 3, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 17 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 7

**Corpus:** 12

**Influence:** Eco-Friendliness 2

**Numina:** Innocuous, Wilds Sense

**Ban:** Eco-Friendly may not take any action that will or might definitely disrupt a natural environment.

## *Insanity Disincarnate — Dementias*

Like every other permutation of thought, madness, too, has its proper place within the Astral Realm. Indeed, some say the mad occasionally hold a deeper insight into the secrets of that realm, perhaps through a closer connection to the embodiments of insanity — dementias — that inhabit it. Just as with all of the other summonable entities native to the deep Astral, dementias are temporary aggregations of certain ideas, coalescing into thoughtforms that can be called down to the material realm and interacted with as though they were independent beings.

As with any Astral entity, a dementia exists to facilitate the spread of the concept that it embodies. All of these beings possess the Derange Numen (see p. 221), keyed solely to the derangement that comprises its substance: a dementia of schizophrenia can only engender that specific derangement, just as

one of suspicion can only inspire the derangement of the same name. In addition, many of the more potent of these entities possess the Harrow Numen (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 321) or the Psychic Torment Numen (see p. 222).

Dementias are summoned into the material world by way of the Summon Astral Archetype spell, above, and many believe that they, along with exemplars and iniquities, constitute an offshoot or subspecies of aletheian, attuned to concepts universal to consciousness, itself.

### *Sample Dementia: Vocalization*

Vocalization is the inner voice that spills outside, like liquid leaking out of a flawed container. It says the first thing that comes to mind, and then the second, and then the third, and so on. Vocalization keeps talking, and talking. Its innermost thoughts are on display for the world to hear. Maybe it doesn't think that anyone's listening, or maybe it just doesn't care. So long as it thinks, it speaks. And it *never* stops thinking.

For those that can perceive the immaterial state of Twilight, this dementia reveals itself in the form of a gray, roughly human-shaped figure. It has no discernable arms, but it walks on two overly-thick legs, swaying back and forth as it paces, talking to itself and anyone who happens to be within earshot. Its entire form is fuzzy and indistinct, except for an oversized gash in its "head" that serves as a mouth, the lines of which are perfectly clear. The quality of its voice changes from instant to instant.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 5, Resistance 2

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 18 (species factor 7)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 7

**Influence:** Vocalization 2

**Numina:** Derange (Vocalization), Harrow

**Ban:** If Vocalization is forcibly silenced, it sustains a point of Corpus damage per turn, until such time as it can freely speak, once more.



### Sample Dementia: *Paranoia*

Paranoia knows that everyone is out to get it. It checks the doors *and* the windows. It searches every nook and cranny for those that are conspiring against it. The dementia is aware that its summoner is trying to do *something* bad to it; if only it could figure out what. Every shadow conceals an enemy and every question or comment is a trap for the unwary. When whatever it is that's going to happen finally happens, Paranoia will be ready.

This dementia is gangly, with a naked, androgynous form that appears starved. Its entire body is a sickly mauve in color, and it is forever in motion, to the point of being jittery. Paranoia makes others nervous by its mere presence, whether out of a sense that some shadowy conspiracy really *is* about to kick down the door or because the dementia seems like it could erupt into irrational violence at any moment. Its bald head is featureless, save for a ring of nine unblinking, beady black eyes. Its jaw

moves when it speaks — in a frantic, high-pitched tone — causing the thin skin over where its mouth should be to stretch like a paper-thin membrane on the verge of rupture.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 6, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 17 (species factor 7)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 8

**Influence:** Paranoia 2

**Numina:** Derange (Paranoia), Psychic Torment

**Ban:** Paranoia must check every hidden space in the location into which it is summoned: behind doors and curtains, under couches, even inside jewelry boxes or briefcases.





## Who Summons These Things?

It's a fair question: what mage in her right mind would call down a dementia (or, for that matter, an iniquity of hate crime or an aletheian of violation)? First of all, many mages who summon dementias *aren't* in their right minds and they are seeking insight into their respective psychological conditions through contact with entities that encompass the nature of those afflictions. By communing with madness, such willworkers reason, perhaps they can rise above it. The theory has borne fruit often enough that the practice persists.

Certainly, some — perhaps even many — of those who summon the darker entities of the Astral Realm, themselves, have dark intentions, but even the wisest mages sometimes need to understand wickedness, horror, and insanity. Perhaps a mage simply wants to help a friend through her Bedlam, or comprehend the motivations of a serial killer whom she is stalking. Those who would tread these dangerous roads for altruistic ends, however, should *always* take care to mind their steps...

## Virtue and Vice — Exemplars and Iniquities

Some believe that morals and ethics are all-encompassing, that the universe is possessed of an inherent mandate regarding right and wrong. Perhaps the Astral entities known as exemplars and iniquities stem from those universal constants; or, maybe, they are the result of long-held and pervasive human beliefs in the *idea* of moral absolutism. Whatever the case, these beings, when summoned down into the material realm, are extensions of the concepts of moral dualisms: good and evil, proper and improper, righteous and wicked. The Seven Cardinal Virtues and Seven Deadly Sins, for example, exist among the myriad of exemplars and iniquities, respectively, but these beings also come in varieties far more diverse and, occasionally, mutually contradictory, as one culture's virtue is another's sin.

Most of the summoners who focus upon the Astral Realm wonder how it is that, say, xenophobia can be reflected by both exemplars and iniquities, but a

scant handful of them believe that this phenomenon occurs on account of the human bias, impacting an essential concept, devoid of inherent moral value, and dividing it upon the basis of those minds that uphold it as good and those that revile it as evil. Effectively, *people* transform the ethical barrenness of an unfettered concept into virtue, vice, or both. While a number of scholars disagree, none have yet put forth any more plausible theory.

Iniquities invariably possess the Usurp Vice Numen (see p. 223) — often, such an entity's *only* Numen — while exemplars are more varied in their selection of Numina. Like aletheians and dementias, both types of beings seek to actively (and forcefully) foster the virtues or vices that they embody, not content simply to be what they are.

### *Sample Exemplar: Charity*

Charity gives, and gives. It is benevolence, bestowing what is needed upon those in need and what is wanted upon those that want. Charity gives all that it has and keeps nothing for itself. It accounts itself rich, indeed, to be stricken with poverty through its selfless acts. The exemplar knows nothing of hoping for anything for itself, instead aggressively addressing the privations of those that it encounters.

Charity appears, to those that can see into Twilight, as a pleasant, matronly woman, holding a horn of plenty. She may be dressed in antiquated garb or modern, but her cornucopia is ever-present. The exemplar produces whatever is needed or desired from the horn, handing it over to those that ask. Such objects fade when Charity departs or is destroyed, but they can be fully enjoyed for as long as the exemplar remains present in the material realm.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 7, Resistance 9

**Willpower:** 15

**Essence:** max 20

**Initiative:** 16

**Defense:** 7

**Speed:** 23 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 14

**Influence:** Charity 3

**Numina:** Essence Conversion, Fortify Material, Material Vision

**Ban:** Anything that is given to Charity, it must immediately give away to one in need.



### *Sample Iniquity: Vindictiveness*

Vindictiveness wants retribution. It's going to get that bastard back for what he did. It longs to exult in the utter humiliation, ruin, or even destruction of those that wronged it. It is satisfied only by witnessing the glorious culmination of its vicious hatred. Its desires go well beyond "an eye for an eye" and stray far into the realm of excess. It knows no bounds in its quest to be avenged.

This iniquity is a hunched, feral-looking thing, covered in bristling spines. Its gleaming yellow eyes reveal its cunning, while its broad, fanged mouth smiles easily when it thinks or speaks of vengeance. Its mottled gray-brown hide blends into a number of environments; all the better for watching and waiting as its plans unfold. Its voice is a guttural snarl, rasping on the eardrums of all those to whom it deigns to speak.

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 16 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 7

**Influence:** Vindictiveness 1

**Numina:** Usurp Vice

**Ban:** Vindictiveness must answer any harm or slight in kind, preferably with a disproportionate response.

## *Off the Edge of the Map*

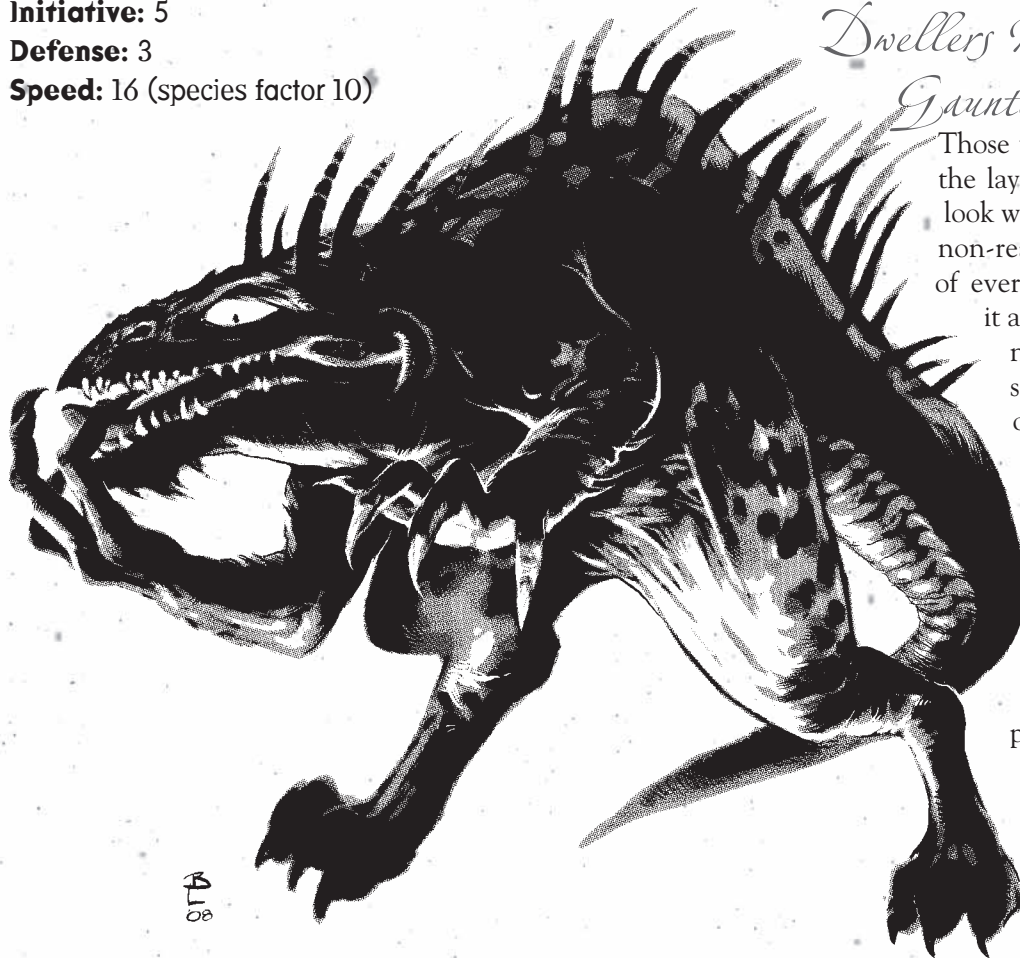
Stranger beasts, still, lurk within the hidden fringes of the Tapestry. Some are definitely native to the Fallen World, such as those odd entities dwelling within the Gauntlet that divides spirit from flesh. Others are of less certain provenance: horrors that allege origins within the Lower Depths, for example.

These sorts of beings are ill-understood by even the most skilled Fallen World summoners. Only a handful of sages dwell upon these obscure realities, preferring to work with the tried-and-true methods for summoning beings out of better-catalogued realms.

## *Dwellers Within the Gauntlet*

Those who manage to divide the layers of the Gauntlet to look within discover a barren non-realm, virtually devoid of everything. Most describe it as a misty gray nothingness, broken up only by slightly thicker pockets of silvery fog. But some few beings manage to eke out a meager existence within the weave of that barrier, like the simplest forms of life, surviving against all odds in a tremendously inhospitable environment.

Invariably, these beings are simple-minded and, while not properly spirits, are close enough to





them that the Spirit Arcanum proves effective when used upon them. They cannot long remain within either the Shadow Realm or the material, however, dying within a matter of hours at the very most if removed from the Gauntlet. These beings appear to carry out the naturally-occurring functions of the Gauntlet, raising and lowering its intensity, according to their migrations and the normal processes of their ephemeral biology. They are invariably quite small, with fragile, translucent or transparent forms that pulse rhythmically with faint currents of Essence, like blood pumping visibly through veins.

Try as they might, willworkers have been wholly unable to enter this plane of existence (or whatever it might be). Theorists speculate that all aspects of a human being — physical, mental, and spiritual — whether taken together or separately, are simply too “thick” or “heavy” to exist within this diaphanous near-reality.

### *Look Within the Gauntlet* (Space ●●●● + Spirit ●●●●)

By picking apart the weave of the Gauntlet between the material and the ephemeral, a willworker can look inside that barrier, to behold its astounding emptiness and, just maybe, to study some of its otherworldly life.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

Successful casting of this spell enables a mage to look within the metaphysical fabric of the local Gauntlet.

**Free Council Rote:** Worlds Between Worlds

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science + Space

With their at times eccentric approach to magic, Libertines were the first willworkers to discern the existence of something like a realm, tucked away within the Gauntlet between the Shadow Realm and the material world. The scant few Free Council mages who made this discovery shared their findings with students of such bizarre lore among the other Pentacle Orders, though the rote remains little more than a curiosity.

### *Sample Gauntlet-Dweller: Vergeling*

Where Shadow and the material meet, one realm bleeds over into another in a phenomenon known as a Verge. At the very fringe of such a portal, so-called “vergelings” feed on the subtle spiritual energies hemorrhaging from both realms. They cluster, like small fish, delicately sampling the slow trickle of power bleeding out into the Gauntlet, before departing for unknown grounds to spawn.

Vergelings look much like transparent trilobites floating in midair, about half the size of a balled-up first, with long, rippling streamers in place of limbs. When they move, they alter the direction of those streamers, which move as though underwater. Faint lines of silvery light pulse within their bodies at staggered intervals and their herds give off a luminescence of a similar shade. Vergelings do not communicate with other sorts of creatures and seem to be incapable of doing so.

When summoned into either the Shadow Realm or the material, a vergeling dies within seconds, dissipating into nothingness. For the number of hours equal to the summoner’s Gnosis, however, the Gauntlet strength in her immediate vicinity, no matter where she goes, is raised by one, to a maximum of five. This is the case regardless of whether she summons and kills one vergeling, a dozen, or a thousand.

**Rank:** 0

**Attributes:** Power 1, Finesse 2, Resistance 1

**Willpower:** 0 (vergelings do not possess Willpower)

**Essence:** 0

**Initiative:** 3

**Defense:** 0 (a vergeling does not act to defend itself)

**Speed:** 18 (species factor 15)

**Size:** 0

**Corpus:** 1

**Influence:** None

**Numina:** Verge Sense (no roll required). The vergeling automatically senses the direction of the nearest Verge.

**Ban:** Vergelings, like all Gauntlet-dwellers, swiftly die when exposed to any realm other than their own.



## Denizens of the Lower Depths

Some say demons — of the genuine “demons from Hell” variety — dwell within the Lower Depths, believed to exist beneath even the Underworld. By extension, this would make that realm the *true* Hell, by any definition. While most willworkers dismiss the notion as provincial, others find a measure of sense in it: metaphysically speaking, the Lower Depths are the realm most directly “opposite” the Realms Supernal in the great axis of the Tapestry.

Regardless of the truth of their nature (which even the entities of the Lower Depths, themselves, may not adequately comprehend), these beings are inimical to life. They despise all things with an intensity that rivals that of the creatures of the Abyss. Awakened magic may or may not even be able to call these monstrosities into the material realm; some of the beings of the Lower Depths claim to predate the Tapestry, itself, pushed aside when the universe as it is now known came to be.

### Sample Lower Depths Entity: The Decay

None can say if it has been summoned or if it is trapped in the material realm; perhaps it manifests at certain times and places according to some insane calends of the Lower Depths. It doesn't *have* a form. Rather, this presence makes itself felt through the rapid dissolution of any space that contains it. Walls begin to fall apart, while floorboard sag and crumble. Glass pits and corrodes, as metal rusts and falls into powdery dust. The entire process can reduce a well appointed room to ashes in a matter of minutes, making the results of 10 seconds to look like 100 years, and 10 minutes to look like scores of millennia have transpired. When it speaks, within the soul — not the mind, but the *soul* — of the one who catches its interest, the Decay offers boons. If it is refused, it is gone, and hesitation counts as refusal.

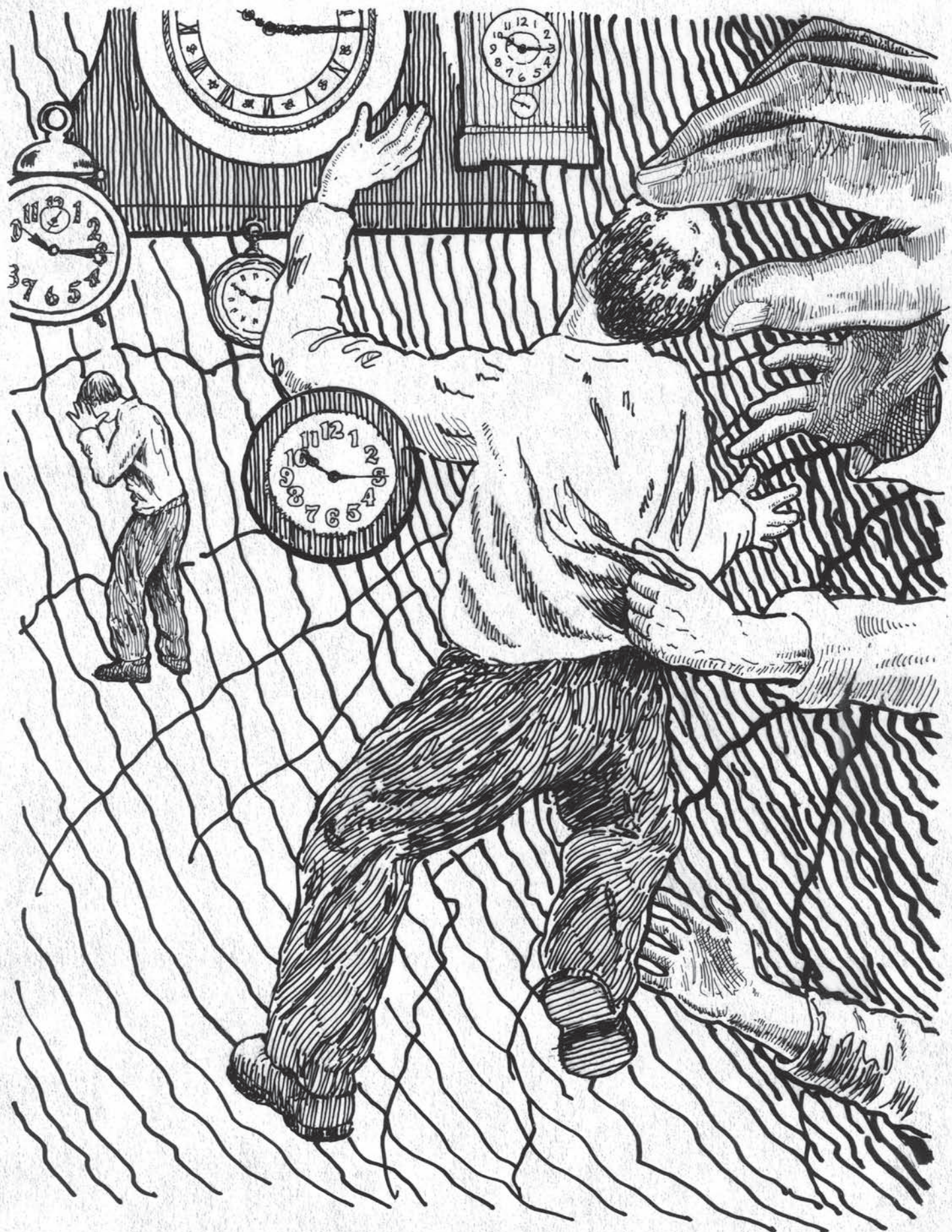
If the Decay's offer is accepted, however, it can grant powers similar to Acamoth Investments (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 323, and Chapter Three of this book). It wants the same thing as an Acamoth, of course: the freedom to use the mage's Awakened soul as a conduit to... somewhere. The Decay certainly doesn't go to the Void, though, so accepting its

bargain can't *possibly* be as bad as bartering with the Abyss, can it? Those who wake — screaming, drenched in cold sweat — even years after accepting the Decay's offer, their minds and spirits plagued by nightmares of horrid worlds that cannot possibly be, might beg to differ.

The Decay has no Traits. It is simply a devil's bargain within the self. It *may* be able to be summoned; certain lost objects of power, created by no human hand, might contain secrets of how to call this malevolent being. A mage who wants an Abyssal Investment, but who isn't willing to deal with an Acamoth to get it, might just be tempted to seek out an otherworldly relic that enables her to call the Decay into the material realm for long enough to reach an arrangement.









# CHAPTER TWO: FROM THE FIVE TOWERS

*"This is a bad idea." Billy was looking at the walls, adorned with sigils. Time. Fate. Time. Fate. And one other one — what's that sigil?*

*"I don't care." Tears were still running down Faron's face. "I need her back."*

*Billy rolled his eyes, but he kept his face turned away from his friend. "Faron, even if you manage to succeed at this, what you're asking is impossible. If it were possible, everyone would do it."*

*"Maybe everyone does."*

*"Oh, man." Billy rubbed his temples.*

*"Billy, I love her."*

*"Then you should have stayed faithful." Billy was sorry he'd said it, and he considered rolling time back a few seconds to fix it, but Faron didn't respond. He just crouched to the floor and sobbed. Billy walked behind him and put a hand on his back. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that."*

*"I'm not asking much," whispered Faron. "I know I fucked up. I want thirty seconds of last Tuesday back. That's all I want. That's fair, right?"*

*Billy sat on the floor in the middle of the circle, facing the younger man. "Faron, listen to me. I know you're hurting, but please, understand this. You are fucking with Time now, and that's a bigger issue than you and your girlfriend. If you screw this up, hell, even if you succeed, you might be changing things in a way that we can't understand."*

*"I know." He stood up and wiped his eyes. "That's why I'm not using Time."*

*"What?" Billy looked back at the walls. Faron was right — the sigils weren't for a Time spell. They looked more like an oath, or an invocation, or—*

*"Billy, don't move."*

*The walls were changing. The sigils were coming alive. Hands emerged from them, hands with delicate, pale fingers. Hands too small to belong to adults, but far too beautiful to belong to children.*

*"Faron, what have you done?"*

*"Billy, I'm so sorry." Faron's eyes were bright with fresh tears as he stepped out of the circle. "But I have to have her back, and you're right, I can't risk changing Time that way. So I had to use Fate."*

*Billy tried to pull time backwards, to run, to escape, but his magic failed him. He saw faces in the sigils now, looking at him, hungrily. He had seen those faces before, during his time in—*

*"Arcadia."*

*Faron nodded sadly. "Thirty seconds last Tuesday," he said to the faces. "In exchange for that, you get my best friend."*

*"Done," whispered the faces in unison, and Billy came unstuck from time.*



*And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.*

*—William Shakespeare, *The Tempest**

The Realms Supernal, in which stand the Five Watchtowers of the Oracles, are perhaps the greatest mystery in all of the Tapestry. Even in the days of Atlantis, these realms captured the loftiest imaginings of humanity. It is from these far-off worlds that the very power of Awakened magic flows, descending through the Abyss and into the human soul, to manifest through will within the Fallen World. The eternal spirit of an Awakening mage rises up to these realms, whether astrally or in a waking dream of metaphor and symbolism, so that she can etch her name upon the very fabric of the universe and proclaim her intention to see through the all-encompassing Lie that has been inflicted upon her since birth. The Supernal Realms are wondrous and terrifying, absolute in the purity of the concepts and ideals that they represent. No wonder, then that many willworkers long to reflect upon certain portions of their respective experiences during the journey to one of the Watchtowers. Many seek in ancient texts and crumbling and forgotten ruins the long-lost paths to the Supernal; if such things ever existed, at all, however, they are now so well-hidden as to be beyond the craft of any save perhaps the Archmasters and those mysterious beings who stand as far above them in mystic prowess as they stand above the average mage.

On the other hand, some such Awakened (perhaps a bit more pragmatic, a bit more foolhardy, or a bit more of both) turn to the ancient practice of Supernal summoning, hoping to glean some insight into the higher worlds through proximity to – and inquiring of – its denizens. The reasoning is simple, of course: to best discover the nuances of any foreign land, one should first speak to a native. While nothing immerses one in the truths of a place quite like being there, converse with Supernal beings may well be the next best thing for those interested in understanding (and, perhaps, eventually ascending to) those realms. Indeed, the depth and breadth of knowledge

that a mage can learn from such Supernal entities is staggering, though certainly not absolute, and, given how remarkable it is to touch Heaven (or Hell, or whatever other Supernal Realm to which a given willworker Awakened) for the first time, it comes as no surprise that some wish to do so again, even if only in a limited way, in the hopes of growing further in mystic understanding or power.

But these entities are not lightly tampered with. They reside in worlds far more pure — both for good and for ill — than the Fallen World, and they understand as little of this reality as human beings, even Awakened ones, do of theirs. Most importantly, they *are not human*; they are precisely what they are, and cannot be anything other. They may change through the turning of the ages with the shifting energies of the Realms Supernal, but they do not will themselves to change. They may wax and wane in power, but only according to the ineffable designs of the mechanisms that move the higher worlds. They may move mortal willworkers to heartbreaking awe and soul-numbing fear, but they cannot truly appreciate the magnificence of what they are, because their nature is simply to be extensions of the truer reality in which they have their genesis. In fact, some willworkers speculate that the actual purpose of the creatures of the Supernal is to serve as guideposts along the journey of the human soul, as it struggles toward all that which is revealed in the Awakening. And that is a sobering thought.

## *Drawing Down the Supernal*

Awakening is by no means a universally pleasant experience. While mages of every Path come through the Awakening more knowledgeable, more enlightened and more powerful, many of them go to Hell



## Once in a Lifetime

While the heart of the matter has already been summarized in the Introduction to this book, it bears repeating, here: the central struggle of the Awakened is to be found in the Fallen World, rather than in far-flung realms peopled by strange beings and alight with unearthly magics. This is particularly important to recapitulate with respect to the Realms Supernal, given the drive that many mages feel to attempt a return to the Watchtowers and the worlds in which they stand. But the attempt to do so is a fool's errand. When, and if, a willworker is ready to return to the higher worlds, she will know; in the proper time, nothing will need to be forced and the road to the Supernal will reveal itself. No loopholes exist in the laws of the cosmos to make this process any easier. If they *did*, they would invalidate the entire Awakened journey.

Many mages may be tempted to treat summoned Supernal entities as some kind of "quick way" back to the realms from which they hail. This is a perfectly reasonable mindset for such characters to evince, as people who believe in higher purposes and higher powers often make desperate leaps of logic in order to see what they want to see in the world (particularly in the World of Darkness). From a rules-design and (far more importantly) Storytelling perspective, however, it is vitally important that any such efforts be doomed to failure. The Awakening is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a *reason*. The Oracles, the Supernal Realms as a whole, or whatever it is that calls the human soul up through the Void to the higher worlds, chooses those whom it chooses and then it *sends them back*. With all of their power and incredible potential for knowledge, so many mages who see the Awakening as a challenge merely to return to the Supernal fail to grasp that simple truth.

Supernal entities cannot open magical doors for mages that lead back to the Watchtowers, or even to offer another glimpse, however fleeting, of them. They cannot exercise any otherworldly influence or rare Numen to get a willworker even one short step closer to going back to the Supernal Realm to which she Awakened. They cannot thwart the laws that divide the Fallen from that which stands above, even if those laws can occasionally be bent to permit them to descend to the material realm. They cannot do any of these things and, just as significantly — if not more so — they *should* not. This chapter, like every other in this book, exists to illustrate what mages can do in the Fallen World with powers that stem from elsewhere; the ways in which they can affect their native realm, for better or for worse, proving that it is not where willworkers go that defines them, but what they *do* with the power that they have been given.

to gain that knowledge. And so when mages speak of returning to the Supernal Realm to which they Awakened, the motivation tends not to be to repeat the experience, but to find answers to lingering questions. These questions include: *Why me? What was I supposed to learn? Did I miss something important? What were those strange beings around me?*

The last question is one that nags at the Awakened for years after a visit to the Supernal. All five of the Supernal Realms are inhabited, and the nature of those inhabitants is a mystery. To mages of course, a mystery is a siren's song. And so some mages seek to open a gateway to the Supernal Realms, to call down the inhabitants. This chapter explores the process of doing so, the motivations that a mage might have for attempting it, and the possible outcomes.

### *Looking Across the Abyss — Motivations*

Some of the denizens of the Supernal correspond to creatures from Sleeper mythology. Mages know, of course, that the Supernal often has correspondences in mundane lore — Sleeper notions of Angels recall the fantastic beings of the Aether, for instance. The tales of the Forest Primeval remind Thyrsus mages of the Primal Wild, and legends of tricksters the world over, beneficent or malevolent, remind the Acanthus of their trip to Arcadia. To the Awakened, it's not hard to see where humanity got these stories — they are remnants of memories from before the Fall.

Mages with a slightly broader experience of the world, though, disagree. Yes, the "Fae" of Arcadia



resemble legends of faeries, but there are other beings in the World of Darkness that claim the title, and they don't seem to have any Supernal understanding about them. Calling the denizens of the Aether "Angels" or of Pandemonium "demons" is a dangerous game to play, because these terms are loaded with connotative religious meaning.

One strong motivation for Supernal summoning, therefore, is nailing down the exact nature of the beings from the realms. During the Awakening, the mage is so focused on what is happening that he has no time to analyze the beings around him (nor does he have the magical acumen to do it, at that point). But months or years later, a mage starts to wonder what he really saw. Were the ghosts of Stygia truly the souls of the dead, or were they simply constructs; Supernal beings playing a role for the mage's benefit? Are the great beasts of the Primal Wild truly representative of the extinct animals of the Fallen World? If so, imagine the knowledge that could be gained by summoning one!

But another possibility exists, and it nags at the Awakened. Not every mage experiences the same thing when Awakening to a given realm, and that means that the experience is not wholly objective. Some mages never see their realm's Watchtower (see *Mystery Plays*, p. 31 of **Mage: The Awakening**), and experience the Awakening as a hallucination superimposed over their normal lives. What does that imply, then, about the Supernal denizens? Are they hallucinations as well? While some mages feel that those who experience mystery plays as opposed to "normal" Awakenings are too weak to cross the Abyss, others feel that mages who experience the Watchtowers are simply not possessed of a strong enough personality to fully incorporate the Awakening into their lives. Naturally, neither of these hypotheses has any hard data backing it, but knowing the truth about the Supernal denizens might shed some light on it.

And then, not every mage has knowledge in mind when she draws a summoning circle. Some wonder if calling down a denizen couldn't spell quick mastery of the Arcana, or allow the mage access to secrets about rivals of the same Path. The desire for power is a common one among the Awakened, and since magic stems from the Supernal Realms, drawing them down would seem a logical way to get more of it.

## *The Metaphysics of Summoning*

In order to summon a Supernal being, the mage needs to create a bridge across the Abyss to the realm of his Awakening. Fortunately, all Awakened magic works on this principle — the mage imposes the natural laws of one of the Supernal Realms on a section of the Fallen World. When summoning a Supernal being, the mage tries to create a connection from the Fallen World to the Supernal Realms that is simply "wider" than usual. In the process, he needs to entice such a being to use the channel thus created, and doing so requires planning, research, and magical skill. But even with all of that, the mage has one very serious obstacle in his path: the Abyss.

The Abyss isn't alive, and calling it "sentient" is a stretch, but it does take notice of what happens in the Fallen World and in the Supernal Realms. It gets involved if a spell is "vulgar;" that is, if the disconnect between the laws of the Fallen World and the Supernal laws being imposed on it is particularly great. It also pokes through and taints magic if Sleepers can see and recognize magic being performed, not because the Sleepers see magic as "impossible" (which it clearly isn't) or "unbelievable" (reality is not governed by subjective elements such as belief), but because Sleepers resonate with the Abyss. If a Sleeper sees magic, then, the Abyss is watching, and can upset spells that it normally wouldn't notice.

When something as monumental as a gateway to one of the Supernal Realms occurs, then, the Abyss *always* notices. The question then is not whether it chooses to intervene, but whether the mage is able to cast the summoning spell despite the Abyss' interference. One of the greatest risks of summoning Supernal denizens, in fact, is that the mage will draw an Abyssal entity into the Fallen World instead.

Summoning a Supernal denizen requires that the mage is capable of casting a Weaving spell in one of the ruling Arcana of his Path (meaning that only mages with three or more dots in one of their ruling Arcana can attempt the summons). Which Arcanum the character uses determines what kind of Supernal being (if any) answers the summons. This is discussed further anon.

A mage can only summon beings from the realm corresponding to his Path. That is, an Acanthus mage can't summon shades from Stygia, even if he becomes a Master of Death. That said, a character's



magical style and choices of Arcana can indeed affect the temperament of the beings that he summons. The Fallen emulates the Supernal, and so it should come as no surprise that a mage's proclivities affect the sorts of beings he summons from the Supernal Realms. This chapter discusses each of the Supernal Realms in turn and examines the effect of the various Arcana on summoning attempts.

### *The Summons*

The spell is an extended action, meaning that even a powerful mage requires some time to complete the casting. The casting area is important. Supernal creatures aren't so much compelled to the Fallen World as enticed, and so the area to which they are being summoned must be as compatible with the Supernal Realm of choice as possible. The best possible summoning location is a Demesne, but since they aren't easy to come by, most Awakened summoners try to incorporate as many symbolic correspondences to the realm in question — and to the Arcana being used — as possible. The sections on the realms later on in this chapter list sample correspondences, but obviously different mages have different takes on the Supernal Realms based on their own Awakenings. Because no two Awakenings are alike, a summoner has an easier time contacting the Supernal if he can use symbols and objects that call to mind his own time in the realm.

Mages of different Paths have various approaches to the ritual, depending, again, on what they are trying to summon and why. In general, summoning something from the Supernal Realms is *usually* done alone, rather than with a cabal. Part of the reason for this is that cabals are often made up of mages on different

Paths, and having a mage nearby who resonates with a different realm is (correctly) felt to hinder the effort. In addition, a certain degree of competitive spirit is common among mages; if someone manages to summon a Supernal being, and then a rival mage turns around and presents the findings to the Consilium or to an order first, who's to say who *really* codified the process?

Another issue is that some mages take a dim view of trying to bridge the Abyss in the first place, or at least, trying to do it casually. While the Silver Ladder wants magic to be a more powerful force in the world, and the Free Council share that sentiment to a point,

the Guardians of the Veil and the Adamantine Arrow worry about what would happen if the Supernal Realms and the Fallen World were to meet. The Abyss has separated them for so long — can the world handle a sudden influx of magic? Supernal beings don't live long in the Fallen World, so would a mass "migration" of them trigger some kind of cataclysm, or would it provide enough of a shift in the world's magic ecology that they could survive? There's no way to know, and mages that err on the side of caution would rather that the curious among the Awakened look elsewhere for answers.

All of this in mind, the summons tends to be a solitary affair. The character sets up the area and casts a spell using the Arcanum of choice. The spell isn't designed to *do* anything, merely to forge a connection to the realm and keep it open long enough for a Supernal being to make the journey. Of course, that journey involves traversing the Abyss, and so every minute that the connection remains open, the chances grow that *something* will worm its way into the gateway. For this reason, when the Supernal being returns home, the mage needs to be able to change





the spell, to redirect it, otherwise it simply collapses. This, too, is dangerous.

### *Supernal Beings — Gross and Subtle*

Each of the Supernal Realms has two ruling Arcana, one Gross and one Subtle. A mage attempting to summon a Supernal being can choose between these Arcana, and therefore choose between two broad types of Supernal denizen.

The denizens corresponding to *Gross* magic are called *manifest beings*, while those affiliated with *Subtle* magic are called *recondite beings*. While all of the realms contain a myriad of different beings, a summoner has little choice in what he summons, apart from the manifest/recondite distinction. (Note that while the *character* has effectively no choice in the kind of entity he calls down from the Supernal, the *Storyteller* should consider what the *player* is attempting to accomplish in summoning a Supernal being. Optionally, if the character is aware of a particular being, the *Storyteller* might allow her to add successes to the summoning spell — see p. 73 — to call it.)

Manifest beings, focused as they are on the Gross Arcanum, have a better understanding of beings with physical bodies (like mages). Some scholars speculate that the manifest beings are the ones that guide a mage from the Fallen World to the Supernal Realm and back for the Awakening. Others feel that manifest beings guard the gates to the Supernal Realms. Whatever their role, it is true that manifest beings respond to summons more frequently than recondite beings, and can remain in the Fallen World longer. However, they are also more difficult to control and bind, and if they become hostile, they stand a better chance of harming the summoner.

Recondite beings are born of the Subtle Arcanum of a given realm, and understand the loftier matters of the soul, the mind and the spirit. Some mages make the mistake of thinking that these beings (and the Arcana that they represent) are more powerful or somehow more “pure” than their Gross counterparts, but in truth, neither can exist without the other. Recondite beings are harder to summon and they are much more delicate, but they are often more knowledgeable about arcane matters. They are not, however, necessarily more cooperative than manifest beings, though they are easier to bind and direct.

The sections on the different realms later in this chapter provide traits for both manifest and recondite

beings. Both traits are listed using the spirit rules, but manifest beings often have physical, solid bodies.

### *The Dangers of Summoning*

Apart from disapproval and censure from other mages, a summoner faces some peril when she opens a gateway to the Supernal. The most important and immediate danger has already been touched on—the character might attract an Abyssal creature rather than a Supernal one. The mage, however, has no way to know if this has happened until it becomes too late, and therefore this danger is one that summoners acknowledge and try to plan for, but can ultimately do little about.

Another potential problem is that the beings themselves might not be cooperative, and may, in fact, be downright hostile. Every Supernal Realm has beings that are primal or even bestial, and allowing one into the Fallen World is a little like taking a hungry tiger and turning it loose in a shopping mall. Confused and terrified, the creature lashes out, and the only targets in the area, typically, are the summoner and any witnesses. This isn’t nearly so big a problem as that of calling down an Abyssal creature, but it’s still something that the mage needs to watch.

Finally, a mage that summons Supernal beings too often runs the risk of becoming Abyss-Marked. This condition can afflict mages that summon Abyssal beings, as well (see Chapter Three), but is actually more commonly found among Supernal summoners. In short, because the mage creates frequent tunnels through the Abyss, he “stains” himself with it in the process. The Abyss takes greater notice of his magic, and that, of course, can be dangerous. Abyss-Marking can take place after the first time a mage summons a Supernal being, but it usually doesn’t happen until the mage has opened a half-dozen or so portals across the Abyss. See the sidebar for mechanical details on Abyss-Marking.

### *The Benefits of Summoning*

Some of the benefits of summoning Supernal beings have already been hinted at, and the benefits of summoning specific denizens are discussed in the realms sections later in this chapter. In general, however, the benefits of calling down a Supernal denizen are:

- **Knowledge:** Supernal beings have an intuitive understanding of their home realm that not even a Master mage could aspire to. While they don’t have



## New Flaw: Abyss-Marked

Your character has been stained with the Abyss. Paradox is a greater threat to the mage than usual, and Abyssal creatures always notice him (though not all of them are hostile).

In game terms, the Storyteller adds one die to the character's Paradox pool. In addition, the character receives a -2 modifier to hide from Abyssal creatures, magically or otherwise. Abyssal creatures don't necessarily wish to harm the character; less intelligent ones might even view him as a kindred spirit. Being Abyss-Marked also makes Supernal summoning more dangerous (see p. 74).

the answers to all of the great philosophical questions to the universe, they can sometimes tell a mage why he Awakened, what the choices he made during his Awakening meant, whether or not a given person is Awakened (and whether a given mage is still alive), and possibly even whether a given person is destined for Awakening (or at least, is likely to Awaken). In addition, a mage might ask a Supernal entity how to access Atlantean temples, how to activate Artifacts, details about Atlantean history (so far as the being knows; see below), how to perform certain kinds of magic, and whether any members of a particular Legacy are still live.

- **Arcane Experience:** Certainly, the first time a mage successfully summons a Supernal being, he should receive at least one point of Arcane Experience. Summoning a manifest and recondite being might each be worth a point, and the knowledge that such a being imparts might be worth even more.

- **Artifacts:** Supernal denizens can, in theory, bring Artifacts from their home realm with them to the Fallen World (see p. 173). This isn't something that the summoner can necessarily plan for (especially since he has no control over what sort of being he will attract). If, however, the player wishes to spend experience points on an Artifact after character creation, the summoning ritual can make a good rationale for it.

- **Magical Intercession:** A mage might wish to perform a feat of magic that is, for whatever reason, impossible. The mage might wish to regrow a lost limb

permanently, or sever or alter sympathetic connections in a manner not usually possible, even to a Master of Space (see pp. 176). A Supernal denizen might be able to perform such feats, though only within the summoning circle (see Summoned Creatures, below).

## Summoned Creatures

While specific creatures are discussed in the sections on their home realm, below, enough commonalities exist to merit a brief look here.

## What Denizens Know

Much to the disappointment of the Awakened, Supernal denizens are not omniscient. They do not know the secret history of Atlantis, the true names of the Oracles (or the Exarchs), or how the Supernal Realms were formed. They know, as indicated above, specific details about mages who Awakened to their realm, but the greater mysteries of the universe seem to elude them.

Mages draw several conclusions from these facts. One is that the denizens of the Supernal are merely inhabitants of their realms, much like mages are inhabitants of the Fallen World. They know about what surrounds them, but they can only speculate about greater truths, just as mages (and Sleepers, for that matter) can only speculate about the purpose of life on Earth. They know fact, but not meaning — and indeed, there may be no intrinsic meaning to it all. Some Supernal denizens *claim* to know the nature of Creation, but then, so do some Sleepers, and neither are backed by any hard data.

Another possibility is that the Supernal denizens know the truth, but will not or cannot reveal it. Since the Supernal Realms were created (or at least codified) by the Oracles, it stands to reason that the inhabitants must owe some fealty to them. As such, they might be limited in the information they can reveal by outside edict. If that's the case, a prolonged period in the Fallen World might be enough to erode this control, allowing a Supernal being to speak freely about the Oracles and/or Exarchs and other lofty topics, were that being so inclined. As mentioned, though, Supernal beings don't live long in the Fallen World, and no summoner has yet managed to extend their lifespan here.

Finally, another possibility exists, and it's one that mages are reluctant to even acknowledge. The "Supernal beings" summoned from the realms might be nothing more than magical constructs, forged through



the summoner's own magical expertise and given form through imagination and will. "Summoning" them is an act of magic, obviously, but they aren't separate intelligences — they don't know anything the mage doesn't subconsciously remember from his own time in the Supernal Realms. This would explain why the Awakened find it so much more difficult to summon the Supernal beings in the presence of other mages, and why the information they can grant is so specific to Awakened who have visited the realm, rather than the realm itself.

Supernal denizens are not able to teach rites, as rites are specifically designed to allow magic to work more smoothly in the Fallen World. They *are* able to teach Arcana, however, though not with any greater result or speed than another mage would. (Storytellers may, however, wish to assign Arcane Experience — see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 340–1 — to characters who seek tutelage in the Arcana from Supernal beings.) Supernal entities have a wealth of knowledge about topics related to their realms, which is discussed in the sections following.

### *Fruity*

Denizens of the Supernal Realms have the same traits as spirits (see pp. 317–322 of **Mage: The Awakening**), but they are not spirits or ghosts for the purposes of magic use. Affecting Denizens with magic is discussed below. Supernal beings can use Influences and Numina in the same way that spirits do, from the perspective of game mechanics.

### *Affecting Denizens with Magic*

All Supernal beings are, obviously, native to those realms, not the Fallen World. Although they use spirit traits (see above), they are not vulnerable to summons, commands, attacks, or any other spells using the Spirit Arcanum. A denizen of the Supernal Realm, when summoned to the Fallen World, is susceptible to magic using the following rules:

- The ruling Arcanum used to summon the being (Gross for manifest, Subtle for recondite) can be used to *heal* or *enhance* the being. Damage suffered due to exposure to the Fallen World (see below) is considered resistant damage, and cannot be healed this way.

**System:** The mage casts a Perfecting spell using the Arcanum in question. Every success either heals a point of Corpus damage or adds one point to the creature's Power, Finesse or Resistance. Multiple uses of this spell do not "stack," so if a mage increases a

creature's Power, and then casts the spell again to raise its Resistance, the extra Power fades.

- The ruling Arcanum other than the one used to summon the being (Gross for recondite, Subtle for manifest) can be used to *command* or *scrutinize* the being.

**System:** The mage casts a Weaving spell using the appropriate Arcanum. The being can resist with a contested Resistance roll, though it can also choose to allow the mage to cast the spell. If the mage wins, it can engage in magical scrutiny or can command the being. Scrutiny and command of Supernal beings are discussed in more detail under the realms sections later in this chapter.

- The inferior Arcanum for the creature's home realm can be used to *harm* the creature.

**System:** The mage casts a Fraying spell using the appropriate Arcanum. The player subtracts the being's Resistance from his dice pool. Every success inflicts one point of damage to the being's Corpus. If the being falls to zero Corpus (regardless of the type of damage), it loses its grip on the Fallen World and vanishes. The player immediately checks for degeneration if the character's Wisdom is greater than 2 (roll two dice).

This isn't to suggest that other spells can't be used to affect the creature, especially to do direct harm. An Adept of Forces can attack a Supernal being with a lightning bolt, regardless of her Path. That said, some entities have specific weaknesses or invulnerabilities, and these are noted in the examples below.

### *The Trial*

All Supernal beings have a test, a condition or an action that they demand of mages that summon them. This action is in some ways similar to a spirit's Ban; if the mage doesn't take the appropriate action, the Supernal entity *cannot* help her. In some cases, it might even attack. Powerful supernal beings tend to have complex and esoteric Trials, while weaker beings might simply demand that the mage be honest and respectful (or, conversely, command the being forcefully to show his dominion over magic).

Researching Supernal beings usually reveals information about the Trials in an indirect way. For instance, a mage researching the denizens of the Primal Wild might learn that they respect summoners that will do what it takes to survive. Whether the mage can extrapolate from that when he summons the Blood of the Prey (p. 103) is another matter, but the



Storyteller should allow players to roll Intelligence + Occult to gain hints about what a given denizen might expect.

### *Life Span and Weakening in the Fallen World*

Beings from the Supernal Realms are vulnerable in the Fallen World. In their own realms, they are natives — the environment is uniquely suited to them, and they are immune to the suffocating blackness of the Abyss. The realms are, in a way, pure. The Fallen World, though, is a much more diverse environment, containing elements of all of the realms, the Abyss, and other levels of existence (such as the Shadow). The inhabitants of the Supernal, therefore, start to die in the Fallen World. They don't have the antibodies to survive, as it were.

When a Supernal denizen arrives in the Fallen World, it enjoys the protection of the summoning circle for a brief period of time (how long depends on the mage; see below). After this period is over, the denizen suffers one point of Corpus damage for each hour it stays in the circle. If it leaves the circle, it suffers this damage every half-hour. If it comes into contact with Sleepers or with an Abyss-Marked mage (see p. 71), it suffers this damage every 15 minutes. Finally, if a mage causes a Paradox within 50' of the being, even if the mage contains the Paradox within his own body, the being suffers one point of damage for every success on the Paradox roll. Every time the being suffers damage, the Storyteller rolls the denizen's Power, Finesse and Resistance. For every roll that fails, the relevant trait falls by one point. A mage can use magic to boost these traits as described above, but Corpus damage is considered resistant and cannot be healed by magic. Likewise, using magic to increase the being's Resistance (see above) does not change its effective Corpus for the purposes of determining the length of time it can stay in the Fallen World.

Once the being runs out of Corpus, it vanishes. The denizens can sense when their time is running out, and usually attempt to get back into the summoning circle, so that they can go directly home. If, however, the creature "dies" outside of the summoning circle, or is killed by a deliberate magical attack (see above), it cannot use the path laid down by the mage to reach its home again. Instead, it vanishes into the Abyss. This is obvious to anyone watching — black tendrils may extend from the walls and rip it to shreds, or an Abyssal spirit might manifest to collect it. In any

event, if a mage directly contributed to this event, the player must roll to avoid degeneration if the character's Wisdom is 2 or above (roll two dice).

## *Game Mechanics*

The spell below describes the process of summoning a Supernal being from a game mechanics perspective. This spell has never been made into a rote, nor can it be — the "spell" requires a pure, raw work of magic. Codifying it is impossible, because opening a gateway to the Supernal Realms necessitates thinking back to one's Awakening. This experience is too personal to allow the kind of practice that a rote requires.

### *Summon Supernal Being* (Any Arcanum ●●●)

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Special

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 10 Mana

The mage must fashion a summoning circle, usually using runes and High Speech glyphs appropriate not only to the Arcanum he is using, but to the intended purpose of the summoning. The process and form of the ritual is different for each realm, and is discussed in detail under the appropriate realm sections.

Before beginning the ritual, the player must decide upon how many successes the mage will attempt to accrue. The formula is as follows:

The mage needs 10 successes to open the gateway. Every additional success has one of the following effects:

- Extend the duration in which the being can remain in the Fallen World without suffering damage. Each success adds 30 minutes. If the mage allocates no successes to this duration, the being begins taking damage immediately.

- Protect the gateway from Abyssal intrusion. Every success thus allocated allows the player to make one additional roll without the Storyteller checking for the Abyss creeping into the gateway.

In addition, the following factors add to the necessary total:

- Add one success per Sleeper present. In addition, a Sleeper's presence renders the spell improbable.

- Add one success per mage of a different Path present.



- Add one success if the summoning is taking place in a Demesne oriented to a realm *other* than the one in question.

- Add one success if the mage has caused a Paradox (even if he contained it) within the last week.

- Add one success if the mage is Abyss-Marked (see p. 71).

- Subtract one success from the target if the summoning is taking place in a Demesne oriented to the realm in question.

- Subtract successes if the character incorporates items and conditions into the summoning that correspond to the realm in question. The sections on the different realms later in this chapter list sample correspondences, but the character must still weave these correspondences into the spell gracefully enough to ease the casting. The Storyteller can either adjudicate the number of successes shaved off the total based on the player's descriptions of his character's actions, or the player can roll Intelligence + Occult. Every *two* successes on this roll removes *one* success from the target number of the summoning spell.

Once the player has determined the target number of successes and how they will be allocated, he can start rolling. The amount of time required for each roll is, of course, determined by the mage's Gnosis rating (see p. 76 of **Mage: The Awakening**). The player is not limited in the number of rolls he can make, but fatigue will eventually begin to set in. A greater danger, though, is Abyssal intrusion.

The player can make a number of rolls equal to the character's Resolve + Composure + any successes allocated to avoid Abyssal intrusion. After that point, the Storyteller rolls the character's unmodified Gnosis for every roll that the character makes. If the Storyteller accrues a number of successes equal to the mage's Gnosis + [ruling Arcanum used to cast the spell], the Abyss breaks into the gateway, and the creature that arrives is not a Supernal being but an Abyssal one. The Storyteller should by no means reveal how many successes she gets on the intrusion rolls. The Abyssal being that arrives might impersonate a Supernal one, at least for a while. More information on Abyssal summoning and the creatures resulting from them can be found in Chapter Three.

**Example:** Whim, an Acanthus of the Mysterium, decides to call down a recondite being from Arcadia as part of her ongoing quest to unravel the nature of the Fallen World. She is a Master of Fate, so she is more than qualified to cast the spell. Her Gnosis

is 3, so every roll requires one hour. She requires 14 successes to start — 10 (base) + 3 (three of her cabal mates are present) + 1 (she caused a Paradox within the last week). Her player decides to add in three more successes. Two are allocated two duration (if she is successful, the being will be able to survive in the Fallen World for an hour without taking damage) and one is allocated to stave off Abyssal intrusion. Her Resolve + Composure is 5, so with the success she has allocated, her player can make six rolls before Abyssal intrusion becomes a problem.

If she fails to accumulate 17 successes in six rolls (which is a distinct possibility), the Storyteller rolls Whim's Gnosis rating for every roll beginning with the seventh. If the Storyteller accumulates eight successes (Whim's Gnosis + Fate) before her player finishes accumulating the 17 needed for the spell, an Abyssal entity intrudes.

**Concluding the spell:** Once the Supernal being has returned "home," the mage needs to channel the magic he used to work the summoning into something else. Leaving the spell "open" is dangerous, because if he does so, sooner or later the Abyss *will* seep in. The spell can be closed easily enough — the mage simply needs to choose what spell to cast. The player makes the appropriate roll, the spell occurs, and the gateway closes.

If the spell rolls *fails*, though, or if the Supernal being dies from exposure to the Fallen World or is deliberately destroyed outside the summoning circle, the gateway collapses. This creates a temporary portal to the Abyss. Every mage within 50' of this portal suffers a number of Health points of aggravated damage equal to the summoner's Gnosis. In addition, the portal remains open for a number of days equal to the summoner's Gnosis. During that time, the mage needs to watch the portal carefully, because Abyssal creatures can and do escape into the Fallen World.

## *The Aether, Abode of Angels*

*The rain beat violently against the wide, glass windows of the skyscraper. High above the city, lightning flashed, illuminating the Obrimos forum. In the center of the gathered mages, an entity, pale and softly luminous, floated serenely a few feet off the floor. It had materialized from the Aether in the form of a female; naked and hairless. Its skin was a delicate white and slightly translucent,*



with a subtle webbing of thin, pale blue blood vessels just beneath the surface. Most unsettling and alien of all, a thousand tiny, closed, lash-less eyes covered the surface of the entity's entire body. For all the being's silent serenity, and in spite of the raging electrical storm outside, it might have been sleeping. Galileo knew better.

Kaon lay unconscious on the scorched tile before the entity, her skin steaming like rain evaporating off hot asphalt. The acrid scent of burnt flesh and hair hung in the heavily charged air. Several of the gathered rushed forward to tend to Kaon's wounds.

The ritual had been a lot to ask of such an inexperienced mage, but these were desperate times, and the more practiced mages would be needed in the long, hard battle ahead. Galileo stepped forward, facing the being. Willing his voice not to waver, he spoke.

"We have great need of your help. Something is poisoning the ley lines, and the taint of the Abyss is infecting the Awakened throughout the city. Many have died, sleepers and Awakened alike, and many more will die if the origin of this poison is not discovered. Despite our best efforts, the cause remains untraceable to even to the city's most powerful mages."

The entity's eyes remained closed, and Galileo stepped back reverently. Another Obrimos of the forum took his place, giving testimony of dark, malignant energy that was spreading like a cancer throughout the city. Each declaration strengthened the first, and when the last mage had spoken, the forum fell still and silent, waiting for the being's response. Even the storm outside had ceased, as though the night was holding its breath in anticipation of the verdict.

In a sudden blaze of light, the entity opened its thousand eyes. Briefly, a myriad of tiny, electric-blue pupils could be seen, and then the light grew so bright that every mage present was blinded for an instant.

When Galileo's vision returned, the entity had disincorporated and returned to the Aether. Still slightly disoriented, he felt his way to the window of the skyscraper. Far below, the city shone with flowing rivers of blue-white light. The ley lines were now visible to every mage in the city. Galileo squinted, leaning closer to the cool glass. In the distance, the pure, shining blue-white energy of the ley lines dimmed — the flow of the river of Mana was stagnant and mottled with darkness.

## *Calling Down the Aether*

Mages who walked the Path of the Mighty often recall Awakening in a realm of pure energy — spinning with the stars of the heavens and surrounded by beings of pure light. They feel the forces of the

universe great and small, from the tremulous potential energy in a coiled spring, to the awesome, explosive force of a star turning super nova. When a Theurgist returns to the Fallen World, he often feels as though his eyes have been opened. He can look at the world through a new, divinely-inspired lens — his life has a purpose, and nothing can stand in the way of what is right and just (by his reckoning, anyway). Even those with a clear sense direction will falter occasionally, however, and this is when an Obrimos looks back to the Aether for guidance and inspiration.

The Angels of the Supernal Realm of the Aether are ancient and wizened sages, winged warriors of righteous fire and might, and vast elementals of pure, crackling energy. They provide the summoner with the wisdom and strength of the eternal magic and forces of the universe. They offer devastating powers of destruction, but only for the sake of rebirth and creation. Angels of the Aether are intense and charismatic creatures: ageless, awe-inspiring, and all-consuming. Angels themselves are neither good nor evil, and simply are what they are meant to be: beings devoid of moral choice. They may not be kind, but they are unwavering in their resolve and righteousness (although, having no choice in the matter, what Angels consider "righteous" can vary considerably). Angels hold lofty standards, and will not answer the call of those they consider impure or unworthy.

While a Theurgist may summon an Angel from the Aether for help and guidance in personal matters, he may also do so to benefit the greater good. An Angel, in fact, may be much more willing to assist a mage who calls upon it for a selfless purpose. More so than denizens of any other Supernal realm, Angels of the Aether are willing to help those in times of need. A mage willing to die to save the lives of others will find himself blessed in unexpected ways, while a mage who calls upon an Angel with wicked or selfish intent may find himself wholly regretting ever having Awakened.

## *Risks*

Angels are powerful beings with high, rigidly fixed, ethical standards. While most are benevolent, many are simply incapable of seeing gray areas when it comes to morality. As such, any mage who calls upon an Angel must be extremely careful. Angels are able to inherently understand the moral nature of the Obrimos whose call they answer, some with such clarity that they are capable of seeing, in vivid detail, past



transgressions of the mage. An Angel may herald the sins of the summoner for all to hear, utterly destroying his reputation, or worse, it may demand immediate penance for his sins.

The penance an Angel inflicts upon the summoner can take many forms. It may brand the mage with holy fire, or repeatedly strike the summoner with bolts of crackling energy. To cleanse the mage of her sins, it may hold her beneath the surface of a crystal lake until she is half-drowned, or engulf her body in divine fire until her impurities are utterly burned away (often with large amounts of flesh). In some cases, the penance exacted upon a mage by an Angel is so extreme that it leads to the death of the summoner.

Lastly, the Fallen World simply does not shine like the Aether. Every day, an Obrimos faces the ugly truths of the mortal world: war, hunger, sickness, death, pollution. Despite his sense of holy conviction, a mage awakened to the Aether has witnessed the divine light of Heaven, and he may grow to feel trapped and filthy in the smothering darkness of the very world he seeks to enlighten. He may long for the brief clarity that he felt when Awakening in the Abode of Angels. In his desire to be near beings that remind him of that state of perfect and pristine lucidity, a Theurgist may find himself calling upon those selfsame Angels of the Aether again and again. Like a moth to a flame, a mage who repeatedly calls down the Angels for such a lowly purpose will eventually be utterly consumed by divine fire — driven mad by its unattainable beauty, or devoured, body and soul, by its all-powerful, purifying flame.

### *The Ritual*

Mages who follow the Path of the Mighty often recall a feeling of divine purpose upon Awakening. They may recall being surrounded by and engulfed with energy, hot and bright. Some recall shining beings composed of pure light or energy. To a mortal from the Fallen World, the immaculate forces of the Supernal Realm of the Aether can be overwhelming. To summon an entity from the Aether, an Obrimos must recreate this feeling of power and purity.

The location of the summoning may or may not be a physical place. Anywhere or any time the powers of the universe are active and strong will suffice. Some suitable locations or times for a summoning might include close proximity to a roaring waterfall, during an intense electrical storm, near an active volcano, in a nuclear plant, or beside a fault line in the Earth.

Once in a suitable place to perform the ritual, the mage must cleanse herself with heavenly fire (however she chooses to interpret such), purifying her body to serve as a divine conduit to the Realm of the Aether. To recreate the heavenly fire of the Aether, a mage must combine Forces and Prime, energy and magic itself, finding a harmonious balance between the two. (Any Obrimos capable of a Supernal summoning must have the proficiency needed in at least one of the two ruling Arcana in her Path; three or more dots. She can supplement the more potent Arcanum with even an initiate's understanding of the other.) She must physically immerse herself in the forces of the universe: electricity, gravity, kinetic energy, heat, light, physics, radiation, sound, or weather. Having done so, she must call upon Prime to temper the energy before she is consumed by its power. The process is dangerous, and painful. Entities from the Realm of the Aether are called through the creation of the heavenly fire, however, and the process purifies the body of the mage, making her worthy of divine attention.

**Sample Correspondences:** fire, electrical storms, nuclear energy, steel, divine purpose, vibration, cleansing, gold, purity, aurora borealis, volcanoes, light, earthquakes, gravity.


### *The Entities*

Obrimos can summon entities from the Aether using Prime (Subtle) or Forces (Gross). All such entities are collectively called Angels. Manifest Angels are called Seraphim (singular, Seraph), while recondite Angels are called Cherubim (singular, Cherub).

### *Seraphim — Angels of Forces*

The term “Seraphim” might call to mind the highest order of Angels as they were developed in Christian theology: winged beings who sing in the heavenly choir surrounding the throne of God. The word “Seraphim” is, in fact, derived from the Hebrew word, *Seraph*, which is used in all its forms to connote a burning, fiery state. This is, perhaps, more semantically accurate when describing Angels of the Forces Arcanum. While Seraphim may not have any relationship to God or religion, they can be considered divine beings in many other ways. St. Thomas Aquinas may have best described the divine fire that is often associated with Seraphim, “*We consider in fire the quality of clarity, or brightness; which signifies that these angels have in themselves an inextinguishable light, and that they also perfectly enlighten others.*”





Seraphim are beings composed of pure energy derived from the Supernal Realm of the Aether, and are representative of the vast and limitless power from which all of Creation was born. To some extent, all Seraphim have been touched by divine fire. Many do strongly resemble the Angels of belief systems throughout the world: beings composed of pure light or fire, with multiple faces and/or wings. Others, however, may choose less recognizable forms: a pulsing orb of light, a shimmering wave of heat, a twisting pillar of water, or a fiery bird blazing across the heavens. They commonly arrive loudly, in a rush of roaring wind or a surge of unbridled energy.

Each Seraph stands steadfastly for what it believes to be just and right, and is typically a skilled warrior for whatever its distinct cause may be. The forces that Seraphim command are generally used for benevolent purposes, but that is not to say that they cannot be destructive. Indeed, if an entire city must be demolished for the sake of what a Seraph understands to be the greater good, he would not hesitate to (and, in some cases, could very easily) burn it to the ground. Seraphim, like all Supernal Angels, are not creatures that are capable of recognizing grey areas of morality. Good and evil (as they understand the concepts) contrast very sharply in the eyes of the Seraphim, and they hold those whose call they answer to rigid ethical standards. Despite this fact, Seraphim can prove to be valuable allies to any Obrimos who walks a true and virtuous path.

### *Cherubim — Angels of Prime.*

In contrast to Seraphim, Cherubim gain their name from the Babylonian term, *karabu*, which means propitious, or blessed. While Seraphim are warriors for divine cause, the Cherubim are sages and teachers. They have existed in tandem with Seraphim since time began, and use their power to temper the blazing fire and passionate fervor of their counterparts. As such, they are also excellent communicators, councilors, and intermediaries.

Cherubim, like Seraphim, typically follow a divine or righteous purpose, but there are exceptions to every rule. Because of their innate ability to serve as intermediaries, Cherubim are, perhaps, more likely to walk the fine line between good and evil. While the Seraphim almost always see morality in black and white, Cherubim are more likely to at least acknowledge the *possibility* of moral ambiguity. Of the two types of Supernal Angels, Cherubim are more capable of understanding why mortals stray from

the path of the just and, accordingly, they are also likelier to be somewhat more understanding, patient, and forgiving.

Most Cherubim glow with a soft, luminous blue-white light, representative of Mana. They tend to have multiple eyes — sometimes, hundreds or even thousands of them — representing divine, all-seeing wisdom. They have an understanding of the fundamentals of magic that can make a Master of Prime look like a novice. Some can sculpt the raw essence of magic into material forms, creating objects and even beings of potentially immense power. Some believe that Mana itself springs directly from the will of the Cherubim, and flows from the Aether to all other realms, Supernal or otherwise. In these ways, Cherubim are god-like, creating something where there was once nothing.

Cherubim are typically quieter, more secretive, and less demanding of the summoner than Seraphim (at least as far as ethical standards are concerned) — but that is certainly not to say Cherubim are less powerful. Indeed, Cherubim are representative of the power of magic itself, and it is through magic that all other energies are harnessed and shaped.

### *The Summoner*

Many Obrimos are passionate men and women, fortified by their unwavering belief in what is just. As such, a Theurgist's Virtue can shape the form and personality of the Angel that she summons from the Aether. A mage who is known for her giving and generous nature, may find herself in the company of an Angel who is also charitable. Similarly, an Obrimos with the Virtue of Faith might be more likely to attract Angels that are representative of spiritual iconography, while one possessed of a moderate nature might find that even the powerful, radiant Seraph she calls is capable of some modicum of personal restraint.

A Theurgist's knowledge of magic also has an effect on the entity he summons. Each of the Arcana are present in the Supernal Realm of Aether to some extent, and the mage's proclivity toward one brand of magic or another may interact with the ruling Arcanum of Prime and Forces in a variety of ways. The following are suggested beings that a mage with a great deal of knowledge in a non-ruling Arcanum (Disciple or better) might summon.

- **Fate:** Angels summoned by a disciple of Fate are representative of the chaotic aspects of Forces and Prime. Seraphim may manifest as forms in ceaseless



motion: from something as unassuming as a rubber ball ricocheting off the walls, to an awe-inspiring thunderstorm rolling swiftly across the sky. Cherubim summoned by a mage versed in Fate are known to be fond of setting magic itself loose in the world. They may be able to temporarily strengthen or increase the magic of Artifacts... or weaken them.

- **Life:** Seraphim called upon by a Theurgist knowledgeable in life magic manifest in forms representative of creation and growth. The summoner may find himself on the summit of a mountain, face warmed by the light of the sun, looking down upon a lush, green valley below. Cherubim, however, tend to manifest as magic brought to life. They may materialize as luminous children, animals, or birds, and they are known to be able to banish the presence of death and inspire creation.

- **Matter:** Seraphim called upon by an Obrimos with experience in the Arcanum of Matter may manifest in a form representative of matter transformed by energy: a creature of molten lava with blazing wings, or an amorphous being of blistering steam. Cherubim of Matter are gifted artisans and embodiments of creation; they have the ability to sculpt raw magic into a variety of powerful magical Artifacts. The Artifacts that Cherubim create are only to be used by the pure, and for a just and noble purpose, lest the summoner bring divine wrath down upon himself.

- **Mind:** Angels summoned by one practiced in the Mind Arcanum are capable of bringing out hidden powers with the summoner and magic in the world surrounding them. They may manifest as a burning tree or bush, ever aflame, yet never consumed by the fire. Their knowledge is great, and their intent is to enlighten. Any Obrimos who follows a righteous path has much to learn from an Angel inspired by the magic of the Mind Arcanum.

- **Space:** A Theurgist knowledgeable in Space may find herself transported to a safe haven of white marble and glass, surrounded by the boundless star-strewn heavens. The halls of the sanctuary echo with the soft voices of invisible creatures of wind and music. From this lofty height, a theurgist can look down upon all that lies below, magically magnified through the wide windows of the palace. The summoner's just and righteous purpose will clear away any cloud that blocks his view, shedding heavenly light upon the wicked below.

- **Spirit:** Angels summoned by a disciple of Spirit carry their divine purpose to the realm of the spirits,

as such; they are attracted to mages proficient in Spirit magic. Seraphim are likely to manifest in the form of an elemental entity: a pillar of fire, or water, a crackling globe of electrical energy, a blazing ball of heat and light, or a howling wind. Cherubim may appear as spirits composed of pure Mana — soft glowing with a blue-white light.

- **Time:** Unbridled, the magic and energy of the universe can be difficult to control. Angels summoned by a mage studying the Time Arcanum have mastered the power to speed up or slow down time as a means to better control the forces at their disposal. Additionally, some Angels who are summoned by those particularly skilled in the magics of Time are said to have existed from the moment that history began and the universe was propelled out from nothingness. As such, they are known to be wise and infinitely patient teachers.

- **Death:** A Theurgist studying the Arcanum of Death is likely to summon Seraphim that resemble the traditional conceptions of “Angels of death.” Consumed with vengeful justice and bristling with dark energy, they may deal with the darker side of Forces, and the ways in which the energy of the universe can be used for destructive purposes (though, still divinely inspired, they often use their destructive powers to benefit the greater good). Such Cherubim, on the other hand, often manifest as faceless, indistinct creatures of dark, non-reflective substances that are not *quite* material. They are said to be able to dispel magic entirely, to the point that the Cherub can drain the magic from anything with which it comes in contact, including the summoner.

## *Example Entities*

### *Cherub: The Ophan*

Ophanim manifest in the form of a nude female figure, floating serenely a few feet above the ground. Hairless and white as alabaster, an Ophan's pale skin appears to be covered with raised bumps or **nodules** at first glance. Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that the surface of its entire body is stippled with thousands of tiny, lash-less eyes — all of which are closed.

Ophanim have the ability to make all ley lines within a given location (usually an entire city) visible to all who have Awakened for a period of time. Once the ley lines are made visible, Obrimos particularly skilled





in the Prime Arcanum can more easily map and even rearrange the flow of Mana as needed. Because the ley lines are visible, all mages are able to locate the magic streaming to and from hallows precisely, and Mana can be drawn directly from a ley line without the need to go to a Hallow. (This will deplete nearby Hallows that are connected to the ley line in question, however.) Additionally, to the benefit — and in some cases detriment — of mages in the area, all Hallows become visible to the Awakened. Obrimos are sometimes known to call upon an Ophan when something unknown or difficult to trace is poisoning the Mana in an area. When the Mana is illuminated, tainted ley lines that have been tinged with darkness become readily apparent, and the cause or origin of the problem is usually easier to pinpoint.

**Attributes:** Power 12, Finesse 8, Resistance 5  
**Willpower:** 17  
**Essence:** max 30  
**Initiative:** 13  
**Defense:** 12  
**Speed:** 30 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 10

**Influence:** Prime 3, Judgment 1

**Numina:** Binding Vow, Blast, Essence Conversion, Telekinesis (as per the Ghost Numen; see **The World of Darkness**, p. 212)

**Trial:** Before the ritual to call upon an Ophan is performed, an Obrimos forum must be assembled in the summoning location. One of the gathered must then succeed in recreating the divine fire, and the Ophan is called from the Realm of Aether. She floats, graceful and alien, before the assembled, her eyes closed. Each mage must, in turn, give testimony on the purpose for summoning the entity from her lofty place in the heavens, and why her assistance is needed. If the forum makes a convincing argument, the Ophan shows her approval by opening her eyes. For a moment, her white skin is pin-pricked with thousands of tiny, electric blue-eyes. Then, her eyes shine so brightly that all Awakened within sight are blinded by the light of the Aether for a split second. When their vision returns, the flow of Mana within the city is visible — softly glowing with blue-white energy. The Ophan's power affects a number of square miles equal to the caster's Willpower + Gnosis.

### *Cherub: The Beast Keeper*

The Beast Keeper is most easily called upon by an Obrimos with some experience in Life or Spirit magic. It manifests as a solidly-built, muscular man with four arms. Its features are vaguely bestial and, slowly, almost imperceptibly, ever-shifting. The Beast Keeper might have wolf-like characteristics, feathers, fur, cloven hooves or horns at any given moment.

The Beast Keeper will gift the mage with a familiar composed of pure Mana if she passes its trial (see below).

**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 4, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 11

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 19 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

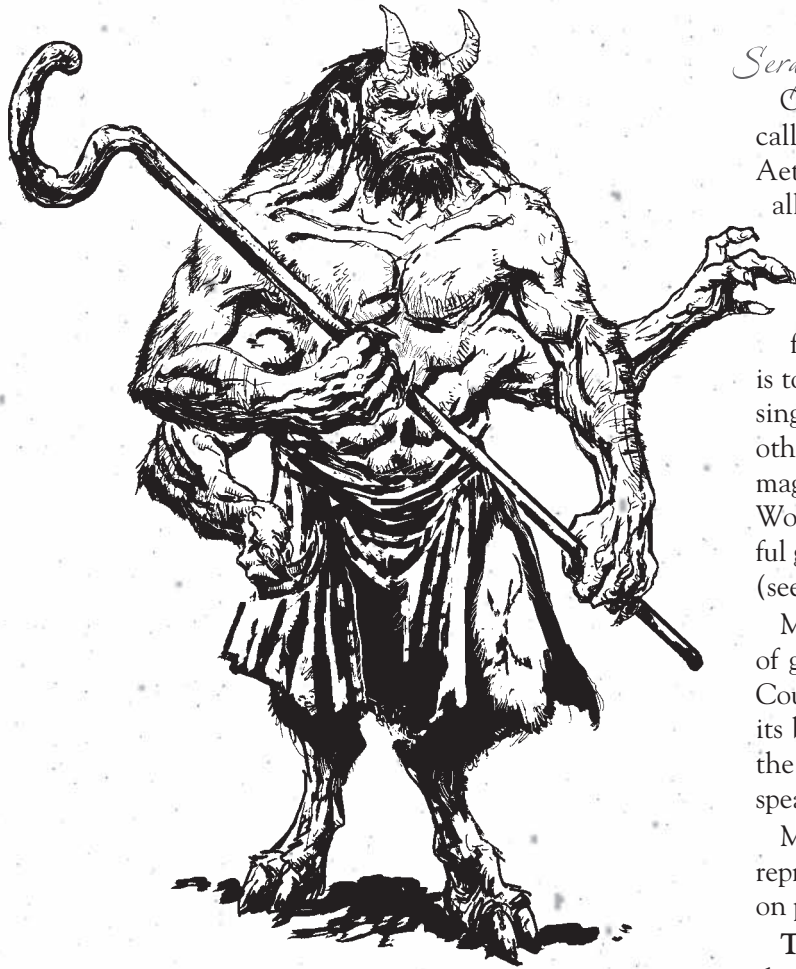
**Corpus:** 11

**Influence:** Prime 1, Beast 1

**Numina:** Binding Vow, Trial

**Trial:** A mage who succeeds in summoning the Beast Keeper finds herself in the midst of a surreal





forest, luminous with blue-white energy. As she walks through the woods, she may feel she is being followed or watched. Eventually, the mage comes across an animal composed of the same blue-white energy as the flora surrounding her. The animal may be hurt, sick, violent, or scared. The mage must care for the animal in some way: mending an owl's broken wing, coaxing a frightened wolf pup from its hiding place, or calming a violent boar from its rage. Any mistreatment of an animal in the Beast Keeper's presence will bring about its wrath.

Once the summoner has shown her ability and willingness to care for the Aetherial animal, only then does the Beast Keeper reveal itself, and ask if the mage would like to keep the creature as her own. If the willworker responds in the affirmative and vows to take good care of the animal, then the Beast Keeper allows the mage to do so. The scene dissolves around the mage and she finds herself once more at the location of the summoning, with a new familiar composed of pure Mana (see the Supernal Companion Merit, p. 186).

### *Seraph: Metatron*

Only the purest and most just of Theurgists can call the Angel Metatron from its lofty throne in the Aether, and only in a time of desperate need. As with all Angels, what, exactly, "just" means in a moral sense can vary greatly. Commander of a mighty celestial army, Metatron is a Seraph of immense power. It is impossible to call upon the entity for a selfish purpose, as the need of a single person is too insignificant for it to notice or understand. A single person can, however, speak on the behalf of others, and the perceived need and righteousness of a mage will draw the Metatron attention to the Fallen World. In rare cases, it may bestow up to three powerful gifts upon the summoner: The Gifts of Metatron (see below).

Metatron manifests as a towering being composed of glorious celestial fire — bright as a blazing star. Countless, shining, white wings fold and unfold from its back, ever in motion. Brilliant sparks crackle in the air surrounding its form, and when the Metatron speaks, its voice resounds like a clap of thunder.

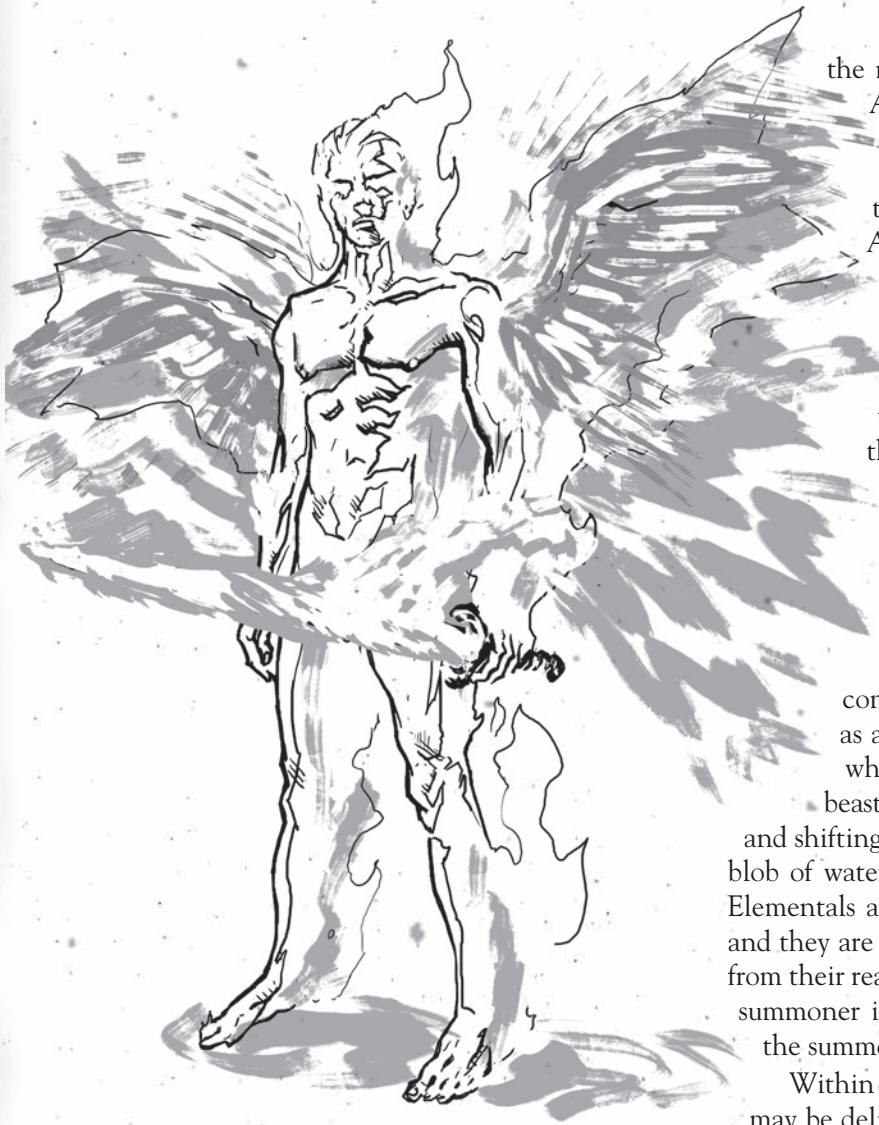
Metatron is a god-like being too powerful to be represented with traits (See "The Spiritual Hierarchy" on p. 317 of *Mage: The Awakening*).

**Trial:** A mage who summons Metatron must explain the dire situation with which he is faced, and why the Angel's help is needed. The Obrimos must explain in great detail the evil that he intends to conquer with Metatron's aid. The Theurgist must be entirely truthful in his disclosure, as Metatron cannot be deceived. It is not a being that sees morality in shades of gray, and if the mage tells even the smallest of white lies, Metatron will lash out at the summoner with celestial fire (quite possibly maiming or even killing him) and return to the Aether.

However, in the rare event that the mage's purpose is deemed worthy of the Angel's assistance, Metatron will bestow three gifts upon the summoner: the Shield of Metatron, the Sword of Metatron, and the Wisdom of Metatron. The Sword and Shield of Metatron are ineffective unless used against (or as protection from) the "wicked": foes directly connected to the "evil" described to Metatron during the summoning.

The Shield of Metatron surrounds the theurgist with an intense barrier of energy to protect him from his foes. The barrier has an armor rating of 4/4 (because the barrier is composed of energy that surrounds the mage, there is no strength requirement). The Shield of Metatron can be combined with Forces





armor (see “Unseen Shield” on p.169 of *Mage: The Awakening*), and does not count toward the mage’s Spell Tolerance.

The Sword of Metatron allows the mage to strike down his enemies with the celestial fire of the Angels—leaving the innocent unharmed. Mechanically, the sword is typical of its kind (*The World of Darkness*, p. 170), but its fiery blade deals aggravated damage, rather than lethal, upon the wicked. Additionally, a mage who uses the sword of Metatron will find his hands guided by the divine skill of the Seraphim. When using the Sword of Metatron, the character gains two bonus dice to all rolls related to swordsmanship.

Finally, the Wisdom of Metatron pours knowledge of the energies of the universe directly into the mind of the willworker, making him a master of Forces instantaneously.

The Three Gifts of Metatron remain with the summoner until the threat he faces is resolved or

the mage is no longer worthy of the gifts. Any unjust action (in the utterly rigid and unambiguous sense that comprises Metatron’s understanding) will cause these potent gifts to be swept back to the Aether. Should the Theurgist’s actions be in any way unjust by the Angel’s reckoning, then it may choose to levy punishment upon him, as well. The mage may only use the Gifts of Metatron for the purpose that was disclosed to the Angel during the summoning; their use for any other end is automatically deemed “unworthy” by the Seraph.

### *Seraph: Elemental*

A mage who summons an Elemental finds himself confronted by a being composed of pure energy. It may manifest as a pillar of blazing fire, a shining ball of white heat and light, a crumbling, hulking beast of molten earth and stone, a shimmering and shifting heat mirage, or a sloshing, amorphous blob of water, undulating to an otherworldly tide. Elementals are not particularly intellectual beings, and they are known to become violent when taken from their realm. Often, an Elemental will attack its summoner immediately after materializing within the summoning circle.

Within certain circles of Obrimos, an Elemental may be deliberately called upon to battle a newly awakened Theurgist as a divine rite of passage. The rite is representative of the exertion of mortal will over the forces of the universe, and how through the mastery of magic, a mage may defeat whatever adversary he faces. A young mage can learn a great deal about his own abilities through the process, and gains arcane experience from the confrontation.

**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 2, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 17 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 11

**Influence:** Forces 2

**Numina:** Blast, Reaching

**Trial:** Elementals are the forces of the universe incarnate, and as such, they can be challenging ad-





versaries. Many inexperienced Obrimos have been badly injured or even killed in the process of subduing an Elemental. When an Elemental attacks, it will make use of whatever force it commands: crackling bolts of lightning, rays of blasting heat or radiation, or rippling distortion waves of crushing gravity. The mage must counter the attack with his own magic, proving his mastery of the forces he commands. When the battle is over, the Elemental typically returns to the Aether.

## *Arcadia, the Abode of Fae*

"I'm sorry. I wish things could be different." That was the last thing he said to her on the phone that day. His voice was steady, resolute. Lydia clapped her cell shut before he could say goodbye, ending the call. She didn't want to hear the finality of the click as he hung up. She didn't want to hear the empty silence on the line that followed.

At the time, Lydia felt nothing at all. She stared numbly through the grimy window of her shabby one-bedroom apartment, void of all emotion. Technicolor sunlight streamed through the filthy glass. Children outside laughed and played on the vividly green lawn, but their voices were muted, distant.

Lydia stumbled to the toilet and heaved, emptying the contents of her stomach into the bowl. Wiping the sick from her chin, she sank to the floor, feeling the smooth coolness of the porcelain tile. Then the tears came, streaming hot down her pale cheeks. She lost herself in wave after wave of raw emotion, feeling nothing but agonizing sadness, and anger, burning strong and hot as hatred. "If you wish so badly that things could be different, why did you leave? Why not stay with me?"

Lifting herself shakily, Lydia made her way to the bedroom. Wracked with sobs, she collapsed upon the unmade bed. She could still smell him in the sheets. Memories of all the times they had fucked on that bed came flooding back to her. She had stared intensely into his eyes as he climaxed, silently willing him to love her — to stay with her. Not to leave her alone.

Alone.

Consumed by rage, Lydia felt for the thread. She knew it well, because she had traced this particular course of Fate time and time again. It was the one where the two of them ended up together, happy and whole. She saw flashes of the life they might have shared. He was holding her safe in his arms. He was kissing her at the altar. They were laughing together. Their newborn daughter slept soundly against her breast — so tiny, so fragile. Images played through her mind like film on a reel. Lydia lost herself in the lifetime that could have been for as long as Fate allowed her, reliving its most precious moments over and over again.

Hours passed, and the unfulfilled destiny started to fade away. His features began to dissolve into chaotic, endless possibility. Lydia held onto the disappearing thread tightly, and it burned suddenly bright in her hands, scorching her flesh. Somehow, it knew what she was about to do.

"Let go, Lydia. You need to let him go."

Biting her lip through the white-hot pain, Lydia pulled resolutely upon the vanishing thread of Fate with all the magic and strength she could call upon. She knew that what she was doing was wrong, and that part of her was being torn away by the act, but she did not care. With blind desperation and anguishing desire she pulled, and then, she felt something come loose.

When Lydia opened her eyes, he was standing before her. He was exactly as she remembered, down to the finest



detail. Every curve of his face was perfect—his eyes were just as kind as always. When his arms encircled her and held her tight, she felt just as safe as she always had.

“Never leave me again?” She asked.

“Never.” He said.

But when he spoke, there was a hollowness to his voice that she had never heard there before.

## Calling Down Arcadia

A mage awakened to the Realm of Arcadia tends to be known (if stereotypically) for her free spirit, enthusiasm, and passion for life. She may be seen as fickle, irrational, or immature, but the wonderment with which she perceives the world is infectious to those around her. Likely, a mage drawn to the Path of the Thorn was capable of seeing “magic” in the world even before Awakening—in the eternal dance of the seasons, in the laughter of a child, in a secret glance between lovers. For all of life’s beauty, Acanthus are also capable of sensing and understanding the purpose behind life’s ugliness. As many Acanthus Masters ask of their apprentices, “If one good person had to die to save thousands of lives, what would you do?”

Luckily, most people are not afflicted with the foresight to ever *truly* face such a question. Enchanters, however, forever trace the threads of Fate and Time, untangling hundreds of possibilities and outcomes from an impossibly intricate knot. They can see events that might occur, and can influence seemingly extraneous factors to produce a desired conclusion. Altering destiny to ensure the untimely demise of one person and the preservation of the lives of thousands might, therefore, be a simple choice for a mage capable of understanding the end result. But what if that one person destined to die was someone genuinely important to the willworker? A mother? A child? A lover?

Such a problem can raise many difficult moral and existential questions, and the fact that the mage’s own destiny is entwined with the very person who is destined to die further complicates matters. Can an Enchanter allow things to run their natural course despite the outcome, knowing that she has the power to change the future? Should she tamper with the interplay of history and inevitability in the first place, recognizing that it’s impossible to perceive or understand the final destiny of universe? (After all, mages can only see so far before possible events split away into a chaotic tangle of infinite possibilities.) And if an enchanter is not meant to utilize magic to

alter events, then why was she granted the ability to do so in the first place?

For the Acanthus, there will always be difficult decisions. Even with the ability to see the future, there are questions left unanswered, and destinies left unfulfilled. An Enchanter may summon a denizen of Arcadia because she is searching for answers, to assist her in achieving a desired end, or simply to help ease the crushing burden of the gift (or curse) that she has been given.

## Risks

Known for their capricious manner, summoned Fae can be dangerous, benign, or, more likely, a combination of the two. Fae are believed to be creatures born from all that is, or might be, possible. They can be playful and mischievous, wildly temperamental and easily offended, or haunting and mysterious. Nearly all are, to some degree, unsettling for their instability. Beings called from the Realm of Arcadia are as diverse as the chaos from which they originate; and while the majority of Fae may not actively intend harm, their unpredictable nature can be extremely dangerous. Because of this, a mage who calls upon a denizen of Arcadia can *only* be absolutely sure that he cannot be absolutely sure of anything, at all.

For all the benefits a mage might reap from summoning an Arcadian Fae, there are risks in doing so that go far beyond the hazards of the being’s mercurial temperament. Creating a gateway to the Supernal Realm of Arcadia is, after all, inviting chaos to the Fallen World—and chaos can be difficult or even impossible to contain, once unleashed. If the Realm of Arcadia is set loose during a summoning, it can manifest in many ways: all of the glass within the radius of a city block may shatter, birds may fly backwards, day and night may suddenly occur simultaneously within the mage’s sanctum, or living dreams of strange futures and pasts that never were may wander the waking world. A mage who risks opening the door to the Realm of Arcadia wide enough to call upon one of its creatures may even find his own destiny altered beyond repair.

As stated, the chaos of Arcadia is not easily fettered. That said, it follows naturally that the denizens of Arcadia, born of infinite possibility, may also be difficult to contain. Occasionally, a creature summoned from Arcadia may not desire to return home, and may use whatever faculties that are available to it to remain in the Fallen World as long as possible. Even if the summoned Fae is unsuccessful in its attempt to stay in the physical world (as it surely must be), it



can easily create a link of destiny between itself and the enchanter before being cast back into Arcadia, fating the summoner to run into it again at some point in the future.

Fae may wish to remain in the Fallen World for a number of reasons: the summoned being may wish to help the mage, it may perceive the Fallen World as entirely too organized and in desperate need of a touch of chaos, it may be bored with existence in Arcadia or in danger in its own realm, or it may simply be intensely curious and wish to unravel the mysteries of the Fallen World. Whatever its purpose for wanting to stay, denizens of Arcadia do not belong in the Fallen World. Even attempting to allow Fae to linger beyond their allotted span in the material realm is, inevitably, dangerous at best and disastrous at worst.

### *The Ritual*

Finding a suitable location for the summoning ritual is an important factor to consider when calling upon a denizen of Arcadia. To summon Fae, an Acanthus must first find a place that represents the infinite possibility of Fate and Time. This eases the difficulties in bridging the gap between the Fallen World and the Supernal Realm of Arcadia. The location can be anywhere that a significant change in destiny has, might have, or will take place.

For example, a stage where an assassination attempt was (or will be) made upon an influential politician might make a suitable location for a ritual. In this particular case, the mage might discover the area by feeling for multiple threads of destiny. Each thread represents a possible future that might have happened. One thread of Fate might represent a future where the politician is killed. Another thread might represent a future in which he survives. Additionally, there are hundreds of other possible futures that might diverge from the same event. Hundreds, thousands, or even millions of destinies might be significantly altered by hearing (or not hearing) the speech that the politician makes (or doesn't make).

Once a location is found, the Acanthus must meditate in solitude on the infinite possibilities of the universe. Once a meditative state is achieved, she can follow the threads of destiny and the flow of time as she chooses. While the mage's body never physically leaves the site of the ritual, she is no longer aware of her surroundings. While in the trance, the enchanter perceives the flow of history and probability as an intricate web of interconnected threads. She is able to navigate through the jumble by deliber-

ately picking out a specific pathway and following its twists and turns. As the mage traces the thread, she perceives flashes of the destiny; many claim that it feels like watching a movie or flipping through a book of photographs.

The summoner must find a thread linked to a being of the realm, and then physically pull the thread of destiny attached to the Fae. Discovering a thread of Fate resulting in a successful summoning can take hours, and the process of physically pulling Fae into the Fallen World can be extremely painful. Fate knows that the denizens of Arcadia are not meant to exist in the Fallen World. Therefore, once a willworker discovers a thread that can summon Fae and begins the process of pulling the being in the world, the connecting thread immediately begins to burn white-hot. The Acanthus must persist in pulling the thread, despite of the pain caused by continuing to hold onto the burning strand. If the mage perseveres, the summoning is successful and the Fae is dragged into the Fallen World. Some rare few willworkers report physical distress on account of this phenomenon (almost invariably manifesting as a level or bashing damage or, at most, two), while others find that they are instead exhausted in spirit by the ordeal (and must spend a point of Willpower to represent that inner struggle).

**Sample Correspondences:** shattered glass, threads, dice, passion, bright colors, patchwork, chaos, clocks, crystal, mischief, playing cards, mirrors, frivolity, hourglasses, change.


### *The Entities*

The term "Fae" might bring to mind the modern portrayal of faeries: tiny, magical beings known for their playful and mischievous nature. It is true that Fae can be both playful and mischievous, and they may even manifest as something resembling the faeries of contemporary folklore, but the qualities of a creature summoned from the Realm of Arcadia cannot be so narrowly defined. Fae, in this context, is the collective name for beings from the Supernal Realm of Arcadia, born from possibility. Acanthus can summon entities from Arcadia using either Fate (Subtle) or Time (Gross). Manifest Fae are called Anachronisms, while recondite Fae are called Moirae (singular, Moira).

### *Moirae — Fae of Fate*

As volatile as possibility itself, Moirae are beings summoned from Arcadia using the Arcanum of Fate.





Moirae can manifest in any conceivable form, and some may choose to appear as something different with each blink of the eye: an eccentric old man, a ball of chaotic energy, a beautiful woman in brightly-colored robes, a small animal or imaginary creature, or a friend or acquaintance of the summoner.

Every Moira knows something of Fate, instinctively at the very least. Most Moirae have developed unique abilities pertaining to the manipulation of Fate, which can be utilized to advantage of the summoner. Among a score of possible benefits, a mage calling upon a Moira can gain a greater understanding of the nature of destiny. Mere proximity to a Moira can alter the destiny of the mage, ultimately leading her to new discoveries and conclusions.

Moirae are notorious for turning things around on the summoner, which may end up being either to the benefit of the detriment of the Acanthus. Because Moirae are born from limitless potentiality, their doing so may not be intentional (then again, being entirely unpredictable, it may). As such, a mage who calls upon a Moira must often be extremely careful about what he says when dealing with the creature, lest his words be misinterpreted... or lest he be bound to them with gossamer chains of destiny.

### *Anachronisms — Fae of Time*

The term “anachronism” refers to anything that is incongruous with the time period in which it exists. An Anachronism appears in a temporal context in which it seems out of place and impossible, or at the very least, peculiar. Similarly, a being summoned from Arcadia using the Arcana of Time is taken from its appropriate place-time and brought into a realm in which it does not belong. As such, Fae of Time are called Anachronisms.

Anachronisms appear in a variety of forms related to the passage of time. They may appear very old, very young, or both old and young simultaneously. Many Anachronisms manifest along with imagery related to chronology some way: clocks, calendars, mechanical objects, a beating heart, a metronome, an hourglass. They may alter the summoner’s perception of the progress of history throughout the ritual, making the environment to seem as though years or months have passed when only been a few minutes have transpired.

Anachronisms have an unparalleled understanding of the mechanics of Time. They may be able to journey backwards or forwards in the stream of time,

or clearly see events that have passed or will come to pass. They may be able to stop or speed up time, or link objects together temporally. Some scholars believe that Anachronisms may even be able to remove themselves from the stream of time entirely, and emerge in a place where time is meaningless. From this vantage point, anachronisms can view the passage of time as a whole, and step back into the current wherever (or whenever) they please.

Whether or not Anachronisms are more rational beings than their related Fae, Moirae, is up for debate. While Anachronisms as a whole tend to be more solemn and reserved (though there are certainly some exceptions), they can be just as erratic as their more lively counterparts. A mage summoning an Anachronism is wise to remember that fact. She should stay on guard, show respect, and watch her tongue — or risk being carried away, powerless, by the swift, endless current of time.

### *The Summoner*

While the mage’s ability in other Arcana (apart from ruling Arcana) is typically a fairly straightforward indicator of what type of entity will be summoned from a given Supernal Realm, such is not necessarily the case with Arcadia. It is true that an enchanter who is a disciple of Death might be slightly more likely to call upon a creature associated with death from the Realm of Arcadia, for example. However, the Supernal Realm of Arcadia is a place of chaos, chance, and infinite probability. Therefore, it is also possible (though perhaps less likely) for an Acanthus studying Death to summon an entity that is representative of Life (or, indeed, *any* other Arcanum) from Arcadia.

It is important to remember that a summoning ritual calling upon a denizen of Arcadia can result in the manifestation of a being slanted toward any Arcanum, despite the magical background of the mage. While it is more likely that an enchanter will find herself confronting an entity somehow related to the Arcanum with which she is familiar, she is wise to be prepared for whatever chance brings her. As luck would have it, Acanthus are probably the best suited of all Awakened to deal with such a predicament.

• **Death:** An enchanter who studies the Arcanum of Death is likely to call Moirae representative of ill-omen. They may resemble creatures from superstitious folklore: the Banshee of Irish folklore, a black cat, a flock of ravens, or the barguest, a spectral dog



believed to be a harbinger of death. While Moirae take the form of an omen of death, Anachronisms often choose to manifest in a form representative of the temporal nature of decay. They may manifest as corpses, for example; decaying rapidly, turning to dust, and reforming once more.

- **Life:** An Enchanter who is a Disciple of Life is likely to call upon Fae that manifest in animal form. Despite their appearance, such Fae are known for their cleverness and are usually capable of speech. They may feign ignorance in order to size up the intentions of the summoner, or to gain an advantage. Moirae tend to favor the form of beasts resembling tricksters of folklore: rabbits, coyotes, crows, monkeys, foxes or spiders. Anachronisms manifest as animals long extinct (or, perhaps, not yet evolved): dinosaurs, quaggas, prehistoric fish or insects, mastodons, or saber toothed tigers.

- **Matter:** Mages knowledgeable in the Arcanum of Matter easily reshape the physical world around them to suit their needs. As such, an Acanthus who summons a denizen of Arcadia is likely to attract beings adept at reshaping time or destiny. A Moira of this kind might be able to easily forge a new destiny from the pieces of several others. An Anachronism might be able to take something from the past and combine it with something the future to create something new in the present.

- **Mind:** Fae attracted to a mage studying the Arcanum of Mind are typically exceptionally intelligent and have an unmatched understanding of Fate and Time. A mage who gains its approval can learn a great deal more than he could from most any being native to the Fallen World. Moirae might manifest as sphinx-like creatures, and are often fond of riddles and puzzles. Anachronisms might materialize in the forms of wizened old men or women in grey robes, and are equally fond of challenging the intellect of the summoner.

- **Prime:** Magic flows not only throughout all that is in the present, but also throughout all that is in the past and future, as well. Acanthus well-versed Prime magic may summon Fae who are capable of drawing upon the limitless supply of magical energy that ever was and ever will (or might) be. The ability to harness enormous amounts of Mana in combination with the unpredictable nature of Fae can have greatly beneficial or disastrous results.

- **Space:** Fae summoned by an enchanter studying Space magic are intrepid travelers. They manifest as adventurers of any conceivable shape, size, or

personality; and they typically come equipped with an equally diverse mode of transportation: car, bus, plane, airship, motorcycle, sailboat, bicycle, rickshaw, etc. Moirae can journey through Fate to any location within any possible destiny, and Anachronisms can travel to any location at any point in time: past, present, or future. Persuading these vagrant Fae to take the summoner along can be difficult, however. And once at the desired location/time/destiny, it may be equally difficult to convince the traveler to return the mage to his proper location/time/destiny.

- **Spirit:** A mage strong in the Spirit Arcanum is likely to attract Fae who resemble spirits of Luck or Fate. These Fae may have a strong connection with time and destiny as it occurs in Twilight and the Shadow Realm. Moirae may be able to twist the course of Fate connected to a specific spirit, or help the mage contact spirits that might have been or might be. Anachronisms may assist the mage in contacting a spirit that no longer exists or will exist in the future.

- **Forces:** If it were possible for an Arcanum to be any closer to chaos than Fate, it would be Forces. Moirae summoned by a Disciple of Forces manifest as the energy of the universe, unbridled and unstoppable. They may take the form of balls of explosive fire, wild electrical storms, or roaring waterfalls. Moirae representing such energy have much to teach an Enchanter about harnessing the fluctuating powers of the universe. On the other hand, Anachronisms representative of Forces tend to manifest as beings related to the effects of energy throughout time. One might take the shape of an eroded statue, a creature that has been warped or mutated as though exposed to radiation, or a being made of ice that slowly melts away before the summoner's eyes.

## Example Entities

### *Moira: The Weaver*

The Weaver manifests as a petite, wispy old woman wearing dozens of brightly-colored, intricately woven shawls and scarves. Her eyes are two highly-polished, flat silver mirrors. Her fingers, delicate as spiders' legs, are disproportionately elongated and exceptionally dextrous. Her husband is the Watchmaker (see below), and she chatters about him incessantly to anyone, or anything, willing to listen: "Playing with those silly watches of his all day long, you'd think the old fool would





*be capable of coming home at a reasonable hour once in a while."*

A mage who successfully calls upon the Weaver can persuade her to weave a favor. Like her husband, the Weaver practices her craft for its own sake, and is usually more than happy to oblige in exchange for pleasant conversation and good company.

The Weaver is able to perceive the potential for greatness in any person: any budding talent that was never encouraged to grow, and any hidden ability that was never able to surface. She can sort through the course of destiny, find alternate threads of Fate connected to the mage in which latent untapped abilities are realized, and weave them into a physical form for the summoner to wear (usually a wristband, belt or small talisman). A mage who has never played a musical instrument in his life may suddenly find himself an accomplished pianist when donning a favor crafted by the Weaver. While an Acanthus may find himself stronger at a certain skill while wearing the favor, he

may also discover that he is weaker at others. After all, if a mage spent a great deal of time and effort in one stream of destiny to become a great musician, less time would have been devoted to other skills in order to achieve greatness in one. A favor made by the Weaver eventually unravels (or is prematurely destroyed), and the summoner's original skill (or lack thereof) returns.

The Weaver's favor temporarily rearranges the character's Skill dots, creating areas of great strength and great weakness. The favor remains in effect so long as the player wears it. A favor made by the Weaver unravels in a number of days equal to the mage's Gnosis + Composure.

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 10, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** max 30

**Initiative:** 14

**Defense:** 10



**Speed:** 26 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 8

**Influence:** Destiny 2, Craft 1

**Numina:** Binding Vow, Versatile Energies

**Trial:** The Weaver is highly intolerant of poor manners, so any mage hoping to win her over is wise to stay on his best behavior. The smallest indication of poor etiquette (elbows on the table, an uncovered sneeze, or simply not thanking her for attending the summoning) will turn the Weaver's typically warm demeanor suddenly frigid, and she will obstinately decline any further request made by the summoner.

### *Moirai: The Vardøger*

The loss of a loved one is a difficult burden to bear. While death is one cause of an individual leaving another's life, there are other ways in which a person can be lost. A person may be called away on some important duty, he may lose his mind due to disease or a traumatic event, time and circumstance may transform him into an unrecognizable person, or it may be his own decision to leave. Whatever the reason, the pain of the loss of another can be unbearable. While Sleepers have no alternative other than to muddle through somehow, a mage skilled in the ways of Fate knows that destiny is not set in stone. An enchanter understands that the bringing a loved one back may have a disastrous impact on the future, but the strength of emotion can be a powerful force, and can bring even the most rational of mages to their knees (not that Acanthus are typically known for being very level-headed in the first place).

Vardøgers manifest as detailed replicas of the person lost to the summoner, with the same personality, appearance, and memories. But something is always subtly different: his eyes may not be quite the right shade of blue, his voice may not sound exactly the same as it did, he may have a slight nervous tick that he never had before.

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 5, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 19 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 10

**Influence:** Destiny 1, Memory 1

**Numina:** Harrow

**Trial:** An Acanthus summoning a Vardøger must find a thread of Fate in which the circumstances leading to the loss of that person have not occurred. She must meditate on that alternate destiny, and resolutely pull upon the thread of Fate connected to it, calling the Vardøger into the Fallen World. The original destiny is taken as payment by the Vardøger, who, in return, creates a new Fate based upon the destiny desired by the summoner. A Vardøger physically takes over the place of a lost person within the newly forged destiny.

Typically, a Vardøger wishes to remain in the Fallen World for as long as possible. (Note that a Vardøger's strange trial temporarily overcomes the normally short lifespan of Supernal entities within the Fallen World, through an ill-understood metaphysical loophole.)

Fragments, however, still remain from the original destiny that occurred before the Vardøger altered it: a photograph of another family the lost person could have had if Fate was allowed to pass as it should, or a lost and confused person who has no right to exist, anymore. When confronted by a residual piece of Fate that remains from the original destiny, a Vardøger vanishes and the original destiny returns.

### *Anachronism: The Watchmaker*

The Watchmaker manifests as a tiny, hunched old man donning a waistcoat and telescoping spectacles. His eyes are the flat faces of two clocks, ever ticking. His fingers, delicate as spiders' legs, are disproportionately elongated and exceptionally nimble. His wife is the Weaver (see above), and he speaks of her animatedly and often to anyone willing to lend an ear, "Been together 3,000 years now, at least. Talk about the old ball and chain! The missus knotted our destinies together so tight I couldn't leave if I wanted to!"

A mage who successfully summons the Watchmaker can ask him to build a clockwork mechanism. Like his wife, the Watchmaker practices his craft for its own sake, and is usually more than happy to oblige in exchange a bit of pleasant conversation and, if available, a drop of bourbon.

The Watchmaker is a skilled artisan, and can build magical clockwork devices to serve nearly any purpose: a stopwatch that can temporarily stop time, a silver clockwork nightingale whose song causes the listener to fall into a deep sleep, a clockwork hornet with a paralyzing sting. Such powerful Artifacts come at a high price to the summoner, however. Clockwork devices crafted by the Watchmaker run on time taken



from the life of the mage. The more powerful the Artifact and the longer it must run, the more time from the life of the mage required to fuel the device. An Enchanter who obtains a clockwork Artifact may find large chunks missing from her memory, or she may find herself unable to perform certain tasks or spells previously learned. In game terms, the character temporarily loses a number of Skill dots equal to the merit rating of the Artifact. If the Skill dots are reduced to zero, the character also temporarily loses any rites associated with the Skill. The Skills that the character loses are chosen by the Watchmaker. Eventually, the mechanism runs down (or is prematurely destroyed), and the lost time is returned to the mage.

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 10, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** max 30

**Initiative:** 16

**Defense:** 10

**Speed:** 24 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 10

**Influence:** Time 2, Mechanics 1

**Numina:** Accelerate

**Trial:** The Watchmaker guards the secrets of his trade carefully. If a mage shows too much interest in his work, asks him too many questions, or glances in his direction as he works, the Watchmaker will stubbornly refuse to assist the summoner.

### *Anachronism: The Perdurantist*

A Perdurantist manifests as a two-dimensional image of a man, composed of light and flickering like frames of a movie through a projector. He appears to change rapidly in form and shape as he cycles through life over and over again, from crawling baby to hunched old man. The Perdurantist is representative of change throughout time, and has the ability to make objects younger or older than they are in the Fallen World.

A mage who summons a Perdurantist can ask him to “fix” a broken Artifact. An Artifact that could not ordinarily be repaired by magical means can be restored by a Perdurantist. Rather than mending what is already broken, the Perdurantist finds a discrete moment in time when the object is not broken and restores the object anew.

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 8, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 12

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 14

**Defense:** 8

**Speed:** 24 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 3

**Corpus:** 9

**Influence:** Time 2

**Numina:** None

**Trial:** Before a Perdurantist will restore a damaged Artifact, the summoner must use the Time or Fate Arcanum to show him the purpose the Artifact will serve in the future. The Perdurantist will not exhibit approval or disapproval of the mage’s intent; rather, he will ask the mage one more time if she is sure that she would like the object restored. If the Enchanter is resolute, the Perdurantist will agree to fix the Artifact. Additionally, he will attach a bane or a gift of fortune upon the object to help or hinder the summoner when the object is used in the future. What, exactly, wins the approval of the Perdurantist is uncertain. He is as unpredictable as any denizen



of Arcadia, and there is a small chance that even a mage with the noblest intentions might find herself object of the Perdurantist's bane.

## Gender Identity

Several of the entities chronicled in this chapter are referred to by gender-specific pronouns, while others receive the neutral "it."

Neither approach is *precisely* accurate, as these beings may or may not possess distinct divisions of that sort. Some entities that show certain gender-based characteristics — like the feminine form of the Ophan — are, nevertheless, decidedly neuter. Others — such as the Weaver and the Watchmaker — exhibit decidedly gender-archetypal or even -stereotypical traits. Still others display no specific signs of gender, at all.

Mages, being human, are apt to assign genders to Supernal beings, based upon outward appearance and mannerisms, but they are wise to remember that these creatures may, in fact, simply be the reflections of concepts as they are *meant to be*, filtered through a lens of imperfect mortal comprehension and then cast in a skin that can temporarily endure the intolerable climate of the Fallen World.

## *Pandemonium, the Abode of Demons*

"Stronger than the lash, my spirit, my mind."

The whip licked out again, leaving another bloody gash in his back. He ground his teeth together and repeated the mantra. "Stronger than the lash, my—"

The whip struck him, and he gasped, but finished the statement. "My spirit, my mind!" He cursed Harden for striking him in the middle of the mantra, even though he'd told him to do so before the ritual had started. Can't succumb to patterns. Can't let the mind become weak.

Harden struck again, and again, but Asmodeus didn't notice anymore. He repeated the mantra, over and over, and he found himself alone. The cracks of the whip faded. The room around him faded. Was he going back? Did Pandemonium await?

And then the pain returned. Harden had switched to the brass-tipped lash. The metal at the end of the whip

lodged in the flesh of his side, and Harden yanked it free. Blood spurted from Asmodeus' naked flesh, staining the floor of the summoning circle.

"Stronger than the lash, my spirit, my mind."

The circle opened, but only slightly. Asmodeus peered into it, and saw the ghastly light. He remembered this. He remembered the rolling hills of the Abode of Demons, and the sounds — God, the sounds! — of the tortured souls, always coming from the next rise, forever out of sight. Why in the name of God was he called down something from there?

"Stronger than..."

He trailed off, ready to stop, ready to close the gateway, to let the Demons stay in their abode. And then the pain again, as Harden struck, the brass blade laying his right leg open. Asmodeus cried out, and finished the mantra one final time.

Two immense hooves emerged from the gateway, and then the haunches of a great bull. The Demon pulled itself from the Supernal Road in a perverse parody of a breech birth, fire and sulfur following it like afterbirth. It turned and swung its massive head from side to side, surveying the room, and then leaned down and stuck its snout in Asmodeus' face.

"You called me down, little boy?"

The mage stood, blood flowing freely over his hips and legs. He shut off the pain, now that the spell had succeeded. His heart was pounding, but his voice was clear and strong. "I am Asmodeus. My name adorns the Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet. My mind and spirit are strong, stronger than the lash, stronger than the Abode of Demons, and stronger than you. I called you because I require services of you."

He stared the Demon down, and the Demon dropped its gaze.

## *Calling Down Pandemonium*

Mages on the Path of Scourging are often enamored (or fixated) on the notion of *ordeal*. Everything worth having must be earned, and one earns through suffering. Through adversity, one gains strength. Mastigos mages are capable of turning off pain, but they usually choose to experience it, because in agony they prove (to themselves, if no one else) that they do not need to rewire their minds in order to endure.

Summoning a denizen of Pandemonium, then, is one more test. Calling up a Demon, be it a manifest Imp or a recondite Wraith, is physically and mentally trying. The Warlock must expend a great deal of energy in the ritual itself, and then when the Demon



arrives, he needs to have the remaining fortitude to conquer it. Denizens of Pandemonium are not necessarily hostile to humanity, but they do take their roles as adversaries very seriously. They are not meant to be at the beck and call of mankind, even the Awakened. Weaklings, therefore, need not even attempt a summoning. Of course, a weakling probably doesn't have what's necessary to Awaken as a Mastigos in the first place.

Calling down a Demon isn't without its rewards, however. Some Mastigos call down Demons in order to glimpse Hell again, to remind themselves that what they went through for their Awakening was a greater ordeal than their Acanthus and Obrimos comrades (whether that's true or not is a matter of debate). Other Warlocks look for information on "true" Demons, the inhabitants of Lower Depths that, unlike the Demons of the Kingdom of Nightmares, feed on human vice and depravity. Some Mastigos look for assurance that others of their Path are alive — given the Path's propensity for teleportation and clearing away sympathetic connections, this might be the only way to find this information.

Finally, some Mastigos attempt to call down their tormentors, the Demons that tortured them, turned their souls inside out and exposed every mistake and sin they'd ever experienced, just so they can return the favor.

### *Risks*

Demons are not helpful creatures. They are meant to be tormentors, testers and abusers, and that's precisely what they do. Some Mastigos expect to be met with a handshake and a congratulatory smile — after all, the mage survived Hell, returned to the Fallen World, and has become a powerful enough mage to call a Demon out of its natural habitat into and command it. Shouldn't that be worth a little respect?

Not the way Demons see it. A mortal that calls a Demon out of Pandemonium apparently didn't get the message the first time, and needs a bit more abuse before he learns the lesson of his Path. Time in Pandemonium is meant to turn a mage inside out and force him to confront himself — if a mage needs more help in doing that, the Demon can certainly oblige. Note, though, that most Demons are intelligent enough to realize that they shouldn't kill the summoner. Imps are happy to thrash the mage a bit, while Wraiths invade his mind and look for sins and transgressions to pervert and shove back in his face.

## Demons and Other Demons

The word "demon" is a loaded term, because it calls to mind fallen Angels and other figures from religious mythology. Mages often debate whether Pandemonium is truly "the Abode of Demons." Is it Hell? Are the horrific creatures there the souls of sinners, made monstrous by their surroundings? If so, what does that make the Shades of Stygia? And, when mortal occultists summon what they believe to be Demons, what are they truly calling up?

Awakened scholars generally accept that the inhabitants of Pandemonium are not "demons" in the classical sense, though their appearance may have influenced (or been influenced by) spirits and other entities that actually *do* feed on vice and sin. As for where these beings hail from, some are conceptual spirits found in the Shadow. Others are beings that are not precisely spirits, but occupy a place (or at least, a plane of existence) outside the direct experience of Sleepers and mages alike. This place could legitimately be called "Hell," and the inhabitants thereof, Demons. Whether that lends credence to any particular religion, though, is impossible to say — it's just as likely that early humans saw Hell, somehow, and made up their legends from there.

Likewise, it's important to draw the distinction between the Demons of Pandemonium and the beings "summoned" by goetic magic. Goetists call up manifestations of their own vices and frailties, giving them will and form. In a sense, they aren't really summoning anything, merely giving voice to what already exists. Practice of goetia doesn't help or hinder a Mastigos in calling up a Demon.

A Mastigos performing a Supernal summoning, then, *always* has a struggle on his hands when the entity arrives. The nature of that struggle varies. Some Demons can be intimidated. Some have to be fought to a standstill. Others can be outwitted or commanded. The specifics of the situation depend on the nature of the summoned being, but also on the mage's Awakening. Remember that a Supernal summoning is recalling his own time in the realm in

order to make the spell possible. As such, the situation often feels horrible familiar to Mastigos, as they remember what it was like to be powerless.

The good news is, of course, that if the Mastigos is in a position to cast a summoning spell, he *isn't* powerless. He escaped Pandemonium to become a mage, and a skilled one at that. But the Demon doesn't always (or even usually) attack in the same way that the mage remembers. If the Mastigos' trip to Pandemonium was an exercise in body horror, in which he was ripped to pieces and then stitched back together again, the Demon he summons up might turn off his senses and leave him in silent blackness. If the Abode of Nightmares was a grand ballroom for him, a party in which he was forced to serve the wanton needs of the assembled Demons, the Imp he calls down might dominate him mercilessly, shoving him to the ground by his face whenever he attempts to rise. The details, again, vary from Demon to Demon, but the Warlock should prepare for adversity.

### *The Ritual*

The Mastigos needs to replicate the conditions of his Awakening as much as possible. Since the extreme, mind-bending surrealism of Pandemonium isn't immediately replicable in the Fallen World, though, many Warlocks turned to self-flagellation or other means of inflicting pain in order to call to mind the trials they suffered. Some mages even use their command of the Mind Arcanum to inflict random hallucinations on themselves, reduce their capacity for logic and quick thought, switch off their senses and amplify their responses to physical pain. Although it can make the summoning process more difficult (see p. 73), some Mastigos ask members of their cabals to be present for the summoning, either to help facilitate the simulation, or to provide medical attention if things get out of hand.

Because of Pandemonium's relationship with Space, the physical surroundings for the ritual are largely unimportant. They might be significant to the mage, but the "place" in the Fallen World that resonates the strongest with Pandemonium is the human mind. Summoning a Demon inside a person's Oneiros is unsafe at best, and not necessarily possible, and so Warlocks more often try to keep their summoning circles either nondescript (keeping the sympathetic associations experiential or internal) or mock them up to resemble what the mage remembers of Pandemonium.

This latter option can get out of hand very quickly, of course. One Mastigos abducted seven Sleepers,

magically blinded them, arranged them in various torture devices around his sanctum, and called down a Wraith from Pandemonium. The Sentinels of his Consilium discovered the ritual and freed the Sleepers, took the Warlock into custody, and found no evidence that the spell had even been attempted. The mage, however, repeatedly asserted that the spell "worked better than he'd imagined." While the Consilium officially asserts that he went mad and never tried the spell, it also passed two laws that same month — one banning Supernal summoning, and one declaring the mage's sanctum off-limits to anyone without at least a Disciple's rank in the Mind Arcanum.

**Sample Correspondences:** Pain, madness, sensory deprivation, silence, darkness, screams, bondage, sensation, whips, chains, vertigo, very high or deep locales, caves, brass, iron.

### *The Entities*

Mastigos can summon entities from Pandemonium using Mind (Subtle) or Space (Gross). All such entities are collectively called Demons. Manifest Demons are called Imps, while recondite Demons are called Wraiths.

#### *Imps — Demons of Space*

The word "imps" calls to mind creatures short in stature, but full of wickedness and mischief. And sometimes, that's not far off the mark — Mastigos can certainly summon creatures that resemble the traditional interpretation of an Imp. But the term as Supernal summoners understand it is simply "a Demon summoned with the Space Arcanum," and that allows for a great deal of variety.

An Imp differs from a Wraith in that it always has a physical body. That body's form, though, is not static, because it is a product of Pandemonium. In the Kingdom of Nightmares, a mage's self, his soul, is inverted. His thoughts and fears are removed and plastered across the landscape, while the details of physical reality become part of his understanding. The Imps are manifestations of Space — the physical world and its properties — filtered through the lens of fear, horror and adversity. Small wonder, then, that whatever form they take, Imps are terrifying.

Some Imps take the forms of literal monsters, hulking, slaving demons that the mage must summon all his courage even to approach. Some are small and unassuming things, using the forms of terrestrial animals. Some even appear human. It's difficult to say



whether all Imps are intelligent. Some *act* as though they only have an animal's level of cognition, but in a realm in which Mind is one of the Ruling principles, cognition is not in short supply.

An Imp's challenge might be martial in nature, but it's just as often a moral quandary or a riddle. After all, if all a Mastigos wants to do is best his own vices he should take up goetia. Calling down manifest Demons of Pandemonium might ask him to enter a literal fight with a monster, where damage is measured in blood and flesh (Health), not in fortitude and courage (Willpower). It might also present him with an Imp in the body of a child, begging not to be returned to the Supernal Realms. Who could send a child back to Hell? The mage must, by remembering who he is (a Warlock on the Path of Scourging) and therefore who the child is (a Demon).

Imps, when bested, can help mages overcome mental blocks relating to the practice of Space (in game terms, granting Arcane Experience that can be used to increase the Arcanum instead of Gnosis). Because of their origins, however, they also often command unparalleled skills at scrying. A mage requires a sympathetic connection to his target in order to open a scrying window, but a Demon is the scrying window. Because Space is ultimately a state of mind, no sympathy is required for a Demon to scry. An Imp might be able to find a target that the mage cannot, though it might simply grant the mage a tenuous sympathetic connection, just enough to enable a weak attempt to open a window. The mage, then, needs to build the connection from there.

### *Wraiths — Demons of Mind*

Wraiths, the inhabitants of Pandemonium summoned through the use of the Mind Arcanum, are arguably the most dangerous to summon of any of the Supernal beings. They do not normally have physical bodies, but they might as well — the connection created when a mage summons a Wraith allows the being immediate and unfettered access to the mage's mind. As such, the Wraith can force the mage to feel, see, hear and otherwise experience anything it wishes. If the Wraith wants to harm the mage, it simply wills the mage to feel pain.

Fortunately, Wraiths are not usually malevolent just for the sake of it. In true Pandemonium fashion, they act in an adversarial manner in order to test the mage, to force him to rise to meet the adversity. If the Wraith has access to the mage's mind, the mage must either fight to reclaim it or shut it off. The Wraith can

remind the mage (graphically, if necessary) of any sin he has ever committed, every trauma he has ever faced. If the mage hasn't truly come to terms with himself, then he shouldn't be calling down Supernal entities, and certainly not from the Abode of Demons.

A mage that successfully summons and bests a Wraith might be granted self-knowledge of a nature deeper and more profound than any a Sleeper guru could teach. Any action he has ever taken, any choice he has ever made, he can learn exactly why he made it. He can learn how external stimuli affect him (which, coupled with the Mind Arcanum, can allow him to *change* how they affect him), and he can learn how to beat his own Vice. Summoning up a Wraith sometimes acts as the impetus for a mage to learn goetia. And some goetists call down a Wraith, and realize that they just don't need to bother with their Vices anymore.

### *The Summoner*

All summoners unconsciously influence the specific being they call down simply by dint of their magical styles. For Mastigos, however, intent plays perhaps a larger role in the summons than for other Paths — not surprising, given that Mind is one of the Ruling Arcana. A mage that wants to be punished for a past transgression summons a Demon capable of meting out punishment. A mage that wants to be rewarded *might* get his wish, but it's far more likely that the Demon will make him look at his motives objectively (and then reward him, if that's appropriate). This reflection of intent is, of course, more prevalent for mages summoning Wraiths than Imps, but all Demons know the summoner's thoughts better than other Supernal beings.

A Warlock's choice of magical study also influences the being he summons. While all of the Arcana are present in Pandemonium to one degree or another, they interact with the dominant forces (Mind and Space) in different ways. Below are some suggestions as to the beings a mage with a great deal of knowledge in a non-ruling Arcanum (Disciple or better) might summon.

- **Death:** A Mastigos who studies Death is likely to summon an Imp that takes the form of a dead person, and probably proceeds to impersonate her, throwing in the Mastigos' face every wrong that the mage ever did the deceased. If the mage summons a Wraith, the Demon might take the form of ghost and do much the same thing, or it might focus more on the capacity

for Death to represent the negative. More specifically, such Wraiths specialize in sensory deprivation and mental negation, leaching away thought until the mage has to fight to remain conscious.

- **Fate:** An Imp summoned by a Warlock with some proficiency in Fate might resemble a classical Demon, complete with blandishments to enter into a pact of some kind. The Mastigos needs to be careful here, for two reasons. First, of course, the Imp needs to be bested, and agreeing to a pact probably isn't the way to do it. But second, the mage doesn't have any way to be certain that the being he summoned *isn't* a Demon, or an Abyssal creature (which is close enough). That pact might be a symbol to winnow out the mage's weakness, or it might be a real offer.

- **Forces:** These Demons are showy, loud and terrifying. Imps are covered in flames and accompanied by the howls of the damned, while Wraiths drop the temperature as they emerge, change the colors of the area to a surrealist nightmare, and emit haunting songs meant to distract and disturb the summoner.

- **Life:** A Demon called down by a Mastigos studying Life is often unabashedly sexual. Sex is a hot button for many people, mages included, and Mastigos have to cope with being able to magically alter a desirable person's mood in their favor. These Demons might try to seduce the Mastigos, or might take on the forms of people he has seduced in the past. Wraiths summoned by such Mastigos are often the rare recondite Demons that choose to take on physical bodies, but they often get the textures of flesh and hair wrong. A woman's skin might look normal, but feel scaly or too warm. A man's breath might have no scent at all.

- **Prime:** A Mastigos who is also skilled in the Prime Arcanum is likely to summon Demons who are extremely well-versed in Supernal magic, Awakening, and Paradox. This means that an Imp is likely to impersonate an Abyssal creature (especially if the mage has caused or seen a Manifestation Paradox before), while a Wraith is more likely to alter the mage's perceptions to make him think he's caused a Paradox. Simulating Bedlam isn't hard for Wraiths, and an insidious one can make a mage think he's experienced a Branding or even Havoc.

- **Spirit:** A Warlock with Spirit expertise is in for some bizarre happenings if he summons a Wraith. These Demons of Mind often search for sentience near the mage, and then amplify it. Of course, given that the Shadow surrounds the Fallen World, sentience is always abundant; it's just that most people lack the capacity to see it. But if the mage is a Disciple of Spirit,

he can look across the Gauntlet (or the Wraith can force him to), and see the creatures there, made clever but not kind by the Wraith's influence. An Imp summoned by the same mage might take inspiration for its form from spirits, or it might create portals to open gates into the Shadow, just long enough for the mage to look into the most hellish part of the spirit world. After all, the mage has already seen Pandemonium — what other Hells can the Demons show him?

- **Time:** Combining the temperament of the Demons with the Arcanum of Time makes for torture that few beings on Earth can fathom. The demon might stretch out the mage's senses, making one pinprick last forever, or show the mage the past (or the future) in breathtaking clarity. These Demons might take the form of childhood friends now long dead, or assume the shape of people the mage knows as young, strong individuals, made old and decrepit by the ravages of years.

- **Matter:** Matter is the inferior Arcanum of Pandemonium. In Pandemonium, there is no weight, no true substance, and no concept of inertia or solidity. A Mastigos who overcomes this limitation and becomes a Disciple of Matter, then, is a force to be reckoned with, and Demons respect and fear such a mage. A Warlock who studies Matter and summons a Demon is afforded slightly deference that he might otherwise see, but he can expect some pointed questions about his choices of magic.

## *Example Entities*

Below are two sample Imps and two sample Wraiths. Each of them includes some suggestions about what kinds of Mastigos might summon it, but with a little tweaking, any of them could be a suitable answer to a Warlock's summons.

### *Imp: The Demon Bull*

This Demon resembles the Greek minotaur. It stands more than nine feet tall, and has the haunches of a bull, massive shoulders, human-like hands and a bovine face and horns. It emerges from the summoner's portal tail-first, with a gush of blood and fluid that resembles an obscene birth. This Imp is a good respondent to the summons of a Mastigos with some proficiency at Life magic, or one whose experience of Pandemonium was of small, subtle creatures. The Demon Bull is anything but subtle. Within moments of being "born," it demands to know who summoned it. If the mage takes credit in a clear, strong voice, the





Bull submits and will answer questions or perform tasks of lifting, carrying or crushing (though not combat). If the mage falters, the Bull punches him, and then asks again who summoned it. This continues until the mage succeeds or falls unconscious (at which point the Bull departs).

**Attributes:** Power 8, Finesse 3, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 14

**Essence:** max 20

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 8

**Speed:** 21 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 7

**Corpus:** 13

**Influence:** Fear 2, Pain 1

**Numina:** Harrow, Reaching

**Trial:** The summoner's player must succeed on a contested Resolve + Composure roll (vs. the Bull's Power + Finesse) in order to stand up to the Demon Bull. If the mage fails, the Bull punches the mage (attack dice pool 11, inflicts bashing damage), and

again asks who summoned it. The mage's player must continue attempting to stand up to the Bull, but wound penalties apply to the Resolve + Composure roll. If the mage falls unconscious or gives up, the Bull departs for Pandemonium.

*Imp: Eshu Latieye*

This Imp takes its name from one of the *orishas*. When it appears in response to a summons, it challenges the mage to a game — cards, dice, coins, it doesn't matter. It invariably wins, and then challenges the mage to a "best of three," and then best of five and so on. If the mage doesn't end this series of contests, the Imp runs out of time and departs. Not surprisingly, Eshu Latieye appears in response to the summons of Mastigos with a background in Fate magic.

If a mage can win the games, fairly or not, the Imp is willing to grant him luck in a future endeavor. The Imp spits into a small vial and hands it to the mage. When the mage wants the luck, he simply crushes (or drinks) the vial, and then may enjoy an 8-again bonus on any three rolls in the next scene.



Eshu Latieye appears as a small, dark-skinned humanoid, with long fingers and a snide smirk on his face. He never wears clothes and displays his nakedness proudly, which some mages interpret as psychological warfare.

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 6, Resistance 2

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 19 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 6

**Influence:** Luck 1

**Numina:** Innocuous

**Trial:** Once a mage has beaten Eshu Latieye in a game of chance, the Imp is bound to give up its services. The problem is, it happily cheats. Nothing, it explains, is really a game of chance — everything can affect the outcome, so there's no reason not to do it overtly. Playing fair requires contested rolls with the Imp, with the dice pool depending on the game — but the Imp gets an 8-again bonus, and isn't above using the equivalent of the "Evil Eye" spell on the mage. The mage, however, can cheat as well, using Fate magic to alter the games' outcomes. This isn't considered dishonorable; Eshu Latieye thinks any mage who *doesn't* do it is foolish.

### *Wraith: The Thousandth Cut*

This horrible Demon does not take physical form, and indeed does not manifest visibly. Mages who summon it don't even know that the spell has succeeded... until they start to bleed. The Demon cuts them open, making tiny slices in their flesh. None of these cuts causes serious damage by itself, but by the time the Thousandth Cut earns its name, the mage has is half-mad from pain and blood loss. Of course, true to form for a creature of Pandemonium, the Wraith will stop whenever the mage asks. But if the mage does tell it to stop, it departs for its home realm. If the mage succeeds in holding out for a thousand cuts, the blood on the floor ripples and shimmers, and the rivulets form into a mouth. The Demon can then speak to the mage, helping him to puzzle out enemies' motives, cause and effect relationships and giving advice both political and practical.

**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 7, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** max 15



**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 7

**Speed:** 19 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 2

**Corpus:** 5

**Influence:** Blood 2

**Numina:** Harrow, Trial

**Trial:** The Demon makes one cut per turn as soon as it emerges from the summoning gateway. The mage suffers one level of lethal damage per minute, and the player must accumulate 10 successes on a Stamina + Resolve roll (roll once per minute). If the mage falls unconscious or demands that the Demon stop, the Demon leaves.

The mage has another option, though. If he can pinpoint the Demon's location using the Mind Arcanum, he can force the Demon to stop using a Space spell (see Affecting Denizens with Magic, p. 72).



## *Wraith: The Memory of Hell*

One of the most insidious recondite Demons of Pandemonium, the Memory of Hell attacks in a rush of sensation and images. It brings the mage back to Pandemonium, and forces him to relive his Awakening. This time, however, it changes key details, makes challenges just a bit harder and tries to force the Mastigos to give up. Moreover, it tries to make the Mastigos believe that everything that has happened to him since his Awakening has been a dream, just part of a grand mystery play. If the Mastigos succumbs to despair, or tries to repeat that which has already happened, he fails to best the Demon and it returns to Pandemonium. If he refuses to play along and asserts that he is and has been walking the Path of Scourging, the Memory of Hell ceases the assault, and converses with the mage. The Memory of Hell can help point the mage toward a practitioner of any Legacy that teaches the Mind Arcanum, or any Legacy open to Mastigos. For some of the more obscure Legacies, this Demon might be the only way to find a mentor.

The Memory of Hell is invisible and incorporeal. It never manifests visibly, but its voice is low, sonorous and frank.

**Attributes:** Power 7, Finesse 8, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 11

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 12

**Defense:** 8

**Speed:** 25 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 2

**Corpus:** 6

**Influence:** Memory 4

**Numina:** Derange, Psychic Torment, Trial, Usurp Vice

**Trial:** This Demon's challenge is best run as its own scene, with the mage reliving his Awakening and trying to remember that he already succeeded. This requires that the player give the Storyteller details about the Awakening (hopefully earlier in the chronicle), and the Storyteller presents these details with slight variations. Likewise, the Storyteller should revisit key points in the chronicle, with the intention of making it all seem surreal and dreamlike. If, at any point, the mage states that he is a Warlock and that this challenge has already been completed, the Demon ceases it.

## *The Primal Wild, Abode of Beasts*

"Aren't you worried about... you know... the natural world and all?"

I love young Shamans. "What do you mean?" We were standing on the side of the mountain, a split-rail fence separating us from hundreds of feet of nothing. Well, probably not nothing. If we fell here, we'd bounce against the mountainside enough times that we'd be hamburger by the time we hit bottom.

"Well, I just..." He gestured around us. Scrub, cactus, flies, sand. "We're bringing jeeps and stuff out here—"

"Nothing that hasn't been done before."

"I know, but—"

"Hang on." I took a drink from my water bottle. It was still cool, but sweating something awful. "You think maybe this is a bad idea, because we drove here? If we hadn't, we'd be dead already."

"I know. But now that we're here, we still have all this stuff." He gestured to the pile of gear. I rolled my eyes.

"Craig — sorry, Cernunnos — you've got to lighten up." I swatted a fly on my arm, and the poor kid actually winced. "Look, I'm not saying that the natural world isn't a concern. I'm not saying that environmentalism isn't a concern. But you've got to look at it all on the right scale." I smacked another fly, crushing it against my shoulder. "Now, take that fly, for instance. If it and all its buddies could build machines that would let them feed without getting smacked, they would. Human beings do what we do because we can. It's our place in the natural world you love so much." Craig's face was getting sunburned, too. I debated letting him burn just to show him that he needs to be prepared more than dogmatic, but screw it. I'm too old for that kind of sensei bullshit. I tossed him a tube of sunblock.

"But all the damage we're causing—"

"Has its reflection in the Shadow, too." I started scratching the circle in the ground. We needed to get this going before dark. "Look, I'm not saying it's okay for people to be dumping their garbage everywhere, because doing that shows a lot of disrespect for the place we have to live. But if you watch the world, animals — and people — are changing to cope with the way the world's changing, or else they die out. That's how this works."

"But if we're the ones causing the changes, isn't that... I don't know... wrong?"

I connected the points on the circle. "Me, I don't see it as any more wrong than an asteroid hitting us." I looked up at the sky. I've always had this weird feeling that if any asteroid hits, it's going to hit me, but that's probably just egocentrism. "But I could be wrong. That's what I want to ask." I pointed at the cooler. "Grab the stuff out of there. We're going to start."

Realization hit Craig full in the face. "We're contacting the Primal Wild to ask about—"

"Yep." Four hours to twilight. I figured that would be enough. "Best to go to the source, I figure."

## Calling Down the Primal Wild

Mages looking for lofty advice, sage wisdom and benevolent mentors had best look elsewhere. The Primal Wild is the Abode of Beasts, and the Shamans that connect to this realm know that they take their lives into their hands when they open the gateway. Thyrus mages summoning Beasts using Spirit magic have a slightly better chance of getting an intelligent creature, but the denizens of the Primal Wild, even the Subtle ones, aren't known for cognition. They are known for their primal instincts, their animalistic, simplistic needs and how they express them. There is wisdom to be gained in drawing down the Primal Wild, but that wisdom is, like a fossil, buried under a million years of the natural processes of the world.

Every Thyrus faces the same problem: the Shadow is all around, and *everything* has a spirit. A mage's natural human compassion dictates that nothing with a consciousness should be made to feel pain, but spirits — even intelligent ones — prey on each other regularly. Reconciling where she fits in the circle of life is a difficult task for a mage who can see the pain of the land ravage by pollution, or can witness the cancers forming in a child living under power lines. And so Shamans think back to their time in the Primal Wild, trying to find the Supernal lessons there.

The mage can find wisdom here, certainly, but she must be careful that she does not, in the process, lose that which makes her Wise. Mages are just as prone to anthropomorphism as any Sleeper, and the Shaman calling down the Primal Wild must remember: the sky does not weep, it rains. The ground does not tremble in anger, it quakes from seismic tremors. The cat does not play with its prey, it kills it carefully, making sure not to be bitten in the process. The Primal Wild is not a human realm, and human beings are unimportant here. A Shaman calling a being out of this realm should remember that.

## Risks

Summoning a denizen from any of the Supernal Realms has its risks, as has been stated elsewhere. But summoning the Beasts of the Primal Wild entails a different sort of risk, because those Beasts do not have a vested interest in keeping mages alive or teaching them. The wisdom they have to impart is incidental — a mage might learn much about shapeshifting or body transformation from watching a Beast, but not by conversing with it. A mage might be able to glean information about the spirit wilds by observing the ephemeral natives thereof, but those spirits aren't usually interested in explaining themselves to a Shaman. Indeed, most of them aren't *able* to explain themselves.

A mage summoning a Beast, then, is calling up a creature with no particular regard for the mage as a human being. It doesn't see humanity as noble or special, and it regards the summoning gateway the same way an animal might regard an intriguing hole or path — something that might contain food or shelter. The main risk a Shaman calling down the Primal Wild runs, then, is being killed and eaten.

Of course, Beasts called down using the Spirit Arcanum aren't always so animalistic. The Primal Wild mirrors the Shadow in some ways, and the Shadow is home to conceptual spirits, ephemeral beings that embody emotional, psychological and even moral concepts. A mage that summons a spirit of love isn't likely to be devoured, of course, but what if the mage summons a murder-spirit, or a spirit of spite? The possibilities are so vast and the window of control so narrow that a mage who summons a recondite Beast has *no* idea what kind of thing she might see, and that's before considering the possibility of getting an Abyssal creature instead.

Obviously, Shamans should summon with care. Fortunately, by the time a Shaman is powerful enough to attempt this summons, a mentor has usually beaten that lesson into her head.

## The Ritual

Summoning a creature from the Primal Wild can be likened to going into the wilderness for an extended period of time. The mage needs to make sure she has all of the possibilities covered. That means the summoning space needs an escape route, and help needs to be close enough that the mage won't bleed out before it reaches her. Shamans usually keep weapons close at hand, summon guardian spirits to



step in if called, and, for those mages skilled in Time as well as Life, hang healing spells in case of injury (see p. 260 of **Mage: The Awakening** for more on prepared spells).

As for the ritual space, Shamans normally prefer to summon manifest Beasts (called Atavisms) in a natural setting. Forest, desert, mountains, lakes, even oceans — any place away from a major population center is often the first choice. Urban Shamans, however, point out that cities can hold a surprising amount of biodiversity, and report great success in summoning such creatures into the “concrete jungle.” Of course, summoning this sort of creature here presents another problem — the large number of Sleepers nearby can provide a source of Disbelief, or, worse, food, if the Beast gets loose.

Recondite Beasts — or Totems — can be summoned anywhere. A Thyrsus doing so, though, needs to pay attention to the correspondences not only to the Primal Wild, but to the Totem in question. That is, the mage can't predict what kind of being will come through the gateway, but she can (and should) pay attention to what is nearby. A Thyrsus who summons a Totem in a room full of weapons is likely to attract a violent Beast. Summoning a Totem to a murder site might call down a spirit of grief, death, murder or even justice. A Shaman should look around her ritual space and ask herself: “What kind of spirit would be attracted to this area?” She then must prepare for any answer she can come up with.

**Sample Correspondences:** Blood, sex, animals, stone, mountains, silver, moon rocks, fur, werewolves, water, fire, predation, plants, fossils.

## *The Entities*

The denizens of the Primal Wild are collectively called Beasts. Manifest Beasts are known as Atavisms, while recondite Beasts are called Totems.

## *Atavisms — Beasts of Life*

An “atavism” is a genetic throwback, something out of place in modern life. The Atavisms of the Primal Wild are exactly that. They emerge from the Supernal gateways, some hungry, some timid and some indifferent, but almost all operate according to animal instinct.

The Storyteller has a great deal of leeway in presenting these creatures, because they can represent animals that have not walked the Earth in millions of

## Totems and Spirits

Are Totems, in fact, spirits? They work by the same game mechanics, they conform to the same ecology, and they originate from the Supernal Realm in which Spirit is a ruling Arcanum.

For the purposes of **Mage**, the only difference is that Totems are subject to magic as described on p. 72 of this book, rather than being subject to the Spirit Arcanum as described in **Mage: The Awakening**. But to an observer in a chronicle, yes, Totems are indistinguishable from spirits.

That has some implications for the Primal Wild as it relates to the Fallen World, and more importantly, the Shadow. Was the Primal Wild part of the Shadow at one point, before an Atlantean king carved part of it away and moved it across the Abyss? It's possible, but that isn't the sort of question that needs a definitive answer in a game book, because it's not the sort of thing that a cabal is going to realistically be able to answer anyway.

Another, related matter, for Storytellers and players who have access to **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, is this: do Totems respond to Gifts and rites? The answer is: no. Totems, whatever their origins, are Supernal creatures, and are not subject to the bargains and oaths that compel spirits to respond to a werewolf's powers. Likewise, while it might be possible for a Beast to consume a spirit from the Shadow if it is in the Beast's nature to do so (the Ravenous Beast, for instance), this doesn't change or empower the Beast in any way. It might be a good bribe, though.

years — or never did. The Life Arcanum is capable of created fantastic creatures, dragons, unicorns, griffins and beasts unrecognizable to any human mythology. Any of them might answer a summons.

Does this mean that such creatures ever lived in the Fallen World? It's hard to say. The Primal Wild is a realm of spirit and flesh, and the line between the two blurs considerably in the Abode of Beasts. A given Atavism might have no fossil record, but that doesn't mean it was never a spirit — and if it's a spirit, in the Primal Wild, it has a body. Likewise,

many creatures in the realm can change their forms, and what steps out of the gateway might merely be what that Atavism chose to wear that day.

Some Atavisms are intelligent and capable of human conversation. Many are not, but can be made so with a Life spell (see *Affecting Denizens with Magic*, p. 72).

An Atavism can teach a mage much about extinct animal and plant life. A Shaman on the cusp of learning to shapeshift or create *Fantasia* (see p. 192 of **Mage: The Awakening**) can take notes from the manifest Beasts of the Primal Wild. Also, a mage might summon plant life just as easily as animal life, and cuttings from these Supernal flora, while they might not grow into something quite so fantastic as their “parent,” can make for amazing herbal treatments, remedies and even poisons.

### *Totems — Beasts of Spirit*

Shamans who call down recondite Supernal beings from the Primal Wild often expect them to behave like spirits. The methodology is much the same, and the magic is similar, so surely the end product should be as well? Sometimes, these mages are correct — the Totem they summon looks and acts much like a spirit called out of the Shadow. Sometimes, though, a Totem gives them more than they are prepared for.

Spirits in the Shadow, after all, have a limited degree of autonomy. They are able to act only within their purview. A hate-spirit cannot do other than hate. A fox-spirit must *be* a fox, which means it cannot show mercy to its prey if it is hungry, and so on. As spirits grow more powerful (which they do by consuming other spirits), they also gain a greater degree of will and intelligence. Totems from the Primal Wild are *all* powerful spirits, even the ones that appear weak. They don't suffer from the same kind of purity of focus as that suffered by their Shadow-born cousins. As such, a mage might summon something that resembles a hate-spirit from the Primal Wild, but it is capable of understanding the mage's perspective. A fox-spirit understands that something has to die so that it can live, and is able to make choices based on *what* is being killed for its sustenance.

In order for Totems to display this kind of cognition, though, the mage needs to treat them like something other than spirits. She needs to indicate understanding that the Totem she has summoned is more than a “normal” spirit. This kind of deference to the spirit world is a hallmark of the Thyrsus Path. The Shaman

does not need to be subservient, but respectful. The Shaman does exert power over spirits, certainly, but must do so wisely.

Totems can appear in nearly any form; as stated above, they can manifest as natural, conceptual or even artificial spirits based on what correspondences the mage has in the summoning area. Some Totems emerge from the gateway ready to converse the mage, and some behave like squires or pages (see p. 317 of **Mage: The Awakening**) until the mage finds a way to unlock their potential.

If a Shaman treats a Totem well, it might be able to give her knowledge of the local Shadow. She can learn powerful spirit's ban, the location of a Verge, how to deal with werewolves (even the right phrase in the tongue of spirits can be enough), and other pieces of Shadow lore.

### *The Summoner*


The summoner has an effect on the type of Beast summoned from the Primal Wild, but this effect is far less pronounced for Shamans than for Mastigos, for instance. This is because the Primal Wild is built on the assumption that a mage's *ability* to survive and Awaken determine her *eligibility* to do so. Put another way, a Shaman becomes a Shaman if she deserves it, because the Primal Wild is a brutal, uncaring wilderness.

The Shaman that summons up a Beast, then, could consider her ability in the other Arcana as bait. What kind of Beast might a Shaman who studies Forces entice? What sort of Atavism would be drawn by Fate? Many summoners don't consider this question, figuring that since the Primal Wild is a realm of Life and Spirit, those are the only two Arcana that matter. When a creature wholly other than their expectations emerges, they must scramble to deal with it.

- **Death:** A Shaman who is a Disciple of Death is likely to call Totems that represent death or carrion. They might take the forms of Grim Reapers, crows, owls and other animals associated with death. Atavisms, though, are scavengers — hideous vultures, rooting boar-creatures or other monsters that feed on the dead. Such creatures might look and smell revolting, but they have much to teach a Thyrsus about reusing discarded matter — or even ideas — in new forms.

- **Fate:** Atavisms tempted by Fate are almost always fantastical creatures, animals that never truly walked the Fallen World, but have a place in it all the same.





Such Beasts are often intelligent even before a Shaman uses magic to make them so. More importantly, they usually understand the notion of bargaining, which is a much safer starting point than normally possible. Totems summoned by such Shamans are often embodiments of concepts (honesty, oaths, betrayal, destiny), and take the forms of ravens, cats and other animals often used as familiars.

- **Forces:** If a Shaman knowledgeable in the Arcanum of Forces summons an Atavism, it's just as likely to be a plant as an animal. Flora, of course, flourish with sunlight, and so a mage that can control light, heat and (to some extent) weather makes is of interest to such beings. Likewise, reptiles and other cold-blooded organisms might emerge from the gateway (this also gives the Shaman a good way to get on the Beast's good side). Totems, in this case, might be elemental spirits, taking on the forms of phoenixes, lightning beetles, salamanders, leeches and other animals that are either tied to the elements or the weather in popular myth.

- **Matter:** When an animal or a plant dies, its magical purview changes from Life to Matter (after a brief stint with Death). As such, Beasts summoned by Shamans with knowledge of the Matter Arcanum might be scavengers, or they might be animals that shape their surroundings. Woodpeckers, dung beetles and many other species use their physical environments, and they might appreciate a mage that can do much the same thing on a grander scale. Likewise, in the Primal Wilds, water, stone and air all have spirits, and Totems representing these materials might seek out a Thyrsus skilled in Matter.

- **Prime:** Every object, being or substance has within it Mana, and so Prime is a kind of siren call in the Primal Wild, a resonating signal that any Beast might feel compelled to follow. As such, a Shaman with knowledge of Prime who summons down a Supernal being is putting a kind of evolution into play — only the creature that can enter the gateway quickly follows the gateway to the reward at the end. Of course, this means that only fast, savage or intelligent Beasts make the cut, which can have either good or extremely bad ramifications for the mage at the other end.

- **Space:** Shamans with expertise in Space tend to call Beasts with amazing powers of perception. A spider feels everything on its web. An eagle can see so far as to border on clairvoyance. Likewise, creatures that can cross long distances in the blink of an eye might be lured by a mage with a similar ability. Totems, likewise, tend to follow the same lines —

spirits of distance, travel, knowledge are possible, as are spirits of suspicion, jealousy, and violation (a Disciple of Space has amazing potential to see what she shouldn't be able to see). Such Totems might take the forms of insects, frogs, geckos and other clinging or creepy animals.

- **Time:** The study of Time breeds an appreciation for inevitability and the ravages of years, and the Primal Wild is an excellent object lesson in these precepts. A jungle will eventually reclaim a city, if it isn't trimmed back. A stream will cut through rock. Years of erosion can destroy any structure. Not all Shamans who learn the Time Arcanum learn this sort of patience, however — they might use Time to skip over the difficult parts of their lives, to speed up what they don't wish to experience. A more patient mage is likely to attract Totems and Atavisms that live slowly. Spirits of weather, glaciers, mountains and stone, or animals such as tortoises and alligators (or, if the terrain permits, sharks, which were swimming the Earth's oceans long before the dinosaurs appeared) are all good possibilities. Impatient mages might summon mayflies, salmon and other creatures that live quickly and urgently.

- **Mind:** The Primal Wild is a realm of instinct and intuition, not cognition. That isn't to say that the inhabitants are stupid, but they do tend to animalistic (in the case of Atavisms) or so focused on their own purview that they *seem* simplistic (Totems). The ability to awaken true *thought* in these creatures, then, is a powerful one, and Shamans who learn at least a Disciple's rank in Mind are likely to attract Atavisms and Totems that already have some affinity for human-like reason. These beings might take any form, but they are often deceptively small and weak-looking.

## Example Entities

### *Atavism: The Carnivorous Plant*

It's not something that people think about often, but every living thing in the world, plants included, need sustenance. Most plants take it from the sun, but some eat meat. This Atavism appears when a Shaman summons a being from the Primal Wild into a forest or jungle area, or in a place in which prey is plentiful (a pet store, perhaps). The plant takes root, and can stave off dying from exposure to the Fallen World as long as it eats at least five pounds of meat every day.



The plant varies in shape. Some resemble huge Venus fly-traps, others the pitcher plants that trap insects in basins of toxic digestive juices. Some have vines that drag prey toward and open maw, and some emit a scent so cloying that the prey can't help but lie down for a while.

These Atavisms aren't intelligent, but with a Life spell they can be made so. Conversing with them usually requires the Shaman to alter her body to allow communication via scent, but once that happens, the mage can learn new ways to use the plant life around her in magic. A cutting from this plant produces a smaller version that, if well fed, produces bulbs that can be consumed for one point of Mana each (assume it produces two bulbs a week).

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 3, Resistance 5  
**Willpower:** 9  
**Essence:** max 15  
**Initiative:** 8  
**Defense:** 4  
**Speed:** 0 (this Atavism is sessile)  
**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 11  
**Influence:** Hunger 2  
**Numina:** Versatile Energies

**Trial:** As mentioned, the Carnivorous Plant can't communicate using human language, and won't communicate at all unless made more intelligent.

### *Atavism: The Ravenous Beast*

Summoning up this sort of Atavism is only slightly less problematic than calling down an Abyssal creature. The Ravenous Beast wants only *meat*, and it doesn't care about the source. It doesn't want to eat the mage specifically, but if no other options are available, it leaps at her, fangs glistening with saliva. If she can get it to forget its hunger for a short time, it is a cunning and helpful ally.

The Ravenous Beast can take the form of any predator. In a jungle, it might resemble a great cat or a lithe, bipedal dinosaur. In the city, it could appear to be a huge dog or wolf, or even a swarm of rats or locusts. In a desert, it might be a jackal or coyote. No matter what it resembles, the Ravenous Beast is still an Atavism, and so it is a huge example of that animals, born of nightmares too primal to recount.

If a mage gains its cooperation, the Ravenous Beast can teach the mage a great deal about hunting. The Ravenous Beast's advice can also grant a +3 modifier on rolls to avoid losing one's human mind while shape-shifting (see p. 190 of **Mage: The Awakening**).

**Attributes:** Power 7, Finesse 7, Resistance 4  
**Willpower:** 11  
**Essence:** max 20  
**Initiative:** 14  
**Defense:** 7  
**Speed:** 24 (species factor 10)  
**Size:** 5  
**Corpus:** 9  
**Influence:** Hunting 2, Hunger 1  
**Numina:** Wilds Sense

**Trial:** The Shaman can use a Spirit spell to command the Ravenous Beast to put aside its hunger (see *Affecting Denizens with Magic*, p. 72), or she can provide food for it. She must be aware, however, that the Ravenous Beast is always hungry, and so providing food only works for as long as it takes the creature to wolf down its repast. After that, the beast is ravenous again.



### *Totem: The Blood of the Prey*

Something must die so that the predators can feast. Atavisms that take the forms of prey animals don't realize this; they simply want to avoid being eaten. Totems that reflect prey animals, however, *do* understand their place in the circle of life. One such Totem is the Blood of the Prey. It is a spirit of satiation, of the end of the hunt when blood spatters the leaves and the carcass is torn to shreds. As such, when it appears, it takes the form of a prey animal. The Shaman must kill it and tear it to pieces. The Totem then speaks to the Shaman from the blood-soaked ground.

The Blood of the Prey is a patient, if somewhat morbid, Totem. It fulfills its purpose with its own death (whether it rises phoenixlike to die again is a matter of debate, and the Blood of the Prey, when asked, doesn't seem to understand the question). It might be able to cure disease or stave off death in other ways, or it might be able to mark a mage's enemy with the Blood of the Prey, making him a target for any natural or supernatural predators he meets.

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 8, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 11

**Defense:** 8

**Speed:** 21 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 2

**Corpus:** 5

**Influence:** Death 2, Inevitability 1

**Numina:** Gauntlet Control, Trial

**Trial:** The Shaman must kill the Blood of the Prey before she can converse with it. The Totem takes the form of a small prey animal — a rabbit, a mouse, a chicken, etc. The Shaman must catch and slaughter it, using any method she wishes. The blood of the creature, though, must splash to the ground. If the Shaman wishes, she can have an animal do the dirty work for her (releasing a dog to kill the rabbit, for instance), but the Blood of the Prey looks at this as a lack of commitment to the summoning. If the Blood of the Prey does not die from predation before it dies of exposure to the Fallen World, of course, the mage can gain nothing from the summoning. A mage who consumes the flesh of this Beast can refill her Mana pool to its maximum capacity.

### *Totem: The Cleansing Storm*

A Shaman learned in the Arcanum of Forces might call down the Cleansing Storm. This Totem is harsh,



but fair (in its own judgment). It is a spirit of renewal, of destruction followed by creation. And unfortunately, once it is summoned, it has to be endured before the Shaman can speak with it.

The Cleansing Storm might take the form of a monsoon, a tornado or even a fire (the surroundings and the correspondences help influence this). It will assuredly leave the summoning area a complete ruin, and might very well cause injury or death to Sleepers around. This is the Shaman's responsibility to cope with after the Storm passes — she called down the Cleansing Storm, and so she must help with the painful renewal.

If the character can endure the Storm, it takes on humanoid form (usually a silhouette through smoke or mist), and answers whatever questions the mage might have. The Cleansing Storm has a flawless memory, and can tell the mage about anything in the Primal Wild that it has seen or heard, including other Thyrus, summoning attempts, or Awakenings. It also sometimes brings Artifacts from the Primal

Wild, objects caught up in its winds that it leaves for the resilient Shaman to recover.

**Attributes:** Power 9, Finesse 8, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 15

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 17

**Defense:** 9

**Speed:** 27 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 10

**Influence:** Destruction 2, Renewal 2

**Numina:** Blast, Spirit Crown, Versatile Energies

**Trial:** The Storm causes four points of lethal damage per turn to anyone caught nearby, and it continues its destruction for five turns or until stopped. The Shaman can either try to endure the onslaught, healing the damage with Life magic so as to stave off death, or she can attempt to command the storm to cease early (see *Affecting Denizens with Magic*, p. 72). Either way, if innocent people are harmed by the Cleansing Storm, the mage bears responsibility and may lose Wisdom.

## *Stygia, the Abode of Shades*

Lisa leaned with her back against a roughly hewn grave marker, near death and thinking about Amanda.

Years had passed since the dogs found her sister's naked, mutilated body prone on the bank of the river. Still, the gut-wrenching pain Lisa experienced when she recalled Amanda's friendly, open smile stung like a wound reopened. The injustice of it infuriated her. Amanda was only 16 when her life was brought to an untimely end. She had her whole life ahead of her. Lisa had considered joining her sister in death many times, but the thought of vengeance sustained her. Recently, however, she had hit a dead end in her search for her sister's killer. Lisa was no closer to uncovering who was responsible for Amanda's death than she was three years ago, despite having Awakened; and she was running out of options.

A small, soft cry from the old stone well across the path from the cemetery interrupted her thoughts. Shakily, Lisa recovered the parcel that was laid out before her, and found the strength to stand and make her way down the dirt path. As she approached the ancient, crumbling well, the sobbing grew louder and more insistent.

Lisa peered uncertainly over the moss-covered rim of the

well, and for an instant she thought she saw it: the pale, filthy face of a small child shining wet in the moonlight, bloated and tinged with decay. The creature was only visible for a moment before quickly retreating into the shadows, but Lisa could not help but think of her sister's poor, broken, body — discarded in the river like some worthless piece of trash.

Even though the old well had not been in use for years, a moldering wooden bucket was still attached to the chain. Lisa placed the parcel in the bucket and turned the windlass, lowering the package into the murky depths of the well. When the last link of the chain had been extended, the sobbing ceased, and she heard movement and splashing echoing up from the darkness. Then, she heard nothing.

The following evening, Lisa returned to the well. The coolness of the night air was refreshing, but the ritual she had performed the night before had taken a lot out of her. Despite her exhaustion, she turned the crank and raised the bucket once more from the depths of the well. It was heavier than before, and her muscles ached with every movement. When Lisa looked inside the bucket, she discovered the parcel had been taken and new objects left in its place. There was a silver key to a locker, an old, sweat-stained gym shirt, and a warped and water-damaged yearbook.


Lisa opened the yearbook, and discovered a slip of paper. It was a poorly drawn portrait of Amanda, crumpled as though it had been thrown out and then subsequently rescued from the trash. As Lisa's eyes followed the unsteady lines and eraser smudges across the paper, she remembered something she hadn't before.

There was a boy in Amanda's grade who used to follow her around, tall and lanky, with greasy hair and pale eyes. Amanda had mentioned once that he had given her a portrait he had drawn of her. When Lisa had asked to see it, Amanda had laughed, saying that it was terrible and that she'd already thrown it out. Amanda had never mentioned anything else about him, and Lisa assumed the kid had moved on. She could recall his face, but not his name. Struck by sudden inspiration, Lisa leafed through the yearbook to Amanda's grade. There he was: Alexander Huntley.

## *Calling Down Stygia*

Mages who follow the Path of Doom often describe their Awakening as a harrowing experience. They recall being wrapped in a shroud, surrounded by dark, shadowy forms. Other mages who Awaken may not recall a shroud, but in many cases, some obstacle obscures their surroundings: shadow, fog, or





a blinding white light. Many who return from Stygia feel compelled to gain a better understanding of what they witnessed when Awakening. What was beyond the shroud? What lurks in the shadows? What was the source of that blazing light? Were the beings that surrounded the mage really the dead, or were they something else entirely?

Additionally, mages drawn to the Watchtower of the Lead coin often contemplate processes of transformation and change in magic and nature. Through alchemy, lead becomes gold. Through nature, life becomes death. Through study and practice, a Necromancer can transform himself, gaining a better understanding of these processes. To many Moros, the knowledge to be gained by observing a denizen of Stygia is a tempting enough reason in and of itself to attempt a summoning. If the beings who reside in the Supernal Realm of Stygia are truly the dead, a Moros knows it is possible that she, too, may someday be transformed by death into one of very beings she summons to the Fallen World in life. Some Necromancers become preoccupied with this notion, and seek to uncover as much information as they can about the natives of Stygia.

Whatever burning question a Moros chases, she knows, better than most, that her time to discover the answer as a mortal is limited. She also knows that the answers to many of her questions lie just beyond death's door, and she will knock upon that door until someone, or something, answers.

### *Risks*

To many Moros, the drive to understand the transformative processes of Death and Matter can become an obsession. Additionally, most Necromancers know that their time on this Earth is brief in the grand scheme of things. As such, Necromancers are may be compelled to perform summoning rituals more often than mages following any other path, sometimes losing their own lives in the pursuit of greater understanding.

The ritual to call upon a denizen of Stygia is a risky process in and of itself, requiring the willworker to bring himself to a state very near death. In doing so, the mage is able to thin the wall between the Fallen World and the Supernal Realm of Stygia and attract beings from the other side. Even for a Master of Death, it is possible to botch the ritual, leading to fatal consequences. There is a very thin line between life and what comes after, and the mage must find a perfect balance. If the mage is timid and does not

push himself near enough to death, the summoning will fail. If the mage pushes himself *too* far, he may find himself unable to step back from the precipice before plunging over.

If the mage succeeds in calling a Stygian being to the fallen world, there are additional risks. Not every being residing in the Supernal Realm of Stygia is benevolent. Some are downright dangerous, wishing to cause death in the Fallen World, and they utilize whatever powers they possess in order to do so. A Necromancer may find himself used as an instrument of death by the very being he invited into the Fallen World.

Because of the transformative nature of the Realm of Stygia, even the most seemingly benign creatures from the realm can be dangerous. The summoner may find himself inadvertently modified by a creature he has summoned: changed from solid to liquid, from flesh to gold, or from living to dead. Such creatures may not intend to hurt the mage, but they also may not understand that change can be a bad thing, leading to the death of the mage (which, to them, is just another transition and nothing at all a cause for concern). Similarly, a mage who calls upon a shade may find herself, or the world around her, altered in some way — not always for the better.

Finally, ever questing for understanding, some Necromancers gain too much insight from summoning a shade. Some Moros gain so much understanding from the denizens of Stygia that they wish to return to the realm and experience it firsthand. Such mages become fervent in their belief that true understanding lies just beyond death's door, and they willingly step across the threshold, never to return.

### *The Ritual*

A mage who walks the Path of Doom is already intimately familiar with death and decay. Even so, facing one's own death often remains an unsettlingly notion at the very least — even for those who have previously done so. As noted above, a Moros who wishes to summon an entity from the Supernal Realm of Stygia must bring his mortal body close to death once more, knock upon the gates of death, and call out into the darkness of the unknown.

The ritual typically occurs in a location upon which the shadow of death has fallen. Most commonly, the summoner will seek out a graveyard, but there are other locations that serve equally well. Any place where the remains of the dead are present, or a large

number of deaths have occurred will suffice: an execution chamber, a battlefield of ages past, the catacombs of an old church, a morgue, a hospital, or a mine or factory in which many workers perished.

Once a suitable location has been found, the summoner must bring himself near death. This can be accomplished in a number of ways: magic, drugs, asphyxiation, or simply sitting silently, without food or water, until death approaches. Typically, the longer it takes for the mage to achieve a state close to death, the more successful the summoning, as he has more time to meditate upon his own mortality and the purpose of the summoning. When the mage is near-death, he can call out to the denizens of Stygia, and likely, they will answer.

**Sample Correspondences:** lead, decay, burial sites, bone, carrion birds, crossroads, gateways, loss, precious gems, earth and stone, night, shadows, dark and muted colors, acceptance.

## *The Entities*

Moros can summon entities from Stygia using Death (Subtle) or Matter (Gross). All such entities are collectively called Shades. Manifest Shades are called Apeirons, while recondite Shades are called Specters.

## *Apeirons — Shades of Matter*

Shades of Matter draw their name from the term “Apeiron”, a theoretical substance from which all matter is derived. Some Moros scholars shun the notion that the denizens of Stygia are the dead, and speculate that all Shades sprang from this singular, original substance, transforming over time into diversified material forms representative of change.

Apeirons are usually associated with the metamorphosis of matter in some way. They may have great knowledge of the processes that change and shape the physical world, or they may be transition itself. An Apeiron may choose to manifest as a specific alchemical substance: a shining being composed of liquid mercury, or a luminous cloud of gas. It may appear as a decomposing corpse, reminding the summoner that he, too, is composed of matter that will someday dissolve to dust. An Apeiron may prefer to take the human form and manner of a skilled alchemist or craftsman.

Necromancers may call upon an Apeiron for a variety of purposes. Sentient Apeirons have much to teach the summoner about the magic and art of alchemy,

and they can be exceptionally patient teachers. They know that the learning process is simply one more transformation, and that the transition may take time, but knowledge will eventually blossom from ignorance. Apeirons may also be highly skilled in shaping and altering matter. They may be called upon to shape a new Artifact from existing matter, or create new matter with properties yet to be discovered.

## *Specters — Shades of Death*

While Apeirons deal mainly with the transformation of physical materials, Specters, in contrast, are associated with the intangible changes in being that occur through Death. The transitional process of death is one of the great existential mysteries of the universe — a puzzle that many Moros spend a lifetime trying to solve. While the Specters of Stygia may not have all of the answers, the study of them is, at the very least, a good place to begin.


Specters can take many forms. They may manifest as pale, indistinct, ghostly figures or ever-shifting, shadowy creatures of darkness. A Specter may reveal itself as a being resembling various cultural personification of death, a Grim Reaper figure or an “Angel of death.” Others prefer the forms of creatures associated with death and decay in folklore and the natural world: carrion birds, flies or maggots, crows, or black dogs. Some take the shape of the dead in various stages of decay. They may appear gruesome or repulsive, bodies hanging with grizzled ropes of rotting flesh, or obscenely swollen with methane gas to the point of rupture. They might even appear almost alive, if it weren't for the subtle chill of their too-pale flesh, or the slight tinge of decay.

Many Moros call upon Specters for assistance with problems in the Fallen World. While a Necromancer may or may not believe that Specters are the dead, they seem, most certainly, to be capable of communication with those who have passed on and are unreachable by the usual magical means. As such, they are able to provide the mage with valuable information that she may not have been able to otherwise acquire. Specters also have their own host of diverse and potent magical abilities, which can be of great use to the summoner.

## *The Summoner*

Many Moros quest for understanding; but in spite of a fierce desire for answers, there is usually some question that even the most inquisitive Necromancer





is afraid to ask. While she may dread the answer to whatever question haunts her soul, a niggling yearning to know the truth sculpts the form of the shade she summons — forcing the summoner to confront her fear face-on. Every Necromancer has an unconscious effect on the nature of the shade summoned, and the experience can be life-altering. Whether the encounter is eye-opening or traumatic, it is sure to change the mage in some way.

A Necromancer's preference of magical study also has an influence on the being she summons. Each of the Arcana are present in the Supernal Realm of Stygia to some extent, some more so than others, and they may interact with the ruling forces of Death and Matter in different ways. The following are suggested beings that a mage with a great deal of knowledge in a non-ruling Arcanum (Disciple or better) might summon.

- **Fate:** A Necromancer who is a disciple of Fate is likely to call Specters representing harbingers of death in folklore: banshees, owls, barguests, crows or Grim Reapers. Specters called by a willworker studying Fate often have great insight into destiny relating to the dead, and may be able to mark those fated to die in the near future, cause one person to die in the place of another, or allow the mage to see his own end. Apeirons, on the other hand, tend to be more interested in the effects different materials have on destiny. They may alter the course of a substance through Fate to see the long-term effect of doing so upon the future. For example, an Apeiron might keep radioactive substances from someone who would use the materials to cause harm at some uncertain future date, or cause a rich man to become destitute through alchemy.

- **Forces:** Specters summoned by Necromancers studying Forces can be horrific to behold. Often, they manifest as grotesque representations of transitional effects of energy on the mortal body: a tumor-ridden body exposed to radiation; a bloated corpse dredged up from the aftermath of a hurricane, or a charred figure burned beyond recognition. Though terrifying to behold, these Specters have much to teach a mage on harnessing the transformative aspects of Forces. Apeirons manifest in diverse forms related to the effects of such energies on matter: a vast glacier melting in the heat, a statue slowly eroding in howling wind or rushing water.

- **Prime:** Shades drawn to a Disciple of Prime are known to excel at the magical metamorphosis. Apeirons may be able to transform Mana from its original state into objects or creatures composed of pure

magic, or imbue materials with magic altering their chemical properties. Specters may be able to transfer magic from one vessel to another — leaching Mana from one object or creature and feeding another.

- **Space:** A mage proficient in Space magic may summon a Specter capable of scrying upon the dead. It may manifest as a deep, endless pit, from echoing with the low moans of the dead, or a vast, boiling shadow from which ghostly images of the dead arise. Apeirons are capable of turning any material into a surface suitable for scrying, and may offer the mage any number of material Artifacts to assist in traveling through space.

- **Spirit:** A Necromancer who studies the Spirit Arcana is likely to attract Specters that represent death or carrion. They might take the forms of ravens, vultures, black dogs and other animals associated with death. Likewise, Apeirons often take the form of spirits concerned with changes as they occur within matter: spirits of erosion, decay, or other transformation.

- **Time:** Shades summoned by a Disciple of Time typically manifest in forms that call to mind chronological change. A Specter might choose to manifest in a form of a rotting corpse — rapidly cycling through various stages of decay before the eyes of the summoner. Apeirons tend to appear in forms representative of transitions that occur in matter over time. They may reveal themselves as a beings composed of a substance that shifts erratically between solid, liquid and gaseous states.

- **Life:** Although Life and Death may seem diametrically opposed, both Arcana have similar transformative aspects. Specters called upon by a mage with knowledge in the Life Arcanum therefore represent metamorphosis in life and how it relates to death: a compost heap blossoming with new growth, a dying mother giving birth, or a spider that kills its mate after breeding. Apeirons often take forms resembling the hulking, clay golems of Judaic mythology — matter given life.

- **Mind:** A Necromancer proficient in the Arcanum of Mind should take particular care when summoning a shade from Stygia. He may find himself faced by an entity that is afflicted with some kind of mental disturbance, representative of changes within the brain. Paranoia and madness are common in Specters, especially. Apeirons, on the other hand, may be able to produce any number of mind-altering compounds to the benefit (or detriment) of the summoner.



## Example Entities

### *Specter: The Salvager*

A Salvager is the incarnation of all that is lost and forgotten in death. It might manifest as an orphaned child, pale and emaciated from neglect, or as a frail, elderly man, abandoned and lonely in his twilight years. Its features may be slightly decayed, but the effect is more heart-wrenching than monstrous. A Salvager's clothing is faded and worn to threads, as though it should have been discarded long ago, and it carries upon its back a frayed sack that has been patched together time and time again. The sack contains the detritus of the past, discarded and broken objects, or items that have been lost and forgotten by the owner.

Salvagers are typically called upon when a mage has hit a dead end with a problem at hand, and has run out of options. Salvagers can utilize their connection to the lost and forgotten to provide the mage with valuable hints related to the problem at hand (see "Trial" below).

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 6, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 17 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 7

**Influence:** Memory 2

**Numina:** Ghostly Presence, Trial

**Trial:** When the Necromancer performs the ritual to summon a Salvager, he must bring a container (a box, a basket, folded cloth, etc.) filled to the brim with items that represent the joy of life, creation, and the new. For example, fine food and wine to remind the Salvager of what it was like to taste and smell, a painting or recording of a symphony to remind it what it was like to feel, or a photograph of a family to remind it of companionship. The mage sets the basket before her when she arrives at the summoning location. As the Moros approaches death's door, she meditates intently on the problem at hand, attracting a Salvager. If the Salvager accepts the gift, the entity will take it back to Stygia.

A day later the mage returns to the location of the summoning to find the container returned with the gifts taken. Within the container, she will now find items helping her with the problem at hand: old photographs, antique keys to unknown doors, faded newspaper clippings, perhaps even a hand-written note from one of the lost dead. While none of the items should present an immediate answer to the character's problem, they may provide subtle clues or present alternatives that the character may not have yet considered, or that the mage may have forgotten.

### *Specter: The Harbinger*

Not every Necromancer summons a denizen of Stygia with pure or decent intentions. While it is true the most Moros call upon shades to aid the living, it is also true that the darkest of mages can call upon a shade for assistance with any number of malignant acts — including murder.

A Harbinger manifests as a tall, beautiful woman with smooth, pale skin. Her eyes are black, shining darkly like polished hematite, and a pair of large, feathered, ebony wings unfold gracefully from her ivory back. She is bare-chested, but wears a sarong of scarlet silk about her waist. The sickly-sweet scent of



crushed nightshade berries clings to the Harbinger, invoking a strange combination of attraction and revulsion.

Harbingers are always delighted to have dealings with Necromancers. When a Harbinger is called upon, the summoner finds herself in a darkly opulent chamber surrounded by draped silk. In the center of the chamber, softly lit by candlelight, is a table set for two. The Harbinger is a gracious host and will offer the Necromancer the finest food and wine but if the Necromancer decides to partake of the meal, she will taste nothing but death and decay the moment it passes her lips.

The Harbinger will ask the Necromancer whom she intends to murder. Then, ever agreeable, she will laud the mage's intent to end the life of another and offer assistance. The Moros can then choose to make a deal with the Harbinger. In exchange for a small piece of the mage's "soul," she will kiss the willworker, and bestow upon her the Touch of the Harbinger.

If the mage accepts, the character's Wisdom immediately drops by one, and she is gifted with the Touch of the Harbinger. When the summoner's trial ends, the next living creature that she touches, even accidentally, will die within 24 hours under circumstances unrelated to the mage (making the murder very difficult to trace at worst, and perceived as an accident by the authorities at best).

The Touch of the Harbinger is less effective and much easier to track when used upon a mage, however, as the Awakened inherently possess a certain



amount of resistance to paranormal attack. A mage possessing the Touch of the Harbinger must be able to remain in unbroken physical contact with an Awakened victim for a number of minutes equal to the victim's Resolve + Gnosis. The intended target is alerted of the danger by the intense pain caused by the touch of the mage. Additionally, when viewed with Mage Sight (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 110), a Necromancer who possesses the Touch of the Harbinger appears

as though her hands are dripping with vibrant, red blood. If anything breaks or interrupts the initial contact, the Touch of the Harbinger is lost and the victim is unharmed and unaffected. If the Touch of the Harbinger is successful upon a mage, the victim will die within 24 hours.

**Attributes:** Power 8, Finesse 6, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 14

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 12

**Defense:** 7

**Speed:** 24 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 11

**Influence:** Death 2, Seduction 1

**Numina:** Harrow, Trial, Underworld Gate

**Trial:** The Harbinger is a vain creature, and will become very offended if the summoner suggests in any way that she is not the epitome of sensual beauty. If the mage does not show full appreciation of her kiss, she may attempt to kill him on the spot.



### *Apeiron: The Bird of Fortune*

Many inexperienced mages studying alchemy have called upon the Bird of Fortune. Not yet being skilled enough in the Arcanum of Matter to transmute the elements, even a mage with limited experience in Matter can call upon the Bird of Fortune to acquire rare or valuable materials.

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 6, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 10

**Speed:** 20 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 1

**Corpus:** 5

**Influence:** Matter 1, Perseverance 1

**Numina:** Trial

**Trial:** A mage who succeeds in summoning the Bird of Fortune will find herself in a boundless gray, barren field with a monstrous, gnarled, black tree rooted before her. The mage must climb to the uppermost branches of the tree, overcoming any number of obstacles that hinder her progress: shifting branches, rotting and slippery bark, and piercing thorns. In the highest boughs of the tree, the Necromancer finds a

ghostly bird within an ethereal, mossy nest. If the mage attempts to use magic to climb the tree, she finds herself once more on the ground, all progress lost.

For one who works diligently to reach the nest despite the perilous conditions, the Bird of Fortune shifts aside to reveal a nest full of small, softly luminous, golden eggs.

The mage may take a single egg as a reward for her hard work, but if she is greedy and takes more than one egg, all of the eggs will crumble to worthless clay before her eyes.

Once the mage obtains the egg, her surroundings fade away and she finds herself back in the location of the summoning. The golden egg may be cracked open in the fallen world, and from it will gush a large quantity of a precious alchemical material: diamonds, gold, silver, oil—any element or compound that can be created through the manipulation of Matter that the Moros desires.

The material obtained from the egg remains in existence so long as it is of use. Once the substance is no longer useful or valuable, it crumbles into clay.

### *Apeiron: The Metal Smith*

Only a mage with extensive experience in both the Matter and Prime Arcana can forge thaumium, a substance that is, when charged with Mana, capable of serving as a shield against mystic will (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 203–204). Less experienced Necromancers can still acquire Artifacts forged from thaumium, however, if they call upon the Metal Smith.

A mage who summons the Metal Smith will find herself in his workshop, a hot, dark chamber with a glowing forge and large heaps of scrap metal. The Metal Smith materializes as a broad, hulking man with a hardened expression. He has been working for thousands of years, and the heat of the forge has hardened his skin to stone. The Metal Smith keeps his ears stashed away in a box so that he need not hear





the constant, deafening clang of hammer on metal.

**Attributes:** Power 8, Finesse 6, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 14

**Essence:** max 20

**Initiative:** 12

**Defense:** 8

**Speed:** 24 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 7

**Corpus:** 13

**Influence:** Matter 1, Craft 2

**Numina:** Fortify Material, Trial

**Trial:** The Metal Smith is nearly always intensely focused upon his work. Unable to hear a voice calling out to him, or feel a tap on the shoulder through his dense, petrified skin, it can be difficult to gain his attention. The summoner must find some way to communicate with the Metal Smith. If the mage is skilled in the Mind Arcanum, she may be able to communicate telepathically. The surest way to get the Metal Smith's attention, however, is to find the box containing his ears. When the box is opened, the Metal Smith can hear once more, and he will be willing to do business with the mage.

The Metal Smith's magical forge can only be fueled with the blood of the living, which is in short supply in the Supernal Realm of Stygia. The Metal Smith is more than willing to craft a small Artifact made of thaumium in return for a quantity of the summoner's blood. If the mage agrees to the deal, she must slice open her flesh and pour blood from the wound into the forge, feeding the fire.







# CHAPTER THREE: FROM THE ENDLESS DARK

All of the correspondences were set out, just as the old grimoire specified.

At Naimah's feet, the preserved remains of a forsaken newborn lay curled up, and salt-encrusted bronze nails were driven into the tiny corpse's shriveled eyes. At her right hand, a bowl of rough-hewn black basalt, filled with the water from a drowned man's lungs. At her left, a small dagger, cut from the femur of one unjustly slain for an act of infidelity that he did not commit. Just above her head rested the freshly-harvested spleen of a willworker killed by Paradox. Every component and soul-withering sigil was in its proper place, and Cadence had spoken the words and performed the blasphemous *audras*.

And, still, nothing.

Desperately, Cadence returned to the text, flipping from one page to another, wondering what minute detail she had neglected. Her heart strained unto bursting to see Naimah's lifeless body whenever she glanced away from the page. Pale and still before the Moros, her cabalante and best friend lay, dried blood still encrusted around the two small holes in her shirt, through which the fatal bullets had entered her left side. For months, Cadence had preserved her, just as she was when she breathed her last. It was not within her skill to keep Naimah from dying, but her studies since that night had taught her what she needed to know to save her friend from death.

*If only the fucking spells would work.*

With the cold reason of a Necromancer, she had diligently assembled all that was necessary. She had seen a great deal of death since returning from Stygia's Watchtower, seven years ago. Now, however, her discipline was, at long last, breaking down. She shoved the grimoire away, causing the fragile book's spine to crack audibly when it fell from off of the desk and onto the concrete floor of her basement. Two or three pages came away from the binding.

"Why?" She asked aloud, "Why won't you work?" Her legs trembled through each of the half-dozen steps that brought her to Naimah's side and she did not kneel there, so much as fall to her knees. "I just want her back." She took Naimah's hand, terribly cold, in her own. "I'd do anything — anything — just to have her back." She looked to the damaged tome with a scowl. "You promised. You lied."

"No, Cadence, it didn't."

The sound of Naimah's voice was thin, somehow... flat. Hollow. But it was her voice. Naimah's eyes were open and she was smiling at Cadence, again, just like she remembered. This was wrong. She knew it was wrong. That ice-cold hand began to grow warmer.

"I want to go home, Cadence. Say that you want to come home with me."

A tear rolled from the corner of her eye. "I've missed you so much, Naimah."

"I know." The smile remained, though it never touched those empty, glassy eyes. "Say it."

The Moros drew a breath; the longest moment of her life. "I want... to come home with you, Naimah."

Naimah sat up slowly, moving as if to embrace her friend, just like she used to. "And so you shall, Cadence..."



*There was something awesome in the thought of the solitary mortal standing by the open window and summoning in from the gloom outside the spirits of the nether world.*

**- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

## *The Dreaming Madness*

The face of the Abyss most familiar to mages in the Fallen World, the Acamoth are those Void-born spirits that somehow became trapped within the material realm between the sundering of the Ladder to Heaven and modern times. Some of these entities have lingered in fitful slumber for millennia, while others found a way down from the Abyss (or were called from it) and got stranded. The most ancient of these beings might *never* have truly dwelt within the Void, at all, having become cut off from their “native” realm in the instant of its creation in the Fall.

The Acamoth constitute the overwhelming majority of the Abyss spirits with which mages interact, due to their relative nearness, if nothing else. Even while the Acamoth slumber, they influence the world around them, projecting their nightmares into minds and spirits, their very presence exuding a corruptive taint. Skilled investigators among the Awakened can often spot the clues that point to these earthbound monstrosities, following their trail as readily as a hound tracks an elusive scent. Certainly, some seek the Acamoth to destroy them, but the majority of seekers have much different goals in mind. Among all of the ephemeral entities found in the Fallen World, none are so amenable to pacts and other binding agreements as the Acamoth, and few have such interesting gifts to offer.


## *Summoning the Acamoth*

Severed from the realm that gives them their identity, the Acamoth spend most of their time in the Fallen World held fast in the slumber of spirits. Perhaps they have, over their long imprisonment, become so much like the denizens of the Shadow Realm that they are now bound by many of the same laws. Regardless of the reasons, however, deliberately making contact with an Acamoth is no simple feat.

A mage must overcome the inertia of sleep, passing through layers and layers of alien nightmares, just to get the entity to notice that someone is attempting to communicate with it; less forceful methods of contact are almost always simple dismissed by the spirit as one of an infinite number of odd details of an endless horrific dream and forgotten nearly the instant that the attempt ceases. Even repeated messages are often ignored as patterns that temporarily spring up within an individual Acamoth’s nightmares. Like a sleeping human who occasionally incorporates elements of half-sensed stimuli into her dreams, so, too, do the Acamoth sometimes dimly perceive that which transpires around them and experience the reflections of such in their slumber.

Thus, the first task for any would-be summoner of Acamoth is to learn the specific protocols for waking one *just enough* to hold a meaningful conversation with it. A mage might be fortunate enough (or unfortunate, as the case may be) to find a wakeful Acamoth, but he can’t count on that. It is likelier, by far, that his months — or even years — of painstaking research will point him at a quiescent monstrosity, trapped within its own ceaseless dreams, halfway between blasphemous life and endless death. These spirits are almost always located in largely inaccessible places, like salt caverns nearly a mile underground, under a dozen layers of mud and decaying matter at the bottom of a swamp, or in an Atlantean Diaspora-era ruin resting upon the floor of a scalding, sulfurous lake. Such entities simply aren’t found where life thrives, though the reasons are unclear. Some mages believe that the Acamoth create barrenness by their nature, while others think that these ghastly spirits, in their terrible wisdom, chose resting places where they would be only infrequently troubled, and then only by the very individuals with whom they would most wish to have dealings.





Finding the Acamoth is more a matter of skill and knowledge than luck. Many phenomena within the Fallen World create dark and unpleasant resonance, but the Abyssal taint of the Acamoth has its own unique character, readily understood as such by those mages with experience in seeking out the spirits of the Void. Intelligence or Wits + Academics, Investigation, or Occult rolls are likely called for, with dots of the Library Merit (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 85–6) focused upon the Abyss, Acamoth, or similar subjects granting their customary benefits. Of course, knowing where an Acamoth sleeps and actually *getting* to it are two different tasks, entirely. More powerful willworkers might simply scry the resting place of an Abyssal spirit and teleport to it or otherwise use magic to ease the journey, but not all mages have access to such powers. Thus, some peril is often involved merely to reach the creature. Given the sometimes thousands of years during which the horrific madness of an Acamoth has had to leach into the very land around it, nature itself is sometimes turned against a seeker, as vicious beasts haunt her steps, paths twist in upon themselves, and the air becomes a poisonous vapor. If the spirit senses an Awakened visitor from within the weave of its eternal dreams, though, it often clears the way, welcoming the willworker into its resting-place for negotiations.

Many mages just aren't cut out for these dangerous ventures, however. Though every willworker is potential a scholar of the unknown, not all are adventurers and explorers; the sort of people often necessary to reach the subterranean tomb of an Acamoth. Other methods for contacting the Fallen World's Void-spawned prisoners exist, though, allowing even the most retiring academe to barter with such beings for powers not meant for the earthly realm.

A less direct — though perhaps less complex — route than physical proximity involves tapping directly into the dreams of the Acamoth. Mages who wish to attempt this may use either Mind 3 or Spirit 3 (almost certainly paired with Space 2, given the likelihood that the Acamoth is nowhere nearby) to reach out to the nightmares of the entity, once it has been located through the study of ley lines, the perusal of old texts, or whatever other method. Instantly sensing the magical intrusion upon its thoughts, the Acamoth focuses its attention upon the interloper, opening a channel of communication. Certain willworkers claim to have made incredibly favorable deals with Acamoth deep in slumber, as their thoughts are simply too sluggish and hazy to bring their full alien brilliance to bear,

though these stories are as likely as not rumors spread by Scelesti and similarly corrupted mages, hoping to ensnare others with the promise of easy gain.

As to the Accursed, some believe certain of their number are empowered to act as proxies for the Acamoth they serve, either setting up “appointments” (corporeal or telepathic) with their masters or facilitating the entire process of bargaining, from start to finish. While the latter tales are especially suspect, enough evidence exists of the former to make for a relatively reliable fact. Through Scelesti intermediaries, mages can effectively “summon” an Acamoth for a meeting. For those interested in going this route, it has the added benefit of requiring no particular degree of mystic prowess; the willworker need only make contact with one of the Accursed who happens to be bound to the service of a given Acamoth and he can contact that Acamoth, so long as the Scelestus is willing and able to do so.

Lastly, certain of the Acamoth realized long ago that their distance from the Awakened typically made for considerable difficulty in bargaining with them, and so they created (or got Awakened servants to create)

### Calling the Earthbound

Technically speaking, can it truly be called “summoning” when all a mage is doing is attempting to get the attention of something already dwelling in the Fallen World? Semantics aside, most Awakened who care to think on the prospect concede that magics intended to gain the notice of the Acamoth *are*, in fact, acts of summoning, as the spirit must either be drawn to the mage's location or — as is rather more likely — some portion of its consciousness must be invited to dwell within the willworker for a time.

Veteran summoners cite various criteria for their claims: the standardized use of circles of protection, for example, and other defensive measures, as well as the possibility of forging a pact with such an entity at the conclusion of a bargaining process. Ultimately, however, the distinctions are inconsequential, as the spirits of the Void are just as dangerous when called from deep beneath within the heart of a mountain or the bottom of the sea as when summoned out of the dead heart of the Abyss, itself.

means through which they might be contacted. Some inscribed strange tomes, penned in languages not meant for the human tongue or mind, while others crafted seals that need only be cracked to earn an audience, or archways that opened into the very chambers in which they were sealed away. Part and parcel with these means of communication were protocols to connect to some part of the Acamoth's consciousness, that the spirit might present its many wares.

## *Bargains with the Acamoth*

So, what, exactly, can a willworker get from dealing with the Acamoth?

First of all, Acamoth, no matter their power, are capable of offering Investments (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 323) to those willing to bargain with them. Even the feeblest such spirit is able to offer any mage one year's respite from the ravages of time, for instance, in exchange for the freedom to use that mage's Oneiros as a temporary gateway to the Abyss. It is only through long familiarity with the Fallen World that Abyssal beings gain the knowledge and understanding necessary to make this journey, making Investments unique to the Acamoth; though the Gulmoth are, quite often, stronger in terms of raw power, they lack the requisite conversance with the nature of the terrestrial realm to perform these particular manipulations of the human form and spirit.

Some Acamoth — those that were stranded in the Fallen World during the collapse of the Celestial Ladder — possess lore that dates back to the time of the Atlantean Diaspora and most are certainly willing to part with the information, provided that the price is right. One shred of occult knowledge is essentially as meaningless to the Acamoth as another, though most are aware that the Awakened highly prize particularly ancient secrets, so they bargain particularly dearly in such a case. Despite this, however, the occasional willworker even walks away feeling that what he gained was worth the steep cost of an Acamoth's teachings.

Other Acamoth have accrued small stockpiles of treasure over the millennia: Artifacts and Enhanced and Imbued Items, as well as grimoires, spirit fetishes, and other enchanted relics. On top of this, some hold entirely more mundane objects of great value, such as the journals of Archmasters or tablets inscribed with lost dialects of the High Speech. Some, according to their natures, hoard wealth with which they might tempt the Awakened to service and gladly dole out

gold, silver, and precious gems to those who submit to the will of the Acamoth. Indeed, whole cabals of Scelesti have financed their works throughout the ages solely upon the riches held in trust by a half-sleeping spirit of the Void.

Naturally, many of the Accursed worship or otherwise revere the Acamoth, making such entities a ready source of disreputable labor. Some Scelesti are so irresistibly conditioned by the monsters to which they kneel as to be virtually incapable of disobedience. A Scelestus' soul is, of its very nature, a less desirable prize than that of a willworker not yet seduced into the service of the Abyss; thus, an Acamoth will venture its human resources in a calculated gambit to win the fealty of one not yet swayed to the thrall of the Void. For mages looking to have enemies wiped out, commodities stolen, or other shady activities undertaken for their benefit, an Acamoth can offer much, sending its Awakened soldiers forth to attend the will of the summoner.

No matter what a mage requests, however, the Acamoth almost always asks for its customary price: the freedom to use the mage's soul for an Astral journey, through the Oneiros and the Temenos, and, from there, into past the furthest reaches of the Astral Realm and into the Abyss, itself, there to drag just a tiny measure of the Void back to the Fallen World. Unless a mage can offer something vastly preferable to this all-consuming drive, no Acamoth will settle for anything less, and most are decidedly less than pleased to be roused by a willworker who doesn't even understand how the process works. Certainly, mages have been died for less.

## *Investments*

In addition to the Acamoth Investments listed in **Mage: The Awakening**, the Acamoth are capable of granting certain other gifts to those who dare to carve the glyphs of old and speak the words of power. These Investments are, in some cases, rarer than those more commonly known to mages (inasmuch as *anything* can be said to be "commonly known" about the Acamoth, anyway). All of these powers go outside of the known boundaries of Awakened magic, even if only in subtle ways, but therein lies a good deal of their attraction.

**Abyssal Invisibility:** At any time during the next week, for a full 24 hours, the mage is invisible to the sight of any Abyssal entity (Acamoth or Gulmoth) with Rank less than his Gnosis. The mage may even attack such creatures and remain unseen by them



(causing them to suffer the customary penalties for fighting blind when attempting to attack him; see *The World of Darkness*, pp. 166–7). This Investment is rare and typically only granted by Acamoth of Rank 3 or greater.

**Backlash Mitigation:** For the next week, the mage may spend points of Willpower, on a one-for-one basis, to eliminate Health points of damage inflicted by Paradox Backlash, to a minimum of zero. Note that the willworker may spend more than one point of Willpower in a turn, if necessary, to do so, and that these points may be spent *in addition* to any spent to enhance a die roll or for any other normal purpose (such as augmenting Defense). This Investment is rare and typically only granted by Acamoth of Rank 3 or greater.

**Cure a Derangement:** The mage is permanently cured of one derangement of her choosing from which she presently suffers. This derangement may, however, return through later emotional or spiritual trauma. Note that derangements gained as a result of Wisdom degeneration *may not* be cured through the use of this Investment, though they can be completely suppressed for one full year.

**Enhanced Mana Capacity:** For the next month, the mage's maximum Mana is increased by an amount equal to his Gnosis. Any other means of carrying additional Mana (such as storing it in the form of Tass) continue to function normally for the willworker.

**Feed on Pain:** For the next month, whenever another living thing sustains harm — one or more points of lethal or aggravated damage — within the willworker's presence (including himself), he may spend a point of Willpower to recuperate a point of Mana, up to the maximum normally allowed by his Gnosis. The effects of this Investment may be used in conjunction with Legacy oblations that involve physically harming others or oneself. This Investment is rare and typically only granted by Acamoth of Rank 3 or greater.

**Fortitude:** For the next month, the willworker receives a +2 bonus to all Resistance Attributes for the purposes of all resisted or contested effects (magical or otherwise) directed at her. Characters that have enhanced any or all of their Resistance Attributes through other means may still benefit from the Investment's effects. This Investment is rare and typically only granted by Acamoth of Rank 3 or greater.

**Inverted Agony:** For the next week, the mage's dice pool penalties for her last three dots of Health



are inverted; when functioning on her last three points of Health she *gains* one to three bonus dice, as appropriate, for all activities for which she would normally be penalized. During this time, the mage experiences pain as pleasure, growing more intense as her body sustains more damage.

**Manifestation Immunity:** The *next* time within the next 12 months that the willworker incurs a Manifestation Paradox, the Abyssal entity that arrives does him no harm. The spirit will stay for as long as it is permitted to (within the limits of the Manifestation's duration) and may attempt to bargain with the mage, should he permit such, but it *must* return instantly to the Abyss if commanded by him to do so. If the willworker does not incur a Manifestation Paradox within a year of gaining this Investment, its effects are lost without benefit. This Investment is rare and typically only granted by Acamoth of Rank 3 or greater.

**Paradox Sense:** For the next week, the willworker can discern the presence, type (Backlash or Bedlam, for instance), and general strength (weak, moderate, or overwhelming, for example) of Paradox within sensory range by succeeding on a reflexive Wits + Composure roll. The mage must consciously attempt to use this sense. The Paradox may be up to one day

old per point of Gnosis possessed by the mage using this Investment, and can be detected in people, places, and things, as appropriate.

**Redouble Resolve:** Once during the course of the next month, the mage may recuperate all points of temporary Willpower as a reflexive action. This recovery in no way precludes the mage from refreshing Willpower through upholding his Virtue (or by any other means).

**Rote Specialty:** For the next year, the mage gains a single rote specialty (as per the order benefit) for all rotes known to her using any one Skill of her choosing. This benefit may not be “stacked” on top of an existing rote specialty (in other words, a member of

## Legendary Investments

Stories circulate among the Awakened — typically, through the least reputable circles of mage society — regarding particularly powerful Investments offered by the rarest and most potent of Acamoth. Those who tell such tales speak of bargains to have a particular Sleeper’s soul carried on an Astral journey in the hopes of inspiring an Awakening, granting immunity from Paradox (whether for a set period of time or for a lifetime), and even restoring life to the dead. As fanciful as they are, these stories persist from generation to generation and some willworkers are compelled to wonder whether any shred of truth exists, at all, among these sorts of accounts.

Those who dig a little deeper, however, invariably discover darker, uglier details to the myths. A Sleeper Awakens... perhaps... but returns from her sojourn with a strange, unnatural fire in her eyes and wielding terribly destructive magics that stink of the Abyss. The lash of Paradox avoids the bargaining willworker, but seems to rain down its fury upon all those closest to her, Awakened or not. A lost loved one sits back up, all of his wounds mended, but speaking in hollow tones and the spark of his human spirit replaced by *something else*.

Those mages who barter with the Void for even small services invariably end up cheated in the deal. So much worse off are those who negotiate for terms that challenge the rules of the cosmos in far more ambitious ways.

the Adamantine Arrow could not choose Athletics, Intimidation, or Medicine in conjunction with this Investment). This Investment may be taken multiple times, though a different rote specialty Skill must be selected for it, each time. This Investment is rare and typically only granted by Acamoth of Rank 3 or greater.

**Void Demesne:** The mage may designate a space no larger than a single average-sized room which is largely immune to the ravages of Paradox. For the next week, the mage treats any spells that he (and only he) casts within this space as being cast within a Demesne appropriate to his Path (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 280). The customary “side effects” of a normal Demesne (such as static electricity in an Aetherial Demesne or the deepening of shadows within a Stygian Demesne) are invariably subtly mad, twisted, or otherwise *wrong* within such a space. This Investment is rare and typically only granted by Acamoth of Rank 3 or greater.

## *Soul Disintegration*

After the first two or three times that a mage grants an Acamoth the power to use her soul as a bridge to the Void, why doesn’t she do it *all* the time? After all, repetition of almost any heinous act eventually anesthetizes a person to the moral consequences and repugnance of such deeds. The answer to this question is known to many of those who fancy themselves scholars of the Abyss and its ways a “soul disintegration”; literally, a process by which the Awakened spirit becomes metaphysically riddled with small tears that render it increasingly unusable by an Acamoth for the purposes of a journey through the Astral Realm and back to the Abyss.

Each year, a willworker can allow an Acamoth to “ride” her soul up through the Astral Realms a number of times equal to her Gnosis dots without other deleterious consequences (other than the simple act of bargaining with an Abyssal entity, anyway). This represents the overall wear and tear on the Awakened spirit inherent to the Acamoth’s misuse of the mage’s soul. For each time thereafter within a single 12 month period that the willworker permits an Acamoth to use her soul as a conduit back to the Void, she incurs a cumulative -1 penalty to *all* die rolls pertaining to magic, whether rote or improvised. By spending a permanent *dot* of Willpower, the mage can stave off this penalty for a single journey (or prevent the penalty from worsening, if she is already suffering from one); this dot may be repurchased at



the cost of eight experience points. When the mage's spellcasting penalty is equal to the *lesser* of her Gnosis or Willpower, an Acamoth can no longer use her as a conduit to the Abyss (and will, therefore, almost certainly refuse her its services, unless she has something better to offer).

Each year (counting as every 12 months, to the day, from the time of her first bargain with an Acamoth), provided the willworker has not exceeded her Investment tolerance (whether by engaging in a number of such bargains equal to or less than her Gnosis, or by spending enough dots of Willpower to completely prevent the accrual of spellcasting penalties), this total resets. If the mage *has* accrued spellcasting penalties within a given 12-month period, one point of penalty fades for each full year (again, each full 12 month anniversary of her first Abyssal Investment) during which she refrains from gaining Investments. During this time, her annual Investment tolerance drops by a number equal to her current spellcasting penalty, to a minimum of zero.

For example, a mage with three dots of Gnosis who gains her first five Investments within a single 12 month period – *without* spending permanent dots of Willpower to extend her tolerance – gains a –1 penalty to all spellcasting rolls (rote or improvised) as of the fourth Investment and a –2 penalty as of the fifth. Upon the one-year anniversary of the willworker's first Investment, the total number of Investments that she can "safely" gain during the next 12 months drops to one (her Gnosis of three, minus two for her current spellcasting penalty). Should the mage manage to restrain herself from bargaining with the Acamoth more than one Investment during the course of those 12 months, then her penalty drops to –1 during the subsequent 12-month period. If the mage's Gnosis increases at all during this time, then her subsequent tolerance increases accordingly, but *not* retroactively.

Other Awakened who glimpse a mage currently suffering from spellcasting penalties as a result of too-frequent Investment bargains with Acamoth with the Death 1 "Soul Marks" spell (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 135) note a feeling of raw, ragged wounds of uncertain origin upon her spirit. Those who look upon her with the Prime 1 "Supernal Vision" spell (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 211) see fraying at the edges of her aura; the greater spellcasting penalty, the greater the apparent damage. A Tremere lich attempting to sustain himself on the soul of a mage whose soul disintegration spellcasting penalties meet or exceed

her current Gnosis finds that her spirit is no more sustaining than that of a Sleeper.

## *Abyssal Summonings by Path*

Different Paths suggest different methods for calling out to the Acamoth. The methods that make sense for, say, an Acanthus don't necessarily resonate with the philosophies of a Thyrsus. The symbols of certain Watchtowers identify more closely than others with the Abyss and its native creatures, making the path of temptation that much more appealing to the willworkers embodying those realms. Some mages speculate that the allure of the Void's madness and nihilism are somehow vital to the ordeals of these Paths, testing those souls bound to them through the opportunity to refuse the seductive power of the Abyss... or to accept it.

**Acanthus:** The cruel caprices of Arcadia have their reflection within the roiling lunacy of the Void. The Lunargent Thorn is a precious thing, after all, but also one that wounds. Specific moments in time are sometimes infected by the taint of the Abyss and Enchanters are uniquely well-suited to discovering those inauspicious instants. Likewise, times and places of crossing appeal to the Fae nature of the Acanthus, enabling such willworkers to use those locations (particularly those that lead to bleak and ruinous destinations) as focal points for Abyssal summonings. People, places, or things befouled by broken promises that led to calamity can be employed by Enchanters to invoke the Void, as can those contaminated by broken destinies.

**Mastigos:** The Warlocks of Pandemonium may well be the willworkers most continually assailed by the siren song of the Abyss. Their magics open the mind and render meaningless the distinctions of place; sorcery easily subverted to the purposes of calling out to the things of the Void. As with the Acanthus, strange and unwholesome intersections can serve the Mastigos as ritual sites for summoning Acamoth. Likewise, any place heavily corrupted by foul psychic residue (the site of a brutal mass slaying, for example, or a children's hospital in which a doctor slowly and deliberately betrayed and murdered a number of her patients over the years). Ordeals turned from transcendent experiences to become merely expressions of pain without the possibility for growth are also potent symbols of Daimonic Abyssal summonings.

**Moros:** For the Moros, death without meaning constitutes their Path's most powerful connection

to the Abyss. Fortunately for those Necromancers determined to walk this loathsome road, such death is relatively commonplace within the Fallen World, and they need only locate sites (or items, or individual) saturated by the presence of particularly heinous sorts of pointless death. Given Stygia's tie to lifeless matter, Moros can also use material goods that deny the preeminence or even existence of the soul — or those that, of their nature, debase it — as lenses through which to focus Abyssal summonings. Places in which silence and stillness are perverted to unclean ends can also be used by Necromancers for the purpose of contacting the Acamoth.

**Obrimos:** Ironically, after the Mastigos, the Theurgists of the Golden Key may be the mages most tempted by the lure of the Void; for, while they are commonly just and honorable, they are by no means always *good*. The powers of the Aether are readily turned to savagely destructive ends and so those places in which the subtle energies of the world lies poisoned or in which raw, elemental power has bred catastrophic amounts of suffering may be configured by the Obrimos for use in Abyssal conjurations. The Thuergist's drive to judge and to purify easily turns bitter and vicious in the absence of Wisdom and compassion, making anything resonant with righteousness perverted a correspondence for Aetheric supplications to the Void.

**Thyrus:** The chosen of the Primal Wild understand well the predatory nature of the Abyss and the "kill or be killed" mentality of the creatures that dwell within it. Certain aberrant forms of life are abominations that are, in their essence, destructive, and these deviants strains of evolution constitute a tie to the Void that the Thyrus can use. Conversely, the Shadow Realm and all of the creatures and states of being connected to it are, fundamentally, neither good nor bad — they just *are* — though each such phenomenon may be *turned* to dark purposes by a Shaman looking to contact one of the Acamoth. Objects, locations, and people resonant with violations against the laws of nature, whether subtle or overt, can also be turned to such an end: the child of an incestuous union, for instance, or the isolated environment in which human tampering enabled a weaker species to overwhelm and drive to extinction a stronger one.

### *Abyssal Summonings by Order*

Just as each of the five Supernal Paths holds its own unique connections to the Void and its creatures, so, too, does each of the five Pentacle Orders (as well as

their enemies) use different symbols and methods for getting the attention of the Acamoth. The secrets handed down for millennia can be and have been perverted to the cause of calling out to the exiles of the Abyss.

**The Adamantine Arrow:** Combat and conflict drive the soul of the Arrow; opposition to impurity in the name of the innocent and helpless. When the drive to protect is sublimated into the desire to cause harm, the mission of the Dragon's Talon becomes twisted and perverse. Martial skill turned to hubristic ends can be used to torture and conquer, while an understanding of the body's tolerances can become pointless masochism or profane acts of self-mortification. The threat of violence, as well as its judicious application, can be turned to the creation of fear. These pursuits are all easily used to gain the notice of the Acamoth.

**The Free Council:** Above all else, the hope of freedom from the Lie of the Exarchs motivates the mages of the Free Council, but people are willing to do all sorts of terrible things in the name of liberty. The science of the Sleepers that so many Libertines embrace is utterly without morality of its own; indeed, the abstract notion of "progress" has been used to justify countless atrocities throughout the ages. Places in which revolutions have turned corrupt and betrayed the promise of the human spirit, as well as those in which technology has been turned — deliberately or otherwise — to relentlessly ruinous ends can serve a Libertine as the focal point of an Abyssal summoning.

**The Guardians of the Veil:** Lies, misdirection, secrecy, and a veritable tyranny of treachery and fear are the hallmarks of the Guardians of the Veil. Further, those who dwell behind the Masque are deeply acquainted with the terrible sacrifices that one must make in the name of order and security. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Guardians sometimes turn to the hard choice of calling upon the Acamoth in the name of their heavy obligations; few are as familiar with Paradox and its instruments as the Guardians of the Veil, leading some of their number to believe, erroneously, that they can tame these forces. For those Guardians who wish to walk this dark road, the symbols and practices of their order are easily subverted to magics of the Void.

**The Mysterium:** Knowledge for its own sake may be one of the most dangerous pursuits in the Fallen World. Certainly, the denizens of the Abyss know many nightmarish secrets they are willing to share



with ambitious mystagogues, provided those mages have the courage to ask the right questions. The lock blazoned on the Atlantean glyph of the Dragon's Wing indicates both the portals that must be passed to earn knowledge and the locking away of lore too powerful to be left in the hands of the ignorant. Both of these images resonate with the Acamoth and can be used by a mystatogue to form a connection to such a being. Contrary to what many willworkers of the Mysterium believe, some information truly is evil, irrespective of the intentions of the one who uses it.

**The Silver Ladder:** The Ladder to Heaven is a powerful symbol, still, to the théarchs of the Silver Ladder. Perhaps, the ruins of that structure — as much metaphor as physical construct, if not more so — exist, still, within the Abyss. As the théarch reaches upward toward something so sublimely shattered and annihilated, she reaches also toward the Abyss. The devastation of the Ladder may well have been the birth of the Void; for all many denizens of the Abyss know, it was. Pride, also, resonates with the burden of those who would lead their fellow willworkers, like the hubris that sundered the worlds and created the madness between them. Symbols and actions indicative of leadership gone awry, turned to dark purpose, call to the Acamoth in the name of the Ladder.

**The Seers of the Throne:** The goals of the Seers of the Throne are so easily corrupted to the seductive call of the Acamoth. The Throne is built upon the acquisition and indulgence of power as both means and end, as a thing sacred by its very nature. The Abyss offers power, devoid of any sort of ethical mandate. It is a short step beyond the need to subjugate and control out of selfishness, to the longing to do so out of hatred. Once others have been reduced to the level of commodities, they can be treated like animals and less than animals without the slightest pang of conscience. Lies and greed feed the Abyss, and those Seers who would ascend to the right hand of the Exarchs must first cross the long dark of the Void.

**Banishers:** Those who long for the destruction of magic, itself, have much to learn from the Abyss and from the Acamoth who are its substance made manifest in the Fallen World. The Banishers' creed of insane hatred of all that they fear and misunderstand is very nearly a symphony to the spirits of the Void. Merely by being what they are, Banishers make themselves attractive to the Acamoth, who happily hasten to their call. As many such willworkers believe themselves cursed or even damned by the Awakening, it can prove to be a short step to "turning the Devil's

tools against him." Only too late do such Banishers learn that the Abyss can *never* be turned to its own unmaking, for it was utterly unmade at the very instant of its genesis.

### *Left-Handed Legacies and the Acamoth*

It is certainly worth mentioning that many members of Left-Handed Legacies want as little to do with the Abyss and its creatures — earthbound or otherwise — as any other relatively sane willworker. In fact, the only such mages to deal with the Acamoth on a consistent basis are the various groups collectively known as the Scelesti. Left-Handed mages such as the Tremere liches don't necessarily object to dealings with the Void on any moral level (though some of them do, as the beliefs that willworkers hold in such concepts as right and wrong aren't always, or even often, so black and white), but almost *all* of them recognize the dangers inherent to such practices. Given the day-to-day perils of living as a Left-Handed mage most anywhere in the Fallen World, it's easy to understand why so many of them shun this sort of magic.

The Accursed, however, certainly make up for the reservations of their Left-Handed peers with a vengeance, with no few of them summoning and otherwise calling upon the Acamoth as freely and as frequently as they dare. Numerous Scelesti exercise far more caution and discernment in their Abyssal summonings, of course, but their actions are balanced against those of the many Accursed who long only to do their part in burning down the world until they, too, are consumed by the insatiable, otherworldly, and all-devouring flame that they seek to unleash. Some Scelesti remain in more or less constant communication with one or more such patron spirits, while others only infrequently experience the presence of the Acamoth. A few Accursed *never* directly deal with Acamoth, though this is quite rare.

### *Calling to the Void*

As powerful and versatile as the abilities of the Acamoth may be, most of these creatures are still cut off from the majority of their unnatural might and can offer only certain gifts to those willing to deal with them; thus, a few Awakened turn to the practice of summoning down those spirits still dwelling within the Void. Known as the Gulmoth, these dread beings slither in through tears in the seams of the Tapestry, a

form of free passage offered to them by mages whose desires outstrip their good sense.

Summoning down the Abyss is, easily, one of the most profoundly dangerous things that a willworker can do and, yet, time and again, the Awakened prove willing to do just that. Certainly, many Scelesti are willing to taint their already-degraded souls with the stench of the Void, but what might surprise the Awakened are the numbers of seemingly upstanding willworkers who meddle with these powers. Whether to learn forgotten lore or to destroy an otherwise unassailable enemy, some few mages of the Pentacle (as well as Apostates, Seers of the Throne, and others) turn to the unspeakable, carving forgotten names into the flesh of the innocent and burning the salt harvested from the tears of starving children to earn audiences with things that should not be.

### *The Ritual*

Summoning from the Abyss is actually quite easy, provided the mage in question has no desire for subtlety or control: accrue enough Paradox from casting vulgar magics and a Manifestation *will* eventually appear. This approach leaves a great deal to be desired, however, as such entities are inherently unruly and commonly show up with no agenda more elaborate than spiteful mayhem. Certainly, some of them are interested in making deals, but a willworker can't count on getting an Abyssal tempter, rather than a ravaging engine of destruction. Furthermore, mages cannot simply banish these beings when their presence is no longer desired; the Manifestation subsides only in its own good time, or when the spirit is forcefully banished.

In order to deliberately call out to a spirit of the Void in a safer (though by no means particularly safe) and more controlled manner, a mage must unlearn much of what she knows about magic. Awakened spells employ the power of the Realms Supernal, through a tenuous connection that wends its way through the Abyss. The trick to calling down the Gulmoth and their ilk lies in "disconnecting" the Supernal link of Awakened magic partway through its journey, metaphysically creating a temporarily ladder down which such an entity might scale, into the Fallen World. Lusting, as they do, for contact with this realm, Abyssal beings will almost certainly accept the tacit invitation, though a mage must be *extremely* careful in doing so, should she wish to exert any degree of influence whatsoever over the type (and overall power) of the spirit that answers the summons.

The problem with this process is that the Awakened soul is meant to be a vessel for the Supernal, not the Abyss, and that it is uniquely unsuited to the task; effectively, the every instinct of the mage's spirit recoils from the possibility of direct contact with the Void and she must devote much of her energy to overcoming her soul's natural aversion to the attempt. Her knowledge of the Arcana avails her nothing in such a casting, for what she seeks has nothing to do with the Watchtowers. Her rites cannot benefit her, as no earthly knowledge resonates with the powers with which she seeks audience. Thus, a mage who wishes to perform a ritualized Abyssal summoning rolls only her Gnosis, her raw mystic will.

This is an extended action, requiring an hour per roll and five successes per Rank of the spirit to be summoned, through Rank 5 spirits. Beyond that constraint, a mage is not limited to calling an Abyssal entity of any particular Rank; such spirits will gladly come for *any* Awakened soul that calls out to them. The Gulmoth long for the pains and pleasures of the Fallen World and, upon following the bridge offered by a mage's soul (through this process and this process alone), enter into this realm physically incarnate, without the need for an appropriate Numen. Effectively, the mage's desire to interact with the entity is an invitation that grants it license to take on corporeal form for the duration of its interactions with the willworker in question. Some believe that the process is similar to that used by Acamoth who "ride" a mage's Awakened soul through an Astral journey to the Abyss; that the mage tacitly allows the entity to make use of her power in a specific manner through the very act of summoning a Gulmoth.

Naturally, though, more than just the will to call down the Void is necessary. Mages must align the summoning space with Abyssal correspondences, items that resonate with the mad, stillborn cosmos that roils between the Fallen and the Supernal. Perhaps the creatures of the Abyss desire a "comfortable" space in which to arrive in the Fallen World or, maybe, they simply *cannot* enter this realm in the absence of certain procedures to create an inauspicious environment through a polluted flow of subtle energies. Those Awakened capable of discerning such things typically report that ley lines are soured in the wake of Abyssal summonings, though it is — in most cases — difficult to say whether the process of defilement began before or during the ritual. (The symbols, ideas, and objects aligned with Paths and orders, above, are just as useful



in this respect for summoning the Gulmoth into the Fallen World as they are for calling out, across it, to the Acamoth.)

Physical relics of Paradox are often suitable for the purpose of “consecrating” a ritual space for use in an Abyssal summoning: material taken from the area of an Anomaly, the remains of someone killed by Havoc, even a few shreds of unnaturally preserved carcass from a slain Manifestation. Not all mages can get ready access to these sorts of things (not without deliberately incurring Paradox and chancing a Manifestation, anyway, which largely ruins the point of the exercise), so other methods are often called for. Objects, places, and acts that carry the taint of madness, sickness, betrayal, horror, destruction, death, and the like call to the Abyss and its denizens are readily drawn to the savor of such pleasant fare. In certain cases, areas carry a sympathetic connection to the Void; perhaps an Abyssal intruder incarnated there or a powerful Scelestus resided there for many years. Would-be Abyssal summoners cannot typically count on the “good fortune” of finding such a locale, unattended and ready for use.

Mages are capable of augmenting somewhat their ability to call out to the things of the Void in a (relatively) safe manner. Willworkers of particular low Wisdom (1 or 2) gain a bonus die on the extended Gnosis roll to summon Abyssal spirits. Mages may also sacrifice to the Abyss to gain bonus dice for a single roll in the extended action. By sacrificing a living creature (as per the rules given on p. 78 of **Mage: The Awakening**), the willworker may gain bonus dice in place of points of Mana. He must either take bonus dice or Mana from the sacrifice; the process only allows for one or the other. Note, however, that this is the deliberate act of ending lives in the name of the Void. Regardless of a character’s intentions in doing so, this is Left-Handed willwork in its truest form. Objects and locations associated with such a sacrifice inevitably take on a hideous resonance and even those otherwise faithful to the path of Wisdom often find their auras stained by so heinous a deed.

Conversely, a mage of exceptionally high Wisdom — 9 or 10 (though what such a willworker would be doing calling down creatures from the Abyss is questionable, at best) — suffers a one-die penalty to his extended Gnosis roll; the Void recoils from the purity of his spirit and his very soul rebels against such unholy magics. Of course, practicing Abyssal summonings is a sure way for a mage of such profound

Wisdom to fall from his high perch and the Gulmoth invariably do all that they can to encourage in such a willworker the belief that they aren’t so bad; that they are victims of the Fall, as much as any other creature from among the many realms. In a way, unfortunately, the Gulmoth speak the truth in this respect, which makes their words all the more dangerous for the pure of heart to hear, for to be moved by them is to embrace the end of Wisdom.

As to what must be done to call down beings of Rank 6 or greater, none can say for certain, as it is doubtful that more than a bare handful of such still-born gods have tread the Earth in the ages between the Fall and the present day. A scant few texts speak of the ritual sacrifice of scores of lives, Awakened souls obliterated by unspeakable acts of sorcery, the creation of Paradoxes so vast and elaborate that they sustain themselves for a thousand years, and similarly heinous perversions of magic. Furthermore, these are among the tamest of the unholy rites alluded-to by those that dare to speak, at all, of the prospect of inviting into this reality such Gulmoth, anathema to all that which is and will ever be.

### *The Risks*

Bargaining with the Void is, at best, a tremendously iffy proposition. Mages have met horrific ends for having truck with such powers, and not always at the hands of the creatures they call down from the Abyss. Almost every mage of the Pentacle Orders



(and many Apostates, Seers of the Throne, and even Banishers) are violently opposed to trafficking with the creatures of the Abyss and a significant number of them will simply “shoot to kill” when confronted by a mage who practices those sorts of summonings. The Adamantine Arrow, Guardians of the Veil, and the Silver Ladder are particularly harsh and unyielding in their persecution of those who converse with the denizens of the Void.

Of course, the foremost peril of Abyssal summonings is to be found in the otherworldly powers, themselves. The Gulmoth are not to be trifled with; even when summoned according to all of the proper rites and arcane formulae, such beings definitively intend harm toward those who call them. It is simply their nature. They hate and desire to violate and destroy. Willworkers who offer them passage into the Fallen World make for convenient targets and it is only through a profound measure of restraint — engendered by an understanding that sparing one soul today may enable a given Gulmoth to devour two, tomorrow — that such entities manage to hold their instinctual urges in check.

That said, the Gulmoth typically try their best — within their intrinsically hostile frame of reference, anyway — to put on a relatively friendly face when called to the Fallen World through the use of the proper rites and incantations. A spirit that pounces on the first human it sees *might* get called back again, but mages are quite good at gathering information and it’s only a matter of time until some enterprising summoner realizes that calling that particular Gulmoth down is a sure way to die. So, in the interests of preserving what credentials they have with the Awakened, most such entities curb their savage hungers and their hateful lusts, and allow those who call to them to be destroyed of their own accord; preferably with the very things that they wish for. While not as viscerally satisfying, many of the creatures of the Void (those with interested in being regularly called into the Fallen World to barter with willworkers, at any rate) are capable of cultivating at least enough of a façade of patience to rein in their “natural” behaviors.

### *The Reasons*

Given the terrible costs and risks of dealing with the powers of the Abyss, what could motivate a willworker to actually do so?

Some willworkers seek knowledge purely because it is knowledge. A thirst for understanding overrides all

### On A Rampage


So, why don’t Acamoth and Gulmoth go on nightmarish killing sprees when called? Many of them are certainly powerful enough to break through the wards and bindings that the average mage can erect, leaving one to wonder what holds them back? The most obvious answer is, sometimes, “Nothing at all.”

On occasion, a willworker has the singular misfortune of calling down some horrid avatar of fury, desirous only of the opportunity to murder the world. Such malevolent entities typically leave a swath of destruction in their wake, until such a time as mages, Fallen World spirits, or other powers can somehow manage to destroy, imprison, or otherwise incapacitate the fiend.

In other cases, though, Acamoth and Gulmoth are better behaved; not because they *wish* to be, but instead because they have an understanding of the consequences of not doing so. Self-preservation does not rank highly on the list of priorities for most Abyssal beings, but the chance to spread misery, suffering, horror, and the like on a greater scale than mere slaughter *is* a powerful motivating factor for many such creatures. Perhaps, in earlier ages of the Fallen World, the threat of death and the spectacles of its aftermath was enough to incite the passions cherished by the Void, but humanity is simply far too jaded, now, by the atrocities that it inflicts upon itself, every day.

Thus, the majority of these creatures act their proper part in the Faustian dramas for which mages call out to them, for they perceive in these summons the possibility of far greater and more telling damage to the Fallen World. An old proverb admonishes: give a man a fish and he’ll eat for a day; teach him to fish, and he’ll eat for a lifetime. The subtler approach — more patient and nuanced — is the Void’s answer to teaching the human race to fish. Killing a few people and tearing down a small fragment of the material realm is viscerally satisfying for Abyssal spirits, to be sure, but so much more satisfying, is it, to encourage willworkers in the very pursuits that most extensively and fundamentally damage the Tapestry in its entirety.





sense of right and wrong and, indeed, all comprehension of safe and unsafe. Many of these become the archetypal cackling lunatics of the Awakened world, driven far beyond the edge of reason by contemplation of truths (and lies that are, nevertheless, simultaneously truths) too terrible for the mind to absorb, let alone articulate. But the fact is that all the myriad things that wander the endless insanity of the Void know *something*. These secrets blast the soul, but some mages believe the wounds they will surely carry are worth the enlightenment they stand to gain. What sorts of lore does the Abyss conceal?

Perhaps the most significant of the information willworkers can dredge out of the Abyss are the Supernal secrets that filter down from the Watchtowers, only to become lost in the Void. For every Supernal truth that migrates into the Fallen World, many more lose their way in the long dark of the Abyss and some of these are discovered by the denizens of that loathsome realm. Perhaps, overly curious mages sometimes speculate, some vital secret of the Oracles has gone astray in the Void; some shred of knowledge so important it must surely be worth the cost to one's soul necessary to obtain it.

More banal, perhaps, but certainly no less compelling, is the promise of Supernal Artifacts that "wash up" on the shores of the Void, rather than descending properly to the Fallen World. Mages sometimes barter with the Gulmoth for these items; presumably, given the near-impermeability of the Abyss as a barrier between the worlds, the majority of Artifacts end up in the Void, instead of the material realm. Thus, a willworker who knows what she's looking for may be able to very nearly "custom order" an Artifact from a willing and resourceful Gulmoth, so long as she's able to meet the creature's price.

Some say the Watchtowers, themselves, are mirrored in the roiling madness of the Abyss. Certain Awakened are so desperate for the lore of the Five Towers that they will stoop to bartering with the Void for knowledge of them. A reflection, after all, may not be the thing itself, but one can discern much by exhaustively studying even an image. A handful of willworkers believe some formula exists within the dark inversion of the Watchtowers that will enable one who deciphers it to return to the Realm Supernal. Of course, no one who has actually attempted the journey has returned, but the Gulmoth are all too willing to keep providing such knowledge as they possess upon the subject to any mage who knows enough to ask the right questions.

Lastly — and perhaps most significantly — the Gulmoth offer the benefits of pacts without all of the hassle of negotiation. Provided one can locate the correct entity, it will perform whatever service is required of it, irrespective of how vile, in exchange for a predictable fee. A summoner need not wonder at the cost or (in most cases) perform any lengthy service. Instead, the Gulmoth requires a severed digit, a priceless treasure destroyed, or a dear friend's throat slit with a dagger forged from a piece of steel extracted from the wreckage of a fatal car crash.

### *An Abyssal Bestiary*

*Scratched into the floor with a chisel used to cut the planks for the coffins of seven murderers, the circle was a faint whitish line against the pale old hardwood. Sigils in the High Speech adorned the meticulously carved ring, at each of the cardinal directions, but these marks were obviously wrong, somehow. Any scholar of the old tongue would know them as such, merely to glance at them, though few, indeed, might understand the true significance of a misplaced line, here, or a too-sudden curve, there. What crouched within the circle knew, however, and it stared across that boundary at she who had called out to it.*

*"You have summoned me, Awakened One. What do you ask?"*

*Shakti licked her lips nervously, casting the briefest of glances around the barren dining room of the aging house; as though its walls still dripped with the blood of those butchered here so many long years ago by he who was husband and father to them. Though she accounted herself well-schooled in the ways of Path and order, this was something entirely different. Still, she had not come this far, only to falter at so critical a juncture. Shakti steadied her voice and answered, "I have need of your services, Prince in Tattersers."*

*The mystagogue could have sworn that the thing smiled at that, the cloud of inky darkness atop its neck twisting into something roughly approximating a grin. "As you say, Awakened One. What service, specifically, may I render unto you?"*

*"I have been tasked with an oath, sworn without compulsion but against my wishes." Shakti paused, trying to think of how best to phrase her request. The Gulmoth did not prompt her or in any other way display even the slightest impatience. Instead, it remained rooted to the very spot to which it had been called, staring intently at her. Finally, she continued, "I must have the freedom to circumvent that oath without breaking it."*

## Crazy, No Matter How You Slice It

Sitting back in one's living room, paging through a book, it's easy enough to see that trafficking with the powers of the Void — Acamoth, Gulmoth, or whatever else — is a *bad* idea. Nothing the spirits of the Abyss offer can even potentially be worth more than what a mage barter away to have it. In a very real way, in fact, the denizens of the Void have *nothing* to offer, because that is the essence of what they are and the totality of where they dwell. Their "gifts" are poison, afflicting the recipient with the unbridled horrors of all that she foolishly requests of them. Why, then, does anyone actually summon such creatures and bargain with them? Certainly, one can discuss the boons at stake, but that, alone, isn't enough. Something has to push a person over the edge of doing what can't in any way truly benefit him, in the vain, mad hope that, *this* time, it somehow will.

All save the most unschooled, wantonly ignorant, or improperly educated mage is well aware that having truck with the Abyss is a sure path to suffering, but people — even supposedly enlightened people — sometimes do things they know to be wrong, or even stupid, because they have allowed circumstances to make them irrational. A man dying of thirst in the desert will likely drink any cup offered to him, even if he's aware that the water within is foul and unsafe to drink. Maybe a willworker desperately needs or wants something and no other way to obtain it exists or, perhaps, he has to undertake a difficult task and has an incredibly pressing reason to take a shortcut, *just this once*. Alternately, he might approach the situation with the best of intentions: is it *truly* evil, after all, to sacrifice a mass-murderer's soul to the Void in an effort to save the life of an innocent child with a terminal disease?

The answer to that question (and any other question like it), of course, is an emphatic, "Yes." Anything that the Abyss requires as the price of its services is wrong to give, and anything that it offers is wrong to accept. That is the Void's very nature. It is incontrovertibly wicked and monstrous to deal with the Abyss and its natives, to be sure, but good people are sometimes hurt, confused, despondent, or simply possessed of bad judgment. Through these cracks in the foundations of a human spirit, the Abyss insinuates itself into the Fallen World.

*When the thing replied, Shakti sensed, more than heard, the note of sadistic glee in its tone, "You must be more exact in your words, Awakened One: of what oath, precisely, do you speak?"*

*Shakti's head fell and her voice dropped to scarcely more than a whisper. "The injunction against dealing with the Seers of the Throne placed upon me by my Hierarch."*


*The Prince in Tatters bowed low, at that. "As you desire, Awakened One." The willworker's breath caught in her throat, as the Gulmoth reached one spindly, long-fingered hand toward her, its talons just barely within the line of the circle. "And whom do you offer as the fulfillment of my price?"*

Certain spirits of the Abyss have, over the course of centuries and even millennia, become known to earthly willworkers. In the depths of a ruined Mysterium Athenaeum, on ragged sheets of tanned human flesh, a thousand names, fit to scour sight and sanity, are tattooed, detailing the attributes of a particular Gulmoth; the tithes it demands and the favors it grants. Elsewhere, etched into 55 sheets of unearthly metal,

covering the walls, floor, and ceiling of a chamber without windows or doors, mutely testify as to the generosity of a terrifying Abyssal spirit... and warn of the soul-shivering toll exacted by its inhumanly beautiful counterpart, when so much as a single ritual component is a hair's breadth out of line or a word of power is even slightly misspoken. The alien entities are unknown and unknowable, but they permit and even encourage the convenient deception that they can be categorized and understood, for the human mind is so much more willing to accept that which it believes itself to comprehend.

The titles by which these entities are known are not their real names, of course. Such creatures *have* no "real names"; they don't truly possess existence and so they cannot have names. Rather, these titles are convenient forms of address by which human minds might classify them and so attempt to confine them. Each such spirit might be known by a hundred different names; over the ages since the Fall, some of them *have*





been. So long as the rites are observed and the proper tribute made, most of them will answer, regardless of the noises that humans use to address them.

Eleven Gulmoth, in total, are presented here for use in your chronicles or simply as inspiration for unique Abyssal horrors of your own. Two of each correspond to the five spirit Ranks for which mechanics are applicable, while the last is an example of a far more potent sort of entity, a creature that *cannot* be fought with raw power, irrespective of scale. In addition to the general sorts of environments into which Abyssal entities prefer to be summoned, each has its own individual tastes, the particular atrocities that call out to it and for which it will heed the summoner's call. Each has its own appearance and mannerisms, for the horrors of the Void are infinite, as are the alien spirits that bask in them. Each of the Gulmoth has its strengths and its weaknesses; the gifts that it offers and the price that it exacts. Also, each such being suffers under a personal Ban, through which a clever willworker might mitigate, somewhat, the toll that she must pay for the spirit's services, or perhaps even thwart the cost, outright.

Remember, however, that the sum total of what may truly be known and comprehended with respect to the Void is but a drop of water next to the ocean of what *no* mortal mind will ever grasp of its essence. The Gulmoth chronicled below are but the smallest sampling of what awaits those who meddle with the vast nothingness between the Fallen and the Supernal. Each is a nightmare, distinct and utterly unique. Each despises and hungers. Each offers only the *seeming* of aid, in exchange for a price that gnaws at the soul and rots the foundations of this realm, like drops of water falling onto stone over the course of hundreds of millennia. One who deals in such powers should expect to pay the dearest cost, when — not *if* — her reach, at long last, truly exceeds her grasp.

### *Boons*

Abyssal spirits *want* to be summoned, so they, unlike many other such entities, arrive in the Fallen World brandishing ready goods and services. Nearly every deliberately summoned Void-born being has within its purview a certain range of gifts that it can offer to its summoner. Only those Abyssal creatures utterly new to earthly incarnation or so intrinsically inimical to terrestrial existence as to be incapable of reasoned bartering with a summoner lack such a suite of wares with which to tempt.

Invariably unwholesome and frequently repellent in nature, these boons are, nevertheless, the primary reason for calling down and consorting with the Gulmoth. Many of these boons enable mages to take shortcuts in their willwork, acquiring instantly something that might take years of study and hard work, or even something simply beyond the purview of Awakened magic. Others are simply too difficult for the summoner to acquire on her own; while destroying a hated enemy may, technically, be possible for the willworker, the disparity between their levels of mystic skill and mundane resources could make such an undertaking a virtual impossibility... without Abyssal aid, anyway. Likewise, an Atlantean ruin could contain all sorts of traps and riddles the would-be pillager must overcome, some of which require particular degrees of mystic acumen, athletic prowess, or intellectual capability. Certain Gulmoth, however, are more than capable of cheating the laws of reality to bypass these safeguards, calling upon powers that have no place in the Fallen World to accomplish ends inconceivable to even the ancients, themselves.

### *Tithes*

Naturally, nothing in this world or any other is free, so the Gulmoth require an exchange for their services. These bargains, taken in their entirety, are never to the advantage of the summoner, though they may certainly *seem* so, depending upon the perspective of the individual. Whether or not a given mage believes a century of extra life is worth the murder of 10 Sleepers is irrelevant; from an objective, metaphysical perspective — that of the path of Wisdom — the willworker has been cheated in the deal, for *nothing* can possibly be worth what he has sacrificed. This is the way of the tithes the Gulmoth demand. They aspire to make the price seem as fair as possible, or even to favor the summoner. In the case of especially far-fallen and self-absorbed mages, the cost can absolutely seem trivial compared to the prize.

Some tithes *are* actually quite small, for they are the demands of relatively weak Gulmoth. If such a being can get more out of a mage, it will, but these creatures are the small fish in the unimaginably vast, predatory sea of the Void and pride is not a concern for their kind. For the most part, they acquire what they can, when they can, and content themselves with doing small harms to the fabric of the Tapestry. More powerful entities command commensurately higher prices for their assistance, most of which

cannot be reckoning in any sum of money or other measure of material wealth. For the greater beasts of the Void, as with their lesser kin, more rarified commodities call to them: violation and vengeance, love turned sour and the slow disintegration of Wisdom and ethics. What they take, an amoral mage might not even miss, until it's far too late to repent of one's ill-advised bargains.

### *Pacts*

Of course, the system of boons and tithes presented here serves as something of a shorthand version of the economy of favors with Abyssal entities. Because they want to make deals, they make the process easier and less time-consuming than other spirits might. Those willworkers who do their homework come to realize that one can acquire a given commodity from a particular Gulmoth by performing a specific act; it's as simple as that — like walking into a shopping mall and reading price tags. But it need not be so cut-and-dried for those who *truly* desire to throw the dice and gamble with their sanity, their lives, and their very souls. Those who wish to wander into the marketplace and barter with the Void may certainly do so, though the vendors are especially renowned for their deceptive natures and dangerous wares.

Gulmoth will readily make more elaborately binding pacts with the mages who summon them down from the Abyss (see the systems for pacts on pp. 171–182). Such spirits demand all of the sorts of costs that one would expect of creatures of the Void. They offer no more and no less than any other otherworldly entity, but Abyssal spirits tend to have powers that lend themselves to certain especially gruesome, underhanded, or otherwise morally unacceptable pursuits. They take no exception to being used as hatchet-men (some few don't even particularly object to obvious suicide missions). They won't ever refuse to perform a repugnant task based upon a purely ethical objection. They aren't offended by any low, disgusting thing that a willworker secretly and shamefully desires. Gulmoth will, to the best of their ability, fulfill a mage's darkest longings, and they will do so without compunction or judgment.

Perhaps most importantly, Gulmoth don't try to gouge the summoner like many other spirits will; the mage is *already* paying a cost steeper than any creature of Shadow or some alien realm might require, even if she isn't truly aware of it. The bulk of what the Gulmoth gets out of the transaction is to

be found in the degradation of Wisdom in a single soul, the gradual fraying of one of the threads that helps to hold the Tapestry together. When enough of these strands break, then more of the Abyss seeps into the Fallen World. Knowingly accepting the aid of a spirit of the Abyss — let alone deliberately summoning one into the material realm — is, of itself, an act of direst hubris and those who indulge in such an undertaking degrade their own spirits, as well as the world around them. For the Gulmoth, that alone would be very nearly worth the cost of any favor, but certain rules must be upheld while within this realm and the creatures of the Void are no exception: the scales of any pact must, in the end, be level.

### *Arublex*

Summoned so frequently over the ages that it has been assigned something like a proper name in the obscure legendry of the Awakened, Arublex revels in its status as a Gulmoth that spends far more time in the Fallen World than the Void. This, however, is unsurprising, considering the little creature's function: Arublex acts as an Abyssal familiar to willworkers. It prefers those cleaving to the Left-Handed path, though it will certainly accept very nearly anyone willing to have it. Those that wish to call down the gruesome Imp must destroy a grimoire inscribed with a spell meant to summon a more conventional familiar (either the Spirit 3 spell "Familiar Pact" or the Spirit 4 spell "Grant Familiar"), using an implement created from the ruins of a fallen tower; the type of tower is immaterial, and a sharpened piece of metal from a collapsed cellular phone tower works just as well as a stone spearhead hewn from the crumbling remains of an ancient turret.

Fortunately, this horrid Gulmoth is typically confined to Twilight while in the Fallen World, as its appearance is surely a cause for alarm. Arublex is approximately the size of a capuchin monkey, with overlong arms and squat, bandy legs. Its hands and feet all end in vicious, needle-like talons. Its pear-shaped torso is flabby and pot-bellied, and its head is nothing more than a writhing wormlike mass, which occasionally parts to reveal a single, unblinking round black eye at the center. Arublex's hide is pus yellow, slick and shiny. Its voice manifests in the ear of its summoner (or master, in the event that a familiar bargain is struck); the Gulmoth will speak to no other, unless forced.



**Rank:** 1  
**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 2  
**Willpower:** 5  
**Essence:** max 10  
**Initiative:** 5  
**Defense:** 3  
**Speed:** 13 (species factor 7)  
**Size:** 2  
**Corpus:** 4  
**Influence:** Perversity 2  
**Numina:** Discorporation, Innocuous

**Boons:** Arublex's services are both very simple and extremely complex. The Gulmoth will only perform a single duty, though that one obligation is profound. As mentioned above, Arublex will act as a Twilight familiar to a willworker who summons it for that purpose. Thus, the spirit is willing to do anything that the average familiar would, but *only* for one who binds it to service. For those unwilling to accept the bond of master and slave (though which is which in Arublex's case may occasionally be somewhat unclear, given the Gulmoth's abilities), this nightmarish little demon spares no words.

**Tithe:** The tithe of Arublex is twofold. First, any mage who wishes to engage the entity's service must agree to a familiar bond. This contract — though forged through unorthodox means — is as binding as any other (requiring the same experience expenditure as any other Twilight familiar), tying the two together in a symbiotic relationship. This very connection forms the basis of the second half of Arublex's tithe: the Gulmoth must spend a point of Essence every day, same as any other familiar. In Arublex's case, however, the spirit funnels this Essence into the Abyss, doing its own small part to feed the Fallen World to the Void.

Naturally, Arublex takes pains to use its Essence as often as it can get away with, preferably to assist its master in an obvious a manner as possible, so as to earn *Mana* that it might offer to its lords in the dark heart of the Abyss. While the two commodities are functionally identical, the Gulmoth delights in the irony of sending the celestial fire into the depths of the Void.

**Ban:** Periodically, Arublex must indulge its perverse nature through an act of abject contrariness. The Gulmoth *almost* always does as its master requires of it, but — every once in a while, when something is *extremely* important to its master — Arublex must oppose the willworker's intention. Further, it must do so in such a way as does not directly violate any command that it has been given, but nevertheless manages to corrupt its master's intentions.

### *The Maw of Long Sorrows*

The self is precious and to be treated with profound respect and dignity. When and where this fundamental axiom is defied, the Maw of Long Sorrows may be summoned into this realm. A glutton who has treated her body as a gutter, rather than a temple; a teenaged boy who spells the litany of his angst across his skin in a razor-thin diatribe; a heroin addict whose flesh is a constellation of track marks, and whose veins have collapsed under the strain of a hundred needles too many: these are the canvas upon which the circles to summon the Maw might be inscribed. When the Gulmoth is drawn down, the immediate surroundings seem to grow unnaturally still and quiet, as though the world itself has caught its breath in shock and horror.





The Maw of Long Sorrows opens on the back of the neck of the unfortunate chosen to serve as the focus for the summoning. The flesh splits and tears, revealing a hideous, many-toothed mouth that manifests with no concern for the constraints of anatomy, as the Gulmoth's host can still move, speak, and otherwise function normally for the duration — as normally as a person might with an Abyssal entity incarnated on the back of her neck, anyway — at least, until a bargain is reached (see below). The spirit speaks in a grating, impatient tone; its voice sounds like the gradual splintering of heavy timbers or the slow cracking of thick ice over deep water. Occasionally, a long, narrow black tongue will flick forth, to lick at the Maw's sharp fangs or the ragged tear in the skin around it.

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 1, Finesse 4, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Essence:** max 10

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** As host + 4 (the Maw of Long Sorrows is quite small and difficult to target)

**Speed:** As host

**Size:** 0

**Corpus:** 3

**Influence:** Defilement 2

**Numina:** Harrow, Psychic Torment

**Boons:** The Maw of Long Sorrows will ruin something that the summoner cannot reach: an enemy's favored weapon, a rival's relationship, or whatever other thing — material or conceptual — that is beyond the willworker's power to effect. The spirit cares nothing for the *reason* for the mage's inability to target the commodity in question; its desire is solely to corrode and to despoil. The Gulmoth cannot guarantee a specific manner in which the defilement will occur, merely that it shall. Upon reaching an agreement with its summoner, the Maw uses its host as a vehicle to convey it to the object of its attention, whereupon it works its powers in the attempt to befoul its target. Often, it makes some attempt to hide its presence (compelling its host to wear a scarf or turtleneck shirt, for example), but it sometimes neglects such civilized niceties.

**Tithe:** After completing its assignment, the Maw of Long Sorrows claims the individual into which it was summoned as its prize. This person vanishes into the Abyss at the conclusion of the Gulmoth's manifestation. Naturally, even the most savagely callous willworker must test to resist Wisdom degeneration (at two dice, irrespective of the mage's current Wisdom score) for this heinous act. If the Maw cannot complete its assignment, however, it may not claim its host as recompense, though the summoner must still bear the moral consequences of her evil act, merely as a result of the willingness to consign another to such a Fate.

**Ban:** The Maw of Long Sorrows cannot abide the presence of any object restored from a ruined state. New or otherwise unspoiled items are inconsequential to the spirit, though anything once broken or somehow degraded and returned to a state of optimal function inflicts aggravated wounds upon the Maw — causing no harm to its host — when wielded as a weapon against it.

### *The Courtesan*

Every natural urge has its negation. Perversity, by and large, is defined by social mores, rather than universal law, though *certain* desires are anathema in their essence. Most people, no matter how they try, cannot find any willing partner to indulge these atrocities. Certainly, mages have it within their power to compel obedience in even their most deviant longings, but



that lacks a certain... something. A violation joyfully endured is, to many, somehow more arousing. The Gulmoth known as the Courtesan, however, can be summoned up into any location in which crimes of lust have transpired. The air grows heavy with the smell of sex; those who lick their suddenly-dry lips taste a lover's sweat upon them. A pool of black liquid bubbles up from the floor, coalescing seamlessly into the sparse silken garb of the Courtesan as it crawls up from the depths, only to fall on its knees at the feet of its summoner and ask, "What is your desire, master?"

The Courtesan is androgynous, but beautiful; indeed, not merely attractive, but instead possessed of the sort of alien beauty that strikes awe into the hearts of all who behold it. Every line of its body is sensual in a way that mortal frames cannot contain, while the contours of its face enflame the most unspeakable of lusts. Its every word conceals an invitation for the listener to satisfy her most inhumane yearnings upon the Courtesan, without the need for either restraint or shame. The Gulmoth isn't properly hermaphroditic; unless that's what its summoner most wants in a mate that will gladly consent to any act of lust, irrespective of how vile; violent, or otherwise socially unacceptable. The spirit's touch electrifies every pleasure receptor in its summoner's body, enfolding the willworker in a profane embrace of absolute bliss.



**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 6, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 15 (species factor 5)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 9

**Influence:** Victimization 2

**Numina:** Shapechange (1 Essence, roll Power + Finesse; the Courtesan affects any purely cosmetic change necessary to become the most physically desirable possible mate for its summoner), Usurp Vice

**Boons:** The Courtesan will do anything that is commanded of it, provided that such satisfies a sexual longing of its summoner. The Gulmoth will even allow its physical shell to be destroyed (banishing the spirit back to the Void), if the prospect of murder gets its summoner off. That said, the Courtesan isn't particularly interested in healthy expressions of lust. It will perform, of course, but attempts to "up the ante," as it were, whispering suggestions for more *adventurous* (in other words, more vile and sadistic) activities into the ear of he who called it, even as it services its master's pleasure. The Courtesan, after all, doesn't want to be treated as an object of desire; rather, its nature calls it to suffer as the *victim* of a series of increasingly shocking and brutal sex crimes.

**Tithe:** In addition to whatever Wisdom the Courtesan's summoner might stake in the process of slaking his urges at the Gulmoth's expense, the spirit desires a prize of its own. The Courtesan claims the fertility of its summoner, "borrowing" it (via a combination of its Victimization Influence and Shapechange Numen) for a short while to spawn a new Abyssal entity; a Rank 1 Gulmoth with a nature and personality shaped largely by the mage who is its earthly "parent." For approximately 17 days after a liaison with the Courtesan, the summoner (regardless of gender) is wholly infertile, as the new Gulmoth incubates within the Courtesan's Essence. After giving "birth" (in a gruesome process unimaginable to even the majority of the most jaded scholars of the Void), the Courtesan leaves its progeny to fare for itself.

**Ban:** The Courtesan must accept any gift offered to it; not merely by its summoner, but by *anyone* who wishes to bestow such a thing upon the Gulmoth. No matter how harmful the gift might be, so long as it is presented as such, the spirit must willingly and graciously receive it.

## *The Third of Two*

Duality is as fascinating to some Gulmoth as the concept of existence, itself. After all, in the Void, things are no truer than they are false, no brighter than they are dark, no more alive than they are dead. But it is the way of the Abyss to taint and ruin all that with which it comes into contact, and so it is with the entity known as the Third of Two. Duality is predicated upon certainty and polarity, a rigidity of absolutes. To call the Third of Two, the prospective summoner must destroy (not alter, not degrade, but *destroy*) a stable binary system through the introduction of a correlative additional element. Only in the pollution and disintegration of such concepts as right and wrong or up and down can the Gulmoth be called.

The Third of Two is a nightmarish little creature: equal parts arachnid, reptile, and worm. Its body is a dark, mottled gray-green, covered in long, thin growths that could be hairs, quills, or even feathers no thicker than a blade of grass. The creature is no larger than a basketball and continually fidgets, unless commanded to stillness by one powerful enough to compel its obedience (whether magically or otherwise). Its voice sounds like whispering steam, somehow manipulated to form intelligible words; thin and reedy, with a certain persistently hissing quality about it. The specific lines and angles of the Third of Two are difficult, at best, for the eye to latch onto, though this may simply be because of its tendency to remain forever in motion, even when standing still.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** max 15

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 16 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 2

**Corpus:** 7

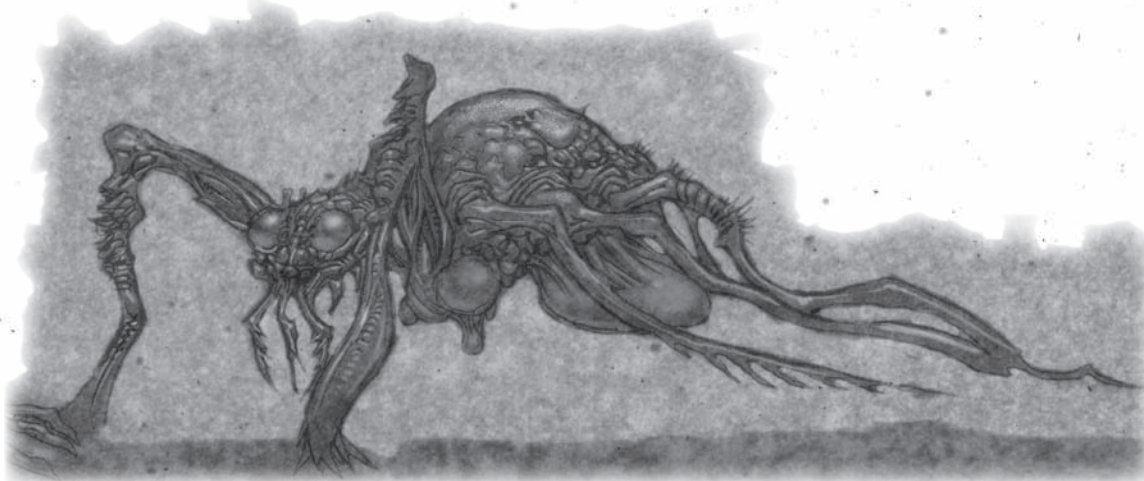
**Influence:** Multiplicity 2

**Numina:** Discorporation, Versatile Energies

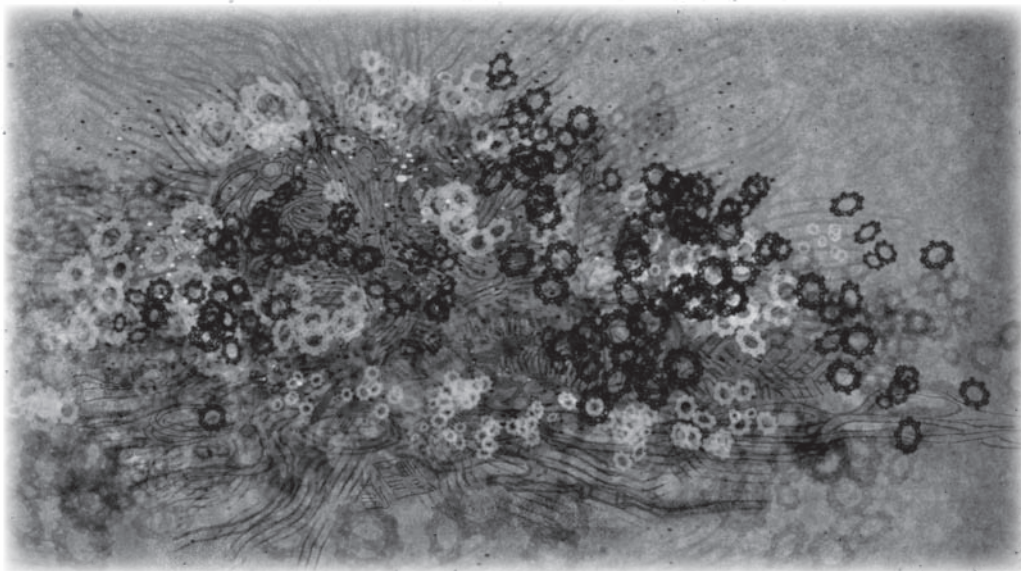
**Boons:** The Third of Two offers only one boon to its summoner, though it is well-known for this singular service and frequently called upon by those that desire it. The Gulmoth can bestow the secrets of training in the way of the Scelestus, allowing a mage to set her feet upon that dark path without the need for an Awakened teacher, thus obviating the risks of seeking instruction from more conventional sources. This knowledge, the Third of Two imparts with great rapidity, allowing a devoted seeker to learn all of the secrets allowed by her Gnosis within a matter of days, at most.

**Tithe:** The spirit asks for little by way of recompense for its services, for it is a small and relatively weak Gulmoth and it furthers its agenda through the ready distribution of its wares. Still, the Third of Two will accept some small restitution, in the form of a point of Mana harvested from the sacrifice of an animal. One who offers such compensation is given the Shadow Name of another Scelestus, seemingly at random, inducted into the Accursed by the Third of Two; knowledge that he may do with as he will.

**Ban:** Two-sided objects engender fear in the Third of Two: playing cards, coins, even sheets of paper. The spirit cannot cross an unbroken line of flat, two-sided objects (anything as thin as a quarter or thinner) and may not take any actions, direct or indirect, to break such a line, and neither may it use any of its powers on any being on the opposite side of such a line.







### *The Gears of Chaos*

The Gulmoth known as the Gears of Chaos can only be called into a place where lifeless devices hold primacy over people. From the factory where children were worked to death, to the automated assembly line used to put employees out of their jobs, to a basement office in which banks of computers continually churn out spam e-mails to a frustrated populace; all of these places call out to the Gears of Chaos. The spirit manifests to the smell of smoldering oil or axle grease, with a metallic shrieking, as though of dozens or even hundreds of gears grinding to a halt, as heavy machinery fails catastrophically. The entity erupts out of the nearest mechanical or electronic device of sufficient dimensions to surround the thickest part of its form (about as wide as the average grown man's thigh), destroying the object in the process. While it is present, all those in the Gulmoth's vicinity taste the bitterness of copper in their mouths, with a slight tingling upon the lips and tongue, as though from an extremely slight electrical charge.

The Gears of Chaos looks like wreckage left in the aftermath of a bombing at a museum of technology: wires and circuit boards are fused into and protrude from twisted masses of hydraulics and clockworks. Everything hisses and sparks, as metal grates on metal and steam vents from odd angles of the spirit's form. The Gulmoth has no discernable anatomy; certainly, no part of the entity's ramshackle body passes for a head. It moves with uneven motions, jerking along spasmodically, as though on the verge of collapse. The Gulmoth's summoner must continually put Gears of Chaos back on track in the course of any conversation,

as it tends to stray far off the topic, its oddly buzzing high-pitched voice meandering from one subject to the next, very nearly at random. Periodically, images appear in one or more of the fragments of television or computer screens protruding from one part of the creature or another; sometimes, it conveys information through these media, as well.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 7, Resistance 9

**Willpower:** 15

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 16

**Defense:** 7

**Speed:** 16 (species factor 3)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 13

**Influence:** Ordered Systems 3

**Numina:** Create Anomaly (Stygia), Essence Conversation, Fetter

**Boons:** Provided she can get Gears of Chaos to stay on-topic for long enough, a summoner can request a number of different services from the Gulmoth. First and perhaps foremost, Gears of Chaos can offer meaningful insight into very nearly any ordered system: a machine, a pylon of Seers of the Throne, a pack of cryptids, a Consilium, a mathematical equation, the weather, or the combination to an electronic lock, for instance. Further, the spirit may disassemble any device into its individual components, on whatever level; a complex mechanical item can be stripped down to each separate part, or even into the elements

that comprise it. Conversely, the spirit can flawlessly reassemble any device that has been partially or fully disassembled; ranging from a rifle, to a puzzle, to an Atlantean perpetual motion machine. Lastly, the Gulmoth can introduce a breaking point into any ordered system. While it cannot guarantee destruction, it *can* assure severe trauma.

**Tithe:** At some point after summoning and employing the services of Gears of Chaos, the mage who called it will fail to contain the Paradox that ensues from one of her castings gone awry. She may attempt to mitigate her Paradox with Mana, only to find that it is wasted. She may decide to accept the brunt of her hubris as Backlash, only to discover that, instead, a Manifestation occurs. No matter how she attempts to thwart this price, it *will* eventually be called due. Further, the willworker may rest assured that this reckoning will assert itself at the most disastrous possible moment; not merely a Havoc Paradox that kills several Sleepers, but which also does so in front of a dozen other Sleepers, as well as two local Guardians of the Veil. Some mages claim to have evaded this steep price by willingly seeding a number of lesser Paradoxes after summoning the Gears of Chaos, though none have ever successfully confirmed such rumors.

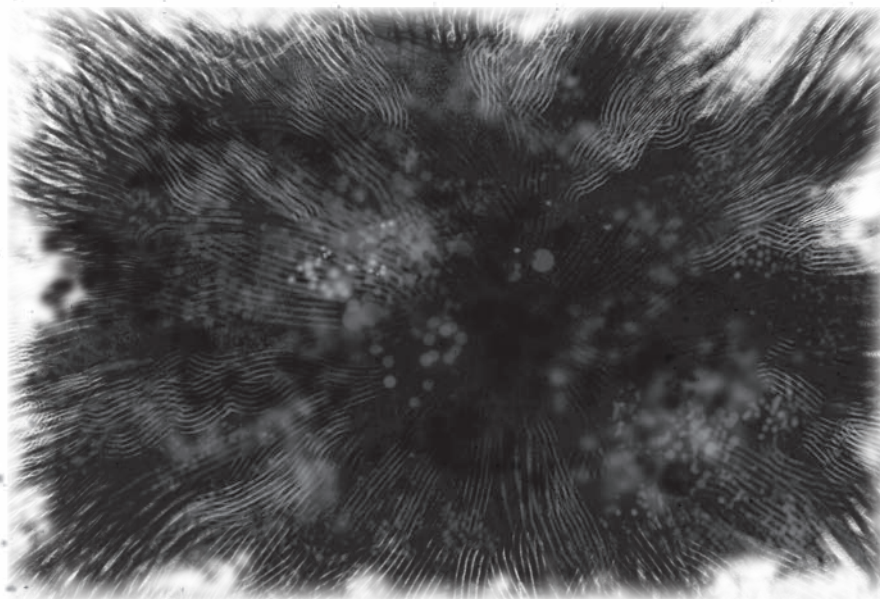
**Ban:** Any mechanical or electronic device deliberately presented to Gears of Chaos (specifically held forth before it, as opposed to, say, a cellular phone or handgun that happens to be on the person of its summoner) offends against the Gulmoth's sensibilities. The spirit must take the time to ruin such a device. Often, to conserve Essence, the entity lashes out at the item physically, rather than deconstructing it with

Influence. If time is against the spirit, however, it will readily destroy the object with a swift application of raw power (unless, of course, the device is mystically fortified against such tampering, causing Gears of Chaos to waste precious moments overcoming its resistance).

### *N'thraka, the Ninth Calamity*

Destruction, as a concept, holds powerful sympathy with the Void. The very idea of it resonates with all the many lifeless, undying *things* with origins in that endless madness. N'thraka, also known as the Ninth Calamity, is drawn to very literal forms of destruction. In fact, this Gulmoth can only be called up within the confines of a Havoc Paradox created by a spell intended to cause direct harm to a person, place, or thing. Naturally, because Havoc Paradoxes can tend to be short-lived (or, at least, exceedingly dangerous to be around for any length of time), those that would call the Ninth Calamity must usually do so in haste, making extensive preparation for the act a virtual necessity. When N'thraka is successfully called, the Havoc ends instantly, collapsing inward on itself to form the substance of the spirit.

When it takes form, N'thraka looks like a roiling surge of chaotic, exploding matter, forever trapped in a cycle of falling in on itself and erupting outward; backlit, as if by a blindingly bright, poisonous green star. The spirit offers greetings either by its name or its title, or a combination of both, with no explanation of how it came by either. Those who hear it speak cannot later recount the quality of its voice. Some say it shouts and screams, while others remember the crisp





sibilance of a badly sparking wire. All, however, agree the Gulmoth manifests to the smell of burning; not burning stone, or metal, or flesh, or wood — instead, they say the Ninth Calamity smells somehow of the burning of *everything*, from the tallest mountain, to the deepest ocean, to every speck of dust afloat in the Universe.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 9, Finesse 4, Resistance 8

**Willpower:** 17

**Essence:** max 20

**Initiative:** 12

**Defense:** 9

**Speed:** 28 (species factor 15)

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 13

**Influence:** Annihilation 3

**Numina:** Blast, Create Anomaly (Aether), Gauntlet Breach

**Boons:** N'thraka will happily serve as a savage thug for anyone who summons it. The willworker need only name the party to be destroyed and the Gulmoth will seek her out and kill her in the most brutal possible manner. Likewise, the Ninth Calamity will lay waste to a structure or object, to the best of its formidable capability. Perhaps the least-used and little-known service that the spirit is willing to offer is the infliction of severe, long-term damage to the Gauntlet in a given area. N'thraka will, if asked, pair its Gauntlet Breach Numen and Annihilation Influence together to rend the Gauntlet in a given area, creating a Shadow Verge (really, more of an open wound between the worlds). Most have no need for such a thing, but a few old texts still refer to this odd boon and the Gulmoth will readily comply with the request.

**Tithe:** To kill a person, the Ninth Calamity requires the willing sacrifice of one of the summoner's fingers. The digit, once claimed, can *never* be healed, by any means. The wound never closes and remains raw (through strangely painless, clean, and dry) for the remainder of the mage's life. To destroy an object, edifice, or other such piece of lifeless matter, the Gulmoth demands a little over a pint of fresh human blood, harvested by force from an unwilling subject. N'thraka cares nothing for the specific origin of the blood, so long as it meets the spirit's sole criterion. At least one drop of this blood must touch the material to be obliterated. To rend the Gauntlet, the Ninth Calamity's tithe is three of the summoner's teeth. As with the sacrifice of a finger, these wounds are perma-

nent; while false teeth may be put in their place, the holes made by the extraction will never heal properly, though they are sanitary and painless.

**Ban:** If N'thraka is surrounded on all sides by radioactive material (which need be no more elaborate than a chunk of an appropriate substance at each of the three points of an equilateral triangle), it is held fast and cannot move — not even through the Gauntlet. For each hour that it is thus confined, the Ninth Calamity will lose a point of Essence. When it reaches zero, it vanishes back into the Void. The Gulmoth may hurl its powers at anyone outside of the barrier, but it cannot take any action that will or might disrupt the materials that confine it.

### *The Echoing One*

Some places have heard whispers that never reached any living ear. Perhaps someone died after murmuring his final words, a bitter curse, declaration of love, or plea for forgiveness that shall forever go unanswered. Maybe a woman only recently struck deaf in an accident spoke aloud to herself, purely by instinct, and then remembered her handicap with disappointment, her sudden thought dying slowly in silence. The Echoing one is drawn to the places where the spoken word goes to die, its purpose unfulfilled. Where such words perish, the Echoing One may be called, appearing from behind some object or up from a dark space within sight.

In terms of its appearance, the Echoing One is a slithering mass of darkness. It seems, at times, to be a blob of shadowy tendrils and, at other times, to be a singular, serpentine form. The Gulmoth hisses its words softly, in a calm, rational tone of voice. While its motions may become agitated, its speech is always measured and polite. Even if the spirit becomes hostile, it never raises its voice or makes threats; it just keeps talking as though holding a pleasant conversation, even when explaining the fine details of peeling the flesh from its enemy's bones. In truth, however, the Echoing One much prefers civil discourse to violence, for its purpose is corruption, rather than "mere" destruction.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 11, Finesse 10, Resistance 10

**Willpower:** 21

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 20

**Defense:** 11

**Speed:** 31 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 5



**Corpus:** 15

**Influence:** Knowledge 4

**Numina:** Derange, Harrow, Psychic Torment, Soul Snatch

**Boons:** The Echoing One is called up to a specific purpose: it comes to provide information for its summoner. Specifically, the Gulmoth delivers the knowledge of any fact that is known, but not *deliberately* hidden. Knowledge that has been lost, it may freely recover, as it may with any fact that is obfuscated by circumstance, rather than conscious intent. The spirit need only be asked the question and it will provide the answer. In fact, the Echoing One is so closely connected to its singular calling within the Fallen World that it traditionally manifests with the statement, “Ask your question, Awakened one, and, should its answer be unhidden by artifice, you shall have your answer.” Interestingly, for whatever reason, the Gulmoth cannot offer any knowledge to do with Atlantis or any other thing predating or concurrent with the Fall.

**Tithe:** While the prize that the Echoing One bestows is great, indeed, so, too is the price that it requires for its assistance. This spirit craves the ending of knowledge, and no knowledge is higher than truth; in this case, Wisdom: the universal moral truth of the Supernal, as reflected within every Awakened soul. In exchange for answering a

question, the Echoing One claims a dot of its summoner’s Wisdom, *permanently*. In other words, the mage loses a dot of Wisdom, automatically (and must immediately check for a Derangement, as per the normal rules for degeneration) and her maximum potential Wisdom score is lowered by one. The spirit will answer as many questions as the summoner asks (within its ability to answer, of course), but it requires a permanent dot of Wisdom for each, and it will only answer questions posed by its summoner.

**Ban:** The Ban of the Echoing One hides within its customary greeting; the Gulmoth can attempt to seek the answer to *any* question, but it cannot answer any question the answer to which has been consciously concealed. Were a mage to discover this fact and somehow compel the Echoing One to speak the answer, anyway, the entity would be instantaneously destroyed by the revelation. Of course, certain knowledge (such as factual information about Atlantis and its contemporaries) is still well beyond the capabilities of even so potent a spirit.

### *The Prince in Tatters*

This Gulmoth is drawn to betrayal. Objects, places, and acts that resonate with such are necessary to gain its attention. When the Prince in Tatters manifests, it does so from the center of a burning seal, the characters of which cannot be read or in any way understood, though one or two willworkers over the years have gone mad in the attempt. Faint wisps of smoke, as if from incense, curl upward from the edges of the seal, smelling of things that remind all present of the most unpleasant moments of their lives. One mage detects the odor of stale sweat and human waste from her father’s last, lingering months of life in the terminal ward, while another catches the scent of cheap beer and greasy food — the ever-present stench of the foster home where he was repeatedly physically and sexually abused.

When revealing itself to human eyes, the Prince in Tatters is anthropomorphic; looming in height and unnaturally gaunt. Its flesh appears to be purple-black chitin and its shape is genderless. Where its head should be, the Prince wears an ever-shifting corona of dark mist that continually seems *almost* to part, revealing what lies beneath. Its voice, smooth, reptilian, and — by the reckoning of some — ever so slightly seductive, emanates from within the roiling smoke perched atop its stick-thin neck. Each of the three taloned fingers on its hands (jointed so that any one finger can oppose and other two) is nearly as long as





its spindly forearms, and the Prince gestures continually, though languidly, while it converses.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 9, Finesse 12, Resistance 10

**Willpower:** 19

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 22

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 0 (immobile; note that the Prince's Defense is not negatively impacted by its inability to move from the spot upon which it is summoned)

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 16

**Influence:** Betrayal 4

**Numina:** Binding Vow, Blast, Harrow, Usurp Vice

**Boons:** The Prince in Tatters will happily facilitate any act of treason, particularly one that sows suffering without the possibility of redemption or restitution. The Gulmoth accomplishes most of its works through negation; it cannot make the woman of its summoner's dreams fall in love with him, for example, but it *can* attempt to make her betray her husband with him in a single night's infidelity. Also, the Prince can break Supernal-sanctified oaths through its power. At the summoner's request, the oath in question may be made to *seem* to be intact, lawfully fulfilled, or whatever else. Lastly, the Gulmoth will work its powers to enable a mage to advance at the expense of a friend or trusted ally without requesting a tithe in return, though it will force the willworker to confront every unpleasant consequence of that treachery.

**Tithe:** As betrayal draws the Prince in Tatters, so, too, does it sustain the Gulmoth. For smaller services (say, getting usurping a friend's position as Consilium Sentinel), the Prince's needs are relatively humble: a finger cut from the hand of a treasured sibling, for example, or the life of a loyal pet. The Prince's favorite tithe, however) and the one that it demands for more sizable bestowments, such as enabling a mage to slip free of a binding oath) is a Sleeper dear to the summoner — someone who loves and trusts her — offered up freely, so that the spirit might harvest the Sleeper's soul and drag it back to the Void.

**Ban:** Should the Prince fail to deliver the service to which it agrees, then it must return its tithe. While sustained and empowered by treachery, the Gulmoth cannot directly indulge in it.

### *The Darkness That Thirsts*

Humanity's first fear was likely a fear of the dark. As the most obvious possible expression of the unknown, the darkness enabled all of the other things that people feared to hide within it, lurking and awaiting the proper moment to strike. This particular Gulmoth comes when called to the siren song of a place where darkness has been used to cloak terrible acts of fear and the suffering engendered by the fulfillment of those terrors. A dank and ill-lit basement in which awful crimes were committed would appeal to the Darkness That Thirsts, as would a boarded-up old warehouse where the enemies of a notorious crime boss were tortured to death, or the crude operating theater in the attic of a crumbling manor house where a cannibal serial killer dissected his victims alive. Shadows gather when the Darkness That Thirsts manifests, so thick





as to be impenetrable. A terrible chill emanates from the spot upon which the Gulmoth appears, cutting through flesh and bone, and directly into the soul.

The Darkness That Thirsts appears to be nothing more than a shadowed space. Its core is absolute blackness, radiating outward and gradually fading back into more mundane darkness. Since the Gulmoth cannot be summoned into an area benefiting from any form of illumination brighter than dim starlight, however, this may simply be a mask to conceal its true features — if, indeed, it possess any. The intense cold that surrounds the Darkness That Thirsts persists throughout the duration of its manifestation. The frozen aura radiated by the spirit is sufficient, even in the midst of a heat wave, to cause breath to fog in the air and moisture to condense as fine ice crystals. The entity does not speak, so much as its voice is heard within the mind and spirit of the listener. This experience is deeply uncomfortable for all save the Gulmoth's summoner, who feels only an eerie numbness within his consciousness whenever the Darkness That Thirsts communicates with him.

**Rank:** 5

**Attributes:** Power 14, Finesse 13, Resistance 15

**Willpower:** 29

**Essence:** max 50

**Initiative:** 28

**Defense:** 14

**Speed:** 37 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 21

**Influence:** Consumption 5

**Numina:** Derange, Harrow, Innocuous, Psychic Torment, Underworld Gate

**Boons:** The Darkness That Thirsts will consume any and all traces of a thing for its summoner. Perhaps she has betrayed her cabal, Consilium, or order and wishes to get away with her act of treason. Then again, maybe the spirit's summoner has come into the possession of an extraordinarily dangerous relic he simply cannot destroy, no matter what spells he tries. Physical objects and concepts, alike, are subject to the Gulmoth's devouring nature, for the Darkness That Thirsts seems unable to discern ideas from inert matter. The only act of consumption to which the spirit will not agree is that of a still-living being; the walking dead, however, are fair game. (One account alleges that the Darkness That Thirsts does not *technically* consider Tremere lichs beyond a certain age to still count as living, or perhaps it simply cannot make that distinction.) If a mage can kill an enemy and wants all traces of the crime concealed, the Darkness That Thirsts is all too willing to help, but it does not traffic in assassination.

**Tithe:** After it consumes what the summoner wishes, the Darkness That Thirsts devours something that *it* desires. The Gulmoth studies the totality of the willworker's existence through the lens of its endless longing and then chooses a commodity to claim. This is never something as simple as the mage's most prized possession. The spirit lacks the generosity necessary to take anything as mundane as an item, even an extraordinary one. Instead, the Darkness That Thirsts usually consumes the summoner's most important relationship, the trust or affection that others feel toward him, or even a measure of his hard-won mystic prowess (in the form of a dot of Gnosis). Whatever it is the Gulmoth takes, the mage *might* be able to earn back, but metaphysical scars invariably remain. In truth, the Darkness That Thirsts cannot tell the difference between an Artifact and the love of a willworker's children; it is merely the spiritual weight the summoner *himself* assigns to the thing that makes it appealing to the Gulmoth's palate.



**Ban:** Light is painful to the Darkness That Hungers. A candlelight inflicts a point of bashing damage per turn to the Gulmoth, while torchlight or the average flashlight inflicts two; an average light bulb inflicts three; a brightly-lit space, four; and floodlights or full noonday sunlight, five. Naturally, the entity will use its Consumption Influence to destroy any source of illumination that it can (and it is capable of doing so to almost any light source short of natural daylight), but it will attempt to flee back into the shadows while doing so.

### *The Thief of Names*

Why it is that the Thief of Names is summoned in the manner that it is, no one now knows, but all of the few sources that speak of this Gulmoth indicate that a mage must obliterate the last of something of significance to gain an audience: the final relic of an ancient civilization, the last living specimen of a dying species, or the only remaining practitioner of an obscure Legacy, for example. The spirit is drawn to extinction and some have speculated that such is because it rarely gets to indulge its desire for destruction while within the Fallen World; rather, it must content itself with subtler fare. The Thief manifests within the real name of its summoner; while it is within the Fallen World, its summoner is defined only by her Shadow Name and any aliases she might use.

The Gulmoth appears as a cosmetically exact physical replica of its summoner, entering from the north (out of a field, through a door, or via whatever means

is appropriate to the immediate environment). The duplication effect is perfect, down to clothing, distinguishing marks, and even fingerprints. It is, however, merely a façade. Any damage to the exterior of the Thief of Names (whether flesh, clothing, or whatever) reveals that it is a hollow shell, the inside of which is completely covered with blasphemous glyphs, written in no known tongue and utterly unreadable, even with the most potent magics. Each time the Thief speaks, it does so in the voices of those important to its summoner, alternating from one voice, to the next, to the next.

**Rank:** 5

**Attributes:** Power 15, Finesse 15, Resistance 15

**Willpower:** 30

**Essence:** max 50

**Initiative:** 30

**Defense:** 15

**Speed:** 40 (species factor 10)

**Size:** As per its summoner (typically, 5)

**Corpus:** Size + 15 (typically, 20)

**Influence:** Names 5

**Numina:** Binding Vow, Create Anomaly (Pandemonium), Harrow, Soul Snatch, Versatile Energies

**Boons:** The Thief of Names comes to only one purpose and will serve no other calling unless forcefully bound to do so (no mean feat for even the most puissant of willworkers). This Gulmoth enters the Fallen World solely to indulge the cause of its given title: it steals a name for its summoner. Specifically, the Thief takes the real name of a person designated by the

willworker who calls it — and whose real name must be known to him — and permanently exchanges it with the *summoner's* real name. Though mages have at least a few reasons to request such a strange boon, the most common cause for calling down the Thief of Names is that a willworker's real name has been discovered by an enemy and is being used as a vector of attack against her.

**Tithe:** The Thief requires the sacrifice of a name as the cost of its service; the name of someone especially dear to the summoner. One mage utterly obliterates all trace of this person's name to have the Gulmoth's boon, while another offers up all memory of it (only to later discover he no longer



knows or is known by the individual in question, save as a haunting shadow on the outermost edge of memory). Yet another brings the individual before the Thief of Names, along with every trace of her identity within the Fallen World, to be dragged back to the Void by the creature when its task is complete. One particularly enterprising (and amoral) willworker offered her *own* name, but only after it had been exchanged with that of the Seer of the Throne whose actions compelled her to summon the Thief in the first place.

Another cost of the Gulmoth's aid — though not *specifically* a tithe — is the complications that inevitably arise for the summoner in the wake of engaging the Thief's services. A name is a powerful thing, not to be tampered with; those who do so often find that they get far more than they bargained for. Attached to a name is the metaphysical weight of the life that it defines and by which it is defined. Fragments of that life are dragged along with it. The willworker may suddenly find he's being pursued by a woman who's not his wife, but that of the man whose name he stole, and that she wants to get close to him for reasons she can't understand. An old man might see him in the street and break down crying, and the mage might be overwhelmed with a sense of remorse he can't define. An enemy might follow the scent of a name, hungry for revenge against someone who did him no wrong, but whose identity carries the burden of a crime unavenged. When a mage takes a name wrongfully, he finds it is more than merely letters and a sound.

**Ban:** The Thief of Names recoils from characters in the High Speech, being the fragmentary remains of the words that encapsulate the reality of Supernal concepts; the "true names" of all that which was, is, and shall be, as it were. So long as an individual openly wears or brandishes a glyph in the High Speech (as a piece of jewelry, written on a slip of paper, or even tattooed somewhere visible upon the body), the Thief cannot initiate violence of any sort against her, *provided that she understands the symbol's actual meaning*. To the Gulmoth, the comprehension of a name is requisite to that name's power. Those who launch an unprovoked attack upon the Thief of Names, however, find that even the speech of lost Atlantis is no proof against its power.

### *The Mirror at the End of All Things*

Some say the edge of the known cosmos is a wave, forever spreading outward. Further, certain believers in this theory hold that the curve of that wave is

defined by a reflection of everything inward of it, as all that which is beyond it is, by definition, nothingness in its truest state. Perhaps the entity known as the Mirror at the End of All Things lurks just on the far side of that eternally onrushing tide, staring back at the reality that sees only itself when it attempts to look outside. The Mirror at the End of All Things has never before been successfully summoned into the Fallen World, though a number of madmen and would-be savants of the Void have certainly attempted such a feat over the ages.

Because of its nature, this entity cannot adopt a particular form within this realm; for to do so is to suffer, even if only slightly, the constraints of material existence. The Gulmoth is nonbeing disincarnate and it cannot be other than what it is. Thus, rather than adapting its nature to suit the Fallen World, it adapts a piece of the Fallen World to encompass its nature. From the site of the summoning, the Mirror at the End of All Things sends out a wave of Abyssal unreality, to an unknown distance and in an uncertain number of directions. All within that zone at the time of the Gulmoth's arrival becomes like unto, and, therefore, *of the Void*. It may spare its summoner, though such is surely not guaranteed, as the Mirror at the End of All Things may or may not even be cognizant of the existence of life within this reality. Lunatic sages of Abyssal lore who know anything at all of the creature contemplate its motivations, but the truth is that such a monstrosity cannot ever be understood by any being that has ever known what it is to exist, at all.

**Traits:** The Mirror at the End of All Things is a Gulmoth of *at least* Rank 6 in power, meaning that attributes, Numina, and the like are patently unnecessary for it. Should this horror actually be drawn into the Fallen World, then only a miracle (or an epic combination of cunning willwork, agonizing sacrifice, and Herculean effort) can bring its manifestation to an end. It may be, in fact, that the spirit has no desire or even ability to interact with this realm, save to spread ever outward, like the wave that bounds it and which drives it back, in an attempt to turn the Universe in upon itself.

**Boons:** Only a madman would deliberately call the Mirror at the End of All Things into this reality, as the Gulmoth might not offer any boons, at all. Typically, the only sorts of mages who tamper with an Abyssal power on this scale are the Awakened equivalent of suicide bombers, eager to get their hands on one of the most potent weapons between here and the Realms Supernal, merely for the pleasure of dying horrifically



in the wake of its unveiling, along with the rest of some fraction of the world.

**Tithe:** This nightmarish juggernaut of Void-born malice exacts what tribute it requires, both from its summoner and from everything unfortunate enough to exist in its path. It is an unreasoning hate — lifeless and deathless — yearning only to make all that which is cease to be, so that it need no longer feel jealousy toward all that which is, for all that which it is *not*.

**Ban:** Should the Mirror at the End of All Things enter into your chronicle, its Ban is best crafted according to the needs of your story, so as to make for the grandest and most powerful possible conflict. Needless to say, however, the Ban of such a thing — a veritable god of the Void — should be elaborate in its execution and far-reaching in its consequences; physical, mental, and spiritual, alike.

## Aberrations

Some of the manifestations, behaviors, gifts, sacrifices, and motivations bestowed, demanded, and held by many of the Gulmoth described in this chapter are, to put it mildly, strange. Some of them don't even seem particularly malevolent — not inherently *more* malevolent than many perfectly mundane human beings in the Fallen World, anyway — but all of these bizarre thoughts and behaviors have their origin in an unyielding hatred of all that which exists and the artificial strictures enforced upon the Gulmoth by corporeal existence within the material realm. The shapes in which willworkers see these entities aren't their real shapes; they *have* no "real shapes." They are fragments of the Void wrenched away from the whole and compelled to take on hateful (and self-loathing) substance within a reality that reminds them of nothing so much as all they, themselves, do not and cannot possess.

Abyssal spirits engage in weird and inexplicable activities, and are subject to occasionally unfathomable Bans, to go with their often disturbing and chaotic appearance. This is because they are, essentially, glitches in the system of the Fallen World: mad bits of nonsensical code inserted into a less-than-perfect operating system. As such, they reveal themselves in ways that sometimes appear internally contradictory and/or exacerbate the flaws in the system they infect through their very presence. Mages forget to their own peril the fact that the Acamoth and Gulmoth are nothing more than incarnations of an incomprehensibly vast universe of hatred, jealousy, horror, and self-destructive lunacy, given material form and some semblance of conscious motivation.







# CHAPTER FOUR: FROM STRANGER SPHERES

*Nine hours, now, and the scrabbling inside the walls still hadn't stopped.*

*Nothing was back there, of course; Munn had already confirmed that with his sights. Near as they could tell, what was going on in there was the idea of a sound, specifically aimed at the suggestion of something trying to make its way in... which was, essentially, the case. The alien relic was in the middle of the sanctum's dining room floor, right where it had been when Clotho led the cabal in the summoning ritual. She left four hours back, when she received a text message that shorted out her phone. She didn't discuss what it said, but departed in a hurry. Ten minutes later, Zephyr took off after her. Now, Danu and Munn were the only ones left in the house and the scratching continued.*

*When something hammered on the hatch leading up to (or, perhaps, down from) the attic, Munn sighed, "I think it's just about puzzled out the idea of ninety-degree angles."*

*"What comes next?"*

*He shrugged. "Next, I suppose it'll move out from infinitely small points and infinitely thin lines, figuring out how to build dimensions by connecting points with lines."*

*"Remind me why we did this, again?"*

*Munn scratched at the stubble on his chin. "To get whatever the hell it is that the Hierarch's been hiding from us, behind that massive two-hundred-year-old ward."*

*"And will it be worth the price?"*

*At that, Munn looked off toward the front door of the sanctum, through which Clotho had left and Zephyr just after her, and then back to Danu. Just then, the timbers throughout the old house groaned, as though a great weight had slowly pressed down upon them.*

*"Probably not."*

*Danu shuddered a bit. "Why did we let Clotho and Zephyr go?"*

*Munn placed one hand on the nearest wall, feeling for the vibrations within it. "Let them leave? I sent her the text," he wiggled his fingers in the air, "knowing that she'd leave and Zeph would follow."*

*"Why?" Danu asked, incredulously, a note of anger creeping into her tone.*

*"Because, six hours ago, the one from ten hours from now told me to, by transmitting a message back through the flesh of the thing that's going to arrive in twenty minutes. We get the object, but we basically burn down the Consilium to do it. We just have this one chance to stop it, but only if there's exactly two of us here."*

*"And if 'future you' was lying?"*

*Munn sighed again, more heavily this time. "Then we're likely no more fucked than we'd have been in the first place."*



***I abandoned the extraterrestrial hypothesis in 1967 when my own field investigations disclosed an astonishing overlap between psychic phenomena and UFOs ... The objects and apparitions do not necessarily originate on another planet and may not even exist as permanent constructions of matter. It is more likely that we see what we want to see and interpret such visions according to our contemporary beliefs.***

**—John Keel**

If a mage were to sit down with some magic markers and a blank canvas of paper, she could draw a map of her cosmology. It may not be precisely objective. It may not be something “true” like you’d find in the pages of *Mage: The Awakening*, but to her it’d be accurate enough, and more importantly, it’d be understandable. She could point to our world, the Fallen World. She could draw lines pointing to the Supernal, and it would be easy enough to depict the great dark gulf that waits between those two realms: the Abyss, a yawning gap that all magical minds must cross to make a grab at the brass ring of enlightenment. She could even lay a sheet of transparency over the whole affair, and faintly trace another realm over all this mess, calling it the Shadow. Were this mage particularly eager, she might even draw little pictures of the Watchtowers way out there in the Realms Supernal.

And that’s it, right? That’s all there is? Some think so. Mages, don’t forget, are hubristic creatures. Even when proven otherwise night in, night out, the sorcerous individuals often expect that they’ve got *all* the information, thanks, no need to look any deeper.

But, to paraphrase the Bard, there exist more things in Heaven and Earth than exist in a mage’s philosophy. So it is with realms far stranger than what’s expected.

### *Here There Be Dragons*

Truth is, cosmology is not so nicely detailed. Just as we here on the physical planet represent just a tiny molecular mote in the great cosmos, so it is with all the realms and places that mages think they understand. Way out there, beyond the known, *beyond the beyond*, mages may find that far stranger spheres and weirder shores exist. These places are home to entities that are so far beyond human intelligence and understanding, they can only be described as “alien.”

That, in a nutshell, is what this chapter is about, really. *Aliens*. Not extra-terrestrials in saucer-shaped

flying machines. No, those kind of creatures are manifestations of biology, of a cosmic design rooted firmly in the physical. The entities found in this chapter are not so easily defined, nor are they comprehensible by a sane human mind.

The price of dealing with such beings is high: one’s mind and soul can easily be lost beneath the crushing intelligences and overwhelming emotions that leak into this plane of existence. But the reward of dealing with such entities is similarly high: those mages swollen with proud wisdom know that the cost of true enlightenment is as immeasurable as the very *idea* of true enlightenment.

### *Summonings From Beyond*

Unless otherwise specified (the Cargo Cult “Atakai,” for instance), summoning the entities in this chapter can be done using the following spell. It’s never as easy as just casting a spell, however; each entity must have certain conditions filled before it dares to enter this world.

#### *Outer Channel*

(*Space* ●●●● + *Spirit* ●●●●)

Similar to Spirit Road, the mage opens a channel between this world and the outer realms, piercing the Gauntlet and the mage’s own Wisdom to do so. It is not a sane act, not by any means, opening a road that would allow a quincunx entity (or any other mad being) through.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended (target number equal to the Gauntlet Strength + the mage’s own Wisdom score)

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None



This does not work like summoning a spirit normally does (p. 249, **Mage: The Awakening**) in that the spirit is literally summoned directly to the mage's immediate vicinity, and the mere summoning of the entity does not come replete with *control* over the entity. The duration is lasting because the spirit doesn't leave at the end of the scene, nor is it in any way bound to the vicinity in which it was summoned. These entities are not "normal" spirits (if they are spirits at all), and refuse to abide by what a mage expects — once more, hubris can blind a willworker who believes she has cemented all knowledge around any kind of ephemeral or bizarre being.

### Mysterium Rote: The Other Door

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion + Spirit vs. Resistance (or the entity's Resolve + Composure if it's not strictly a "spirit")

The Mysterium knows it is sometimes necessary to plumb the deepest, strangest depths of the cosmos to increase awareness, understanding and knowledge. This rote does just that, calling forth a truly bizarre being into audience. Its willworkers do not use this rote lightly, recognizing that once such a creature is summoned, it is not always so keen to leave. The effects of bringing an eldritch or insane entity into this plane of existence *always* comes with powerful consequences — sometimes, a being's very presence will corrupt this world, for they cannot be so easily contained in the material plane.

### Bound?

So — the entities in this chapter, can they be bound with known or theorized magic? The Storyteller is encouraged to allow players to get creative with this.

Can an Adept of Spirit ("I can imprison any spirit, binding it into steel, stone or flesh according to my desires") bind one of these bizarre entities? Maybe. Though even for an Adept, some form of ceremony and ritual should be tied to the being in question.

Alternately, different Arcana may be used in the same way that Spirit would for most ephemeral entities: Prime may be the way to fetter a potent ultra-terrestrial, or Space may create a whole new prison for such a strange spirit.

That's the cool thing about magic, isn't it?  
So many options.

## Cargo Cults

Imagine it. You're a native on one of Micronesia's countless islands. You've known nothing but the boundaries of your own island — its cliffs, its beaches, its distant and surrounding horizon. This is your entire world. Ignorant of what waits beyond.

Then, one day, you hear it: sounds like thunder, a rumble that echoes out over the crashing waves, but this thunder doesn't stop. And it's not followed by lightning, not at all. It appears, then, over the clouds: a plane, double-props whirring, a trail of white smoke emerging from its end. But to you, it's so much more than that: a god, a demon, a thunderbird, an iron dragon. The plane flies overhead. It drops cargo: food, technology, items to help build shelter, what-have-you. The god has gifted you. It is a divine intercession. Your family, your friends, they wonder if the god will come back. They build shrines in its honor. They cut out swaths of jungle — really, an airstrip — so that the great bird may land. And just when they've prayed enough... the great flying god returns anew to drop another parcel of splendid goods upon its worshipful children. Maybe the god will even land, and maybe it'll emerge — white-faced, white as the *sun* and *sand* — and speak in its divine tongue and accept thanks in the form of a feast or other supplications.

Of course, we know what's really happening. These are "cargo cults," born out of foreign intervention starting in the late 19th century. A boat comes, or a plane. It unloads its cargo — perhaps an act of charity, or a movement to establish a new colony — and the natives are astounded. The white men bring unexpected treasures. The natives do not think of these individuals as interlopers, not really — they are ghosts or gods or spirits. It represents a major paradigm shift: where once the gods remained largely distant, seen only in glimpses or certain potentially natural phenomena, suddenly they have emerged. They step onto the islands, made manifest. It changes *everything*. Worship grows out of this. Strange veneration. It's a powerful moment. (And actually, it works as a nice metaphor for the Awakening: the ignorant human is given a glimpse of a magical reality and fails to truly understand it, unable to grasp its depths.)

Cargo cults were particularly prevalent during World War II, when the Allies in the Pacific Theater thought to make allies out of the many inhabited islands of Micronesia and Melanesia. They showed up. They

dropped goods, sometimes landed. It seemed divine, but it was purely mundane. Right?

Except... maybe we *don't* really know what's happening. Maybe something else is at work. And maybe it's still happening, today.

### *Sinister Shipments*

Yes, many — most, really — of the cargo cults were just as described. And yet, not long after the phenomenon began, something else occurred.

Sometimes, what flew over the islands were not planes. Not exactly. They *looked* like planes, for the most part, but they were... “off.” Asymmetrical. A propeller engine on one wing, and something that looked like a black cube on the other. Or only one wing, not two. Or strange paint that looked like black or reflective scales overlaid atop the olive drab. It was as if these were strange, ill-made imitations of planes, or of the *idea* of planes. They'd appear soundlessly out of nowhere, manifesting in a shimmer of the air (like heat rising off a hot road), and then the engines would roar and the dark shape would travel over the island.

Cargo would drop from the planes, indeed. But it was not human cargo, not cargo from this world. The goods that dangled from trees (the parachutes caught in the eaves) or that thudded against the beach sand were packaged in wooden crates, but were inscribed with symbols that matched nothing on human record. Sometimes the boxes shuddered. Other times they made odd noises — as if sucking in a great breath, or urging caution with a guttural growl.

What the boxes contained, though, were objects. At a glance, normal objects. A chair, an ice box, a transistor radio, a wedding dress. These items, though, pulsed with power. Those natives with any magical sense could feel the primal energies radiating outward: these were holy items, truly sacred. Most natives simply called these “givers” the *batkon aire* (“Airplane”), or the *Atakai* (“The Generous”).

### *It's Still Happening*

The cargo cult phenomenon ended for the most part about 50 years ago. Even the tiniest Micronesian islands have since been touched by Western influences, if only in small ways — the world is home to very few indigenous peoples that haven't been contacted by Western civilization. And yet, from time to time, the so-called “Atakai” still appear in the skies over some islands, and these strange not-quite-planes drop

### The Chicken and the Egg

So it is with many bizarre entities that we must ask, where did they come from? Did we create them from our behavior, or did our behavior just summon them? Even stranger, are we simply playing into what they desire most? The real world “cargo cult” phenomenon began, and soon after, strange unidentified entities began mimicking the task: but, is it truly mimicking, or were they called by the powerful veneration offered up by the island aboriginals? Which came first, the human, or the phenomenon? Can we ever know?

bizarre items (seemingly normal objects that are eerily perfect — as if they are the Platonic ideals of the items they represent). When do they do so?

They do so when the islanders summon them, that's when. The islanders learned that they could call the *Atakai* to them, summoning the entities into the skies so that they might be gifted with sacred objects. They appease them through sacrifice, and the *batkon aire* appear.

### *Summoning the Atakai*

This is the truth, and it is not well-known: calling the *Atakai* necessitates certain rituals, and for the most part, only the hidden and still-extant cargo cults of certain islands actually *know* these rituals. The mistaken part comes on behalf of these cults, who believe themselves isolated from other such cults (and don't even acknowledge the existence or veracity of competing “sects”). These indigenous cults believe the *Atakai* only come to *them*, and will only appear above *their* islands. This is false. The *Atakai* will appear wherever the rituals to summon them are performed, whether that's on a mountain on the cinder plains of the Yasur volcano or in the middle of a Kansas corn field. (However, it likely necessitates traveling to the islands to discover the ritual.)

First and foremost, a mage is necessary to perform the summoning. In this case, the mage must possess three dots in Spirit to cast both Spirit Road (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 251) and Greater Spirit Summons (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 249), cast in that order. However, before the spells are cast, quite a bit of preparation is in order.



If one is not present, the summoners must carve out a landing strip for the Atakai, with minimum dimensions of being 250 yards long and 10 yards wide. (If you need a roll for this, it should require an extended Strength + Athletics roll, with 25 successes necessary, and each roll being equal to 10 minutes worth of work. Penalties can go up to -5 if the territory is truly unforgiving. Multiple characters can work toward this goal, and it's recommended to keep this *not* as a teamwork roll; successes gained on multiple extended rolls simply go toward the 25 needed.) The Atakai are not expected to land, but this is where it ("they?") will drop the precious cargo.

When the airstrip is complete, the characters must also put together a full-size facsimile—a "sympathetic model"—of a plane. Doesn't matter if it's done with rebar and tarp, or bamboo and hemp cord; as long as it looks roughly the shape of a plane and can "seat" at least one person. (To complete, the character must succeed on an extended Wits + Crafts roll, with 10 successes necessary and each roll equaling 10 minutes. Teamwork can apply.)

Finally, the character must put a *living* human inside the plane's "cockpit." The plane, with the human inside, must then be set on fire. As the plane burns, so does the sacrifice within. This calls the Atakai. (Note that sacrificing a human in this way is most certainly a sin against Wisdom 3 — "Planned crime without using magic," a.k.a. *murder*.)

The Atakai does not come on a predictable timetable. The strange entity will appear at that spot within the next seven days. The Atakai will drop *one* item of considerable power (Artifact, Enhanced Item, or Imbued Item at five dots minimum). However, glimpsing the Atakai is not easy on the witness: the mind is quite clear that what it is seeing is not something of this world. The character suffers hot or cold flashes, and may tremble, salivate heavily, even suffer momentary seizures. The player should roll the character's Resolve + Composure, with a penalty equal to how many times the character has witnessed the Atakai previously. Failure on this roll causes the character to take on a mild derangement of the player's choosing. Success indicates no derangement is taken (though the other physical effects as noted still occur until the *batkon aire* sighting has passed).

(Note that the spell at the fore of this chapter, Outer Channel, is not necessary to summon the Atakai. In fact, that spell will not work to bring the Atakai into

this plane of existence unless the Storyteller feels it's appropriate — however, that spell short-cuts a great deal of the difficulty necessary to learn about the Atakai in the first place, and is thus not recommended.)

### *Atakai Cults*

The chief-most threat blocking characters from learning or performing the Atakai summoning rites are the Atakai cargo cults themselves. The following cults are all at least 50 years old and continue to venerate and summon the strange *batkon aire* spirits:

**The Cult of Karaperamun (Vanuatu):** The head of this cult is actually a white European male: John Fromm. Fromm has told his adherents that, quite simply, they can rule the world. How? Well, by rejecting European traditions (and money), by once more embracing the "old ways" (guzzling kava, performing sacrifices, committing to polygyny), and oh, by *killing Europeans*. Yes, John Fromm is himself European (British, actually), but he escapes this pogrom by suggesting that he has been possessed by the ancient spirit of Karaperamun, who was once the patron supreme deity of Vanuatu. He offers proof of this by being the only one who actually knows how to summon the Atakai, and by this demonstration proves his purported divinity.

**The Naked Cult of Solomon (Solomon Islands):** Sarmento de Castro heads this cult, and he believes himself (falsely or not) to be descended from famous Peruvian sea navigators such as Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira. He claims his navigator "blood" has indebted him to the Atakai, and that he and his people must serve them with sacrifices, but are rewarded (in the form of the strange objects that drop from the sky). One more thing: to be indebted to the Atakai means remaining utterly pure; which is to say, both utterly chaste and completely naked at all hours of the day and night.

**The Prophet's Cult (Papua New Guinea):** A nameless prophet leads this cult, and claims the following: Jehovah is inferior and servile to Satan, and this great imbalance has led the dead back to Earth, and the Atakai are arming this cargo cult against the eventual incursions of the dead returning. Even better, they believe the Atakai are actually the servitors of some outside god who is older than both Satan and Jehovah, and this god (the Baigona Snake) is actually the snake who brought "wisdom" to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

## Strange Sphere: The Atakai

From whence do the Atakai come? What strange realm do these plane-like entities call home? For the most part, mages will never actually enter this plane of existence, and instead only experience it in glimpses and momentary visitations. Those who have experienced it claim it is, for lack of any better description, the *true* “material world.” Everything in the land of the Atakai is fundamentally material — nothing is *alive*; all is inorganic. It’s a land of objects: a flat plane of items, some standing alone, others piled atop others.

Mages who enter or even glimpse this “true material world” have a number of turns equal to their Gnosis scores to act unaffected. Once those turns are up, their bodies begin to calcify: a limb may start to grow hard with a plastic skin; organs may begin to turn to wooden blocks; hair becomes turgid wire fibers. Every turn affected, the character takes one point of damage that builds: bashing first, into lethal, and eventually into aggravated.

Ideas on how to glimpse or enter the “true material world” include:

- A plane crash. Suffering apparent death in a plane wreck may cause a mage to “awaken” into this plane of existence. (Of course, she’d better find an exit quick, lest her body grow into a mannequin-like object.)
- “Catching a ride” with one of the Atakai. The Atakai appear briefly in this world, loose cargo onto the world, and then return. Finding a way to hijack one of those *batkon aire* is a good way to be physically transported to their home realm. Alternately, simply glancing at one’s reflection in the *faux* windows or metal of a close-up Atakai allows the mage to stare into the realm.
- Destroying a very powerful (five-dot or higher) Artifact causes a terrible, gut-wrenching flash — a momentary (one turn) look into this “true material realm.”

## John Fromm, “Child of Karaperamun”

**Quote:** “The old ways are new again. Civilization is at its end. So begins our reign.”

**Background:** Fromm was, curiously enough, a Christian missionary with little interest in Christ or morality or being saved — none of that garbage. No, he just wanted to get away. Get away from his debts. His family. His countrymen. In his early 20s, he experienced a profound disconnection with the world around him, and so he headed for the islands.

## No Stats for Atakai?

The Atakai are seemingly mindless entities from well-beyond our world. Assume that they have stats that range from painfully simple to profoundly terrible, depending on the needs of your game (and you can use normal spirit-based stats, even though the Atakai is not a spirit from the Shadow). We chose instead to stat out John Fromm because, well, characters are far more likely to deal with this cultic “prophet” than one of the Atakai themselves.

There, he mostly fucked off: drank kava, sat around on the beach, toyed with his nicked machete.

His Awakening came at the base of a tall standing stone, a great obelisk carved with deep whorls — face-like symbols painted in bright oranges and blues. He fell asleep at the base of this stone one night, only to awaken during a powerful storm. The face talked to him. He doesn’t remember what it said, only that it gave him directions to find the Watchtower — he did, and it changed him.

He doesn’t really believe that he’s the incarnation of or host to the ancient god of Karaperamun, but he *does* think that he’s got a spark of the divine within him (hell, not just a spark but a whole bloody conflagration). The islands are home to something primal, as proven by the appearances of the Atakai. He learned of these entities from an old Thyrsus Shaman, a man he reluctantly had to beat to death with a rock.

Now, Fromm leads his cult in increasingly brutal activities and attacks. They often make runs against groups of Peace Corps activists, kidnapping one or two for “use” as pleasure or in the rituals to summon the *batkon aire*.

**Description:** John Fromm is a thin, almost emaciated white man — ribs and collarbone showing, elbows and knees knobby and pronounced. He’s tall and ropy, and keeps his hair closely-cropped and his face shorn. Fromm’s got a manic gleam in his eye, and is often posed in such a way that it seems like he might leap at any moment and start clawing with his untrimmed nails. Fromm wears only traditional Vanuatu garb — *really* traditional, meaning he wears a braided bark-cloth belt and a *nambas*, which is a curved penis sheath formed of the bark or leaves of the pandanus.



**Storytelling Hints:** Fromm's often a bit drunk — drunk on power, and drunk on *kava*. Kava, a potent fermented liquid (from the roots of the kava shrub), does wonders for Fromm, and he believes this traditional juice is mighty sacred, connecting him with the primal forces that whirl about the island. Fromm's funny and quirky, always fast with a joke or a story — but when it gets down to business, he affects a deep voice (the voice of Kamaperamun, he claims) and becomes terribly cruel.

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** None

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 2, Survival 4, Weaponry (Machete) 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Delusions of Grandeur) 3, Subterfuge (Under Duress) 3

**Merits:** Allies (Cargo Cult) 5, Artifact 4 ("Count Amaury's Spectacles," p. 335, **Mage: The Awakening**), Destiny (Bane: Another Thyrsus) 5, Fast Reflexes 2, Holistic Awareness, Inspiring, Status (Cargo Cult) 5

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 3 (Megalomania)

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 8 (with Fast Reflexes)



## Story Hooks

This “cargo cult” phenomenon is a good way to force mage characters into a small or large adventure when they’re seeking an object of true power (or frankly, any kind of MacGuffin you want them to hunt down). Any enchanted, imbued or otherwise Supernal Artifacts can be included via this manner. Some specific story hooks include:

- The grimoire is quite clear: there exists a crown with diadems of bone and a base of copper, and this crown can confer quite a bit of magical authority to the sorcerer who owns it. The grimoire is also quite clear that the only way to get a hold of it is to summon the “Flying Shadows” that “Give the Gifts of the Supernal,” which necessitates taking a long trip to Vanuatu in the Pacific. If one performs the proper summoning, the Atakai will drop the mighty crown from the sky.
- The Cult of Karaperamun (p. 147) has branched out. Members have been found in North and South America, kidnapping notable civilians of European descent and dragging them back to their islands for sacrifice. They get drunk on kava juice and sacrifice the abductees bound to great thrones that burn as funeral pyres. They claim that in the last boxes received from the Atakai was a list — and on the list were the names of those who must be sacrificed. One of the character’s names is on that list (or it perhaps features the name of a loved one or confidant).
- “I’ve caught one.” The voice comes across over an MP3 recording sent to one of the characters — it’s an ally or a confidant telling them he’s “captured” one of the Atakai, and he plans on “flying” the entity back to the realm from whence it came. There, he believes he can learn *so much* — will the characters help him? Accompany him? Or stop him?

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Life 3, Prime 3, Spirit 3

**Mana/per Turn:** 13/4

**Armor:** 3 (“Magic Shield”)

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Machete	2(L)	na	8	na

## The Men in Black

They are not from a movie. They are not government agents. They are not men at all, despite the name.

They appear in regards to overt supernatural displays. Yes, they appear during and after supposed “UFO sightings,” but they also appear when Paradox affects this world, whether it be from Havoc or from a Paradox Anomaly or, most likely, a Manifestation born as a result of magic gone awry. In fact, any other dramatic summoning (especially a summoning where a Sleeper witness is present) runs the risk of eventually drawing the Men in Black.

These enigmatic characters show up, seemingly out of nowhere. Sometimes, they walk up out of the woods,

or simply appear at one’s door. Other times, they drive a matte-black sedan — something large and boxy, an older Cadillac or Oldsmobile. They may show up at the time of a “supernatural event,” but most likely reveal themselves hours, even days after the event has come and passed. They never show up alone: always two, usually three, rarely more than four.

The figures seem... peaceable enough, at first. They like to ask a lot of questions, initially circumventing the topic of the supernatural event, talking around it in a notably clumsy attempt to “get to the point.” Soon, they start to hone in on questions related to the topic, trying to find out more about what the individual saw or that person’s responsibility related to the event. Their questions may have few if any segues to connect them: a series of non sequitur questions is common. At some point, they offer their names, but never any identification — and their names are usually strange, taken from colors or objects or other simple factors (“Mister Door,” or “Agent Clock,” or merely, “I’m Gray”).

All the while, they act like the inhuman attempting to masquerade as human. One might ask for food or a drink, and then stare at what’s handed to them like it’s the most wondrous or most grotesque thing they have ever seen. They eat and drink, but seem confused as how to properly do so — even after finish-



## Dark Tools

So, the cars, the strange stabbing picks, and even their suits — what to think about the physical objects that accompany the Men in Black?

They are actually extensions of the Men in Black themselves. Destroying the stranger destroys all that comes with them: the matte black cars, their weird weapons, their clothing and sunglasses and fake lips and plastic fingernails. All of it.

Unless... once more, magic is a way to get creative, isn't it? A mage might be able to use a combined Spirit/Time spell to "keep" one of their weapons or black cars in this world. These items work flawlessly, to the tune of a +3 bonus. However, those who use them begin to go slowly mad, gaining one mild derangement per week of use. The good news is: the character is able to recognize the source of his nascent insanity, and after the second derangement is almost certain to get rid of the accursed weird objects. Bad news is, the derangements are only conquered through therapy (magical or otherwise) — they do not fade on their own.

ing a glass of water, the Man in Black might lick the glass or gently rub his fingers along the rim, seemingly mystified by the sensation.

Another might ask for a pen, and then let the ink bleed into his white shirt. Sometimes, they perform a seemingly normal action that is inconsistent with their supposed positions as "agents of the government" (which they often claim to be): the Man in Black will get up in the middle of questioning and wash his face in the sink, or he'll begin folding or shredding paper napkins with trembling fingers.

It's not long before their real inhumanity starts to show itself. One might start to shake — not violently, but like a drunk with the DTs. Another wipes his mouth with the back of his hand and his lips pop like ticks, leaving a bright red smear of blood across his cheek (and the enigmatic stranger will seem utterly unfazed by this). A third tugs at his ear, and it comes off, plopping onto the linoleum floor.

It becomes clear soon enough: these figures are ill-made mockeries of man. They are not human, not at all. And when the subject of their "interview" recognizes this, well, that's usually when things get *really* interesting.

## *Silence, One Way or Another*

The Men in Black seem overly concerned with silencing their victims. The level of their intense zealotry toward this goal appears driven by just how connected the victim was to the supernatural event. If the victim was merely a witness, the Men in Black only seek to convince the individual to "admit" aloud that what they witnessed was a hoax, hallucination or otherwise falsified and imagined. If the target vocally agrees and repeats their assertions, they leave. It's that easy. It's *not* so easy, however, if the target refuses to acknowledge that the strangers are correct. That's when the Men in Black get violent.

They resort to torture. They attempt to grab the victim and hold her down. They begin to hurt her. Little pain, at first, with an always odd, off-kilter brand of torture: the figure might begin with small but hard pinches. He might advance to bending back fingers until they break or tugging on an ear until it starts to come off. The stranger might bite her, or try to fill her ears and eyes with things he finds underneath the sink (dishwashing fluid, Windex, drain cleaner). If at any point the victim will admit to the Men in Black being right, the torture stops. The strangers wipe themselves off, maybe get a drink from the refrigerator, then leave, either getting into their matte black cars or simply wandering off down the street, in search of their next victim. If the individual later speaks of the supernatural event, the Men in Black return (see "Brain Death," below).

It's a whole different bag of tricks if the Men in Black encounter someone who had any kind of responsibility for a supernatural event (say, for instance, a mage). To those with any kind of responsibility, they are not so kind.

## *Brain Death*

They attempt to abduct those who have responsibility in a supernatural event. They'll swarm a character, grapple the individual, and throw him in the trunk of their car or drag him bodily to a remote location (which may be five minutes or five hours away).



Once there, the Men in Black attempt to incur some manner of brain death in the victim. This may not be a total brain death, and may instead be something akin to a lobotomy. It isn't a perfect science: the Men in Black have long metal picks with black handles that they use to do the "operation," which more or less consists of holding down the victim and pushing the needles into various parts of the victim's face and head — corners of the eyes, temples, up the nose, and so forth. This may kill the victim. It may turn the victim into a drooling vegetable. It may simply ruin just enough of the brain to stop the mage from, say, performing magic. Again, it's not a perfect science: the Men in Black are imprecise, and when they perform this task it's always like they're doing it for the first time (it may call to mind a child who has a bug trapped under a glass — growing fascinated as it plucks off legs

or sears the poor thing with sunlight through a magnifying glass). If for some reason the person is resisting enough that the Men in Black cannot get the sharp picks into the victim's skull, they'll resort to brutal violence: punching and kicking the target until he is dead.

### *Abilities*

The Men in Black have the following abilities:

**Never Die:** A Man in Black suffers from damage as does any physical object or organic life-form: the stranger's body breaks down and once it has taken a Health track full of lethal or aggravated damage, it perishes immediately, literally falling apart into a gaseous, bloody disruption (often leaving behind something else that looks like runny makeup or melted plastic). *However*, the Man

in Black is reconstituted only one hour later. He doesn't arise from the strange and grisly remains, but instead appears much like they all do in the beginning — driving up in a car, walking out of the woods, coming in through a closet door.

**Spatial Certainty:** The Men in Black have some provenance with the Space Arcanum. A Man in Black has a sympathetic connection with his quarry: he can roughly track it anywhere. He may not know of a target's location, but he always knows (without a roll) the *direction* in which the target awaits. In addition, a Man in Black also has the Spatial Awareness spell as an innate ability (p. 233, **Mage: The Awakening**). This must be activated with rolls, as per the rote, "Trailing the Long Stride" (Intelligence + Occult; the Man in Black has no actual Space Arcanum).



## Weaknesses

The Men in Black are still frail creatures in some fashion, though, and are beholden to the following weaknesses:

**Ill-Made Masquerade:** The Men in Black aren't human, and they don't do a very good job at pretending to be human. Even at a distance, any Perception rolls made regarding a Man in Black's falseness gain +2. Up close, such a roll gains +4, instead.

**Temporal Limits:** The Men in Black are curiously limited by, and vulnerable to the march of time. First, each Man in Black has a "time limit" in this world equal to 43 hours, 17 minutes and 21 seconds. Once that limit has been reached, the shadowy stranger is simply no longer. A character blinks, and nothing remains of the Man in Black that was pursuing her. There exists a wrinkle to this, however: any time a Man in Black's body is killed (see *Never Die*, above) and returns, it restarts the clock, setting it back to the odd deadline. The second temporal limit suffered by a Man in Black is magic from the Time Arcanum. Any time a spell from Time is cast in the presence of a Man in Black, it seems to make him dizzy: he suffers a -1 penalty to all rolls for every Time spell cast (cumulative). This penalty remains for one hour.

**Weapon Confusion:** The Men in Black are capable with Brawl rolls and with Weaponry rolls made to utilize their long needled picks in combat. Other weapons, however, utterly confound them. A Man in Black can pick up a pistol or a baseball bat to use against a target, but attacks are clumsy and slow—the stranger suffers a -5 to use any such weapon.

## Summoning the Strangers

One may summon a Man in Black a couple different ways. First, a mage may utilize the Outer Channel spell (p. 144), with a few notable tweaks to the process.

First, the target number is different. The Men in Black seem to have no resistance to or concern over the Gauntlet, and so the target number is now twice the mage's Wisdom (for the mage must overcome her own sanity and moral scale to invite such inhuman anomalies into this world, even temporarily). Second, the mage who summons the Men in Black is subject to a mild derangement during the time that the Men remain in this world. This derangement is usually Fixation or Vocalization (pp. 97–98, **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

If a mage or other character is not using the Outer Channel spell, then the Men in Black can be sum-

## Storytelling the Men in Black

First and foremost, the Men in Black are not to be played for comical effect, but certainly their behavior can seem comical and, initially, harmless. One of the strangers washes his hands in the fish tank, while another bites his thumbnail down to the bloody quick while asking questions. Strange. Anything weird that they do should be given eventual contrast, though, when it comes time to solicit information or "silence" the target—they become an unstoppable, nightmarish force.

And that's the key to Storytelling the Men in Black: *nightmare*. Like in a nightmare, they represent an enemy that keeps on coming. Yes, you can destroy them physically but they always return (and in fact, destroying them physically only lengthens the duration of the nightmare, really). The story one gets out of the Men in Black is, effectively, a chase story: look to movies like *Duel* or *The Terminator* for this idea. It's about running. About getting away. About *escape* at any cost. All too often, game players have the idea that (often accurately) they just need to find a way to kill the bad guy, need to find the "mini-boss' weakness," except here, that won't work. The good news is, the Men in Black seem programmed on a time limit, so they cannot come ceaselessly until their victim is dead. Because of this, the characters merely need to hide and survive. It should humble the characters a bit: not everything they witness or conjure can be so easily put back down.

moned during a Manifestation Paradox. An Abyssal creature still enters this world (be it a snarling Imp or some dark Angel), and when it does, the character can expend a Willpower point and that character's player can attempt a Composure + Subterfuge roll. Success on this roll brings the Men in Black into this world, though they do not appear immediately, usually showing up within 24 hours of the Manifestation.

The bigger question is, why summon the Men in Black at all? Some mages have done so in an attempt to bring the Men in Black to bear against their magical enemies. Upon summoning the strangers close to a supernatural event, the Men in Black enter this world and hone in on the witnesses to

and those responsible for that supernatural event. (If several such events occurred recently and in the vicinity, they will endeavor to “deal with” all parties related to all events.) If the summoner was not strictly responsible for any such event, the hope is that the enigmatic strangers will now dog their enemies. This can certainly work, but it’s a bit like setting loose a rabid dog in the direction of your foe — yes, the dog may leap for your adversary’s throat, but when he’s done he may come back and bite off the hand that feeds him. Many mages have summoned the Men in Black only to have the strangers assault them for some spell gone awry weeks before.

It should be noted: a character never summons just one Man in Black. They always appear, as mentioned earlier, in twos, threes or fours.

### Theories

Just what *are* the Men in Black, anyway? And from what strange realm do they hail?

One theory is that the Men in Black are the heralds of “true” Paradox, perhaps even hailing from a realm of pure Paradox or a place where sanity holds the laws so dearly in its grip that it’s actually, well, insane. The theories suggest that Paradox exists to prevent the molestation of the Tapestry, keeping its threads mostly unharmed and connected. Except, Paradox now seems to hail from — or at least get filtered through — the Abyss. Paradox doesn’t really *right* anything: in fact, it might create a derangement, cause an electrical grid to go haywire, or force the summoning of some many-mouthed Abyssal larvae. Magical indiscretions are not punished. Rips in the fabric aren’t really fixed. Paradox only seems to exacerbate the scenario, doing little to prevent a mage from causing such trouble again.

The Men in Black, however, show up for a time, punish witnesses and transgressors, and potentially even damage a sorcerer’s brain so much that the mage can no more call on magic (or possibly go to the bathroom by herself) anymore. Doesn’t this imply that they are perhaps true “Paradox elementals,” hailing not from the Abyss but from the distant reaches?

It’s these distant reaches that mages believe could be the home of the enigmatic figures. If a place exists far off the normal cosmological maps, it might be home to plainly inhuman gods who judge mankind’s deeds through a far-off (and prob-

ably distorted) lens. The Men in Black, say some theories, are these gods or are instead *agents* of these gods come to Earth to... make adjustments as the divine powers feel necessary.

### Story Hooks

- An ally of the cabal comes to them, panicked: he’s being followed. They come in a dark sedan that glides quietly along the city streets. Men in dark suits and crooked sunglasses come for him, and he always must flee, but he knows they’re here for him. Can the cabal help him? They poke around, and someone high above them tells them, the way to be rid of them is to destroy them utterly. Except, that’s a lie. It only resets the clock and keeps the strangers in this world. Was the lie intentional? Are they being messed with? What happens to the characters when they try to help the target of the Men in Black — do they become targets, too?

- One of the cabal misuses magic, be it intentionally or by accident. Paradox is the result, however small or large — Sleeper witnesses are present. Within 24 hours, the Men in Black have arrived, but preceding them is a letter slipped under the character’s door. Pinned in elegant script on an embossed card is this message: “You made a terrible error, and I have capitalized upon it. They are coming for you.” Has someone summoned the Men in Black to hound the cabal? The Sleeper witnesses have now gone missing. The Men in Black are ceaseless. But the real question is — who’s the one with the axe to grind?

- An ally or even one of the cabal’s own mages has gone missing — they find blood on the floor at his home and a pair of black sunglasses with one lens shattered. Neighbors describe the Men in Black who visited him. That’s horrible enough, right? It gets worse. Months later, the cabal does something wrong, and the Men in Black come to “correct the error.” Except now, their friend seems to be among them. He’s different. Off-kilter, but it’s him. Can they save him? Is it *really* him, or just a mockery? He seems to know quite a bit about them...



## Man in Black

**Quote:** *Might I have a cup of water? I feel... parched. Tell me about the events of two nights ago. Did you know that water vapor can sometimes simulate a paranormal experience, the manifestation of such may appear to be a ghostly entity? Thank you for the water. Ah. I will enjoy it.*

**Background:** As above. The Men in Black are inhumans masquerading as humans. They seek to “convince” witnesses they did not see the supernatural event they believe they saw, and they also seek to “correct errors” when it comes to those who may have been responsible for such a supernatural event. Correcting an error means, of course, a cruel lobotomy or death outright.

**Description:** At a distance, they might seem human. Up close, that impression fades swiftly. Their skin may appear plasticene, or painted on. They wear dark suits, always, and sometimes wear dark glasses (whether in lens or in frame), dark shoes, and dark gloves.

**Storytelling Hints:** Basically? Act weird. The Men in Black do not react normally given certain stimuli. When transmitting bad news or making a threat, the stranger may wear a broad smile. When giving a compliment, the figure may frown or be watching the ceiling fan revolve or be looking at his own hand as if it’s a marvel of nature. They ask odd questions. They interrupt others and themselves. They speak sometimes in non sequiturs, as if trying to mimic human conversational patterns (and failing).

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 5, Occult 5, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Stealth 5, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 3

**Merits:** Direction Sense, Fleet of Foot 3

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** n/a

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 16 (with Fleet of Foot)

**Health:** 8

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Steel Pick	1(L)	10	Armor Piercing 1

## Numbers Stations

It’s long been assumed that they’re coded communications provided for spies. Some believe that they’re used by criminal organizations, be they drug runners or masters of slave markets.

Certainly, numbers stations are trying to communicate *something*. These radio frequencies, found on shortwave and around since World War I, transmit a series of numbers or codes as read by what sounds to be a synthesized human voice. The transmissions often have simple, tonal music in the background (anything from “Hot Cross Buns” to the “Lincolnshire Poacher”). Sometimes, a series of letters is read first, read in the military style (“Charlie Oscar Tango”) then followed by numbers of a single language (which may be foreign — “zwei eins neun sechs”). A few eschew spoken codes and go for codes based on sound (such as Morse code). Whatever the recording, it’s played over and over again, obviously trying to communicate some kind of message.

These messages are transmitted over a high-frequency signal given low power, receivable only by a properly-tuned large antenna and receiver. The low power makes them difficult — impossible, in this case — to triangulate.

So, what are they? Nobody knows, or if they do, they don’t seem willing to share. No government will admit to using them, even though the United States government persecuted a group of supposed Cuban nationals (the “Cuban Five”) using a numbers station as evidence in the trial (the so-called “Wasp Network”).

Attempts to jam the stations have met with futility. Either the numbers station itself moves frequencies or, as is normally the case, the jamming attempt fails for some reason (equipment breaks down, jammer personnel goes missing).

### Oh, they’re real alright

Go to Google, right now. Search for “Conet Project.”

You’ll pull up some sites where you can go and actually *listen* to Numbers Stations — even better, some allow you to download them as MP3s, so you can play them for your troupe as examples.

Trust us. It’s creepy.

## Decode Me

The numbers are codes. People have long suspected that, and those people are right. The codes are actually part of what's known as a "one-time pad" in cryptographic terms. Without getting overly technical, a one-time pad is a nearly perfect encryption method, because it assumes you're giving a code to someone who is in possession of unique decryption materials. In this case, that person has the "key," which is often one (or more likely, a series) of sheets that has a randomized set of letters bound to numbers, and these numbers represent a *shift* — so, if B = 1, it represents a shift one letter over (a "rotation") to the letter C. If B were to instead equal 10, the shift of 10 now equals L, instead.

In the case of numbers stations, often enough both sides possess a list of randomized letters, but only the transmitters possesses the numerical shifts, and so the numbers station is actually transmitting the shifts so that the person with the other key can translate.

An example: the first six letters on the randomized key sheet are BBAREC. Now, the numbers that come across the station are: 3, 17, 2, 9, 11, 2. These represent the shift — a rotation always moving right. The translation is then ESCAPE (i.e. the third shift from B is E, the 17th shift from B is S, and so forth).

The translation is made all the more complex by having the receiver possess more than one randomized sheet of letters — possibly as many as a hundred. (In this case, the numbers station must somehow identify which sheet to use, as well — this might be done by reading letters such as "Foxtrot Tango Charlie," or through the usage of a certain song, any of which could provide a determination to the receiver as to what page to use. Page 33, for instance, might have the three-letter code of FTC atop it.)

All of this is an arguably simplistic discussion of what is ultimately a very complex cryptography, but it gets the message across that only the *intended* receiver is really able to decipher the message. Without the key sheet, the code is meaningless. The numbers mean nothing without the sheet, and the sheet means nothing without the numbers.

## The Truth Is

Numbers stations are not spy tools. They are not the clandestine communiqués between drug- or slave-runners. No, these frequencies are a type of

summoning, and can in fact themselves *be* summoned into this world.

## Dead Air

The numbers stations are operated by the dead. Spectral ghosts, as a matter of fact, transmitting messages not using shortwave radios at all, but by a unique Numen (see Frequency, p. 160) possessed by certain ghosts.

What is the purpose, then, of the numbers stations? The cosmology is not precise, but it seems that some ghosts do not go to their just reward (be it Heaven or Hell), nor do they linger longer on this mortal coil, not even in a state of Twilight. No, some ghosts go to a very specific Underworld, a realm that exists beneath all else, a bleak and blasted land whose topography is bored through with bottomless holes and endless tunnels. It is here that the Specters learn to serve a race of ancient beings (known in some grimoires as the "Helminth," or "Hellmenth"). These massive worms are said to exist in varying numbers: some occult tomes have them at 144, while others suggest their numbers are far greater at 144,000. (Then again, this latter number is numerologically said to be a metaphor for "limitless" and "eternal," so one could infer that either the number remains unknown, or that there exist an endless array of Hellmenth.)

The *good* news is that the Hellmenth cannot enter this world unbidden. They are far too large, too potent, to wriggle through from their ruined land into the material plane. That really is a good thing, because were they to enter this world, it would become a place of cosmic, god-like parasites. The Hellmenth would bore holes in the material world, slowly chewing it apart and turning it to much the same bleak and blasted land from whence they came in the first place. The world would become a gray Hell, a desolate *sheol*.

The bad news is that the ghosts that transmit the numbers stations — ghosts known as "the Operators" — seek to find a way to summon their larval masters to this place so as to become the consumptive kings of a ruined world. That is the function of the numbers stations.

## Cracking the Code

The Operators transmit the numbers stations with the goal that someone will decipher them. More specifically, the goal is that *magés* will decipher them,



because magic is a powerful key that might unlock the doors that will allow the Hellmenth to enter the Fallen World.

Mages have a couple ways of deciphering the “one-time pad” codes. The first is the standard way, which is by possessing a key. Without magic, a mage must be given the key, however — but who would ever deliver such a thing? Nobody really knows, but sometimes a key will show up uninvited. It’ll be slipped under a door or left in a mailbox, or even sent via e-mail. Who’s sending them? While certainly it’s possible that the Operators have found a way (an alternate use of the Frequency Numen) to relay the information, it’s all the more likely that the keys are delivered by hand via humans who serve the Operators or the Hellmenth. (How might humans come in contact with the Operators? More on that can be found below, under “The Operator’s Gift,” p. 158.)

The second way is, of course, using magic. Using a conjunctural effect with Fate 2 (for randomly assuring that a key sheet can be found or replicated, similar to “Shifting the Odds” on p. 153 of **Mage: The Awakening**) and Mind 1 (allowing one’s mind to work on the code from multiple angles, similar to what’s gained using “One Mind, Two Thoughts” on p. 206, **Mage: The Awakening**) can help a mage solve the one-time pad.

The code itself, as transmitted by the numbers station, is almost always an address. If it’s not an address, then it’s close to it: a latitudinal and longitudinal point somewhere on the planet. A single numbers station does not give away an entire address. It usually only provides five to seven letters or numbers of an address at a given time. The rest will either be transmitted by the same numbers station (the transmission may change after seven days) or will need to be pulled and solved from a separate numbers station on a nearby frequency.

At each point, one will find a red spire. The spires, formed of blood-colored marble and about 10 feet high, are featureless but for a single face-shaped imprint in the center, about five feet up from the ground. These obelisks might be buried, with only a certain portion of the marble showing, or they might actually be inside a building (think embedded in a house’s foundation or behind crumbling drywall).

Placing one’s face upon the obelisk, a mage may “unlock” it by succeeding on a Gnosis roll. Moros

magicians gain a +3 to this roll, however, intimating that somehow the Hellmenth have a sympathetic connection with the Watchtower of Lead (some tomes suggest their awful under-realm actually exists *beneath* that tower). This is further intimated by the presence of the Operators, who are of course dead entities (ghosts). Success destroys the red obelisk. The stone spire becomes shot through with endless micro-fractures, and then it collapses into hunks of stone that immediately collapse into dust. Otherwise, the obelisk cannot be destroyed. Attacks fail to damage them. Even a nuclear blast would destroy everything around it, but would leave the spire exposed (or, more likely, buried again so that it must be found and uncovered — some degree of work always seems explicit).

The world is home to dozens, maybe even hundreds, of such obelisks, though usually they’re hidden in such a way that they cannot be found without effort. However, it only takes six of these obelisks to be destroyed to pave the way for the Hellmenth to come through. Once six of the obelisks have been destroyed, the process begins. Somewhere, way out where mankind does not go (anywhere from the Gobi Desert to Lake Vostok), they begin to crawl into the world — immediately boring into the Earth’s mantle. Slowly, they’ll begin to eat. They hunger for everything, both organic and inorganic matter. They’ll rise up in the oceans first (given that the oceans cover most of the planet), consuming vast quantities of water and fish. They might disturb the mantle in such a way to trigger earthquakes, which in turn trigger tidal waves. Soon, they’ll come for the towns and cities. They eat. They digest. They excrete a spectral landscape in their wake: human ghosts, animal Specters, the shades and shadows of buildings and mountains and forests; all gray and grim, as if covered in a veneer of pale dust.

They do this until the world is destroyed, just as much a wreck as the underworld from whence they came. At least, that’s the *theory* — that’s what’s written in some of the old books and parchments. (Even some early Atlantean texts seemed to tell fearfully of the coming of the Hellmenth.) It’s never happened before, thankfully. But it has certainly come close: six obelisks must be destroyed in *seven days*. If those individual obelisks are not unlocked in this time period, then the gates will not open.

## Deciphering

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult (or Intelligence + Academics)

**Action:** Extended (difficulty of cipher determines successes needed, between five and 20 successes, each roll equates to 10 minutes of code-cracking)

Deciphering any kind of cipher or code may necessitate a roll, even if all the keys and necessary information are in the character's possession already. Assume that cracking the numbers station code *while in possession* of the keys necessitates 10 total successes. Without the key, some codes cannot be deciphered; numbers stations provide one such example.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character fails to decipher the code, and is so frustrated she may not attempt again. In addition, it gives her a headache: all Mental rolls for the remainder of the scene suffer a -1 penalty.

**Failure:** The code is not cracked.

**Success:** The code is cracked.

**Exceptional Success:** As with success, but the character gains a Willpower point as she grows flush with the feeling of triumphant intelligence.

**Suggested Modifiers:** In possession of keys or other necessary information (+3), no ancillary information to help decipher code (-3)

### *The Purpose?*

The biggest question is, why summon them? They're going to destroy everything. The entire physical world will be consumed slowly, probably over the course of a decade or two, and then it's *lights out* on the living. Who wants that?

Some do, certainly. True nihilists, the Scelesti, or Moros mages who want all the world to be a living graveyard might seek such a fate for this world. But for the most part, even those types may say they espouse such a grim ending, but they're usually too self-interested (meaning, happy to be alive) to actu-

ally commit to such a dramatic course of action. So, how does it happen?

Deception, that's how. Imagine this: you're a mage, and you've been shown the way to bring the Dragons back! Or to allow Atlantis to rise once more, or to bring all the worlds back in harmony, or to summon a cabal of true Angels who will help elevate mankind to the next evolutionary level! And all one has to do is find the numbers stations, translate the codes, go to the locations, and unlock the obelisks. So simple it hurts, right?

Mages are creatures of secrets and mysteries: they dig up what's been buried, and many are compelled to uncover new information. Some are so compelled by this act that they fail to truly vet the information that comes into their hands. So hubristic are they that they don't believe that they could be lied to, and so they commit to unlocking these obelisks because they have bought the lies. They open a grimoire that lays it all out in stark detail, or they uncover a prehistoric cave in the south of France that shows a crudely-drawn set of radio frequencies. Usually, it's not something so easy that it seems obvious: again, mages are creatures of mystery, and it's only of value if they have to pick at the layers to find some kind of truth. It's a cruel trick, of course, a vast setup meant to fool unwitting mages (ideally, Moros mages) into instigating the end of the world.

Truly, nothing is to be gained by summoning the Hellmenth. The Operators, however, are not without their merits...

### *The Operators' Gift*

The Operators have a unique ability other ghosts do not seem to possess: they know of damn near *everything* death-related. They can answer any question that involves death. How many people died at the Nanking Massacre? How did one's father die? How long ago did the mysterious corpse in the river perish, and of what causes? They can also answer questions related to Necromancy: a Moros dealing with an Operator may gain one or two Arcane Experience points.

A mage has two ways of contacting an Operator. The first way is by tracking down an extent Operator broadcasting a numbers station. They're out there, but not necessarily nearby; it's not as if every city is home to a transmitting numbers station. Moreover, actually finding the location of the signal is difficult. Certainly some hobby-



ists (humans) have found ways to triangulate the rough locations of the stations by using personal and portable radio direction-finding equipment (jury-rigged, of course). Doing so necessitates an extended Wits + Crafts roll, with a target number of 20 successes, and each roll equates to an hour's worth of driving around. The roll suffers a -5 penalty due to the difficulty of triangulation, however. Those mundane humans who find an Operator often end up in thrall to them (and may be the ones who leave the code keys for unwitting mages).

It is likely far better (and perhaps easier) for a mage to triangulate a numbers station using magic. Spells like "Receiver" or "Tune In" (p. 164, **Mage The Awakening**) don't allow the mage to track the frequency, but do allow her to tune into it and communicate with an Operator sans radio. Combining both Death 1 and Forces 1 allows the mage to hone

in on the numbers station frequency, triangulating it by sensing the spectral energies that form the radio frequency.

Alternately, a mage may summon an Operator using Outer Channel (p. 144) — Outer Channel works despite the fact that an Operator is technically a ghost, because these Specters do not come from any traditional or known realms. Rather, the Hellmenth "underworld" is so far removed from those planes of existence that have been mapped and charted that it is necessary to create a channel that connects this place with that one. (Note, however, that one *thankfully* cannot summon the Hellmenth themselves in this way: they are altogether too powerful and alien to bring here in such a manner.)

Using Outer Channel to summon an Operator necessitates a few tweaks, though. The target number is now the Operator's Resistance + the mage's own



Health score, and each turn spent casting the spell incurs two points of bashing damage as the mage's body reacts poorly with the death energies that start to drift across the widening channel.

Summoning an Operator is not without consequences, of course. The Operator exists, anchored to the spot it is summoned, and from there it begins to broadcast its codes to unlock the Hellmenth. As ghosts, they're quite powerful, and are not so easily removed from this world. In a roundabout sense, one could accidentally contribute to the summoning of the Hellmenth. (In fact, many mages summon an Operator without even realizing what they're really conjuring. They're told that the Operators know a great deal about death, and so they bring them into this world without having a grasp of the bigger — and stranger — picture.)

### *Operator*

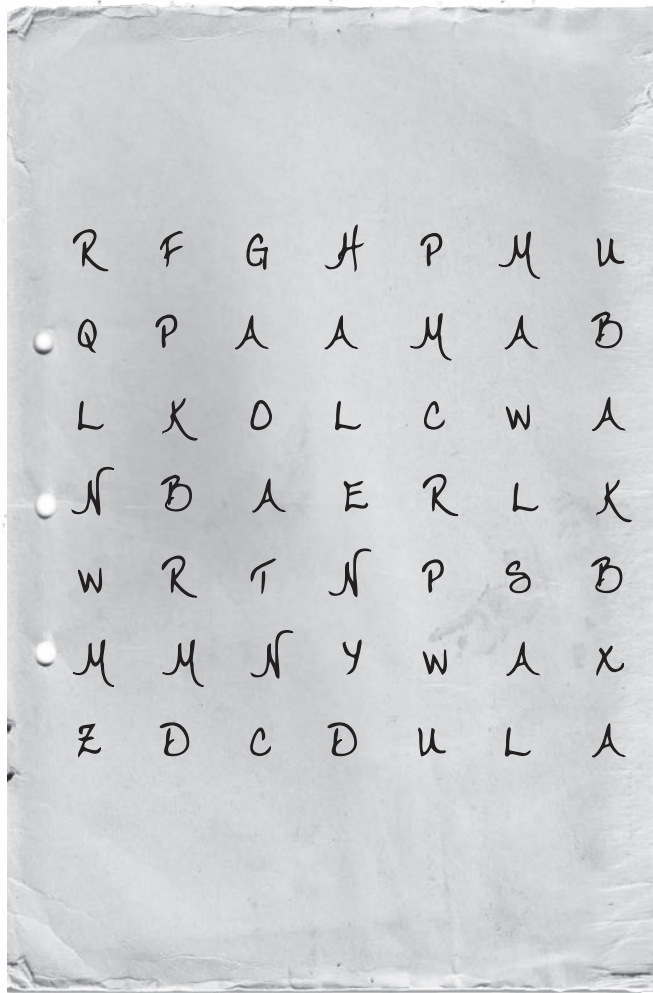
**Background:** As above. The Operators enter this world as immaterial entities existing in Twilight, and they broadcast their numbers stations to “unlock” the obelisks that apparently hold the Hellmenth at bay.

**Description:** The Operators are not materialized ghosts, and exist solely in Twilight. They do have ancillary effects upon their environment, however. Usually, an Operator anchors itself to a room, and that room features certain physical characteristics born as a result of the ghost's presence. Flies, maggots, cockroaches and other vermin associated with death and decay (rarely anything larger than a rat, though) appear. The room itself decays in minor ways: wallpaper peels, wooden floors buckle or

grow weak, metal pipes rust, food spoils in minutes. The air shimmers. It also smells of rot, mold, and moisture. They have no physical description, and cannot be seen.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Operators can only communicate in codes and numbers. No message is every conveyed directly — it is universally heard over the

frequency in the form of a numbers station (usually a slightly mechanical female-sounding voice reading off numbers and letters). Any message conveyed can be translated either by having a key sheet or by being on-site with the Operator itself. The Operator's own “key sheet” (the series of letters used to decode its transmission) is painted on the wall in blood, often in a seven-by-seven grid of alpha-code.



**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 6, Resistance 6  
**Willpower:** 12  
**Morality:** 2  
**Virtue:** Faith  
**Vice:** Envy  
**Essence:** 15 (max 15)  
**Initiative:** 12  
**Defense:** 6  
**Speed:** 0 (Operator cannot move from where it is summoned)  
**Size:** 5  
**Corpus:** 11  
**Numina:** Ghost Sign, Frequency (see below), Magnetic

Disruption, Telekinesis

### **New Numen:**

**Frequency:** Similar to Ghost Sign, the ghost can broadcast its voice over a radio or television band. Spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the roll succeeds, the ghost can repeat a message (no longer than five minutes in length) over that frequency for up to a single day (24 hours). The message is never perfect, and is usually hampered by bouts of static and other radio interruptions.



## Story Hooks

Below are a number of story hooks using numbers station as their focus:

- The cabal receives a letter or a piece of parchment (perhaps scanned and sent over e-mail), and it features the key sheet necessary to decipher the codes transmitted by a numbers station. The key sheet itself is dotted with blood; and someone has used that blood to write a radio frequency in the upper right corner of the document.

- A fellow cabal, be they competitors or allies, have taken to deciphering the numbers stations and tracking down the spires on a swift, globe-trotting adventure. Problem is, the characters learn the truth, and must intercept that cabal before the unwittingly unleash the Hellmenth into this world. That means translating the numbers stations and potentially dealing with the Operators.

- The Operators are ghosts. That means they were once alive. A young girl comes to the characters and tells them her father died five years ago, but he's been "talking" to her again on her radio late at night. It's a numbers station, and it's his voice doing the reading of the numbers. Two things become apparent: first, this girl is *this close* to Awakening. Second, this Operator obviously retains some level of personality from his life, and is connected to this girl. Does that mean the Operators can be redeemed? Can they be turned from worshipping the Hellmenth parasites and be turned toward some manner of just reward?

## The Quincunx

Pick up a six-sided die and look at the fifth side, or instead grab a playing card and look at the symbols present. Or, more specifically, look at the *arrangement* of the symbols: one symbol in each corner, and a single symbol in the center. This is a quincunx arrangement, and it is found in architecture, money, art, astrology, and religious ritual. It forms the foundation for a number of sacred mosques. It is the pattern one uses to plant trees in an orchard. It forms the basis of early Roman coinage (the coins being 12 oz, and the word "quincunx" coming from *quinque*, or five, and

*uncial*, or twelfths — five-twelfths being the value of the quincunx coin).

The symbol has strong religious, spiritual and occult inferences, as well, with the quincunx often being thought of as an arrangement that invokes stability and order. The Olmec arranged items in a quincunx pattern to delineate a sacred space. Vodoun practitioners often use the symbol to "seal in a trick," i.e. to create a space where a spell can be locked in and performed properly. Some pagan rituals arrange candles in the quincunx pattern on an altar, and early alchemists believed the arrangement was key to the *prima essentia* of the Philosopher's Stone.

So, if this symbol is meant to invoke a sense of spiritual and magical stability, why is it then that moments of madness — riots, atrocity, outbreaks of disease, break-outs at insane asylums and prisons — the quincunx symbol appears as a physical manifestation, an entity composed of five strobing lights? The presence of these apparent entities does not seem to soothe the situation; stability is by no means the result of their appearance. In fact, the more that appear, the worse the situation seems to become — those individuals present seem to succumb to madness with hair-trigger ease. What are these things?

## Description and Manifestation

Each entity appears as a series of five flashing lights arranged in the quincunx pattern. They are approximately the dimensions of a bath towel (unfurled into a rectangle). The symbols are not consistent between entities — one quincunx might offer flashing lights that are little more than dots, whereas another has strobe pulses that look more like intricate mandalas, swastikas, star patterns, and the like.

It's uncertain whether the quincunx appear at moments of madness or, as some suspect, they appear earlier and actually help to stir events into the chaos that they become.

When one or several quincunx is present, the following effects are in play:

- Those nearby (within a radius of 100 yards of the entity) gain a mild derangement. They all gain the *same* mild derangement. However, those who already possess one (or several) derangements do not gain any *new* lunacies.

- For every quincunx nearby (100 yards), any Resolve + Composure rolls made to resist giving into a derangement suffer a -2 penalty, cumulative. Moods

get set on edge. Anxiety tears at one's mental walls. Negative feelings are amplified, and positive feelings are quashed.

- A character's memory is no longer his own while a quincunx is nearby (100 yards). Any who are affected by the quincunx at that moment find themselves besieged by flashes of intense memories — but these memories are not the character's own. He experiences remembered events from those who are near him — seemingly random, and always events that were highly charged with perilous, negative emotions (car crash, death of a father, loss of one's worldly possessions). These flashes incur a -3 penalty to all other Mental rolls (not including the one made to resist derangement effects). Physical and Social rolls remain unaffected.

A quincunx is technically visible to mundane mortals, but they simply don't seem to *notice* the pulsing entities unless their presence is pointed out. However, the manifestation of these chaotic entities does “ping the radar” of anybody with any manner of Unseen Sense, as well as any mage with the Sibyl's Sight (p. 149, **Mage: The Awakening**). To a mage with either of these, they can perceive the tangled skein of Fate starting to unravel, and not in a good way. (The mage Sight spell might offer a strange smell to the air, like ozone before a lightning strike, and the character's heart-rate might start to increase unnaturally.)

Quincunx feed off of madness and chaos. The more individuals present who have given into derangements (i.e. failed the Resolve + Composure roll to resist) only serves to bring more quincunx: for every three lost to madness at present, another of the mad entities is certain to appear. And, of course, that means the presence of these beings feeds on one another, because the more of them found at a scene, the harder it is for characters to resist derangements.

The quincunx serve to foment chaotic events to a boiling point — when the madness reaches its pinnacle and *some* kind of “tipping point” occurs (the inmates burn down the asylum, the rioters kill a prominent politician, the crowd holds hands and leaps off the Golden Gate Bridge to their demise), then all the quincunx disappear once more. When they disappear, any temporary derangements gained as a result of their presence fade, though permanent ones remain. Penalties, as noted above, also disappear at the moment the entities leave this plane of existence.

### *Summoning*

Before discussing the means to summon the quincunx, the better question to be asked is: *why* summon them at all? What does a mage have to gain from one of these entities? Obviously, the presence of one or many such entities is dangerous to the sanity and stability of an area: a high cost for what appears to be little reward.

But for some, the reward is strong enough. Two rewards, actually, await those who are willing to risk inviting a quincunx into the world.

The first reward is, as noted above, memories. The quincunx grab memories from everyone nearby and dice them up, disseminating them amongst all who are affected. One character suffered a near-death experience 10 years ago and still suffers nightmares from it — and, now the memories of that traumatic event are potentially fresh in the minds of everybody nearby. They all know it. If the circumstances around that event were secret, they're now all aware of the once-concealed facts and elements, meaning that when the quincunx are present, secrets become ill-kept.

Mages with the Mind Arcanum can, with a little finesse, actually use this to their advantage. Any spells or rites cast to read the minds of those nearby or work telepathy (using, say, Voice from Afar, Telepathy, Read the Depths) gain +3 to the attempt. (Although, attempts to *cloud* one's own mind from such incursions — with Memory Hole or Mental Shield, for instance — suffer -3 to the roll.)

In addition, the second benefit experienced by those who might summon the quincunx is how easily it opens the conduits of the soul to accept Mind magic more easily. While in the presence of a quincunx, a mage may find it easy to increase his awareness of the Mind Arcanum. Exposure to a quincunx can grant Arcane Experience, applicable only to purchasing new dots in the Mind Arcanum (rather than Gnosis).

Now comes the question: how does one summon such an entity? It becomes necessary to open a channel between wherever the quincunx come from and this plane of existence. This summoning spell at the fore of the chapter (Outer Channel) works to summon the Quincunx, but the act of conjuring these strange beings requires a few tweaks to that spell:

- The act of summoning a quincunx has powerful — and not pleasant — effects on a mage's mind. She feels deep enervation occurring, and suffers odd hallucinations and moments of powerful anxiety. Each





roll in the extended action to summon the quincunx leeches a point of Willpower away. If she has yet to succeed on the action but has no Willpower, she cannot complete the summoning.

- Sleeper witnesses make for more trouble than usual — they cannot comprehend the manifestation of a quincunx. The Paradox modifier doubles when one or more Sleeper witnesses are present, from +2 to +4 (p. 123, *Mage: The Awakening*).

- A mage who holds a physical representation of a quincunx symbol in her hand (a six-sided die, a domino, a playing card) gains +1 to the roll to summon.

### *Dealing with the Quincunx*

The madness of invading quincunx is infectious and often deadly. It spreads like brushfire, or like a disease vector: mages cannot afford to go mad, not when the magic they wield can do such irrevocable harm.

The following, however, is a ritual, non-magical solution to gain protection against the madness-causing effects of the quincunx. This ritual is based on the Vodoun practice of “sealing a trick,” or providing some stability to a spell in a given ritual space.

The characters must place five bottles in a rectangular room. Each bottle must be filled with a mixture of graveyard dirt and salt, and then the bottles must be sealed (capped or with wax) and hidden at the quincunx positions of the room (i.e. one bottle at each of the four corners, with the fifth in the center). “Hidden” is key — the bottles must be concealed by some manner, either under furniture, beneath a rug, or literally below the floorboards. This creates a non-literal, invisible set of “crossroads” that the strange beings may not cross.

This space is now protected from the quincunx entities. No such entity may enter this space, and the effects of being in the presence of such a creature are utterly nullified. It is, quite literally, a ritualized

space of some sanity.

(Some say this space works on a number of other levels. Rumors suggest that rolls to resist madness made in such a space gain +5, and that *any* kind of spirit may not manifest or negatively effect the practitioners while within these “sacred crossroads.”)

One can attack the quincunx as one might attack any spirit, but an attack on a single entity draws the attention of all of them.

### *The Quincunx*

**Background:** As above. The quincunx are puzzling spirits of madness, and multiple theories exist to explain them, with little proof backing up each hypothesis. Some mages believe they're creatures of chaos, hell-bent on breaking down our plane of existence — perhaps, they say, chaos in this world strengthens the order in theirs. Others posit a more radical theory: they come to bring order through chaos. As entropy breaks systems down, new systems arise and often in a more ordered way (it's as simple as noting when an old building is demolished, a new — and often better, more stable — structure is built in its place). The spirits therefore arrive and incur entropy that leads, ideally, to greater order (or even extropy — a transhuman strengthening of our species).

**Description:** Five pulses of light in a quincunx pattern. The pulsing lights may just be that, or may reveal uniform symbols (such as mandalas).

**Storytelling Hints:** The quincunx are inscrutable. They hover. They seem to watch, passive, as the world gathers. When more than one is present, all of them hover together, urging closer to the chaos, as if hungry for it. One cannot communicate normally with the quincunx. They cannot be compelled to communicate — doing so is dangerous for the mage, and may cause misery or madness. The quincunx surely think, though their thoughts are plainly not comprehensible even by the most powerful Awakened mind... but that doesn't stop some from trying, does it?

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 10, Finesse 10, Resistance 10

**Willpower:**

**Essence:** 25 (25 max)

**Initiative:** 20

**Defense:** 10

**Speed:** 25

**Size:** 3

**Corpus:** 13

**Influence:** Madness 5

**Numina:** Blast, Harrow, Innocuous, Materialize

**Ban:** The spirit may not attack anyone holding a physical representation of a quincunx pattern (six-sided die, playing card, domino).

### Story Hooks

Below you'll find three separate story hooks that might draw players toward encounters with the quincunx.

- Someone hands the cabal a book — a journal, actually, written by someone who self-identifies as the “Mad Magician of the Blackwater Bayou.” This journal purports to detail in-depth the nature of the quincunx, and how they are actually the *ghosts* of some remnant race that lived here long before Atlantis rose and fell, and that they were banished from this plane of existence. They return to try to destroy our world and make it once again habitable for them. Is the Mad Mage right? Can the characters read between the lines and come to realize that the Mad Mage was himself a summoner of the quincunx? Driven mad by their existence?

- They have him bound to a chair: John Carver County, serial murderer, addict to the occult. He has kidnapped children — thirteen of them, by his story, one of whom is a family member to the cabal. They need to plumb the depths of his mind to find out where the kids are, but either the mages aren't capable enough or he's thrown up some kind of mental wall (he's no mage, but still a capable occultist). Someone suggests summoning a quincunx to facilitate. Do the characters know what that entails? Do they realize the consequences?

- They've been spotted everywhere. Locally. Across town. Two cities over. Quincunx, more every hour. Nothing's happened, not yet, but surely madness bubbles beneath the surface, fomented by the presence of these flashing, five-symbol entities. What can be done? Why are they here? Who called them?



## Vouivre

This is why they summon her: for her venom. She is not a woman, though most times she looks to be one. She is a serpent, a *wyvern* that sometimes wears the guise of female human flesh. Mages do not know precisely what she is or from whence she comes, only that her presence exists way out in the stars, deep in the potent black of the night-time cosmos.

## Theories

Some say she is not one creature, but many — that when you summon La Vouivre, you summon a single creature that belongs to an entire race. Others say she is truly singular, a being that is summoned, killed, and reborn again in the stars.

Other, more troubling theories exist: she is a dragon, some claim, an eldritch viper whose heritage belongs with those Dragons that bestowed magic upon the willworkers of Atlantis. Is this true? Most don't want to believe it, for that seems to elevate their hunting of her to a truly cosmic crime, though some pride-

besotted mages surely would take great satisfaction in having defeated a creature with such a potent and magical bloodline.

Of course, some claim she is an arrogant serpent deserving to be butchered. She is a Cerynean Hind, a Nemean Lion: just another beast to be hunted.

## The Venom

Her venom — milked from the sacs that feed her vicious curved fangs — is both poison and drug. She must be killed to claim it; she will not give it freely, and curiously once her teeth are removed (a necessity to get at the sacs), she starts to die anyway, her flesh blackening and withering.

The poison itself is a turbid, cloudy fluid (think liquid egg whites both in color and consistency). If it's ingested, it's poisonous. Deadly so, working on the body swiftly with a Toxicity rating of 10 and doing aggravated damage to the body as it runs through the flesh. It scours the internals, turning most of one's insides to a bloody churn.



## Unquantifiable Morality

Some creatures here — such as the wyvern, or the Men in Black — do not have quantifiable Morality scores. It just doesn't matter. Surely they follow some code, but it's not something the mages are really capable of discovering or understanding; that way leads madness.

And yet, these beings *do* possess a Virtue and Vice score. While they may not themselves comprehend what it means, it's a good way for the Storyteller to thematically approach how to use these entities, and moreover how they might act and regain their power.

However, if the venom is “cooked” (think heroin on a spoon) to over 150 degrees Fahrenheit, the fluid loses its cloudy consistency and becomes clarified. Once clarified, a character can inject it into the bloodstream.

It's still not safe, not exactly. The character must roll Resolve + Composure and subtract the successes from 10 — the resultant number is how many hours the “experience” lasts. Every hour, the character gains or suffers from the following effects:

- The character takes a single point of lethal damage. This damage is Resistant Damage (p. 124, **Mage: The Awakening**). This causes no pain, but it is representative of the body's systems starting to shut down. Usually, liver and pancreatic functions take a hit early, which is how those dosing on wyvern venom are identified with ease: their skin takes a notably jaundiced look after the first hour.

- The character suffers hallucinations that are generally pleasing. The hallucinations often seem to confirm the character's desires and dreams, and may actually urge her toward committing actions that would appease her Vice. No roll is necessary, the character may resist without much effort, but the urge is present nevertheless. Hallucinations, however, do cause some penalties: -3 to all Mental rolls, -1 to Physical rolls. Social rolls assume no penalty, and in fact the venom causes a certain gleeful exuberance that adds +2 to Socialize rolls.

- Magic is easier for the mage. It seems to flow more profoundly from her, almost as if it wants to *pour* free from her body and mind. All magic gains

+1 to cast, but some Arcana (Life, Mind, Spirit) gain +3 to cast.

- Use of the venom as drug is addictive. One's generally hooked after the first “hit.” To determine whether a character is addicted, that player should roll Resolve + Composure with a penalty equal to the hours spent under the drug's effects (cumulative — all hours *ever* spent). Once hooked, assume the character has the Addicted Flaw (p. 218, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). This is how entire cults of wyvern-summoners come to be: like-minded addicts looking to take down La Vouivre just to get another “taste.”

### *La Vouivre (“The Wyvern”)*

**Quote:** *You should not have called me. This is not my world anymore.*

**Background:** As above. She is folkloric, *La Vouivre* — a woman who is not a woman at all, but a serpent, a viper, a dragon.

**Description:** In her human guise, she is unnaturally beautiful and never clothed. Her skin seems to shimmer and gleam, as if covered with a sheen of sweat, but closer inspection reveals no such moisture. Her hair is always black, as are her eyes. As a serpent, she does not change Size but instead walks on all fours — lithe disjointed limbs that jut from her snake's belly. Her skin is iridescent, the scales shining in black and violet. It is her great maw that mages seek: an alligator's nest of teeth with curved snake fangs contained within. Fat, grub-like poison sacs sit attached to the roof of her mouth with tough tissue, and it is the venom in these sacs that operates as a powerful drug to the willworkers that consume it.

**Storytelling Hints:** It's easy to make the wyvern a sympathetic creature — in some ways, it truly is a sad thing. It's pulled into this world only to be hunted. Few seek to actually *learn* from her (not that she'd be all that helpful), and most just want to kill it and milk her poison sacs to enhance their own magics (and to experience the raw sensation). That being said, *La Vouivre* is a haughty creature who believes that mages are, for the most part, a nest of idiots. She is given over to profound fits of hubris (not always unjustified), and represents tremendous power. She'll give most cabals a major run for their money, even as a lone creature. Remember, as much as she's the hunted, she's also a hunter: not at all human, and despite her human body, she is of alien intelligence. If she gets a victim in her grip, she might bite him to



make it quick... or she might slice him open, nuts to neck, and toy with his bones and innards.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 7

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 4, Medicine 1, Occult 5

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 5, Brawl 7, Stealth 3, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Intimidation 5, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Brawling Dodge, Fast Reflexes 2, Toxin Resistance

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** n/a

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 5

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 22 (species factor of 10)

**Health:** 12

**Armor:** 5/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Claw	2(L)	16	Can perform in either form
Bite	1(L)	15	Can perform in either form; success = Toxicity 5 poison, agg. damage

**Special:**

**Acute Defense:** She does not lose Defense due to multiple attackers.

**Great Leap:** She has no wings and may not fly, but she *can* leap unusual distances. Triple any of the jumping distances available to humans (see "Jumping," *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 66)

**Venomous Bite:** If she succeeds on a bite attack, she may spend a Willpower point to inject the victim with a dose of poison. This venom is as described above: Toxicity 5, and caused aggravated damage. Truth is, she only has enough "doses" in her equal to her Size (5), and a dose regenerates at a rate of one per *month*.

Hence, she's only sure to actually inject the venom via bite when she is truly threatened, or wants to deliver a potential death blow to a victim.

**Wildness Within (Life):** La Vouivre has access to the following Life-based spells: Purify Bodies (Life 2), Control Median Life (Life 3), Enfeeblement (Life 4). Each costs her one Willpower, not Mana, and each is activated via an Intelligence + Presence roll.

## Story Hooks

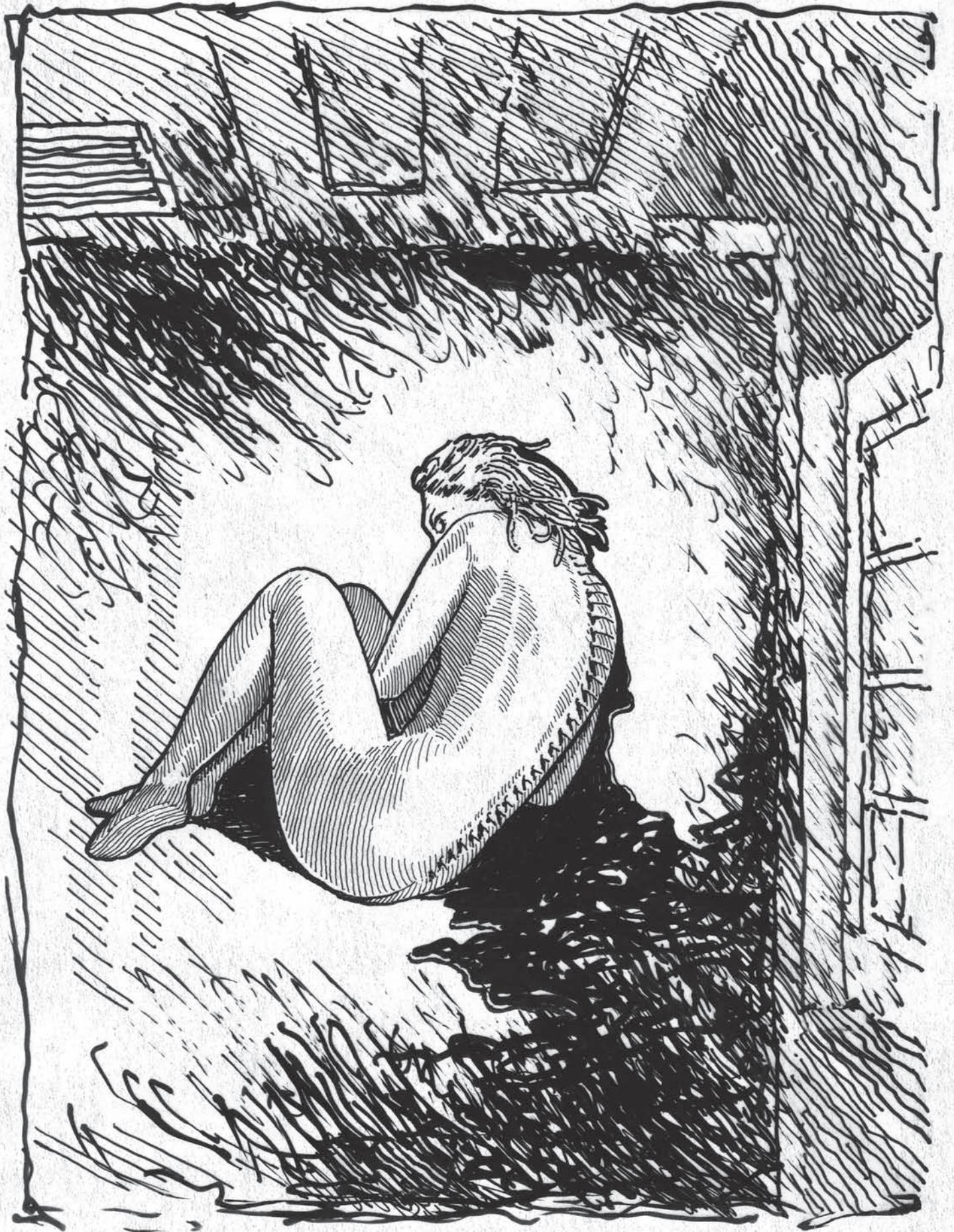
Check out the following story hooks using La Vouivre:

- One of the characters needs some extra juice to get a spell going, and someone offers her a taste of a milky fluid — just heat it up, inject it in, and the magic will flow all the easier. Why not, right? Except, oops. It's addictive. And worse, now the character needs more, and the only way to get it is to help summon and hunt down another wyvern.

- Someone begs and pleads with the characters: *save her, they're killing her*. La Vouivre is a majestic being, they say, a clear scion to the magic-giving Dragons of long ago. And yet, the hunting party is happy to have the characters join *them* instead. Who do they help? If they help to save the wyvern, does she care? Does she turn on them? Or is there a greater gift she can give them, something far better than the venom that sits in the sacs in her mouth?

- The characters summon her, but this time... something's gone terribly wrong. There's supposed to be just one, isn't there? But now, she comes in an army of lithe lizard-limbed women and human-faced legged serpents. One of them is hard enough to kill — what about 10? Or 20? Or 50? The old saying, "Never let more snakes out of the bag than you're able to kill" has become truly apt, here, teaching the cabal how dangerous the act of summoning can really be.







# CHAPTER FIVE: OTHERWORLDLY COMPACTS

*She screamed, her breath frosting in the chill winter air.*

*Outside, the driving snow piled against the sides of the decrepit tenement, long since abandoned by anyone with the option of being anywhere else. Despite this, however, Malice's simple, threadbare garments lay piled nearby, atop a rusty old boiler, still and silent; as cold as the icy concrete upon which she writhed, every nerve in her body was alight with agony.*

*The Gulmoth's hunger was seemingly insatiable, gnawing away at bone and nerve tissue with savage abandon. She chanted a mantra, over and over again, in her mind: This is what I want. This is what I want. This is what I want...*

*Every so often, a nearly unbearable spasm would make Malice's body reflexively contort in some way that enabled her to glimpse the small of her back with the gruesome, poisonous yellow orb in her left eyesocket, and she could see the Abyssal spirit slowly devouring and replacing her spinal column. When the first few rows of slender bone quills began to extend down the center line of her back, the willworker shrieked again. Overwhelmed by pain, she instinctively attempted to hide, her chameleonic skin shifting to same mottled gray coloration as the floor. But the Gulmoth was already within her, and there was no escaping this pain that she was now certain would kill her.*

*And, then — just like that — it was over.*

*Malice lay, unmoving, for several long moments, drawing slow, deep, shuddering breaths, before rolling out of the fetal position and collecting her limbs beneath her. As she stood, hot trails of blood ran from the scores of ivory-white spines protruding from her back and, from there, down her legs, to pool at the soles of her feet. The willworker left crimson tracks in the dust as she stepped around a tall pile of old junk, to regard the one relatively new addition leaning against its far side. As she willed her flesh back to its normal shade, Malice gazed into the full-length mirror, curious as to the results of her final chrysalis.*

*That baleful yellow left eye stared back at her, along with the blue right one. Her skin, while marked by livid scarlet stains, was still corpse-white, with a fine network of translucent black veins just beneath the surface. She turned a bit, to see the bristling bone quills jutting from the line of her spinal column; short at the small of her back and where they protruded from base of her skull, and gradually lengthening to be longest between her shoulder blades.*

*She reached out to the mirror, delicately touching its chill surface. Fog quickly condensed on the glass in a hazy corona around each fingertip. With her free hand, Malice caressed her own cheek. A tear rolled from the corner of her right eye — the left was incapable of crying. Ever so slowly, a smile curved her ashen lips.*

*"Beautiful."*

*Malice heaved a blissful sigh.*

*Finally beautiful.*



**Saith Osiris Ani: "Hail, thou mighty one, come unto Tattu.  
Make thou my paths and let me pass round [to visit] my thrones.  
Make me to renew myself and make me to wax strong.  
Grant that I may be feared, and make me to be a terror.  
May the gods of the underworld fear me, and may they fight for me in their habitations.  
Let not him that would do harm to me draw nigh to me.  
Let me walk through the house of darkness..."**

**—The Egyptian Book of the Dead**

Summoning is a dangerous business, a school of magic created and sustained by its own highly complex systems of rules and arcane formulae. For each entity that can be called to attend the summoner, a ritual or incantation exists. Mages have developed spells and even Legacies to capitalize upon the myriad nuances of summoning, and certain trained or ingrained qualities contribute to this perilous craft.

In this chapter, you will find these sorts of systems and more. Of especial interest are the mechanics for pacts—mystically binding agreements forged between mages and the things that they call from disparate worlds. These elaborate give-and-take arrangements are perhaps the cornerstone of summoning, allowing willworkers to ask boons of the creatures of the various realms of creation and compelling service, in kind; one of the most ancient and primal forms of magic known to humanity.

### *The Summoner's Art*

For all of the various rules to be found in this chapter, it is important to keep in mind that summoning is an art form, just as much as it is a science. There is a sort of poetry and a tremendous beauty and grace to this singularly dangerous pursuit. Invocations tend to use powerful, moving language, as willworkers command, coerce, invite, or even seduce the subjects of their summonings. Some of the oldest surviving human writings are spells directed at various supernatural powers and these are almost always written in grand, ceremonial language.

Likewise, many of the wards and circles employed in summoning are, themselves, like works of art. Goetic seals, for example, or the *veves* used to call down the *loa*, are often quite intricate, requiring a skilled hand and a sense of proportion and aesthetics. Summoning chambers are usually crafted to establish a particular emotional resonance; a room built to honor the Angels of the Aether should look entirely different from one

intended to appeal to the nihilistic and all-consuming hatred of the Gulmoth.

The systems presented here are more than just die rolls and dots on sheets to the characters who make use of them; they are fascinating and terrifying, like the predatory gaze of a Bengal tiger or the explosive eruption of a volcano. Mages should approach this magic with reverence and respect, not merely because it is dangerous, but also because it touches upon so many worlds, making manifest their wonders and horrors within the Fallen World.

### *Incorporating Summoning*

Some of the rules in this chapter are quite easy to introduce into your chronicle, while others require a more patient approach, but any or even all can be worked into most any Awakening game, given a bit of time and thought. A Scelestus of the Legion can be dropped into your chronicle as a behind-the-scenes antagonist with players none the wiser... until her hideous and disfiguring Attainments come into play, anyway. On the other hand, pacts need to be carefully considered and their benefits weighed against their drawbacks; not merely for the character, but also for the sort of story you want to tell.

### *Ancient and New*

Perhaps the most important question in introducing these (or any) new systems into a chronicle intended to encompass old knowledge is how to do so without making such practices appear, effectively, out of thin air. Fortunately, the practice of summoning is a relatively secretive one; mages who work these magics don't typically advertise such information, out of fear that they will be—rightly or wrongly—branded as threats to local Awakened society, or even accused of consorting with malevolent powers. Willworkers, just like Sleepers, often become frightened by that which they do not know or understand and, just like Sleepers, can have some very irrational reactions to fear.



The myths and enigmas of summoning resonate with the sense of ancient mystery inherent to **Mage: The Awakening**, as powers potentially older than the world itself dispense strange wisdom to those with the courage (or foolhardiness) to ask. Like almost any movement within the Awakened world smaller than a Pentacle Order, summoners are a secretive and sometimes insular lot. They don't often, or easily, part with the secrets of their trade and just *finding* a mage willing to teach the magics of summoning to a student — let alone convincing her to actually do so — can be a major chronicle goal, in and of itself.

Alternatively, you may choose to debut the wonder and terror of summoning on a grander and more obvious stage, as powers go awry and the seals of binding fail, initiating the cabal into the perils of summoning as a trial by fire. Many of the spells, enchanted objects, Legacies, Merits and Flaws, and other such systems presented here (and elsewhere in this book) can be used to illustrate the threats inherent to summoning magic. However you choose to introduce the systems in this book will color the perspectives of the player characters. A long chase through the occult underbelly of the Consilium and surrounding communities to discover the lore of, say, Supernal summoning from a reclusive Master will leave them with an entirely different sense of the practice than the gruesome consequences that ensue when a trusted and honored Curator of the Mysterium accidentally releases a ravaging Gulmoth when his bindings fail.

## Pacts

Summoners refer to the agreements forged between summoned entities and themselves as pacts. A pact serves as a mechanical benefit granted to the character in exchange for a disadvantage he willingly undertakes. Pacts balance against themselves; they cost no experience. While a pact may grant temporary traits, experience is never paid to create a pact or to gain the benefits the pact grant.

## Forging Pacts

What follows provides for the mechanical considerations of striking a bargain with an otherworldly entity. Before such a pact can be agreed to, an individual must possess the knowledge and capacity necessary to summon such an entity, communicate with it, and possibly even bind it. A character without those abilities cannot enter into a pact. (On rare occasions,

## Summoning for Dummies

At the Storyteller's permission, these rules can provide guidelines for non-mages capable of summoning otherworldly entities. Mystically-inclined vampires, Prometheans of the Ulgan lineage, or even mortals utilizing the rules provided in **Second Sight** might be able to strike such deals. Where these rules contradict other similar rules (such as those for pledges in **Changeling: The Lost**, those for rites and gifts in **Werewolf: The Forsaken** and those for creating Changeling Contracts in **Equinox Road**), those rules take precedence.

however, an individual convinces a summoner to call forth an entity on her behalf so that she can strike a pact without necessarily being able to summon or control the spirit herself. Mucking about in powers one doesn't understand, however, can be disastrous. Additionally, sometimes the entities take the initiative, seeking out a mage to corrupt without being summoned. This is most often the case with Acamoth.)

These rules do not serve as an alternative to role-playing the deal with the devil. While players should work with the Storyteller to determine what benefits and costs their characters are agreeing to while using this method, the *characters* don't have access to these rules. Storytellers are encouraged to portray the otherworldly entities the characters traffic with as unknowable and frightening, even if the player knows what's going on from a mechanical standpoint.

Which is not to say, however, that Storytellers and players should work out the pact as a foregone conclusion before the character actually deals with the entity. Doing so may take some of the unknown out of the interaction, reducing it to the narrative import of checking out with the cashier at a supermarket. Instead, perhaps the Storyteller and player work to establish the finer points of the pact *after* the character has summoned the entity and earned its respect (or compelled its control). Conversely, the Storyteller and player can work out what the player wants before the summoning occurs, but the cost may rise or fall depending on how well the character comports herself. The guidelines for pacts are only guidelines; no occult truism exists within them, and antagonistic entities may charge a higher price for a

bonus than what is listed here while a particularly powerful mage may compel a greater request. These guidelines do provide *balance*, however, so bend them only for compelling reasons.

### *The Basics*

Four distinct aspects make up every pact. The **request** connotes what the character gains from the pact. The **cost** establishes what the character agrees to provide to the summoned entity in exchange for its service. The **term** determines the period of time that the character has to pay the cost (and that the entity has to provide the service, if it isn't an increase in the mage's abilities). Finally, the **forfeiture** governs what the character sacrifices if she fails to uphold her end of the bargain.

The rules define each aspect by its level: *minor*, *medial*, or *major*. Each level correlates to a numerical value, one for *minor*, two for *medial*, and three for *major*. The type of aspect determines whether this value is positive or negative. The rules measure **request** and **term** as positive values and **cost** and **forfeiture** as negative values. Generally, the values for the **request** and **cost** must cancel one another out while the values for the **term** and **forfeiture** must similarly sum to zero. Storytellers may shift this slightly in situations where the summoned wrings a greater **cost** from the summoner than she gets in return from her **request** (or *vice versa*), but the overall value of the pact (the sum of all four aspects taken together) *must* equal zero.

Players determine the number of pacts from which a given character can benefit at any given time based on her Gnosis. A character may benefit only from three pacts plus one for each third dot of Gnosis possessed (thus a character with Gnosis 2 can strike 3 pacts, but can add another when she attains Gnosis 3, another at Gnosis 6, and yet another at Gnosis 9). No mage can ever benefit from more than six pacts at a given time (and few mages consider it wise to stretch one's obligations to otherworldly powers so thin anyway). The precise rationale for this truth is unknown, but most mages suspect that an individual's pattern can only withstand the metaphysical weight of so many agreements. Many mages attuned to numerology suspect that the maximum number of pacts is actually seven, but that the seventh (or the first, depending on how one looks at it) is made between every mage with her Watchtower upon Awakening.

Pacts do not count as spells for any reason, including spell tolerance or the maximum number of active spells that can be cast on an individual at any given

time. Furthermore, no powers granted to the character through the pact (see contracts, below) count as spells. No aspect or benefit of a pact garners Paradox or Disbelief, even if they bring a character's traits to inhuman levels of adroitness. (These facets alone lead many mages down this path.) Finally, no boon granted by a pact nor the pact itself can be affected through counter-magic. Note that the summoning itself does not count as part of the pact, and is likely subject to all of the above frailties of Awakened magic.

The presence of a pact *can* be discerned through the use of resonance scrutiny or the Prime spell Supernal Sight (as well as through other aura-reading powers that grant information on the nature of a being). Under such senses, the pact manifests as bands coursing through the beneficiary's aura. The bands typically seem dark, but the color may vary depending on the nature of the entity that holds the forfeiture of the pact. Unfortunately for other mages, no specific information about the pact can be gleaned through scrutiny, only the fact that it exists.

### *Combining Pact Aspects*

Aspects of a pact come in three basic levels: *minor*, *medial*, and *major*. While these values have to combine to cancel one another out, they do not always do so in the most direct way (a summoner does not always make a *major request* for a *major cost*). The aspects have numerical values, as listed above, but they do not combine directly. Instead, two *minor* aspects combine to equal a single *medial* aspect, while two *medial* aspects combine to form a *major* aspect (one plus one equals two, in other words, but two plus two equals three). This means that four *minor* aspects count as a single *major* aspect. In the case of an uneven remainder, the cost rounds up to the next highest level. (A character who makes a **request** consisting of a single *minor* and a single *medial* boon combines the two aspects into a single *major* aspect). *Epic* or *apocalyptic* (see Epic Pacts, p. 178) **terms** or **costs** can be used to offset the value of opposing aspects (an *apocalyptic* aspect equals two *epic* aspects, and an *epic* aspect equals two *major* aspects), but a character may not combine *major* or lesser aspects to garner a **request** or **term** of *epic* or *apocalyptic* magnitude.

The way these combine can lead to several variations in the way pacts work without breaking the rules. For example, a character making a **request** for adroitness (see below) may choose to add three dots to a single Skill for the period of the **term** as a single *major* aspect, or he could add *four* dots to four *different*



Skills as four *minor* aspects (which combine into a single *major* aspect). Similarly, an antagonistic spirit may try to get the better of a summoner by building the **term** of the pact from smaller blocks. Typically, a **term** of the *major* aspect is at least a month. A canny spirit may attempt to decrease this period of servitude by doling it out as two weeks (two *medial* aspects), or worse, four days (four *minor* aspects)! Suffice it to say, those who treat with spirits from other realms must be careful not to be hoodwinked.

### Forging a Pact

The step-by-step process for creating pacts follows:

**Step One:** Determine the **request**. What does the summoner want from the entity? Establish a positive value for it.

**Step Two:** Determine the **cost**. Choose a **cost** appropriate to the entity that counterbalances the value of the **request**. When the sum of the two values equals zero, they are balanced. Both parties must agree to both the pact's **request** and its **cost**.

**Step Three:** Determine the **term** and **forfeiture**. This is the time the pact lasts and what the summoner risks if he doesn't pay the **cost**. Because the length of the pact is directly related to the **forfeiture**, these should be chosen at the same time. Their value should sum to zero.

**Step Four:** Determine the necessary Willpower and Essence that must be expended to seal the pact. Unless the pact is extraordinary, the cost is one point of Willpower from the summoner and one point of Essence per **request** granted by the entity.

**Step Five:** The terms of the pact are agreed to by both parties. Once the necessary Willpower and Essence is spent the pact has been forged and sealed.

### Request

The **request** of a pact outlines what the summoner wishes to gain from the pact. These benefits range from small bonuses to specific Skills to magical powers free of Paradox and even immortal life. These bonuses stem from the entity with which the summoner establishes the pact, and the entity must be able to grant it.

When establishing the value of a character's **request**, it is often helpful to determine what the character will ask of the summoned entity *before* checking the associated values. Once the choice has been made, determine the value based on the guidelines below, and determine an appropriate **cost** based on that value. That **cost** is what the spirit requires before being willing to provide what has been requested.

### Artifacts

A character who makes the Artifact **request** garners an Artifact, as described in **Mage: The Awakening**. Such Artifacts are always on loan from the Supernal Realms from which they are issued, and they vanish at the culmination of the pact's **term**, no matter how well-hidden they may be at that time. Artifacts seem to enter the Fallen World with a specific destiny, and no Artifact ever appears to the same summoner twice. No summoner may benefit from more than one pact including the Artifact **request** at any given time, and few Awakened find that they are ever offered a second Artifact. In short, a mage who gains such a boon should put it to good use.

An Artifact gained through this **request** is usually designed by the Storyteller with minimal input from the player, who may only gradually discover the Artifact's powers. Such Artifacts are created as any other with the rules on p. 80 of **Mage: The Awakening**. Such Artifacts are new to the Fallen World (and usually leave it soon after) and lack the Legendry quality. Additionally, Artifacts garnered through these pacts may only contain powers based on spells from the two Arcana associated with the realm from which it hails. Only mages can benefit from this **request**.

*Minor Artifact:* The character gains the temporary possession of an Artifact rated at four dots.

*Medial Artifact:* The character gains the temporary possession of an Artifact rated at six dots.

*Major Artifact:* The character gains the temporary possession of an Artifact rated at eight dots.

### Blessings

A magus might summon an entity to ask for assistance in the mortal world. These beings can grant blessings, rewards of one or more Merits, to the willworker in question. Sometimes the summoned being creates the requested Merits out of thin air. A being summoned from Stygia might provide Resources in chests of gold ingots before vanishing, while a spirit of canines may call forth a dog to act as a Retainer. More often, the spirit uses its own subtle influences or arranges with other spirits to assure that the Merits

come to the character through the mundane world. A character may find himself the winner of a contest when he gets his Resources, and he may find a remarkably well-behaved dog on his way home.

The summoned entity never grants itself as a Retainer or Ally, but may act as a dot of Contacts or a Mentor (an especially popular choice for Awakened who have called down a Supernal entity in order to learn from them). The major advantage to requesting the entity act as a Mentor (a blessing) rather than simply for a direct increase in a trait (an investment) is the permanence of the knowledge thus garnered. While any traits gained while learning from a Mentor cost experience, they don't vanish at the end of the pact's **term** (when the Mentor does).

Blessings generally become available shortly after the forging of the pact and remain until the **term** of the pact comes to an end. Note that some Merits provide skills or bonuses (such as the Fighting Styles or Striking Looks): these Merits become available to the summoner immediately upon the sealing of the pact.

*Minor Blessings:* A *minor* blessing provides a single one-dot Merit or adds a single dot to a Merit measured in individual dots (such as most Social Merits). For example, a character might garner Barfly as a *minor* blessing, or she might choose to gain a dot of Allies, Contacts, Fame, Mentor, Resources, or Status (or any other Merit not specific to **Mage: The Awakening** that is measured in dots, such as a Fighting Style or Fleet of Foot). Note that an increase in Status may come with an increase in obligation to the group involved. Characters *can* gain the first dot in a Merit in which they have no dots with the exception of Status. No blessing of any level can grant a character Status in a supernatural society (such as a mage Order).

A *minor* blessing cannot provide Merits that exist outside the specific scope of the core **World of Darkness** game. In other words, a minor blessing cannot provide Merits from **Mage: The Awakening**, **Vampire: The Masquerade**, **Changeling: The Lost** or any other setting (including supplements that provide supernatural options to mortals, such as **Second Sight** and **Skinchangers**). In other words, *minor* blessings cannot provide supernatural boons.

*Medial Blessings:* A *medial* blessing grants a single Merit rated at two dots or adds two dots to a Merit measured in individual dots. For example, a character might garner Danger Sense or add two dots to any of the Merits listed above. Alternatively, she may purchase Merits appropriate to her specific game setting; an Awakened mage, for example, might purchase

two dots in Dream, Enhanced Item, Hallow, Imbued Item, Library, Occultation, Sanctum, or Sleepwalker Retainer. Blessings do have their limits, and a mage cannot gain the Destiny, Familiar, High Speech, Status or Thrall Merits from a summoned creature. Additionally, the Artifact background is handled above. As above, these dots can improve a Merit in which the character currently has no dots.

*Major Blessings:* A *major* blessing grants the character a single Merit rated at three dots (such as Stunt Driver) or adds three dots to a Merit measured in individual dots. The same limitations as above apply.

### Contracts

Summoners sometimes call spirits to them to learn eldritch sorceries. These contracts grant a mage a single, specific power free of threat from Paradox or Disbelief. This power is often outside of the character's personal abilities, but this **request** does not necessitate this (an Obrimos may **request** a contract in order to utilize a blatantly vulgar spell without fear of Paradox). Summoned entities subvert their own personal powers (usually called Numina) to the mage, granting them powers that function as part of the Fallen World rather than the Supernal.

Each contract functions as a single rote. He knows and can use the rote immediately upon sealing the pact, and it vanishes from his mind at the conclusion of the pact's **term**. In the meantime, he can use it with impunity. Use of a contract costs one point of Mana, regardless of Arcana involved, in addition to any costs listed in the actual spell. Contracts are always based on specific spells (or combinations of spells), and the dice pool for using the contract is based on that listed for the rote for any spell (but does not garner the advantage of the Arcanum dice, even if the mage possesses the requisite Arcanum). Thus a contract mimicking the Spirit ••• spell Harm Spirit would be rolled with the following dice pool: Strength + Athletics – Resistance.

Contracts can mimic specific spirit or ghost Numina, but they are always defined in terms of the Arcana. Guidelines for designing contracts are given below. A contract that mimics a conjunctive spell bases its **request** value on the level of the most powerful Arcanum utilized and adds one to that value (meaning that a spell that combined a three dot spell effect with a two dot spell effect and a one dot spell effect would be considered a *major* contract).

*Minor Contract:* A *minor* contract provides a power that mimics a spell of the first or second dot of an Arcanum.



*Medial Contract:* A *medial* contract provides a power that mimics a spell of the third dot of an Arcanum.

*Major Contract:* A *major* contract provides a power that mimics a spell of the fourth dot of an Arcanum.

### Fortification

Some summoners take advantage of the otherworldly nature of the summoned entities to bolster their own physical forms in ways that cannot be represented by the blessing or investment **requests**. Fortification **requests** last only as long as the **term** of the pact, but their effects do not reverse at the end of the pact. If a summoner asks to stop aging for a year, not only will she do so, she will not revert to her previous age at the end of the year (she will instead simply continue to age at her usual rate). All fortification **requests** are considered *major requests*, and include the following effects (as well as any others the Storyteller deems appropriate):

*Break an Addiction:* The character automatically and permanently breaks a previous addiction, whether physical or psychological. It can even break a supernatural addiction (such as that to the blood of vampires). She remains immune to addiction to the substance for the **term** of the pact.

*Cure a Derangement:* The character automatically and permanently recovers from a Derangement, whether it was gained from morality loss or not. Similarly, minor flaws can be removed through the use of this **request**, but the character ceases to gain bonus experience points for the flaw.

*Permanently Regenerate a Limb:* Some spirits can perform miracles outside the abilities of even a Master of the Life Arcanum. Regenerating a single limb counts as a fortification **request**.

*Regeneration:* The character gains the ability to quickly regenerate wounds inflicted upon her. For the duration of the pact, she can heal bashing and lethal damage at the rate of one per turn as an Instant action. By spending one point of Mana, she can do so reflexively for one turn.

*Respite from Aging:* The character ceases to age for the duration of the pact.

### Investments

A summoner may call forth an entity to grant her a facet of the entity's own power. An investment is a phantom dot of a Skill, Attribute or even Arcanum granted by a supernatural entity. It becomes immediately available upon the sealing of the pact and is immediately lost upon the completion of the pact's **term**. These increases in power can take a character

## Investments?

Yes, they go by the same name as those powers that Acamoth grant. Why? Because summoners recognize that these investitures of power are, essentially, the same sort of thing: an otherworldly entity temporarily installs a fraction of its metaphysical strength into a mortal willworker, in exchange for a service. In the case of the Acamoth, that service has been standardized, but the nature of the bargain remains fundamentally similar to that to which pacting mages submit themselves.

Some willworkers look askance at the use of the term "investment" to describe both the abilities granted by Acamoth and those given by, say, a Supernal entity, but experienced summoners are aware that *all* such otherworldly agreements are inherently perilous, regardless of how one defines their terms. In the end, summoners have bigger worries than earning the disapproval of others on account of mere words.

above the usual limits on such traits as determined by her Gnosis (save in the case of Arcana).

Because of an investment's temporary nature, experience costs to raise the supernaturally enhanced trait further assume that the additional dots do not exist.

*Example:* The *théarch* Warlock Nox makes a pact with a demon to increase her Academics (normally 3) to 5 as a *medial investment*. Before the **term** of that pact ends, Nox's player decides to increase the trait with experience points. He pays 12 points to raise her Academics from 3 to 4. The pact remains, however, granting two additional dots of Academics. The Skill now counts as 6, having gone from merely superlative to literally superhuman. When the **term** of the pact ends, Nox's Academics returns to 4, its natural value.

However, despite the supernatural nature of the enhanced traits, the traits act in all other ways as normal, natural traits. They are added to or subtracted from dice pools (including those for *rotés*) as normal. Additionally, for the **term** of the pact, all Advantages derived from the trait (such as Health, Willpower, Defense and Speed) are adjusted appropriately.

In the case of improved Arcana, a character can learn *rotés* that utilize the increased Arcanum. He maintains them, even after the Arcanum decreases at

the culmination of the pact's **term**, but can no longer use them without the requisite skill in the Arcanum. When the character raises the Arcanum again (either through another use of this **request** or through experience), he regains access to the rites.

*Minor Investment:* The entity grants the character a single additional dot to any single Skill.

*Medial Investment:* The entity grants the character two additional dots to any single Skill.

*Major Investment:* The entity grants the character a large portion of its own power, granting her three additional dots to any single Skill or one additional dot to a single Attribute or Arcanum. Only Supernal entities can grant an investment to an Arcanum, and only in one of the two Arcana appropriate to the Supernal Realm from which it hails. Furthermore, a mage can only benefit from a single pact that involves the increase of an Arcanum at any time, and no entity can unlock the secrets of Archmastery for a mage, even temporarily (limiting dots available through a pact to 5).

### Mana

Sometimes a summoner knows that she is in need of greater sheer mystical power than she can gather on her own. She may seek out a supernatural entity to grant her that power through the Mana **request**. This Mana generates within the character naturally at a time chosen during the pact, but it must be a time that occurs only once per day (such as at the rise of the sun or 3:15 pm). This surfeit of Mana does not imply that the character is a Hallow, however, and gains none of the other benefits of that Merit. The character cannot contain more points of Mana than usual, and any extra Mana dissipates harmlessly and uselessly into the atmosphere.

A mage can only support a single **request** of Mana at any given time. Only mages can benefit from this **request**.

*Minor Mana:* The mage produces within herself one Mana per day.

*Medial Mana:* The mage produces within herself two Mana per day.

*Major Mana:* The mage produces within herself four Mana per day.

### Task

Tales commonly speak of the summoner who calls forth an entity to perform a specific undertaking for her. These summoners request a task. Tasks vary from the other forms of **request** listed here in a fairly significant way. They typically do not provide an im-

mediate benefit that lasts until the **term** has come to an end. Instead, the summoned entity has until the end of the **term** to perform the task, just as the summoner has until the end of the **term** to pay the **cost**. The entity forfeits the **cost** if it fails to live up to its end of the bargain, but any further punishment is up to the summoner to dole out personally. Furthermore, while the other **requests** listed here provide concrete levels of benefits, the value of the task **request** is based largely on the abilities of the summoner.

Unlike other **requests**, the results of the completed task benefit from permanence. Enemies killed by the summoned entity remain deceased, and knowledge dredged up by a spirit doesn't vanish from the summoner's head. In a way, this is a way around the loss of traits guaranteed by the other **requests**. Players must purchase any raised traits garnered through such a pact with experience points, however.

*Example:* Nox summons a demon and binds it to her will before striking a pact with it that includes the task **request**. She commands the spirit to spy on the banking allies of one of her rivals, turning them against their current ally and towards her. The demon dutifully does so. Nox's player may now purchase the Allies Merit with experience. Were he to refuse, the Allies would be lost (though the rival would no longer possess them either): Nox simply didn't put forward the effort necessary to maintain their friendship.

The assignments available to this **request** are limited solely by the abilities of the summoned entity and the **cost** that the summoner is willing to pay. A character can request that a specific item be found and brought to her, that the site of an Atlantean tomb or Artifact be located or that a foe be hounded with horrible nightmares. She can ask the summoned to stand with her in a single battle. She can send it to dredge up information to which no others have access. However, the task **request** always covers only a single task. One piece of information is found, one enemy is destroyed, or one dot of a rival's Merit is subverted. Further work requires further pacts.

*Minor Task:* A *minor* task includes anything that the character can easily do herself but would rather not, whether it is because it is unpleasant, she doesn't want to get into trouble, or any other minor reason. The task would not pose significant danger to the summoner. The summoner's supernatural capabilities are taken into account when determining the value of the task. Powerful entities may feel insulted to be asked to provide a task of this insignificance and may attempt to trick the summoner into a less-than-equitable deal.



*Medial Task:* A *medial* task includes anything that the character *could* do herself, but would require significant effort or could pose a significant danger to her.

*Major Task:* A *major* task includes anything that falls outside of the character's capabilities. It may include the use of a power that the mage cannot duplicate or the discovery of some piece of knowledge that could not be uncovered otherwise. Additionally, any task that poses a significant threat to the summoned entity is automatically a *major* task.

*Major* tasks can be an exceedingly powerful tool, but cannot include a task that affects an area greater than a single region (such as a city) at this level. Nor can such a task replicate an act typically considered outside the scope of Awakened magic (such as create a soul or bring a human back to true life). For such terrible feats, see the Epic Pacts sidebar on page 178.

### Vassalage

*Major Vassalage:* Mages rarely summon another being only to bind themselves to its will. It does, however, happen, and mages who supplicate themselves before alien gods can expect at best a cold reception from their fellows. The vassalage **request** is a single *major* request that is always paired with the fealty **cost** and almost always tied to the enlightened soul **forfeiture** and lifelong **term**. In short, to gain the patronage of her chosen god, a mage is expected to serve; failure to do so costs the mage her soul.

The vassalage **request** assumes an understanding entered into between mage and otherworldly force; the mage will serve the entity in the Fallen World for assistance from the entity. Despite being a *major request*, it offers only a few dubious benefits: a mage under vassalage to an entity can call that entity to it as an Instant action that causes neither Paradox nor Disbelief. It requires but a whispered prayer, meaning that it can often be performed without alerting anyone nearby, and results in the presence of the entity. The entity arrives at its convenience (but may choose to travel to the mage as an Instant action, no matter its current location), usually in Twilight. Appropriate wards and bans can cut a mage off from her patron, though the mage herself can never cast such spells without suffering the **forfeiture** of

her soul. The **request** grants the mage the ability to see her chosen patron (and only her chosen patron) even when it is in Twilight. A character possesses an Intimate sympathy rating to her patron solely for the purpose of communicating with it over a distance (other mages cannot sense this connection). A character under vassalage to an entity can establish further pacts with said entity with greater ease than usual (a spirit is less inclined to haggle or throw its weight around when it knows that the summoner is already in its pocket), and may do so without actually calling the entity to it (if she possesses the Arcana



necessary to communicate over a distance and possibly across the Gauntlet).

Mages cannot make pacts that include the vassalage **request** with Supernal entities (though they can make them with similar beings, such as angels, demons and spirits that don't hail from the Supernal Realms). A mage should expect extreme prejudice and suspicion from her fellow mages should her vassalage to any such entity come to light.

### Epic Pacts

What about the nation-shattering or earth-rending powers that summoners so often attempt to enact, spurring heroes to save the day before it's too late? Summoners are perfectly capable of striking such pacts with entities, but the mechanics of doing so are best left to the Storyteller. Assume that two aspect values exist beyond those given here: *epic* and *apocalyptic*. Obviously an *epic request* requires a similarly *epic cost* (often measured in dozens of lives, souls or innocents), and an *apocalyptic request* necessitates a commensurate *cost* (hundreds of lives or souls).

Fortunately, such pacts are difficult to enact in practice. Summoners quickly discover that few otherworldly entities have any interest in disrupting their own ecologies to so great an extent. Furthermore, such powerful magic often reverberates throughout the region, drawing other mages to it like flies. Those mages rarely approve of what they uncover when they investigate such a pact and usually move to disrupt it. Those mages are often the players' characters.

### Cost

Nothing can be gained without loss. Spirits and other entities do not engage in charity, instead requiring a price for any pact enacted. The **cost** of the pact must be agreed upon by the summoner for the pact to be successfully forged (though the *results* of fulfilling the **cost** may come as a complete surprise to the character). The **cost** need not be paid upfront, so long as it is paid in full prior to the end of the **term**.

### Access

The summoner grants the entity access to some aspect of her being. A summoned being may have any num-

ber of reasons for desiring access, some of which may confound the summoner (especially before the fact). If the access granted to the being results in occurrences that would force the character to roll Wisdom were she to perform them herself, she must do so. She directly facilitates whatever evils the entity commits.

*Minor Access:* The character grants the entity a conduit into the world. It might take over a character's embodied familiar (which likely infuriates it) or experience the world through the character's senses (though it is unable to force the character to act in any way). Conversely, the character may allow the entity access to her dreams, allowing it to sculpt those dreams in whatever foul manner it desires.

*Medial Access:* The character grants the entity access to the physical world. The entity gains limited control over the character's actions for a short time (no longer than 14 total hours over the course of each week of the **term**). The character completely loses control over her body during those periods, but is aware of everything that the entity does. The entity does *not*, however, have access to any of the character's supernatural abilities.

*Major Access:* The character grants the entity access to her soul. The entity can utilize the character's body and Awakened magic without interference from the character during a single period of one hour during the pact. Unfortunately, the timing of that hour is at the whim of the entity. Furthermore, the character does not automatically regain control of her being at the end of the hour. She must succeed at a Resolve + Composure roll to wrest control from the entity (though the entity *can* willingly give it up). She may make this roll once per hour after the passage of at least one hour of unfettered access.

### Endeavor

The character agrees to perform some task for the entity. Such tasks can be arduous or simple, but their effects may reverberate for long after. The value of the endeavor **cost** is based on the difficulty for the mage rather than the utility for the summoned entity. By requiring the mage to perform a task she finds simple, the entity may be completing the final piece of a plot it has been hatching over the course of centuries.

*Minor Endeavor:* The character performs a simple undertaking for the entity. Either it requires a repeated performance of a high-effortless task or a single performance of something of only slight difficulty.

*Medial Endeavor:* The character performs a moderately difficult undertaking for the entity. Either the



character performs a repeated task that requires the sacrifice of some time and resources or a single task of moderate difficulty (and possibly danger).

*Major Endeavor:* The character performs a difficult undertaking for the entity. Such endeavors require an activity that can only be accomplished through dedication and concerted effort. It may pose a significant danger to the summoner.

#### Fealty

*Major Fealty:* The character pledges himself to the efforts of his chosen patron. This *major cost* essentially acts as a never-ending series of endeavors (see above) on behalf of the entity, and may range from the simple to the dangerous. This *cost* rarely accompanies any pact that does not include the vassalage *request*.

#### Flaw

*Medial Flaw:* The character agrees to undertake some difficulty on the behalf of the summoned entity. She gains a Flaw (p. 217 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) for the duration of the pact but garners no experience when it troubles her. Instead the experience points transfer to the entity, making it stronger.

#### Forbiddance

The character agrees to refrain from some course of action. This act usually empowers the entity in some way, but the value of the *cost* is determined by the difficulty imposed on the character. Failure to uphold the forbiddance results in the *forfeiture* of the pact.

*Minor Forbiddance:* The forbidden action is easily avoided, but might cause some small inconveniences. Examples include avoiding specific buildings, specific modes of transportation or even specific words.

*Medial Forbiddance:* The forbidden action is somewhat more difficult to avoid, possibly because chances to engage in the action are more common, and causes some moderate inconvenience. Examples include avoiding interacting with a specific type of person or utilizing a specific class of technology.

*Major Forbiddance:* The forbidden action causes major difficulty and may change the way the character lives her life. Examples include a forbiddance against entering or leaving a region, indulging in Virtue or Vice, or sleeping under the same roof two nights in a row or vows of vegetarianism, silence or chastity.

#### Life

The character offers up some sacrifice to the entity, usually one of blood. With the exception of the *minor cost*, the sacrifice likely necessitates a roll to avoid losing morality. The entity can specify where

the sacrifice must take place (and what time of day), but the character must make the sacrifice within the *term* of the pact.

*Minor Life:* A sacrifice of blood (necessitating the infliction of 3 lethal damage on either the summoner or a chosen sacrifice) or harvest (a Resources 2 purchase of fruits, vegetables and grains).

*Medial Life:* A sacrifice of an animal, necessitating its death. The character cannot garner Mana from the sacrifice.

*Major Life:* The sacrifice of a human, necessitating its death. The character cannot garner Mana from the sacrifice.

#### Merit

The entity can also require the summoner to sacrifice wealth, personal knowledge or even personal connections. In the case of Allies, Contacts, Mentors or Retainers, the sacrifice does not *require* the actual death of the individual, only the permanent break of those bonds (and loss of the Merit). The murder of a trusted Mentor or beloved Retainer can actually count both as a Merit *cost* and *Major life cost*. The dots are removed from the sheet for the *term* of the pact, but afterwards the mage can work towards regaining them (which necessitates repurchasing them with experience).

*Minor Merit:* The character must sacrifice a one point Merit or one point of a Merit.

*Medial Merit:* The character must sacrifice a two point Merit or two points of a Merit.

*Major Merit:* The character must sacrifice a three point Merit or three points of a Merit.

#### Term

The *term* of the pact, agreed upon by both parties, sets the length of time the pact remains active. It *never* ends early, even if both parties have fulfilled their obligations. The *term* always connotes the period of time the summoner has to pay the *cost* of the pact and sometimes connotes the time in which the summoned must perform its own task. The greater the period of time granted to pay the *cost* (and benefit from the *request*), the more dire the *forfeiture* wagered as collateral.

*Minor Term:* Between a day and a week.

*Medial Term:* Between one week and one month.

*Major Term:* Between one month and one year and one day.

*Epic Term:* A character willing to stake his enlightened soul as a *forfeiture* may establish a *term* that

ranges from a decade in length to lifelong. Rumors persist within mage society of the possibility of truly *apocalyptic terms*, such as those that affect a family line for generations. Some magi believe that such pacts established some of the major Proximi lines that flourish to this day.

### *Forfeiture*

The **forfeiture** aspect of the pact is some entity or resource that the summoner agrees to sacrifice if she fails to uphold the **cost** of the pact. The entity immediately knows if the summoner has failed to uphold the bargain and immediately claims the **forfeiture**. The **forfeiture** is maintained by the magic of the pact itself, and attempts to stop the entity from claiming its due are doomed to failure. A character might be able to forge a new pact to regain what was lost, but given that the **forfeiture** is always something greater than what was agreed upon in the first place, this can quickly become tragic.

#### **Boon Companion**

The character who agrees to this **forfeiture** puts a loved one on the block. If she fails to fulfill the **cost** of the pact, the entity claims a loved one (who either dies or vanishes from the Fallen World). While a character could certainly wager a cabal member (or other player characters), Storytellers are encouraged to be careful not to allow a single character to thus ruin a game. If the other character agrees to it, on the other hand...

A character who suffers this **forfeiture** immediately loses a dot of Wisdom and suffers a -2 penalty to avoid gaining a Derangement from the degeneration.

*Minor Boon Companion:* The character risks a casual acquaintance or beloved pet.

*Medial Boon Companion:* The character risks a good friend, an extended family member or very young child.

*Major Boon Companion:* The character risks an older child, a romantic partner or extremely close friend. Additionally, any mage set as **forfeiture** counts, though the mage must be a friend or close ally to the summoner. She cannot forfeit her enemies.

#### **Enlightened Soul**

*Epic Enlightened Soul:* This **epic forfeiture** risks the character's enlightened soul. If the character fails to pay the **cost** of the pact, the entity reaps the character's soul. The character becomes soulless (see Soul Loss, p 276 of **Mage: The Awakening**). Only a mage may forfeit his enlightened soul.

#### **Flaw**

*Minor Flaw:* The character agrees to suffer a permanent Flaw if she fails to compensate the summoned. The character gains a Flaw, but never gains experience for it. The experience is instead reaped by the entity. The Flaw is permanent, but can be removed by a pact including the fortification **request** from the same entity that inflicted it.

#### **Life**

The character agrees to provide a metaphysical pound of flesh to the entity if she fails to pay what she owes. This loss occurs immediately upon the failure to pay the **cost**.

*Minor Life:* The character immediately loses one quarter of her Health and one quarter of her remaining lifespan (as if it were taken by a mage using the Death 5 spell "Steal Lifespan," save that the character cannot defend against it in any way).

*Medial Life:* The character immediately loses one half of her Health and one half of her remaining lifespan.

*Major Life:* The character immediately dies as if she had lost all of her Health to Lethal damage. She can be resuscitated if she gains immediate medical attention (calling 911 isn't quick enough, but having a crash cart and a doctor present at the moment of death may be), but if she is, her remaining lifespan is reduced by three quarters. If the character dies, her soul continues to exist as a ghost (and thus she can be the subject of a Death 4 "Revenant" spell).

Health lost to this **forfeiture** is not permanent, though years of life are. The Health lost is an immediate result of the brutal siphoning of the mage's life.

#### **Merit**

The character risks a Merit, either by naming a person or group of people (typically risking her connection to them rather than the actual individuals) or an aspect of herself. If the mage fails to pay the **cost** of the pact, the entity immediately shatters the metaphysical bonds between the summoner and her former associates, destroys her sanctum or library, or consumes some bit of Essence or knowledge from the character, permanently reducing her Merits. In the case of Mentors or Retainers, a character can combine this **forfeiture** with the boon companion **forfeiture** (*minor* only), but those individuals are guaranteed to die or vanish forever from the world.

While the character can eventually regain the Merit (unless it is destroyed, of course), repurchasing it with experience points, the magic of the pact resists any



attempts by the character to do so until a length of time equal to the **term** of the pact has passed (starting at the moment of **forfeiture**).

*Minor Merit:* The character loses a four dot Merit or four dots of a single Merit.

*Medial Merit:* The character loses a five dot Merit or five dots of a single Merit.

## Paradox

Abyssal entities often ask for this specific **forfeiture**. A character who fails to fulfill his agreement with one of them finds that it haunts him whenever he attempts to perform magic. This abyssal taint plagues the character for a period of time equal to twice the **term** of the pact, beginning at the moment of **forfeiture**.

*Minor Paradox:* The character draws the attention of the Abyss. Paradox rolls always assume that there is at least a single Sleeper present, adding at least 2 dice to the roll. If one or more Sleepers are actually present, then the use of rites and order tools grant no penalty to the Paradox roll.

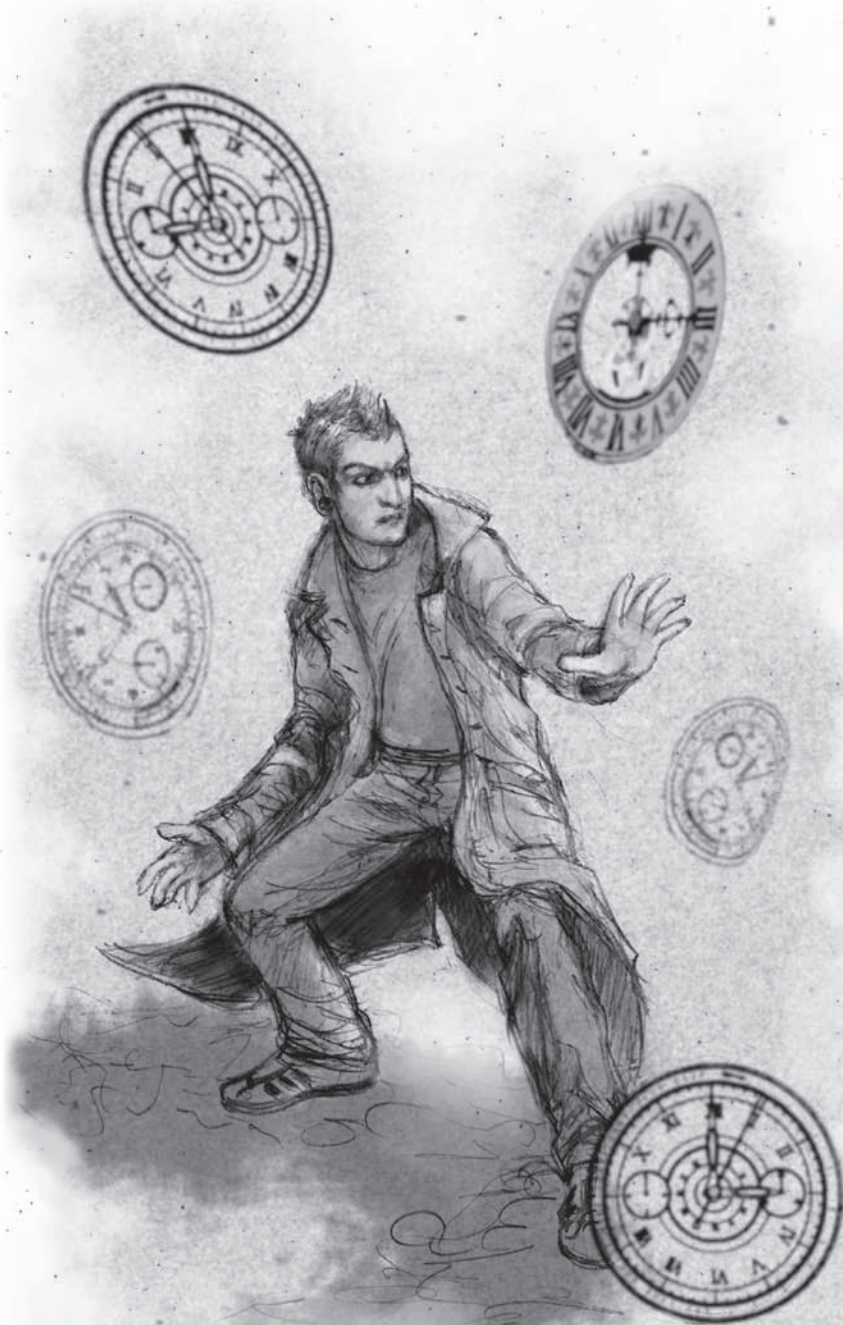
*Medial Paradox:* In addition to the effects of the *minor* Paradox **forfeiture**, the character's Paradox is always considered one grade worse than it would otherwise be. For example, if a character's spell causes what would normally be a Havoc Paradox, it instead causes Bedlam.

*Major Paradox:* The character must roll for Paradox *every time* he casts a spell, whether vulgar or covert. Such a character quickly garners the attentions of the Guardians of the Veil.

## Vulnerability

The character agrees to suffer some form of personal vulnerability if he fails to satisfy the pact's **cost**. A vulnerability is permanent and cannot be removed with Awakened magic of less than Archmastery potency or a pact with an *epic* fortification request.

The character and entity agree upon a particular material (such as silver or iron), substance (such as milk or blood) or other phenomenon (such as fire) that becomes the character's bane. The character gains a phobia Derangement in relation to the bane. Attacks with the bane ignore any and all defenses the character brings to



bear, including Defense, Armor, and magical armor. The bane inflicts damage of a magnitude higher than it would otherwise (bashing for *contact* with liquids like milk or blood, lethal for blunt weapons made of the material, and aggravated for bladed weapons of the material or naturally lethal phenomena such as fire).

*Minor Vulnerability:* The character becomes vulnerable to a rare substance that would normally be harmful (such as a specific poison or specific and unusual type of wood) or to a common substance that would normally be relatively harmless (such as sunlight, the ringing of bells, or crosses).

*Medial Vulnerability:* As above, save that the substance can normally be utilized to do harm (such as iron, wood, silver or fire).

### *Sealing the Pact*

Once the aspects of the pact have been determined, the pact is sealed. This costs one Willpower point from the summoner and one point of Essence per **request** granted by the entity. If the pact includes an aspect of *epic* or *apocalyptic* value, the cost rises to one *permanent* Willpower dot and five points of Essence per **request** granted by the entity. Inability to pay the cost to seal the pact results in its failure to take hold.

## Building a Pact

	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Medial</b>	<b>Greater</b>
<b>Request</b>	Artifact (+1)	Artifact (+3)	Artifact (+3)
	Blessing (+1)	Blessing (+2)	Blessing (+3)
	Contract (+1)	Contract (+2)	Contract (+3)
	—	—	Fortification (+3)
	Investment (+1)	Investment (+2)	Investment (+3)
	Mana (+1)	Mana (+2)	Mana (+3)
	Task (+1)	Task (+2)	Task (+3)
	—	—	Vassalage (+3)
<b>Cost</b>	Access (-1)	Access (-2)	Access (-3)
	Endeavor (-1)	Endeavor (-2)	Endeavor (-3)
	—	Flaw (-2)	Fealty (-3)
	Forbiddance (-1)	Forbiddance (-2)	Forbiddance (-3)
	Life (-1)	Life (-2)	Life (-3)
	Merit (-1)	Merit (-2)	Merit (-3)
<b>Term</b>	Day (+1)	Month (+2)	Year (+3)
	Week (+1)	Season (+2)	Year and a Day (+3)
			Lifelong (Epic, +4)
<b>Forfeiture</b>	Boon Companion (-1)	Boon Companion (-2)	Boon Companion (-3)
	—	—	Enlightened Soul (Epic, -4)
	Flaw (-1)	—	—
	Life (-1)	Life (-2)	Life (-3)
	Merit (-1)	Merit (-2)	—
	Paradox (-1)	Paradox (-2)	Paradox (-3)
	Vulnerability (-1)	Vulnerability (-2)	—

Total request and cost equal one another; total term and forfeiture equal one another.



## Flaws and Derangements

The way of the summoner is fraught with all sorts of pitfalls. Those who deal too extensively in the powers of other realms often find that their lives change, and usually for the worse. Novice summoners, as well — particularly those who come to the calling of their own accord and without anyone to show them the ropes — occasionally misstep badly and find the consequences of that error following them for years to come. Even those who cry out beyond the barriers of the worlds *just once* sometimes get far more than they expected.

### Flaws

Flaws particularly appropriate for summoners include: Addiction (to something only obtainable from a summoned entity); Amnesia (from beholding something terrible enough to scour one's memory); Crippled, Deformity, Lame, One Arm or One Eye (possibly from sacrificing a part of one's body or on account of a botched summoning), Embarrassing Secret or Notoriety. Additionally, summoners — regardless of type — can acquire the following Flaws:

**Bad Bargain:** The character made a pact with a spirit, but didn't think through all of the consequences of that agreement. Now, she's already gained whatever benefit she can from this exchange, but still has to fulfill her end of the deal. Depending upon how she bartered, this may be a single difficult task, a lifetime of serious inconvenience, or anything between. In game terms, the character has a medial obligation, as though from a pact (see pp. 172), though she receives no benefit from doing so. Award the player an additional experience point whenever the character's obligation makes her life (and *only* hers) considerably more difficult or perilous.

**Soul-Scarred:** The mage has made contact with something that has blasted and marked his soul. This lingering injury is particularly appealing to otherworldly entities of the most inimical sorts: Acamoth; spirits of pain, violence, hatred, and the like; malevolent ghosts; and other such ephemeral creatures. Given a choice (and when presented with no other obviously more appropriate target), these entities will tend to focus their negative attentions upon the soul-scarred willworker. Award the player an additional experience point whenever the damage to his character's spirit results in serious danger and/or harm at the hands of spiritual beings drawn to the unhealed gash in his soul.

### Derangements

Insanity is but one of the perils that hounds the steps of the summoner, as the human mind — Awakened or otherwise — can only encompass so much while confined within the Fallen World. Because of the fundamentally magical nature of the summoner's craft, those who succumb to madness while treading that road frequently suffer from the Bedlam versions of mundane derangements (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 269–71), regardless of whether or not Paradox is involved in their onset. Those who gaze into other realms frequently see things that their psyches cannot accept and the mind recoils, wounded.

Common derangements for summoners include: Phobia and/or Hysteria (typically pertaining either to summoning or to phenomena that remind the willworker of a particular summoning gone wrong), Fixation and/or Obsessive Compulsion (the character may, for instance, inscribe “circles of protection” or similar sigils everywhere she goes or even draw them on her skin), Suspicion and/or Paranoia (often relating to the sense that hostile creatures from other realms are nearby or that others are somehow working for them), Vocalization and/or Schizophrenia, Irrationality and/or Multiple Personality, and Avoidance and/or Fugue.

In addition to the Derangements listed above, certain other psychological conditions occur with some frequency amongst summoners:

**Abyssal Compulsion (severe):** Contact with the Void tends to fracture even the strongest mind. Those who suffer from the Abyssal Compulsion derangement, however, have sustained especially deep psychic wounds from their unfortunate experiences. The Abyss creates a terrible wound in the soul — unique to the Awakened state — that causes a mage to obsess upon the Void and its creatures, and to seek out the lore of such. Alternately, the willworker desires to do so to protect himself, to lock the knowledge away, or to pursue it further, with no rhyme or reason from one moment to the next.

When Abyssal Compulsion is active, a mage must succeed in a Resolve + Composure roll at a –3 penalty *not* to look into any Abyssal phenomenon of which he becomes aware. Willpower may not be spent to augment this roll, though the willworker may use indirect means of researching such knowledge (like scrying or sending ghosts or spirits, for instance), should he have such at his disposal. When acting as a Bedlam derangement, Abyssal Compulsion also adds

one die to all Paradox rolls that the mage is required to make, as his attraction to the Void calls out to it and its creatures.

Abyssal Compulsion can follow *any* mild derangement, provided that a mage has had traumatic contact with the creatures of the Void.

**Depersonalization (mild):** When this derangement is activated by stress or emotional trauma, the mage feels as though she is an automaton in her own body. She can think, speak, and act freely, but has no real sense of connection to herself; effectively, she is an observer to a life not quite her own. Almost invariably, the willworker gives no sense to others that anything is amiss, as she is perfectly capable of even elaborate interpersonal interaction. Her withdrawal is not from society, but instead from her own consciousness.

While suffering from a bout of Depersonalization, the mage may not spend Willpower and suffers a two-dice penalty to all Resolve + Composure rolls, as she cannot summon up the strength of spirit necessary to fight for a person with whom she no longer truly identifies. When acting as a Bedlam derangement, Depersonalization also makes a willworker especially susceptible to Life Arcanum spells that target her body, causing her to suffer a -1 to any contested rolls against such, as her sense of disconnection weakens the bond between spirit and flesh.

**Dissociation (severe; follows Depersonalization):** A more pronounced form of the Depersonalization derangement, Dissociation actually puts the mage's body on a sort of "conscious autopilot"; the most important parts of his mind are locked away, while the rest of him carries on. The world feels unreal and utterly devoid of emotional depth to a mage in the throes of Dissociation.

In addition to the effects of Depersonalization, a mage suffering from an active Dissociation derangement cannot recuperate Willpower by upholding his Virtue or indulging his Vice; such acts hold no genuine emotional or spiritual significance to him. As a Bedlam derangement, Dissociation causes the willworker to suffer a -2 penalty to any contested roll against Life Arcanum magic, as well as -2 to his appropriate Resistance Attribute when passively resisting such a spell.

## Merits

The summoner's craft has its own "tricks of the trade," the same as any other. Some of these are in-

born, but most can be learned with enough trial and error. A few of the items in the summoner's repertoire are quite dangerous, but that goes hand-in-hand with the art of calling out to other worlds and demanding an answer.

## *Guise of Death* (●●●●●)

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Stamina 4

**Effect:** An unfortunate number of summoning rituals call for human sacrifice. The magical power generated by sacrificing a human, combined with the ritual itself, acts like a beacon to a summoner's call. Thankfully, most mages find the idea of human sacrifice repellant and work to discover alternatives. Mages that are strong of Art and willing to mutilate themselves rather than commit murder, have found that by coating a soul stone with a liberal quantity of their own blood can generate the same sort of power that results from sacrificing a human. In practice, this requires the character to inflict five points of lethal damage on himself to produce the quantity of blood required to negate the cost of human sacrifice. The blood is drizzled all around the ritual area, including soaking the soul stone. A soul stone withers and decays each time it is used to negate the cost of human sacrifice. Each use decreases the Structure of the soul stone by one and the damage caused may not be repaired in any manner (magical or mundane). Use of another mage's soul stone to replace ritual human sacrifice is an act of hubris for mages of Wisdom four or higher (roll three dice).

## *Otherworldly Lore* (●●●●)

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 3

**Effect:** Through a combination of extended study and practical experience, some mages learn certain tricks for dealing with particular types of otherworldly entities. When purchasing this Merit, Otherworldly Lore must be assigned to a certain type of ephemeral being (ghosts, Shadow Realm spirits, goetic demons, entities from a given Supernal Realm, Gulmoth, Underworld creatures, etc.). When dealing with creatures of the specific type encompassed by her Otherworldly Lore Merit, a mage benefits from the 9-again rule with respect to all rolls — whether magical or mundane; combat-related, social, investigative, or whatever — made upon or against a being of that type. A character may only have one instance of this Merit, representing a





resolute dedication to dealing with a given “species” of entity, until she attains her sixth dot of Gnosis, whereupon she may purchase the Merit a second time. At 10 dots of Gnosis, she may purchase a third instance of Otherworldly Lore.

### *Slayer* (●●●)

**Prerequisites:** Awakened, Occult 4, Brawl 4 or Weaponry 4

**Effect:** Mages know the risks involved when they decide to conjure up entities from other planes of existence, yet they continue to do so. Each time a summoner botches a casting or allows an entity into the material realm as part of a pact, someone has to clean up the mess. Usually, nearby cabals are up to the task and if not, the Consilium is. In cities where the problem of summoned creatures gone amuck

is a frequent occurrence, the Consilium may take to training slayers specifically to deal with the threat. A slayer receives intensive training on how to combat otherworldly menaces and their negligent masters if necessary. Every slayer is already an accomplished combatant in his own right before the training begins; a mage that has learned how to effectively combine magic and brute physical force. Training a slayer takes upwards of a year, during which time the character learns a large amount of summoning lore, allowing him to identify weaknesses in the things he will fight. When confronted with an alien threat, if the character spends one turn observing the entity he can attempt to determine where the thing came from and how best to fight it by rolling Intelligence + Occult. Each success reduces the entity’s Defense by one for any attacks made or directed by the character. With an exceptional success, the character remembers exactly what kinds of weapons

are best used to combat the entity, as well.

### *Summoning Circle* (● to ●●●)

**Prerequisites:** Sanctum (Size) ● or more

**Effect:** Throughout the ages, willworkers have used bounded spaces to set their summonings apart from the outside world. In part, they do this for safety’s sake, but also to cultivate within themselves a sense of the gravity of the act, to separate this powerful form of magic from distractions, whether internal or external. Over time, many of these ritual spaces have become enhanced with their own uncanny character, sliding partway out of this world and partway *into* others.

A summoning circle must be attuned to a given realm (a particular Supernal Realm, the Abyss, Shadow, the Underworld, etc.); once set, this choice



cannot be changed, though a mage may have more than one summoning circle (up to two at Gnosis 3, three at Gnosis 6, and four at Gnosis 9), with each corresponding to its own distinct world. For each dot of a single instance of this Merit, a willworker adds one die to all rolls to summon entities from the realm to which the summoning circle is attuned. In other words, a mage with a one-dot summoning circle (Arcadia) adds one die to a summoning spell intended to call down an Arcadian spirit, while one with a three-dot summoning circle (the Abyss) adds three dice to any roll to call an Acamoth or Gulmoth. Note that the bonus dice *only* apply to attempts to summon the appropriate otherworldly beings, not to any dice rolls necessary to control them, forge pacts, or the like.

Because of the sometimes delicate work necessary to properly maintain a summoning circle, one may only be constructed within a mage's sanctum. A summoning circle can be part of a shared sanctum, but this Merit (and the structure that it represents) is personal in nature and may not be shared within a cabal.

### *Summoner's Soul* (●●●)

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

**Effect:** A minority of mages Awaken with a quiescent connection to other realms, which, if developed, shows itself as an inherent talent for summoning magics. On a level far below conscious thought, the mage has an instinct for the rules that govern other realities. Awakened scholars refer to this gift (or curse, if you like) as a Summoner's Soul. Every mage with a Summoner's Soul is mystically inclined towards one realm over the others, while still being more naturally adept with summoning magic in general than most mages. A player should choose the realm to which her character is linked when selecting this Merit. A mage tied to a Supernal Realm in this manner must select his Path Realm; this inborn connection is probably what drew such a willworker to his particular Watchtower in the first place. When spending Willpower on a summoning spell attuned to entities from his character's favored realm, the player of a mage with a Summoner's Soul receives five bonus dice, or four bonus dice with respect to summoning spells that call upon other realms. When dealing with entities from his favored realm, all of the willworker's Social Skill rolls receive two bonus dice as a result of this special bond. *But this may only be selected at character creation or with Storyteller approval.*

### *Supernal Anchor* (●●●●●)

**Prerequisite:** Gnosis 5

**Effect:** The primary reason for which mages craft soul stones is the creation of a Demesne, a space attuned to a willworker's Path Realm and which functions, effectively, as a Fallen World extension of that world for the purposes of turning vulgar spells into covert ones. Some mages, however, aren't content to divide their spirits in this manner, regardless of how useful it might be to have a Paradox-free chamber or two in which to cast some of their most powerful magics. One answer to this conundrum is to be found in the process of creating a Supernal Anchor.

A mage with this Merit can use a Supernal spirit appropriate to his Path to create what is, effectively, a soul stone attuned to his Watchtower. The mage need not be the one to summon the spirit, but it must correspond to his Path for him to use this Merit to coalesce the entity into a soul stone. In order to do so, the mage must defeat the entity in combat (reducing it to zero Corpus or otherwise beating it to the point of helplessness), whereupon he can reflexively reshape the being into a corporeal fragment of the world in which his Watchtower stands. The spirit becomes imprisoned in this new form (and within the Fallen World), acting as a soul stone belonging to the mage for all intents and purposes, save that he cannot be held in thrall by losing the stone, as it is not actually a piece of his own soul.

Crafting a Supernal Anchor is a dire act of hubris, requiring a mage with Wisdom 1 or greater to roll against degeneration (two dice).

### *Supernal Companion* (●●●●●)

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

**Effect:** Smart mages that decide to pursue Supernal summoning magic start by calling up something small that can easily be dealt with, in case something goes wrong. More often than not, the mage sends these minor entities home after a cursory examination, impatient to move on to bigger and better things when she is sure her magic works properly. Other mages find themselves enamored of the creatures that they summon and decide to use such entities as familiars. In addition to the experience points cost of this Merit, which indicates time spent in study learning exactly how to bind a Supernal creature to her, the mage must complete the Supernal summoning ritual to call her new familiar (see p. 68). Binding a Supernal entity requires the mage to spend one



dot of Willpower and to reveal her real name to the creature. Supernal Companions are created using the guidelines shown in **Mage: The Awakening** on p. 83 for Twilight familiars. A Supernal Companion spends most of its time in Twilight but can manifest at its master's side by spending a point of Essence (this ability is separate from the single Numen allowed to familiars at creation). In addition to the other benefits gained by a mage for owning a familiar, she can drain up to two Essence from the Supernal Companion for an equal amount of Mana once each day.

Note that the process of binding a Supernal entity to oneself in such a manner permits the being to survive indefinitely away from its realm of origin. Forcibly subjecting an *unwilling* Supernal spirit to the familiar bond (and many of them are, indeed, unwilling to be confined to the material realm), however, is an act of hubris, requiring any mage with a Wisdom of 3 or greater to roll two dice to resist degeneration.

*Void-Scourged* (●● or ●●●●)

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

**Effect:** The Abyss insinuates itself into the lives of the Awakened in many different ways, but seldom as obvious as with those with the Void-Scourged Merit. Perhaps her initial journey to a Supernal Watchtower was beset by terrible spirits, or maybe she had one too many close calls with Acamoth and their servants in the years since, but some mages learn to harness the power of the marks that the Void leaves seared into their souls.

Void-Scourged willworkers receive a two-dice bonus to all rolls to summon or socially interact with Acamoth and Gulmoth (whether to negotiate a deal or to intimidate such a being into complying with the mage's wishes). Furthermore, whenever a Void-Scourged mage comes within 10 yards per dot of Gnosis of an Abyssal entity, the Storyteller reflexively rolls Wits + Composure for her, with bonus dice equal to the spirit's Rank. On a success, the character is aware of the presence of an Abyssal being, though she cannot pinpoint its location, or determine its nature or power without the use of other abilities.

This Merit costs two dots at character creation and four if purchased later.

## *Legacies*

Throughout the ages, willworkers have aspired to incorporate the practice of summoning into their very souls, in the form of Legacies. Some of these attempts have failed disastrously, while others have proven quite successful. Still others have led down dark roads the success — or failure — of which is purely in the eye of the beholder. The six Legacies that follow illustrate just a few of the ways in which the Awakened make summoning more than merely a form of magic, elevating it into an inseparable extension of the self. Some make use of summoning magics, whether overt or subtle, while others are the result of eldritch bargains.

# Choir of Hashmallim

The Abyss stands naked and raw before us, pulsing unholy in the darkness,  
an obscene absence of light and goodness and hope.  
Only the ineffable power of the Supernal can wash it away,  
cleansing it from existence.

Throughout history, one finds many recorded instances of mortal humans receiving visions from on high. These visions not only impart knowledge and wisdom, but they give humanity a glimpse into a world not their own. To Sleepers, the phenomenon can be reconciled as messengers from a god. To the Awakened, particularly the Obrimos, these messengers are seen for what they are: agents of the Supernal. The fact that celestial beings could traverse the Abyss and enter the Fallen World has long been a sign of hope to many. To a few it is a call to battle.

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, an Awakened Jesuit priest known as Alessandro Grimaldi (records are unclear as to whether this was his Shadow Name or his name by birth) saw the influence of the Abyss rise in his native Naples. A member of the Adamantine Arrow, the clergyman fought alongside his order to stem the tide of the growing power. All but the most concentrated strikes did nothing, and many Arrows were lost. As much a scholar as a warrior, Grimaldi turned to books and prayer to find a way to overcome the menace. As his fellow Arrows fought and lost skirmish after skirmish with the creatures of the Void, the Theurgist locked himself in his study, refusing food or water or rest until he could devise a means of victory.

Forty days and nights past before Grimaldi exited his chambers. When he next appeared on the battlefield, the Jesuit Obrimos called forth a mighty avatar of the Supernal to aid the local Pentacle in their last ditch effort to eradicate now overwhelming Abyssal force. Inspired by the sight of the angelic figure wading through the hostile creatures, the mages redoubled their efforts to drive back the invaders. Grimaldi led the Pentacle mages to victory, his celestial companion powerful enough to combat the brunt of the Void's assembled might.

After the battle, Father Alessandro told the assembled that the answer was not found in his books, but in his prayers. Exhausted, and nearly delirious from his quest, he received a vision. The Aetherial being that accompanied him on the field of battle had

come to him in his hour of need, offering assistance and support. Over the course of the last week of the monk's seclusion, Grimaldi and the Supernal being spoke. The angelic form taught him much of the power of the Aether and how to combat the Abyss directly. It helped the Jesuit to shape his soul to enable it, and other instruments of the Oracles like it, to descend to the Fallen World and heed the call to battle.

In the years that followed, Grimaldi accepted many students; reports of the conflict in Naples spread far and wide, and numerous individuals wished to command the power of Supernal forces. Not all who came to study his ways were altruistic in their intent. The priest quickly determined who was there to oppose the powers of the Abyss and who was there solely for personal gain. Once those interested in power for power's sake were weeded out, Father Alessandro built his Legacy, which he named the Choir of Hashmallim after the order of angels of the same name, into the foundations of the organization that it is today. The Choir of Hashmallim is focused on disrupting and ending the threat of the Void. Its members hope to inspire others through the use of their Attainments and the glory of the Aether they are able to call upon in battle.

The war is never-ending, but the Choir persists in the belief that it can be won.

**Parent Path:** Obrimos

**Nickname:** Dominions

**Appearance:** Members of the Choir typically dress in non-descript, serviceable clothing. While a few may purchase higher quality garments than others, the overall tone set by the Legacy is one of privation; the focus of the Legacy is the overthrow of the Void and its creatures, not fashion.

Dominions are usually physically fit and often possess at least some degree of combat expertise. Many experienced mages of the Choir — those that survive their harsh obligation — are more scarred and callused than the average willworker, having weathered the assaults of Acamoth and Gulmoth. It is certainly not





unheard-of to encounter a Dominion who has lost an eye or a limb in the course of her personal war.

**Background:** Mages that join the Choir of Hashmallim usually have a strong faith and a solid understanding of Abrahamic theology and the Legacy's connection to the Christian faith. The one quality that all Choir Masters possess is an absolute belief in the righteousness and power of the Aether.

Those wishing to join this Legacy can only demonstrate this belief through their actions.

Less patient mages, only concerned with unlocking the power of the Abode of Angels for personal gain, have attempted to join this Legacy, though the laborious tasks set before them to prove their belief in the righteousness of the Aether frequently discourages such mages.

These ordeals are not foolproof, however: occasionally truly strong willed and patient Obrimos, interested solely in obtaining access to the power of the Aether, are able to gain admittance to the Legacy and learn its secrets, no matter how stringent the Choir is in its screening process.

**Organization:** The Choir of Hashmallim is loosely organized. Individual Dominions travel where they are needed, often taking up residence in locations where Abyssal activity is strong. They make it their mission to drive back the Void and weaken its influence in their home territory. Still others join cabals in areas where the Abyss is not a threat, with the intention of ensuring their fellows do not fall prey to the Void's seductions.

Though no true hierarchy exists, the Legacy keeps in near constant contact.

The Abyss is a danger of such epic proportions that no sane mage could hope to stand alone against its fury.

The Choir's fight is one that sometimes seems hopeless, but by banding together as a community, built of resolute individuals, the Dominions hope to ease that burden and lessen the Void's power in the Fallen World.

**Suggested Oblations:** Assisting local charitable organizations, cleansing Abyssal taint, meditation upon the nature of the Supernal

Realms, leading a prayer group, teaching others the hazards of the Abyss

**Concepts:** Crusader, pious adventurer, religious activist, traveling two-fisted theologian, right wing advocate, zealous Obrimos defender, Jesuit priest

## *Attainments*

The Choir of Hashmallim calls down the power of the Aether on those — human or otherwise — who would permit, or even encourage, the Abyss to grow in strength and influence. The zealotry of those on the Path of the Mighty can be overwhelming for the other Paths; the Choir focuses this zeal and directs it solely at the power of the Abyss. While many are likeable and outgoing individuals, Dominions using their Attainments are so focused in their intent that they often seem otherworldly, even to close friends.

### *1<sup>st</sup>: Aetherial Cleansing*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Prime 2 (primary), Occult 2

The taint of the Abyss is powerful and pervasive; whatever it touches is inevitably stained by the contact. Thus, Dominions turn the tremendous power of the Abode of Angels — the power over raw magic, itself — against these dark forces, in the hopes of protecting the Fallen World and all its creatures from the Void's infectious presence.

Whenever within sensory range of the use of any Numen or Influence by an Acamoth or Gulmoth, the Dominion may spend a point of Mana and attempt to counter the power as a reflexive action, requiring a Resolve + Occult + Prime roll. The mage's successes are subtracted from those accrued by the Abyssal entity, to a minimum of zero. While manifesting this Attainment, the Dominion is wreathed in soft white light and may display traditionally "angelic" or "holy" characteristics: a radiant halo or luminous wings, for example. These displays may or may not be in any way associated with the willworker's Nimbus.

Note that this Attainment has no effect when used against Scelesti, other sorts of Left-Handed willworkers, or any other being other than a spirit of the Void.

### *2<sup>nd</sup>: Aetherial Avatar*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Forces 3, Prime 3

Calling down the very fire of magic from the Aether, the Dominion gives it shape within his soul and chan-

nels it, outward, into the Fallen World, in the form of an avenging angel. This Aetherial avatar is formed of Supernal Mana and adorned with fire; beautiful and terrifying, all at once. Reflections of the Dominion's Virtue and Vice can be seen by those who closely study the avatar: a mage with a Virtue of Justice and a Vice of Wrath, for example, may channel a being holding aloft a balanced set of scales in its right hand or somehow visibly blinded, with a sharp sword in its left hand and blood-soaked wings.

To call down his Aetherial avatar, the mage spends a point of Mana and rolls Resolve + Occult + Prime as an instant action. Success indicates that the Dominion summons the avatar, which remains within the Fallen World for a number of turns equal to the mage's Gnosis.

The avatar's Traits are based on the summoning mage's Attributes, as follows:

**Attributes:** Power (lowest of the mage's Intelligence, Strength, or Presence), Finesse (lowest of the mage's Wits, Dexterity, or Manipulation), Resistance (lowest of the mage's Resolve, Stamina, or Composure)

**Willpower:** Power + Resistance

**Initiative:** Finesse + Resistance

**Defense:** Greater of Power or Finesse

**Speed:** Power + Finesse + species factor of 10

**Size:** 5

**Health:** Size + Resistance (the avatar vanishes back into the Aether when reduced to zero Health, though it may be summoned back later, as normal)

The avatar is affected by spells just like a being normally summoned from the Aether (see pp. 72). While the entity acts in the mage's best interests — according to the unyielding standards of the Golden Key — to oppose the Void, it is not under his direct control, unless he uses other magic to compel its obedience. Others attempting to control the avatar with magic suffer a dice-pool penalty equal to the Dominion's successes in summoning it.

By spending a point of the Dominion's Mana as an instant action (irrespective of the per turn Mana spends allowed by the mage's Gnosis), the Aetherial avatar may create effects identical to the spells "Celestial Fire" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 224) or "Controlled Dispellation" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 224), rolling Power + Finesse. If the Dominion is an Adept of Prime, the damage dealt by the avatar's fire may be lethal. If the Dominion is a Master of Prime, the avatar may spend an *additional* point of his Mana to upgrade the damage to



aggravated. While the Aetherial avatar is present, the willworker may instead shunt any damage dealt to him by an Acamoth, Gulmoth or other Abyssal spirit to the avatar.

The Dominion's Aetherial avatar may only be called down once per scene.

### 3<sup>d</sup>: *Aetherial Exaltation*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Prime 4, Forces 4

With this, the final Attainment of the Choir of Hashmallim, a Dominion can further empower her Aetherial avatar. Enhanced by still greater boons of the Watchtower of the Golden Key, the entity becomes a genuine terror to the creatures of the Void.

After summoning her Aetherial avatar, the Dominion spends another point of Mana as an instant action, requiring a Resolve + Occult + Prime roll. For each success that she scores, the Theurgist may add one

of the following effects to her avatar (these abilities may only be selected once for a given summoning, unless otherwise noted):

- One of the avatar's Attributes may now be based on the *highest* of the mage's appropriate Attributes (Intelligence, Strength, and Presence for Power, for example), rather than the lowest. This effect may be selected three times, once for each of the avatar's Attributes.

- The avatar gains bonus points of Health equal to the *lesser* of the Dominion's dots in Forces or Prime.

- The avatar may remain within the Fallen World for a number of additional turns equal to the *lesser* of the Dominion's dots in Forces or Prime.

- When attacked by an Abyssal spirit, the avatar is considered to have an armor rating equal to the *lesser* of the Dominion's dots in Forces or Prime.

- The avatar gains the Harrow Numen.



# THE CONCORD OF SERPENTS

*Embrace your suffering and shed your weakness.*

The purpose of Pandemonium is to serve as a crucible, enabling the Warlock to cleanse herself of frailty through the endless ordeal of her brutal and unforgiving Path. By definition, this process requires opposition. In the absence of a tormentor, the willworker can fall victim to complacency and so fail to perfect herself through the ordeal of sublime agonies. It is not enough, however, merely to suffer through one's own demons; one must also share these hardships with others, lest they be denied the opportunities for self-mastery that only a Mastigos *truly* understands. So goes the philosophy of the Concord of Serpents, anyway.

Making manifest within the Fallen World the castigating way of Pandemonium, the self-proclaimed "Adversaries" encourage others to perfect their nobler selves through the acceptance of tribulation. Like devils of old, they afflict those around them with the chance to be better, stronger people; to the Adversaries' thinking, the highest form of philanthropy. Of what value, they ask, is virtue untested? It is a simple thing to be good and to do right when no incentive exists to take the easy, wicked, or otherwise morally expedient road. More difficult, by far, is the path of righteousness opposed. The Serpent whispers temptations and strikes at the heels of those who would reach toward grace. The worthy deny these seductive promises and steel themselves against the searing kiss of the Serpent's venom, while the unworthy are destroyed, whether literally or metaphorically.

Believed by certain Awakened scholars to rank among the most ancient of Mastigos Legacies, the Concord of Serpents propounds the notion of life as a never-ending contest between one's better and worse natures. The quality of the soul is, to them, defined within the mind; within the thoughts and emotions that inform action and so become the basis of one's innermost truth. Certain Awakened sages believe the Legacy's ties to the Realm of Nightmares were forged when the realms were closer to one another, though no proof now exists to verify claims, either way.

Some Adversaries cleave to the way of the contrary, demonstrating the value of goodness through a caricature of sin, while others are more akin to merciless drill sergeants of morality and ethics. *All*, however, understand that virtue is not an end, but instead

merely a means to an end. For, in the Fallen World, the downhill path is one of cruelty, pettiness, greed, and satiation; it is easily walked and erodes the inner potential of the one who treads it. To deny the animal self — the basest longings of the human spirit — is to swim against the current of spiritual indolence, and *that* is an accomplishment grand and glorious unto itself. While the Obrimos preach righteousness for its own sake, Adversaries celebrate its pursuit as the greatest of all possible trials and its culmination a blissfully temporary state that inevitably turns, full-circle, back into further opportunities to again suffer and persevere.

**Parent Path:** Mastigos

**Nickname:** Adversaries

**Appearance:** Rare is the Adversary who doesn't attempt to look her best, though these willworkers sometimes adopt very bizarre notions of what "best" really means. Rituals may leave a mage extensively scarred, tattooed, or pierced; physical evidence of transcendent ordeals that she may wish to reveal to others through her mode of dress. She may, on the other hand, express her purpose through a menacing appearance (dark and foreboding tones in her wardrobe, for example, or garish ones that specifically evoke the bright colors of poisonous animals). Her jewelry or hair may bristle with spikes, or her nails may be honed to a claw-like edge. She may adorn herself with chains and bladed weapons, or even file her teeth down to sharp points. In one way or another, however, the Adversary outwardly demonstrates her calling as a force of opposition.

**Background:** Those who come to the Concord of Serpents tend to arrive by one of two ways. The first are those for whom life is a perpetual struggle, mages who view every hardship as a chance for self-improvement. These Warlocks never shy away from the uphill battle and, indeed, seek out such challenges as the very mandate of Pandemonium. The other sort of willworker drawn to the Adversaries comes out of a life of ease, having never had to truly work for anything. Perhaps he is jolted out of this state by a particularly harsh Awakening or some trauma after inscribing his name upon the Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet. Then again, maybe he just tires of his effortless lifestyle and seeks adversity and privation



through which to lend significance to an otherwise shallow existence.

**Organization:** Pandemonium's nature is conflict; so, too, is the way of the Concord of Serpents. Hierarchy requires polarity: high and low, strong and weak, ruler and governed. Each Adversary has an obligation to her peers, as well as to those outside of her Legacy, and the soul of the Warlock cries out for dominion.

Thus, each Adversary strives to carve out a place for herself within the Legacy, asserting authority over fellow walkers of the Serpent's road. Tests of will and conviction are common, though they almost always remain civil (if not always friendly), with each Adversary attempting to cow, tempt, or otherwise erode the resolve of the other, until such time as one emerges as superior to the other. No relationship within the Concord is sacrosanct; even mentors are subjected to this treatment by their students. Indeed, any mage who inducts another into the Legacy would be deeply insulted *not* to be treated in such a manner, as such would imply that her student had learned nothing that she tried to teach.

**Suggested Oblations:** Acting as a moral tormentor for a Sleeper or another mage, deliberately exposing oneself to and successfully resisting intense temptation, elaborately binding or otherwise fettering oneself, interacting with or studying Supernal Demons, meditating upon the nature of Pandemonium, practicing exercises that require stillness or greatly restricted movement, undertaking a brutal physical and/or spiritual ordeal

**Concepts:** Chess Grandmaster, guerilla interventionist, guru of spiritual agonies, modern primitive, peaceful warrior, sacred whore, unconventional psychologist

## Attainments

The Attainments of the Concord of Serpents reward struggle in the face of tribulation, chiseling a better, more resolute self out of stark refusal to bow before the

slings and arrows of the Fallen World. It is hard to be a Warlock, the Concord reasons, but harder still to be a Warlock who stands for virtue in a world that rewards wickedness. This difficulty, however, is the very pillar upon which the Concord of Serpents stands, for the challenge is not to be upright for the sake of uprightness; but, rather, to empower and exalt the self, as is the way of the Iron Gauntlet.

### 1<sup>st</sup>: *Virtue's Pact*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Mind 2 (primary), Space 1, Empathy 2

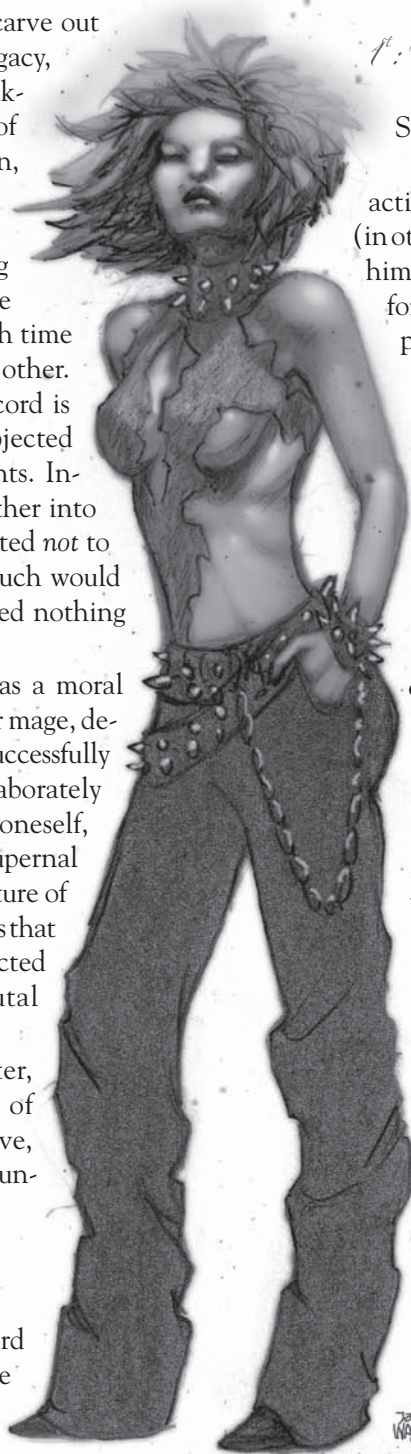
Whenever the Adversary undertakes an action that reaffirms his Virtue under duress (in other words, any situation that would enable him to recover all points of spent Willpower for doing so), he may opt to instead spend a point of Mana to temporarily incarnate a singular aspect of a lesser Wraith of Pandemonium, corresponding to his Virtue. For the remainder of the scene, whenever the Adversary takes any action that directly and forcefully upholds or is benefited by his Virtue, he receives two bonus dice to his roll, as the Wraith employs its Influence on his behalf through an unsailable Supernal thread. This Attainment cannot be used in any chapter in which the willworker has already refreshed his Willpower by way of his Virtue and its use counts as having fully refreshed Willpower points in such a manner.

Also, with a successful Wits + Empathy + Mind roll (reflexively contested by Composure + Gnosis for an unwilling subject) and an instant action, the Adversary can determine the Virtue of another within sensory range.

### 2<sup>nd</sup>: *Inharmonious Rhapsody*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Mind 3

Balance within the soul is a lie; or, rather, it is only through strife that harmony can be discovered. Inner peace is a series of arduous instants and the spiritual gratification that results from overcoming them. Whenever the Adversary is reduced to her last three dots of Health, she recovers one point of Willpower (up to her normal maximum)



for each subsequent dot of Health filled with lethal or aggravated damage. Note that this damage must actually stem from a life-or-death situation, though self-inflicted wounds can certainly qualify, provided that the mage takes the steps necessary to make the process genuinely dangerous to her. Also, whenever the Adversary successfully resists Wisdom degeneration or any circumstance that would cause her to gain a Derangement, she recovers a point of Willpower. Again, this process must involve a sincere threat to the willworker's wellbeing — whether physical, mental, or spiritual — for this Attainment to work.

**Optional Arcanum:** Space 3

By spending a point of Mana and succeeding on a Resolve + Empathy + Mind roll as a reflexive action, the Adversary can extend the benefit of her first Attainment to a willing individual within sensory range who satisfies the conditions for refreshing Willpower by embodying his Virtue under duress. During this time, the Adversary, herself, acts as the channel for the Supernal Demon reflective of the target's Virtue. While extending the benefits of her first Attainment to another, she cannot simultaneously incarnate her own Virtue (even if both characters possess the same Virtue), nor can she refresh her Willpower during the scene by upholding her Virtue against hardship. After the current scene ends, the willworker may again use her first Attainment upon herself — provided that she meets the conditions for doing so — as normal. No sympathetic tie, whether temporary or permanent, is created through the use of this Attainment, and existing ties are unaffected by it.

*3<sup>d</sup>: Manumission's Fetter*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Mind 4

Through arduous and perpetual self-restraint, the Adversary sets herself free. She no longer struggles against the moral hardships of her existence and instead truly welcomes their endless turmoil into her soul. She will *never* run out of challenges to face and she discovers sublime ecstasy therein. Whenever satisfying the conditions for refreshing her Willpower through the fulfillment of her Virtue in time of adversity, the

willworker may instead *spend* a point of Willpower as a reflexive action and roll Resolve + Composure + Mind, with each success granting her a point of Mana, up to her normal maximum (excess points are lost). This Mana is, in reality, a metaphysical reflection shining outward from just beyond the outmost edge of the Supernal, being something closer to the *idea* of Mana than the actual Fallen World substance. As a result, this Mana cannot be stolen from the Adversary, though she can, if she knows the proper magics, transform it into Tass or bestow it upon others in its raw form; whereupon the Daimonic "Mana" ceases to be a conceptual ideal and becomes the ephemeral material familiar to most Awakened.

The Concord mage may only benefit from one use of this Attainment per chapter. She may, however, recover spent dots of Willpower through the fulfillment of her Virtue, either before or after using this Attainment, though never during the same scene.

**Optional Arcanum:** Space 4

By spending a point of Mana and succeeding on a Resolve + Empathy + Mind roll as a reflexive action, an Adversary may extend the benefits of his second Attainment to a willing individual within sensory range. Note that each individual use of the mage's second Attainment upon another requires its own expenditure of Mana, while multiple points of Willpower may be bestowed through a single use of the Attainment (if the subject were to receive two dots of lethal damage to her last three dots of Health, for example, she would receive two points of Willpower at the a cost to the Adversary of one point of Mana). The peril to the beneficiary of this Attainment must be real enough that the subject genuinely believes in its capacity to cause her serious harm. Some Adversaries are known to arrange for such circumstances, whether subtly or overtly, simply to demonstrate to their quarry the wages of perseverance. As with the previous optional Attainment, no sympathetic tie, whether temporary or permanent, is created through the use of this Attainment, and existing ties are unaffected by it.



# KATSINAM SUUKYA

What is it that they say about those who forget the past?

The Katsinam Suukya grew out of the traditions of the Hopi people of the American Southwest. During the United States' expansion into their territories, more and more traditions and practices disappeared, first through the violence of aggressive expansion and, later, under a tide of cultural assimilation. While some continued to cling to the old ways, keeping them sacred and alive, most were gradually battered down by colonizing frontiersmen and those who followed in their wake. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a Hopi théarch by the name of Ahota ("Restless One") set out with the intention of reviving the traditions of his people among Sleepers and Awakened, alike. The first few years of his work, however, proved deeply disheartening, as Ahota ran into one stumbling block after the next.

To gain a new perspective on his mission, the Shaman embarked on a long journey into Shadow, seeking the advice of the spirits. What he discovered was more and far different than he had hoped, transforming both his mission and his soul. When Ahota returned, he soon gathered five apprentices to himself, only two of whom were of Hopi descent, to pass on what he had learned of the *katsinam*, the life-bringers; spirit guides who educate the young in the important truths of life. Out of respect for his people's tradition of obfuscating the deepest nuances of their language from the uninitiated, he simply called his Legacy the *Katsinam Suukya*, after the title of the life-bringers (already well known outside of the tribe) and the Hopi word for "one," leaving it to the listener to decide whether Ahota intended them to be "one with the *katsinam*," "one of the *katsinam*," "one chosen by the *katsinam*," or something else, entirely.

Ahota eventually passed on (though some say he simply vanished into the Shadow once more), leaving a council of elders — several of whom were not Native Americans, let alone Hopi — to govern the Legacy after his death. He claimed that this approach represented a "broader vision" that would "bring peace to the people of the world, through the embrace of traditional ways." To this day, three of the elders of the council claim to have been apprentices to the first so-called "Caretaker," but the veracity of such statements is uncertain, at best.

Regardless, the Katsinam Suukya exists now to bridge a gap between old ways and the pressures of the modern world, admonishing its adherents to return to ancient forms of spirituality for answers to difficult questions. Ahota's vision, recounted to his first students, told of a time when their ways would be needed to avert some terrible calamity, or to guide many to a better future. A number of those drawn to the Katsinam Suukya feel that its teachings address an emptiness within *their* lives, so perhaps its practices truly can illuminate a safe road through dark times to come. Today, the Legacy is still a small one, but with a diverse membership that calls upon the influences of the many cultures from which its adherents hail, including several threatened by the march of "progress."

**Parent Path:** Thyrsus

**Nickname:** Caretakers

**Appearance:** Older mages of the Katsinam Suukya often dress in traditional garb, with many of them favoring Southwestern materials and styles, particularly for ceremonial occasions. Naturally, these Caretakers tend to stand out in a lot of urban areas, but most elders of the Legacy tend to confine their wanderings to more rural and isolated locales. Some stay on reservation land, while others belong to communes, and still others live as hermits. Younger Caretakers, on the other hand, often adopt a more pragmatic aesthetic, though most of them incorporate more traditional elements into their daily dress.

Jewelry is often worn, and each piece tells a story. It may be a traditional take that usually accompanies a particular sort of item, or it can be a very specific story about how the object in question was acquired. These tales help to keep alive the great oral traditions that many cultures share.

**Background:** The Katsinam Suukya is a small Legacy. Its members are not particularly flashy and many modern mages don't enjoy living a life spent dwelling on old traditions — from a number of different cultures — that they believe no longer serve any useful purpose. Those whose only interest in the past relates to the power that it can offer in the here and now are of little interest to the Caretakers.

Occasionally, elders of the Legacy journey far, seeking those souls who are in need of something that they cannot quite grasp. The elder Caretaker then adopts the role of a mentor, if possible, talking of endangered wisdom and old power, and of stewardship over things of genuine importance. Those who seem receptive to these advances are often offered membership. Through this process, the Caretakers maintain and very slowly expand their numbers.

**Organization:** The Legacy is led by a council of elders. The longer one has served the Katsinam Suukya, the more esteem she holds among its membership. Achievements and personal renown often factor into the pecking order amongst the leading elders of the Legacy, but length of service (and the experience that accompanies it) serves as the Katsinam Suukya's measuring stick when it comes to leadership. While rare, an individual may prove, beyond any reasonable

### Culture Clash

Ahota's bold declaration of having contacted the *katsinam* in a way more "real" than that practiced by the Sleepers of his people sparked outrage among a number of willworkers of Hopi descent in modern times. This is not surprising, given the strong drive that many Hopi feel toward the preservation of their culture, particularly the sacred traditions of that culture. Certainly, the Legacy's intended mission of initiating outsiders into a "higher" spiritual experience of his people's religion — arrogance, in and of itself — leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of many of those, Hopi or otherwise, who hear of it.

To be clear, Ahota's claim is no more "factual" than that of an Obrimos who claims to have spoken with YHVH in his journey to the Watchtower of the Golden Key, or an Acanthus who believes that she summons down the Tuatha Dé Danaan from Arcadia. Faith is a complex thing and those confined to the Fallen World simply don't have all of the answers, no matter how much some individuals might believe that they do. Ahota surely meant no malice by his assertion, but he also did not consider the insult that he gave to the traditions of his tribe in doing so. Those who follow in his footsteps, regardless of their origins, are heirs to that insult... and, occasionally, its consequences.

measure of doubt, that she deserves a place on the elder council. The Caretaker must have performed some heroic or otherwise grand service to the Legacy, and are invited to join the elders by popular acclaim.

Individual Caretakers are usually left to their own devices. If a senior member of the Legacy requires assistance in a specific task, however, custom dictates that the younger Caretaker comply with the request, unless he has a pressing reason not to. Some elders use the tradition of seniority for their own gain or to purposely inconvenience the young (whether as a lesson or for some other, less benevolent end). This sort of behavior, on the whole, is tolerated within the Katsinam Suukya; if the young mage cannot fulfill his obligation without hardship, then he clearly *needed* to endure it. As the elders of the Legacy see things, the world is not the nicest of places and to survive, a Caretaker must be as crafty as possible.

**Suggested Oblations:** Praying to ancestors or other spirits, protecting a valuable archeological dig site, telling an inspiring or insightful story of a past hero, recovering a lost cultural relic and returning it to its rightful owners, guiding a spirit back to Shadow, performing traditional crafts, thoughtfully considering an intricate puzzle or problem and arriving at a creative solution

**Concepts:** Activist, animistic druid, archeologist, historian, new age crackpot, professional storyteller, white would-be "Native medicine man"

### Attainments

The Attainments of the Katsinam Suukya enable a Caretaker to consult with her spirit guide. In and of itself, this is not particularly unusual for Shamans, as many enjoy a solid working relationship with certain denizens of the Shadow Realm, but a Caretaker aspires to become *one* with the entity with whom she most closely identifies.

#### 1<sup>st</sup>: *Understanding the Katsina*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Spirit 2 (primary), Occult 2

The Caretaker's first and most important revelation is the nature of her spirit guide; an incarnation of the Primal Wild whose nature most powerfully resonates with the mage's own. This "spirit" (which is an archetypal ideal, rather than an individual entity) is an animal, elemental manifestation, plant, or something of the sort: coyotes, bears, ravens, mountains, streams, storms, cacti, or cedar trees, for example. When seen



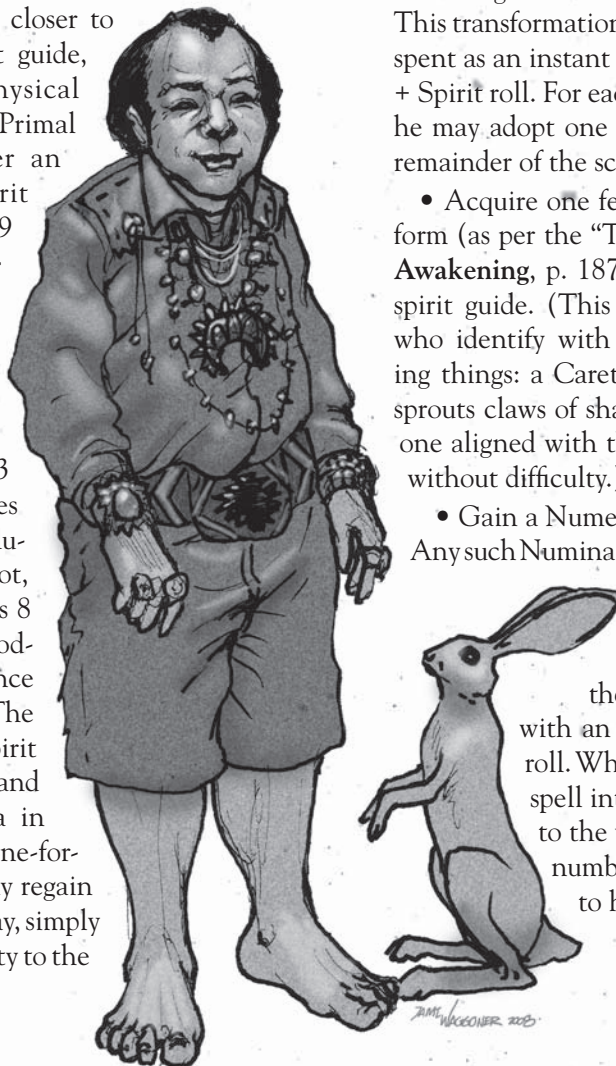
in Shadow, the mage possesses features reminiscent of the spirit guide. The player and Storyteller should work together to determine an appropriate spirit guide for the Caretaker.

The mage is able to see, hear, and speak with spirits as per the spell, "Spirit Tongue" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 246). Additionally, the mage may look into Shadow if in the material realm, or vice versa, as per the spell, "Peer Across the Gauntlet" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 247). These abilities are continually active. Most Caretakers tend to converse casually with the Shadow Realm spirits around them and the spirits, in turn, are often curious about or amused by their company. Occasionally, a spirit may offer its insight into a problem presently confronting the willworker, simply because it enjoys having someone to talk to.

### 2<sup>nd</sup>: *Calling the Katsina*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Spirit 3

The Caretaker grows closer to oneness with her spirit guide, embracing its metaphysical qualities. The mage's Primal connection grants her an Influence (as per spirit Influences, on pp. 318–9 of **Mage: The Awakening**) with a descriptor identical to the nature of her guide, at a rating equal to half her Gnosis, rounding down. (In other words, a Gnosis 3 willworker who identifies with the wolf gains an Influence of Wolves at one dot, while one with a Gnosis 8 whose spirit guide embodies rain gains an Influence of Rain at four dots.) The mage rolls Gnosis + Spirit to use this Influence and spends points of Mana in place of Essence, on a one-for-one basis. The mage may regain one point of Mana per day, simply by remaining in proximity to the object of her Influence.



### Optional Arcanum: Life 3

At times the mage needs other types of assistance. By calling upon the Primal connection that resonates within all living things, the mage gains a unique insight into animalistic minds and is able to turn them to her cause.

This ability functions like the "Control Median Life" spell (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 185–6), requiring a roll of Presence + Animal Ken + Life as an instant action, though the mage can control a number of animals simultaneously equal to her dots in Life.

### 3<sup>d</sup>: *Becoming the Katsina*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Spirit 4, Life 4

With this Attainment, the Caretaker acquires the ability to temporarily physically incarnate certain of the qualities of his spirit guide, calling its ideal down from the Primal Wild and into himself, and becoming something halfway between spirit and flesh. This transformation requires that a point of Mana be spent as an instant action, with a Stamina + Occult + Spirit roll. For each success that the mage accrues, he may adopt one of the following benefits for the remainder of the scene:

- Acquire one feature from a base or median life form (as per the "Transform Life" spell; **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 187) appropriate to the Caretaker's spirit guide. (This effect functions even for those who identify with natural forces, rather than living things: a Caretaker whose spirit guide is stone sprouts claws of sharpened flint, for instance, while one aligned with the river can breathe underwater without difficulty.)

- Gain a Numen appropriate to the spirit guide. Any such Numina cost Mana to activate, rather than Essence, and require a Presence + Spirit roll.

Also, the Caretaker may cross the Gauntlet, in either direction, with an instant action, requiring no die roll. While in this form, any Life Arcanum spell intended to in any way cause harm to the willworker also requires an equal number of dots in the Spirit Arcanum to have any effect.

# THE PEOPLE OF THE HOUR

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Time may be of the essence,  
but that is no reason to rush through life,  
ignoring the needs of others.

The People of the Hour are a product of the fear of the 1950s and the social change of 1960s London. In a world that was yearning for liberty from the timeless certainty of the endless cycle of growing up, getting a job, getting married, having kids, retiring, and dying, a young Acanthus helped inspire others to break free.

It was 1958. She called herself Lady Peacock, and she was trying desperately to change the status quo of London's Awakened community. Rigid traditionalists amongst the Silver Ladder and the Mysterium dominated the Consilium. Members of the Adamantine Arrow and the Guardians of the Veil were too preoccupied with their duties to care about a new social agenda in Awakened society. Even Lady Peacock's fellow Libertines were simply trying to hold onto what little they had, rather than reaching for something better.

Rather than growing discouraged, however, Lady Peacock determined to evolve through a revolution of thought. She studied the patterns of her native London, following strands of the unfolding future, looking specifically for those near to the Awakening. It was by no means an exact science, but destiny must have had a special place set aside for the young Enchanter, who used her powerful Fate magic to ably perform feats only barely within the limits of the mundane, within plain sight of only those few who were struggling to cast off the Lie. While hidebound elements within the Consilium disapproved of Lady Peacock's antics, it was actually a théarch — also an Acanthus — who came to her defense, arguing eloquently to all that nothing she did in any way truly threatened the Veil or otherwise compromised the security of local willworkers as a whole. Reluctantly, the Consilium allowed these antics to continue and, as the young mage had hoped, several of these souls Awakened to the Lunargent Thorn.

What she *didn't* expect is that all but one of these new Acanthus eventually went to orders other than the Free Council. The théarch, Ildanach, took the despondent Libertine under his wing, thereafter, counseling her to seek the will of her Path's native realm in all that she had done and all that followed; for, surely, there was

purpose to it. Lady Peacock took Ildanach's advice to heart in a way that he did not foresee: absconding with a stack of old tomes from the local Lorehouse, the young mage decided to ask Arcadia *directly*.

Perhaps it was her magical skill that guided a first-time summoner through the perilous incantations that brought down one of the mercurial Fae of the Lunargent Thorn to commune with Lady Peacock; likelier, though, it was simply her tremendous good fortune. Ultimately, she got her answer, and a bargain of one sort or another was struck. Lady Peacock became the first of the People of the Hour, those who command the secrets of the future in order to better the present. She began to take on students of all orders — and none — spreading the lore of her new Legacy as widely as possible. Eventually, Lady Peacock left London, altogether, sowing seeds into the cultural whirlwind of the 60s, and reaping their fruits on the return trip.

The 1970s were a blur of sex, drugs, and experimentation, for Lady Peacock as much as for so many others, and she adopted a wide range of willworkers into the People of the Hour, many of whom had clashing visions of the best of all possible futures. This, as she saw it, was for the best, as each would challenge the others to truly question the rightness of what they did. For the first time, she began to run into the students of her own students, eclectic spirits utterly unknown to her, and Lady Peacock was overjoyed by the ecstatic chaos of it all. The 80s and much of the 90s were, in contrast, a disappointment to the aging Godmother of the People of the Hour, so she did the only thing she could: she fled the known and went seeking the "next big things," emerging in all sorts of unexpected places and inducting still those who met with her approval into her Legacy. One week, she was undercover in the turbulent Middle East, initiating a well-hidden Libertine Enchanter into the People of the Hour and, the next, she was grudgingly offering tutelage to an Acanthus Guardian who challenged her perceptions of the place of free will in the Fallen World.

Now in her mid 70s, Lady Peacock (who remains a whimsical, if rarely-seen, friend and mentor to many



People of the Hour throughout the world), has yet to slow down and her Legacy follows suit. Forceful and dynamic, the People of the Hour pursue tomorrow with the fervor of those who believe that, if they try hard enough, they can reach out and grab it, and make it into something wondrous. As to the answer to her long-ago question and the bargain that she made to forge her Legacy, however, Lady Peacock says nothing, save to offer a youthful smirk and a playful wink.

**Parent Path:** Acanthus

**Nickname:** Spoilers

**Appearance:** Spoilers dress with flair and gusto. They understand that while they call upon the future to aid their present, they may not live to see it; though they relive the past to gain the edge of experience, they do not wish to wallow in it.



Their typical wardrobe consists of bright, cheery colors and vivid, eye-jarring patterns. Many seem to have raided the local vintage thrift shop for mod, glam, or hippie fashions, or other styles reminiscent of the 60s and 70s (or what those decades imagined the future might look like). The cost of the clothing is of no concern; what good is such a thing as money if you don't spend it? Likewise, Spoilers tend to extravagant hairstyles and jewelry. If it strikes their mood and looks fun, it normally gets acquired and worn.

**Background:** The common thread that links all People of the Hour is the desire to live in — and improve — the moment, though many of them disagree on the definition of “improve.” Aside from this one thread of commonality, Spoilers come from all walks of life and all strata of society.

Many Spoilers come from the middle class. Most are disenfranchised with their lot in life in particular and the shape of the world as it stands. A good deal of the Legacy work in various charities, activist groups, and social clubs, recruiting strongly out of these of organizations.

**Organization:** The only organizational tie between People of the Hour is that of teacher to student. The student normally accompanies the teacher until he is well on his way to obtaining the Legacy's second Attainment. This serves to reinforce the Legacy's ideals from teacher to student, but also allows the teacher the chance to see how the student applies the lessons that he has learned. Occasionally, though, a Spoiler will only initiate her student into the Legacy, and then allow him to go out into the world, so as to observe how he grows in the absence of rules. Beyond this loose system of authority, People of the Hour recognize one another as kindred spirits, even when they stand diametrically opposed.

**Suggested Oblations:** Performing acts of derring-do while entertaining a crowd, expounding on the virtues of self-help, meditation on the nature of chance and fate, helping someone who has lost something, acting as a

sponsor for recovering substance abusers, performing tarot readings, repeatedly performing an act of random chance (flipping a coin, rolling dice, etc)

**Concepts:** Adrenaline junkie, hippie, racecar driver, human rights activist, solipsist, vagabond, bodhisattva, touring musician

## *Attainments*

The People of the Hour share a Legacy born out of frustration with the trends of stagnation and complacency Lady Peacock saw at the end of the 1950s. The Attainments she bargained for drive Spoilers towards a path of activity, change, and enlightenment.

Living in the moment is the whole purpose of the Spoilers. While their Attainments are versatile and almost universally applicable to any situation, they do not function if the mage is focusing on the future or past. What this means in practical terms is that activities such as research, long-term planning, or the like (anything requiring an extended action) do not gain the benefit of a Spoiler's abilities.

### *1<sup>st</sup>: Fifty-Fifty*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Time 2 (primary), Fate 1

The Spoiler always succeeds (or fails), whenever she wishes, at any simple, uncontested act with only two potential outcomes, and easily focuses in on the present moment, tuning out all potential distractions. She automatically and permanently benefits from an effect identical to the Time 2 spell, "Flip of the Coin" (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 259) and can spend up to three turns "aiming" an action to reduce dice pool penalties, just as with the Fate 1 spell, "Quantum Flux" (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 148–9).

### *2<sup>nd</sup>: Catch As Catch Can*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Time 3

Living *in* the moment and living *through* the moment are two different, but equally important, facets of the People of the Hour. While a Spoiler with this Attainment has yet to learn the secrets of summoning futures out of Arcadia, she *can* call upon immediate experience to extricate herself from the consequences of a bad choice.

With an instant action and a point of Mana, the Spoiler can "rewind" time and re-take her last action, as though casting the Time 3 spell, "Shifting Sands" (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 263). Just as with that spell, the mage must declare the use of this Attain-

ment before her next turn in the initiative roster comes up. The use of this Attainment is automatic; it requires no dice roll, though the Spoiler can only use this ability once in a given scene.

**Optional Arcanum:** Fate 3

By definition, a "spoiler" comes out of nowhere, to throw a monkey wrench into a sure thing. Through the creation of uncanny good fortune, People of the Hour can do just that. The mage may spend a point of Mana as an instant action to gain the 8-again quality on any one future die roll — as per the Fate 3 spell "Superlative Luck" (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 156) — during the current scene. This good fortune manifests as a highly improbable turn of events: the mage sneezes while aiming a gun at a Seer of the Throne holding her cabalmate hostage and accidentally shoots down a chandelier, instead, dropping it onto the Seer's head. This Attainment can only be used once per chapter.

### *3<sup>rd</sup>: Stacking the Deck*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Time 4

This, the final Attainment of the People of the Hour, allows a Spoiler to take a more active hand in her own future. By spending a point of Mana as a reflexive action, the willworker may make use of an effect identical to the Time 4 spell, "Create Potentiality" (see pp. 212). The Spoiler rolls Wits + Science + Time to determine the number of bonus dice created through the use of this ability.

This Attainment may not be used during the same turn during which the mage casts the Create Potentiality spell (and vice-versa), and it is otherwise subject to all of the same restrictions that govern the use of that spell. During the course of a chapter, a Spoiler may use this Attainment a number of times equal to half her Gnosis, rounding down.

**Optional Arcanum:** Fate 4

The Spoiler has the ability to bring destiny, itself, to bear in the course of her work, and may spend a point of Mana as a reflexive action to make use of an effect similar to the Fate 4 spell, "Probable Cause" (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 157). The mage immediately re-rolls all dice that turned up as failures.

This ability may not be "stacked" with another use of the Probable Cause spell. For all intents and purposes, each use of this ability counts against the number of times that a Spoiler can use the Time 4 component of Stacking the Deck over the course of a single chapter, and vice-versa.



# STYGIAN HERALDS

Even dead heroes can still inspire us.

Most cultures revere those extraordinary people that rise above the masses to lead and inspire those around them in times of crisis. The names of heroes, past and present, are venerated in song, story and even with worship in some societies. The Stygian Heralds go beyond simple adoration to remind others of the capacity heroes have to inspire. They call up the souls of dead heroes, borrowing their strength to serve the living.

The Stygian Heralds were founded by a Moros who was studying several unusual Artifacts recovered from mystically sealed vault beneath Uchisar, Turkey. The vault itself was an obvious product of magic, the weapons and armor found within had unusual properties that didn't seem to be the result of enchantment. After months of study, the Moros came to the conclusion that the Artifacts were somehow still bound to their dead owners. The Artifacts seemed to draw energy from a different realm; in them he found the mystical signature of the leaden oppressiveness of Stygia and the echoing eternity of the Underworld. Alongside his continuing studies, the Moros began to experiment with methods of imbuing mundane objects with the same energy and, through trial and error, eventually created the first Attainment of a new Legacy.

Feeling that he was close to a real breakthrough, the willworkers enlisted the help of several other Moros to assist him in the continuation of his work. He taught them the methods behind his first discovery and the cabal began to call itself the Stygian Heralds: Stygian in honor of their path and Heralds in homage to those humble souls who walked before heroes of lore announcing their coming. Many years passed and when the original founder of the Legacy died, in accordance with his wishes, his name was struck from every record of the Legacy, ensuring that he would be forgotten and allowing him to abide in peace. Stories persist, though, inside the Legacy and without, about whom the founder really was.

A few mages, prompted by jealousy (or so the Heralds believe), declared that the founder must have been a Tremere. They suggest that only someone with in-depth knowledge of how to trap and manipulate a soul could have developed magical means of compelling the shades of the dead, of ripping them from wherever it is they rest. The Stygian Heralds refuted

the idea, pointing to the fact that the founder died of natural causes: an unlikely event for a Tremere. Another group of mages posit that the first of the Heralds was a descendant of the Orphean tradition, citing the mythological character as one of the few mages to ever descend to the Underworld and return intact. The Heralds openly scoff at this theory, rightly pointing out that no one is sure exactly from whence the practices of the Legacy call the dead souls. It's just as likely the shades are drawn from the Supernal, or even the Astral Realms; as from the Underworld.

Questions of founder aside, the Stygian Heralds slowly spread their wisdom throughout Awakened society and not everyone approved of their methods. It was a member of the Adamantine Arrow who dubbed them "Resurrectionists," likening their practices to those of grave robbers. Rather than being insulted by the nickname, the Heralds embraced it, noting that the actions of the resurrectionists helped further the science of medicine with their grim deeds. The side-effects resultant from the Stygian Herald's blessings didn't go unnoticed either. Individuals that repeatedly served as host to the souls of heroes had a tendency to go insane. Still, in times of great need, no one could deny the effectiveness of the Stygian Heralds' rituals and so they were allowed to continue their practices. Possibly because of the dubious nature of their studies, the Heralds have never grown to the same prominence as other Legacies. Still, their numbers grow rather than shrink with each passing year and an interested mage can often find one if she is serious about learning what the dead have to offer.

**Parent Path:** Moros

**Nickname:** Resurrectionists

**Appearance:** Resurrectionists tend to dress practically. As Moros, they recognize the transitory nature of earthly opulence and most prefer comfortable, understated fashions. Some Stygian Heralds wear subtle accents that invoke cultures famous for their heroes: a tie with a Classical Greek motif, for example, or a Nordic runestone necklace.

**Background:** Mages that are invited to join the Stygian Heralds generally have a sound foundation in history, myth and legend. Potential candidates must find merit in the idea of using the dead to aid the living.

**Organization:** Most Stygian Heralds only maintain contact with other members of the Legacy under whom they have studied. The bond between teacher and student is strong, the former having shaped the beliefs and practices of the latter. The Stygian Heralds prefer their members be evenly distributed around the world, rather than clumping into cabals, to ensure the strength and memory of the fallen is spread among the living.

**Suggested Oblations:** Leading a sincere group prayer for the souls of departed heroes, reciting from memory every known name of a hero from antiquity, leaving an offering at a memorial for fallen heroes, obtaining a piece of memorabilia owned by a hero, writing a poem, story or paper about a hero

**Concepts:** Ancestral worshippers, grave robbers, historians, military advisors, spiritualists, storytellers

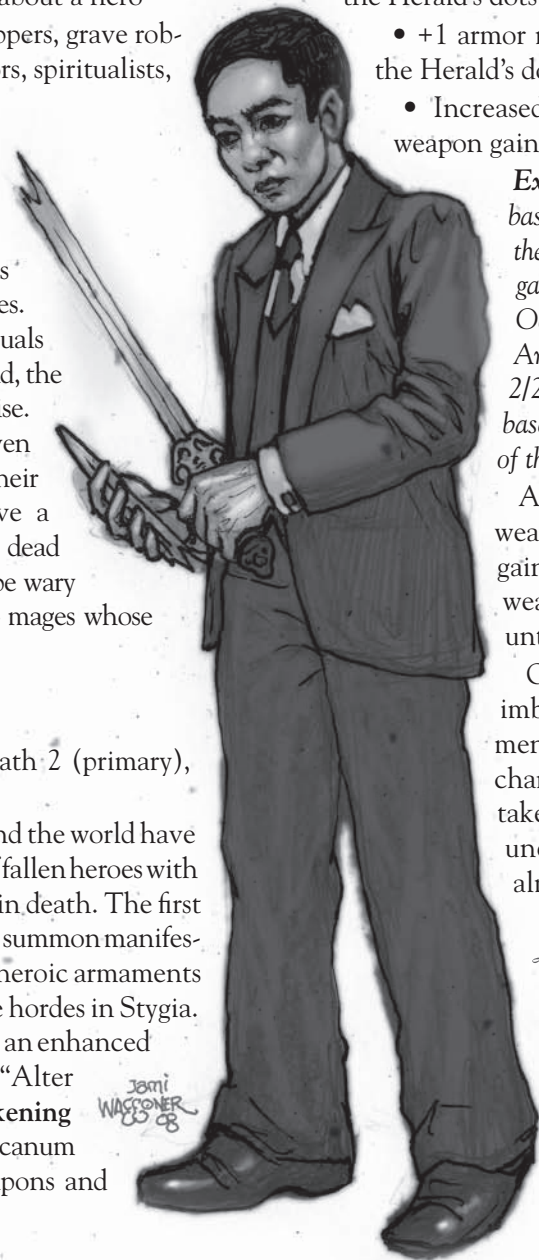
## Attainments

The Stygian Heralds call up the glory and power of fallen heroes to aid them in their own battles. Although they insist their rituals pay all possible respect to the dead, the subjects of their magic say otherwise. The Resurrectionists persevere even in the face of such reports but their necromantic practices do leave a mark on them that the restless dead find distasteful. Ghosts tend to be wary of — or even hostile toward — mages whose souls are marked by this Legacy.

### 1<sup>st</sup>: Heroic Armament

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Death 2 (primary), Matter 1

For centuries, mourners around the world have buried the weapons and armor of fallen heroes with them to ensure they are armed in death. The first Attainment teaches the mage to summon manifestations, physical reflections, of heroic armaments found in the tombs and treasure hordes in Stygia. This Attainment functions like an enhanced version of the Matter 2 spell, “Alter Accuracy” (see **Mage: the Awakening** p. 196), employing the Death Arcanum to call forth the power of weapons and armor from ghostly ephemera.



To activate this Attainment, the mage must touch the equipment he intends to imbue. Only objects capable of being used as weapons or armor can be imbued, though they can be somewhat makeshift in nature. A lead pipe and leather jacket are perfectly acceptable representations of a weapon and armor for the purposes of this Attainment. With the appropriate objects at hand, the mage rolls Resolve + Occult + Death. For each success rolled the mage can add one of the following properties to the object for the remainder of the scene. Successes can be evenly divided to imbue both a weapon type object and an armor type object (no more than one weapon and one piece of armor per scene).

- +1 equipment bonus (weapon only; maximum of the Herald's dots in Matter)
- +1 armor rating (armor only; maximum of the Herald's dots in Matter)
- Increased lethality (weapon only); the weapon gains the 9-again quality.

**Example:** Julian intends to imbue a baseball bat and a chest protector with the qualities of heroic armaments. He gains four successes on his Resolve + Occult + Death roll. He increases the Armor rating of the chest protector by 2/2; gives a +1 equipment bonus to the baseball bat and increases the lethality of the weapon.

Additionally, anyone wielding a weapon altered by this Attainment gains a temporary Specialty in that weapon type and never suffers the untrained penalty.

Once a weapon or armor has been imbued, anyone can use the equipment to full benefit... at a price. Any character (other than the caster) who takes up the heroic armaments feels uneasy handling the equipment, almost like she's robbed a grave.

### 2<sup>nd</sup>: Heroic Presence

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Death 3

The one characteristic shared by nearly every individual named hero is an ability to inspire comrades or followers to acts of valor, regardless of circumstance. A hero leads with supreme self-confidence



and ability that encourages those around him to excel. Related to the Mind 3 spell, "Augment the Mind," (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 210) the Attainment calls on the power of long-dead heroes to boost how the target is perceived rather than providing a mechanical increase in Attributes. This Attainment may only target other characters, never the caster. The mage summons a splinter of a heroic soul and embeds it in his target. This requires an extended Resolve + Occult + Death roll (target number of five successes), contested by Resolve + Gnosis in the case of an unwilling target. The soul-splinter remains in its new host for a number of hours equal to the Gnosis of the caster. While the character plays host to the splinter, he becomes inspirational in both word and deed to those around him.

**Word:** Once each scene, the host character can make a rousing speech by rolling Presence + Expression. Allies within the sound of his voice gain one temporary Willpower (this can exceed normal maximums) for each success. Unspent temporary Willpower vanishes at the end of the scene.

**Deed:** Each time the host character succeeds at an action, allies within line of sight of the character gain a +3 bonus to perform similar actions. As an example, if the host character managed to leap across a yawning chasm, anyone favorably inclined towards the character who witnessed the feat would gain a +3 bonus to clear a similar obstacle.

Even willing targets are troubled by the sensation of hosting a sliver of soul yanked from the Underworld. The sliver feels restless inside them, twisting and squirming to be freed. The character is subjected to a nearly constant feeling of loss and separation, alien to the actual emotions of the character, until the soul-splinter is released. When the effect ends, hosts possessed of even the slightest sense of decency (Wisdom 5 or greater) typically suffer intense spasms of remorse and shame.

Targeting an unwilling character with this Attainment is considered an act of hubris and requires a degeneration roll for mages of Wisdom 6 or higher (roll three dice).

### 3<sup>d</sup>: Heroic Soul

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Death 4

No one knows for certain the final resting place of heroic souls. Legends about Valhalla, the Sum-

merlands or other spiritual paradises could be true or they could all refer to some aspect of the Underworld. The Resurrectionist is able to reach out to those souls and pluck them from their rest, depositing them in living bodies. A more powerful successor to the Death 4 spell, "Revenant," (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 143), can use this Attainment to summon up the souls that have passed beyond the Fallen World, instead of shackling the souls of the newly dead to flesh. This Attainment may only target other characters, never the caster. The mage summons the soul of a fallen hero with an extended Resolve + Occult + Death roll (target number of 15 successes), contested by Resolve + Gnosis in the case of an unwilling host. The soul remains trapped in the host body until the following sunrise. The host character remains in charge of his actions for the duration of the possession. While merged with the heroic soul, the host character gains all the benefits of the Resurrectionists' second Attainment *and* the following bonuses:

- By spending a point of Willpower, the subject may grant a Physical Skill Roll the rote action quality (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 134–5).
- Defense is *increased* by one (rather than decreased) for every opponent past the first that attacks.
- Points of Willpower spent to increase dice rolls made for Resistance Attributes add four bonus dice, rather than two.
- Wound penalties are treated as inversely proportional bonuses (a -2 penalty becomes a +2 bonus, for example).

The soul whispers in the ear of its host for the duration of the possession, haranguing him for keeping the soul from its rest. It accuses the host of vile betrayal; at the Storyteller's discretion, the relentless invective might result in a one-die penalty to particularly complex actions.

Forcing an unwilling character to play host is considered an act of hubris and requires a degeneration roll for mages of Wisdom 3 or higher (roll two dice). Overuse of this Attainment may also be considered an act of hubris at Storyteller discretion.

# THE LEGION (LEFT-HANDED LEGACY)

FOR WE ARE MANY.

The urge to serve the Abyss is perverse and monstrous; how much more so, then, those that summon up its denizens and incorporate such alien creatures, antithetical to life itself, into their bodies and souls? Mages of the Legion — so named because each of them, as a host to lesser Gulmoth, effectively becomes many — are the answer to that question, cast in tortured and deliberately spoiled flesh.

An ancient Legacy among the Accursed, the Legion goes one long step beyond possession on the part of malevolent entities, making its adherents become both more and much less than human through their horrific practices. These mages summon up the least among the Abyss' innumerable natives and give themselves over to such beings, in exchange for baneful powers. By accepting the Void into themselves, however, their appearance becomes alien and terrifying, demonstrating outwardly their willing road of inexorable descent along the path of Wisdom. While other Accursed are often only disgusting *within*, those claiming membership in the Legion wear the brands of their loathsome choice for all to behold.

As with other Scelesti, those of the Legion are sworn in servitude, but they find a sort of comfort in their slavery, reasoning that their incorporation of the entities of the Abyss makes them something like an earthly aristocracy of the Void; sorcerer-nobles building and nurturing small colonies for the Abyss in the Fallen World. Hounded and despised for what they have become, they see their disfigurements and the hatred of others as merely another sacrifice to their nameless lords. In time, they reason, others will see as they do and the long, hard journey of the Legion will be proven, once and for all, to have truly been worth its cost.

**Parent Path:** Any

**Nickname:** The Accursed; mages of the Legion are considered to be another form of Scelestus (as per **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 361–3); some also call them Patchworks or Grafters

**Appearance:** The physical transformations undertaken by willworkers of the Legion become difficult to conceal after awhile, meaning that such mages must resort to exceptional means to blend into society...

if, indeed, they care to. A replaced eye looks hideous and bizarre, while the flesh around it becomes red and irritated, with a fine network of black veins just under the skin radiating outward from the eye socket for an inch or so in all directions. An Abyss-grafted hand is gaunt and wasted: cold and corpse-gray, with a waxy sheen and cracked black nails, while the wrist to which it is attached appears to be perpetually badly infected. These mages look as inhuman as they are and tend to either conceal themselves (whether out of practicality or shame) or else openly revel in their grotesquerie.

**Background:** Legion mages are almost invariably damaged goods when they first embrace the service of the Abyss. They may feel that they are ugly, no matter what they do, and finally embrace that ugliness, allowing it to be mirrored within. Some are simply degenerate and desire to offend against society, a divinity, or some other force for conformity. Still others approach the Legacy from a perspective so mercenary as to verge on insanity, carving away bits and pieces of their humanity to gain the blasphemous gifts of the Void. The fact of the matter is that only a deeply, fundamentally sick person (or, perhaps, one *made* so through the intervention of another) would incorporate the spirits of the Abyss into body and spirit.

**Organization:** The Legion spreads like the disease that it is, infecting one demented soul after another. Only the most twisted and despicable of mages freely permit the denizens of the Abyss to take up residence within them — indeed, to become lasting extensions of one's living essence — so the Legion tends to favor the model of a secretive cult, with mentors inducting promising students in ones and twos, and then either moving on or else exiling their protégés. Inevitably, any gathering of Legion mages larger than a small cabal (three or perhaps four members) eventually attracts the wrong sort of attention, so these abominable willworkers maintain a loose network of connections to one another, rather than forming more cohesive bonds. Still, as a society of hideously disfigured wretches, the Legion constitutes something of a support structure for its members, whose dubious "blessings" eventually make them outcasts from humanity as a whole.



**Suggested Oblations:** Deliberately revealing one's deformities, inflicting unnecessary and unsafe bodily modifications — amputations, human or animal grafts, etc. — upon an unwilling subject, making peaceful contact with an Abyssal spirit summoned by a Paradox Manifestation, meticulously and maliciously disfiguring another, performing a service for a Gulmoth without requesting compensation, performing scarification upon oneself, ritually sacrificing human organs or other body parts to the Abyss

**Concepts:** Abyssal transhumanist, nihilistic degenerate, pathological cutter, perpetual victim seeking escape in monstrosity, scholar of the Abyss who went too far, upstanding mage tortured onto the Left-Hand path, whore to the Gulmoth

## Attainments

The Legion's process of self-transformation is agonizing beyond reason, as the mage permits summoned Gulmoth of the lowest order to feast upon her flesh, consuming the metaphysical template of the body part and adopting a nightmarish mockery of it; one capable of serving in such a capacity and, further, granting extraordinary abilities to the willworker. These grafts become permanent pieces of the mage. — gradually regenerating even if removed (or more swiftly, with healing magic) — as she willingly pollutes both her physical and spiritual self with the taint of the Abyss.

Note that the Attainments of the Legion, unlike those of other Legacies, do not stem from a direct incorporation of Supernal power into the self, but are, instead, the result of the irrevocable Abyssal grafts to which the willworker subjects herself.

### 1<sup>st</sup>: *Pound of Flesh*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 3, Life 2 (primary), Medicine or Occult 2

The initial transformation is easy enough: just a small sacrifice, in exchange for wondrous new powers. This Attainment enables the mage to summon up a tiny spirit of the Abyss, which burrows into her, devour-

ing and permanently replacing a relatively small part of her body and granting her a minor supernatural ability. The “replacement part” looks obviously unnatural to even the casual observer — staining the flesh to match the spirit.

Some example replacements (of which the mage may choose *one*) and their effects:

**Eye:** One of the mage's eyes is replaced by a summoned Abyssal entity. The eye is of alien appearance (not merely a red iris, for instance, but instead perhaps a sickly yellow-green throughout, with a vaguely barbell-shaped pupil, and perpetually cracked and scabbing skin on the eyelid). While the eye is uncovered, the mage can always see Abyssal powers





and phenomena and know them for what they are (including any Paradox effect, even Backlash damage) within visual range.

**Hand:** Traditionally, the right hand is replaced by members of the Legion, leaving the left intact. The hand may appear unnaturally bloated or gangrenous, or otherwise grotesque. With a successful touch (an instant action requiring skin-to-skin contact and a normal Strength + Brawl roll against an unwilling subject), the mage may spend a point of Mana to afflict a target with a poison the toxicity of which is equal to one-half the Legion willworker's Gnosis, rounding down (see *The World of Darkness*, pp. 180–1 for rules on toxins). Note that the poison inflicts lethal damage and may be freely applied to a grappled or incapacitated individual, or one who otherwise allows the mage to touch her with the replacement hand.

**Tongue:** The mage's replacement tongue (which may look, for example, like an oversized slug or be split like a reptile's) enables her to incite madness through speech. With an instant action and a successful Manipulation + Gnosis roll, contested by the subject's Composure + Gnosis, the Legion mage may inflict a derangement of her choosing on an individual, which lasts until the subject next regains one or more points of Willpower.

### *2<sup>nd</sup>: Abyssal Metamorphosis*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 5, Life 3

The mage cuts away more of himself, sacrificing it to the Abyssal monstrosities that he calls up and invites to reside within his flesh. Some example replacements (of which the willworker may, again, choose one) and the powers that they grant:

**Lungs:** By adopting this transformation, the Legion mage allows her lungs to be consumed and replaced, enabling her to spend a point of Mana to "exhale" a Paradox Anomaly (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 271–2), corresponding to her Path, as an instant action. This anomaly has a radius of 10 yards per dot of Gnosis and lasts for one hour per point of Gnosis. Also, the Legion mage need no longer breathe (and so cannot be asphyxiated or choked unconscious, for instance). The willworker's chest may appear rotted or unnaturally shriveled, or her lips and throat may manifest bleeding, infected sores. (Note that this counts as a zero-success Paradox effect for the purposes of the heart transformation, below.)

**Skin:** The mage's entire skin is peeled away and replaced (potentially appearing corpse-like, riddled

with extensive rashes and infections, or even translucent and gelatinous) with a membrane possessed of chameleonic qualities. When nude or mostly nude and attempting to blend into her environment, the Legion willworker receives a bonus to her Stealth roll equal to her Gnosis.

**Stomach:** By replacing his stomach (which may cause the abdomen to swell abnormally or the skin over it to slough away, revealing a layer of greasy fat over raw muscle), the willworker gains the ability to forcibly vomit a potent acid. This requires a point of Mana and a Dexterity + Athletics + Life roll (penalized by the target's Defense and ignoring any non-magical armor). Each success inflicts a point of resistant lethal damage. The range of this acidic regurgitation is five feet, plus one foot per point of Gnosis over five.

### *3<sup>rd</sup>: Body and Soul*

**Prerequisites:** Gnosis 7, Life 4

The final transformation of the Legion mage grants him one last unnatural ability and ties his destiny, forevermore, to that of the Abyss. Some examples of the replacements that such a willworker might choose to make and the powers that they bestow:

**Brain:** The willworker gives his mind over to the Abyss, reaching a state of tranquility in his utter damnation. He is permanently cured of any and all derangements (including those gained through Wisdom degeneration) and can never again gain a derangement, through whatever means, even temporarily. To be clear, the mage is not sane; rather, he is wholly at peace with the otherworldly madness within him. Further, his thoughts, emotions, and perceptions are those of the Gulmoth that thinks for him, and he may, once per turn, spend a point of Mana reflexively to re-roll after failing to overcome a Mind Arcanum spell (or other mind-affecting power) targeted at him. As a result of this change, the skin on the willworker's head may, for example, rot away in places, revealing muscle and bone or his cranium might swell grotesquely, splitting the skin or his scalp with stress and pressure.

**Heart:** The seat of the mage's very life is replaced by an Abyssal entity, allowing him to consume Paradox and transform it into Mana. Whenever any Paradox roll within sensory range of the Legion willworker accrues one or more successes, he may reflexively roll Stamina + Gnosis to attempt to devour those Paradox successes on a one-for-one basis, which the Acamoth within him converts into Mana (up to the



maximum allowed by his Gnosis; excess Mana bleeds off without effect) that cannot be taken from him, given by him to another, converted into Tass, or in any way separated from him, save through usage. Any Paradox successes in excess of the mage's, however, inflict points of resistant lethal damage upon him, on a one-for-one basis, and have no further effect. The mage's blood may turn to a thin, watery pus (making him look hideously jaundiced), become a viscous purple-black tar (afflicting him with what appear to be huge bruises and internal hemorrhages all over his body), or otherwise take on unnatural characteristics reflected in his outward appearance.

**Spine:** In a mockery of the ladder that once reached the heavens, the Legion mage permits an Abyssal spirit to consume and replace her spinal column. Irregular spurs of bone may jut from her vertebrae, like quills through the skin, or her posture become hunched in a feral, animalistic pose, while weeping sores follow the trail of her spine, from the base of the skull to the small of her back. Whenever another mage generates Paradox in the Legion willworker's sensory range, she may compel a Manifestation, which is under her direct control. The duration of the Manifestation is still determined as normal.



## Spells

The Awakened have long practiced magics intended to supplement the practice of summoning. Some seek spells intended to track down otherworldly entities, while others desire the means to combat them, and still others hope to understand these strange beings. The wise summoner, of course, cultivates *all* of these approaches in her willwork, aware that it is far better to possess certain knowledge and never need it, than to need it and not have it.

### *Friendly Face (Fate ●)*

Practitioners of Fate can discern a great deal of knowledge, if they know where to look or whom to ask. Using this spell, Initiates of Fate can determine to what realm they should look when seeking to summon assistance for the matter at hand.

**Practice:** Knowing

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

The mage rolls Wits + Investigation + Fate. Success grants the mage knowledge of which realm (Shadow, the Astral Realm, the Abyss, etc.) will provide an entity most useful in addressing the willworker's current dilemma. The mage must still be able to otherwise summon, control, and communicate with the creature; this spell only shows her where to look.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Locate the Unwilling**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Investigation + Fate

At the height of the Spanish Inquisition, a group of Scelesti used the chaos and distrust to their advantage, directing mortal hunters towards the Consilium of Logroño. Over the course of months, the Consilium lost half a dozen members to the inquisitors. As the local mages did their best to escape the pawns of the Accursed, a Guardian of the Veil known by the Shadow Name of Acallar sought allies to not only protect the mages of Logroño, but also to seek out those responsible for the attacks.

In a matter of nights, the seemingly tireless Acallar devised this spell, using it to seek out agents within Twilight, Shadow, and the Underworld. Having located those able — if not necessarily willing — to assist him, the Guardian quickly set about summoning the various otherworldly beings to his cause. With new and unexpected resources at his beck and call, Acallar made short work of both the inquisitors and the Scelesti, and this spell eventually found its way into the repertoires of many mages throughout his order.

### *Destroy Spirit (Forces ●●●●, Prime ●●●●)*

Caging a creature is all well and good, but sometimes you just need to annihilate it. Designed to simultaneously attack all aspects of spirits, ghosts, and other ephemeral beings, this spell is a weapon against anything that comes from anywhere other than the flesh-and-blood world of mundane Sleepers. The raw might of the Aether is brought to bear against the target, potentially destroying all traces of the unfortunate entity.

**Practice:** Unraveling

**Action:** Instant and aimed

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** One point of Mana (optional for aggravated damage)

The mage channels a nearly solid beam of blinding white light at the target. This brightly glowing ray almost seems to have a certain weight to it, moving with about the same velocity as a thrown projectile. Each success inflicts one point of lethal damage and removes one point of Essence from any creature that has a Corpus score. Lost points of Essence are simply destroyed. With Forces 5, the mage may spend a point of Mana to inflict aggravated damage with this spell.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Obliteration**

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics + Forces

Many of the most destructive spells created were designed in response to a looming threat. This rote was crafted as a preemptive measure by a particularly paranoid Banner Warden of the Arrow named Phosphorous. Scarred by the death of her brother at the many hands of a hideous spirit of gluttony, Phosphorous devised a means to safeguard those that could not save themselves.

In the early summer of 1920, while tourists flocked to the shores of the eastern United States, the bitter Obrimos waged war against the blossoming spirits of corruption and vice that were springing up throughout the area. A number of the mages of Phosphorous' Consilium were against these unprovoked attacks, and more than one chastised the Arrow for creating such a one-dimensional spell; what good would come of such destructive power? They soon found out when one local mystagogue got in over his head.

"Dapper" Dave hadn't intended any harm by it, but whatever it was that he dredged up from the Underworld longed only to destroy. Phosphorous answered its aggression with the fury of her magic, unleashing this brutal spell upon the creature, until it troubled the Consilium no more. After that, folks stopped criticizing the Arrow's "one-dimensional" approach.





### *Detect Alien Mind* (Mind ● + Prime ●)

Occasionally, beings from other planes of existence manage to masquerade as human beings, animals, or even inanimate objects. In many cases, various Mage Sights can be of help in detecting these strange Resonances, but, sometimes, a little something more is called for.

**Practice:** Unveiling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance or Resolve reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Bizarre entities from outside of the weave of the realms (such as those discussed in Chapter Four) don't usually think like those from any of the known worlds; their thoughts are alien even to the monstrous Gulmoth or the strangest

Supernal Demon. These incomprehensible imaginings stain the Tapestry by their passing, leaving a trail that can be followed by one who knows how to look. By casting this spell, the mage gains a sense for the unusual thought patterns that seep out of these beings, to leach into the Fallen World. Depending upon the particular qualities (and power) of the creature in question, its thoughts can leave metaphysical marks that linger for hours, or even days. By way of this spell, a willworker might learn, roughly, what such a being was feeling when it passed through an area (if, indeed, it is capable of any emotions analogous to those experienced by humans), what it was doing at that time, in which direction it was moving, and whether it is close by.

**Guardians of the Veil**

**Rote: Seeking the Hidden**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Mind

Infestations are always nasty things. Back around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chicago played host to one. Someone — word was, a Tremere lich — got

her hands on a weird polyhedral box that some said could only be opened from the inside by one who was outside of it. Whatever the case, she figured out how to unlock the thing and a small horde of skittering things poured out of it from Elsewhere.

Robert Baron, local leader of the Guardians of the Veil, however, happened to be a quick thinker, with a bit of experience summoning unpleasant things from worlds without names, and he recognized the telltale signs of alien entities. No one is rightly sure if he already knew this spell when he went on the hunt; if he *didn't*, though, he certainly came up with it with suspicious alacrity. Reluctantly, Baron taught his rote to as many mages as he needed to curb the infestation, and then he vanished inexplicably at its conclusion.



### *Don Spirit Mask* (Mind ●● + Death ●● and/or Spirit ●●)

A number of cultures historically maintained longstanding traditions of wearing masks as a means of approaching the invisible world with proper reverence and respect. While some mages uphold that ancient practice, this spell is intended for a decidedly different purpose. The caster seeks to deceive nearby ephemeral entities into believing that she is one of them.

**Practice:** Veiling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively.

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Upon successfully casting this spell, the mage projects the subtle qualities of a ghost (with Death), a Shadow Realm spirit (Spirit), or both (with a combination of the two Arcana). Her outward appearance in no ways changes, unless altered by other means, but entities of the appropriate type who fail to contest the spell's effects simply regard her as being of a similar nature, while she is under the effects of this spell; she doesn't register as anyone or anything out of the ordinary. In this manner, a willworker might travel effectively unnoticed by the unseen things of the world.

**Guardians of the Veil Rote: Wearing the False Face**

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mind

In the course of fulfilling his order's obligations, a Guardian of the Veil must often walk in secrecy and silence, unobserved by all. The Fallen World, however, teems with entities that populate the invisible layers of the Tapestry. In concealing himself from these beings — walking among them as though he were one of them — the Guardian hides in plain sight.

### *Gauge Essence* (Prime ● + Death ●, Life ●, and/or Spirit ●)

Ghosts and spirits of all sorts use Essence, an ephemeral substance often imprinted with certain emotional qualities, signifying its origin. Just like scientists can discern the difference between a diamond mined in southern Africa, for instance, and one acquired from elsewhere in the world, an astute willworker can analyze the individual qualities of a particular source of Essence.

**Practice:** Knowing

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance or Resolve reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

With a successful casting of this spell, the mage determines the Resonance of a source of Essence, contained within a

creature of the appropriate type. With Death 1, the willworker can analyze the Essence inside a ghost, while Life 1 grants insight into points of Essence contained within a living creature (for whatever reason), and Spirit 1, any Essence within a spirit of the Shadow Realm. This spell also gives the caster a rough sense of how much Essence a creature contains. For example, a ghost down to its last two points of Essence reads as nearly depleted, while a powerful denizen of Shadow holding 20 or more points of Essence registers as having a potent stockpile of Essence.

This spell also gives a mage a sense for the descriptive qualities of the Essence he sees; knowledge that may, in turn, grant further insight. A perfectly peaceful-looking suburban residence producing Essence flavored by atrocity hides something terrible in its past... or its present. Likewise, a seemingly helpful spirit whose Essence resonates with trickery might not be as accommodating as it seems.

Any creature that wishes to resist having its Essence scanned resists using its Resistance or Resolve (whichever is applicable). This counts only toward sources of Essence presently contained within the being. External sources may be concealed through other powers, however; in such a case, the entity's successes are compared against those of the caster.

**Silver Ladder Rote: Know Thy Enemy**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy + Prime

This spell is of old account among summoners, many of whom regard it as simple good business. Certain thérachs claim the spell actually predates the Fall, and it certainly would make sense were such the case. Some of the oldest texts from the Atlantean Diaspora speak of similar magics, causing certain summoners within the Ladder to point with pride to the venerable pedigree of their craft.

### *Ephemeral Postcognition* (Prime ● + Time ●●)

For some mages, it is not enough merely to know what a summoned entity is; they must also understand where it came from. This spell enables such willworkers to catch fleeting glimpses of the native realities of the ephemeral beings that they call into the Fallen World by studying the immediate history of the Resonance that such creatures carry with them.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant and contested; target rolls Resistance reflexively

**Duration:** Concentration

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Success in the casting of this spell grants a willworker insight into the immediate past of an ephemeral entity presently manifested before her or whom she can otherwise perceive. Effectively, the mage begins to "rewind" the recent



history of the entity, following it back, one minute per turn of concentration and studying the sensory input of its surroundings during that time. The mage may “pause” on any given minute and analyze it for content of interest. In the case of a being recently summoned from its home realm, this actually allows the caster to look upon that realm in the time leading up to the summoning.

An entity whose existence is only recently established (such as one temporarily created with the Spirit Arcanum), however, may not have much history to study. Likewise, a being summoned from a place in which time has no meaning may reveal nothing, or it may reveal wildly inconclusive information.

Following the history of an entity summoned from the Abyss back through the moment of summoning to its place of origin instantly terminates the spell and the mage’s player must successfully roll Resolve + Composure, with a dice-pool penalty equal to the Gulmoth’s Rank, with failure resulting in a mild derangement (or, if the mage already suffers from a mild derangement, a severe one). At the Storyteller’s discretion, a similar effect may befall a willworker using this spell to see back beyond the moment at which an alien entity first arrived in the Fallen World from outside of the Tapestry. Using this spell in an attempt to look past the moment of summoning for a denizen of the Supernal Realms grants a painful and confusing — and utterly unhelpful — glimpse of the higher world before abruptly ending the spell. Attempting to look into the Realms Supernal in this way is an act of hubris for any mage with a Wisdom higher than 3, requiring a degeneration roll on two dice.

**Mysterium Rote: Whence It Came**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Time

Information moves not just forward, but also backward, in time for those with the skill necessary to obtain it. Some mystagogues summon strange spirits from the other worlds, simply to analyze their places of origin by way of this magic, thus advancing the state of Awakened knowledge.

*Hostile Space (Space ●●● + Mind ●●)*

Summoned beings often have their genesis in alien landscapes and they are not necessarily comfortable in this world. This spell actually increases the discomfort that many such entities feel within the confines of the material realm.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Instant and contested; subject rolls Resistance or Resolve reflexively

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

Upon successfully casting this spell, the mage creates an area of metaphysical “static” expressly uncomfortable for one particular type of otherworldly being: Abyssal spirits,

alien entities from outside of the Tapestry, or denizens of a particular Supernal Realm, for example. Beings native to any layer of the Fallen World — no matter how far-flung — cannot be affected by this spell, as its efficacy depends largely upon exacerbating a being’s natural aversion to the particular qualities of this stratum of Creation.

While within this zone, any being that does not successfully resist the distraction of this “static” must spend a point of Essence (or Willpower, for entities without Essence) to take an action in a given turn, above and beyond the costs inherent to any of its supernatural abilities. The entity may not spend Willpower to modify any dice roll made on the (or a) Resistance Attribute.

**Mysterium Rote: Enmity of the Land**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult + Space

This rote has come in and out of favor with summoners for centuries, and perhaps even millennia. Certain Mysterium Athenaeums, however, have quietly maintained texts containing its formulae, dating back to the Middle Ages or before. Unfortunately for the Dragon’s Wing, the rote — long out of vogue and maintained as a secret of the Mysterium — went back into circulation after the ransack of the Athenaeum in Berlin, Germany, in 1945, by parties unknown.

*Ephemeral Co-Location (Space ●●●● + Spirit ●●●)*

Warlocks of advanced skill in their Path’s Arcana can be in many places at once. Those who learn this spell, however, can also be in different realms, simultaneously.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** None

Success enables a willworker to create an identical duplicate of herself on the opposite side of the Gauntlet from her present location. Both copies of the mage must perform exactly the same actions at all times (as per the “Co-Location” spell; **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 239), though adding Mind 3 to the casting removes this restriction. With a reflexive action, the mage may switch places with her duplicate from turn to turn. As with Co-Location, only the willworker’s real self may be targeted by attacks, as the duplicates possess no substance.

With Space 5, this spell may be cast with prolonged Duration.

**Adamantine Arrow Rote: Warrior of Many Worlds**

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Space

In late June of 1967, a Mastigos Arrow by the name of Anaïs happened upon the scene of a Shadow Realm summoning gone horribly awry. The three Guardians of the Veil responsible for the act were already unconscious by the

time the Warlock arrived and she knew that time was of the essence. The spirit's trail moved back and forth through the Gauntlet and Anais, also a Disciple of the Spirit Arcanum, formulated this spell on the spot as a means of keeping track of it, no matter how it attempted to flee its pursuer.

Later, when the entity was contained, the mess cleaned up, and the three Guardians properly chastised for their ill-conceived plan, Anais codified the spell into a rote at the request of the Hierarch, who offered it as a good-faith gesture to a number of Consilii elsewhere in the world.

### *Create Potentiality (Time ●●●●)*

Possibility is an amazing thing; nearly *anything* — no matter how unlikely — can, potentially, happen. Mages with considerable skill in the nuances of the Time Arcanum can latch onto those improbable future events, guiding the present moment toward them.

**Practice:** Patterning

**Action:** Reflexive

**Duration:** Transitory (one turn)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** One point of Mana

Immediately after failing to perform a non-magical action, the willworker may reflexively cast this spell. Successes accrued in the casting effectively add to the failed action's dice pool, retroactively. These dice are rolled, as normal, during the mage's current place in the initiative roster, and any successes scored on them count as normal. Qualities such as 8-again apply to the bonus dice created by this spell, though not for actions initially rolled on a chance die.

This spell's Duration may not be increased. Further, its effects may not be coupled with the Fate 4 spell, "Probable Cause" (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 157); the willworker must choose one spell or the other to take precedence. This spell may only be cast once in a given turn.

**Free Council Rote: Short-Term Gain**

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science + Time

Around the time of the Great Refusal, Libertines were beset on all sides by the depredations of the Seers of the Throne whose offer they had spurned. The forces of the Exarchs were seemingly everywhere and many members of the newly convened Free Council were run to ground in those desperate days, unable to stand against the considerable might of the Exarchs' slaves.

A charming Libertine Enchanter known simply as "the Gentleman" concocted this spell in the darkest hours of that conflict, granting outmanned and outgunned willworkers that last, desperate chance that often spelled the difference between life and death. While the Gentleman was murdered in a Parisian back alley on the five-year anniversary of the Great Refusal by vindictive Seers of the Throne, his spell became part of the Free Council's repertoire, and eventually spread to the other Pentacle Orders and beyond.

## *Artifacts*

The things called up by the summoner's arts are unusual even by Awakened standards and possess knowledge and sources of information unknown or unavailable to most mages. Some entities that come from beyond the material realm also have access to powerful Artifacts and it is for these trinkets of power or information about the location of such an item that many mages call up what they may not be able to put down. Of course, bartered goods don't always remain in the hands of the mage that traded for them and some Artifacts, though otherworldly in nature, have been here all along.

### *Abyssal Blood (Artifact ●●●●●)*

**Mana Capacity:** None

By extending their studies outside the normal realms of magic, many summoners hope to find an edge that will help them overcome more powerful enemies. Only the truly desperate, bitter or insane turn to Abyssal entities for help. No friend to mages or magic, a summoned Abyssal creature will always ask for more in return for its assistance than a sane mage would be willing to pay. The "favors" granted by the Abyss are numerous and varied, but Abyssal Blood could be said to be one of the most common. After paying whatever price was set by the Abyssal being, it imbues the very blood of the mage with the taint of the Abyss. As a by-product, this process attacks the life-force of the mage, permanently reducing his Health by one dot (future increases in Stamina may offset this reduction, but the lost Health is never restored). Sickened by the transmutation, the mage vomits the tainted blood (suffering four points of bashing damage in the process) into a ready container. The reeking, partially congealed mass that results can then be put to use by the mage. This process must be repeated every two weeks to purge the build-up of Abyssal Blood in the mage's system. If the mage is unable to vomit up the poison, he suffers one point of resistant aggravated damage each day until he does so.

Each "dose" of Abyssal Blood generated by the mage provides enough material for four uses. Simply put, Abyssal Blood is a poison to mages that haven't been tainted by the Abyss. The poison must be either consumed or injected into the body of a mage for it to work. Upon the introduction of the Abyssal Blood into the body of a victim, the mage feels slightly ill, but no more than that. The poison races through his system and then waits to be triggered. Each time a poisoned mage spends a point of Mana (from any source) he suffers two points of lethal damage and if the Mana was used to cast a spell, that spell automatically causes Paradox. Abyssal Blood is immune to any magical method of removing toxins and spending Mana only excites the poison more. The only cure for Abyssal Blood is to spend 48 hours without spending Mana.



Though attempts have been made to spread the disease of Abyssal Blood by forcibly draining carriers or through other efforts, none has yet been successful. Lack of success hasn't kept mages that would rather not deal directly with Abyssal entities to gain their questionable blessings from continuing experimentation.

### *Chthonian Quill (Artifact ●●●●●●)*

Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4

**Mana Capacity: 12**

This Artifact resembles a writing quill made from the feather of an unknown species. Eight or so inches in length, the feathers of the Quill are an almost black dark blue and have an oddly metallic quality about them. The edges of the feathers are sharp enough to draw blood from the unwary and rustle with a sibilant whispering noise when used to write that is distracting and unnerving. The Quill can be used to write with normally, given an ink pot and some patience, but it's when the Artifact is used dry that it shows its real power. The ritual use of the Chthonian Quill begins by writing entreaties to those that stand outside the realms of time and space on a flat, vertical surface. As the user scribes her missive to those beyond, she feels sharp pains twinge through her body. A quick examination of the writing on the wall, as it were, reveals the source of this discomfort fairly rapidly.

Used with its intended purpose in mind, the Quill draws blood directly from its user to write. Every symbol, letter and dot is etched in the crimson lifeblood of the user. As he writes, the mage may choose the exact amount of bashing damage taken from this sacrifice. The ritual is completed by drawing a box around the written lines and expending a point of Mana. The scribbled blood turns black and the edges of the drawn box sink into the wall as an unearthly

chill settles on the room. The black of the writing continues to spread until it completely fills the box, which then resembles what it truly is: a doorway to the Other.

The blood sacrifice of the user is enough to summon a minor extradimensional entity, called a *p'tak* by fell texts that speak of such things, into the Fallen World. Each time the doorway is opened it remains that way just long enough for a single entity to pass through. The *p'tak* follows the commands of the mage that summoned it for one hour per point of bashing damage sustained by the mage as he scribed his call. A summoned *p'tak* isn't immediately returned to its home dimension when the duration for control is up; it is instead freed from service and can pursue whatever goals it chooses, unless some other method is found to control it. It should go without saying that the goals of the *p'tak* and those of the mage aren't necessarily the same. Cautious mages look for ways to dispose of the *p'tak* before the duration expires, since the only command it won't follow while "controlled" is a command to return whence it came.

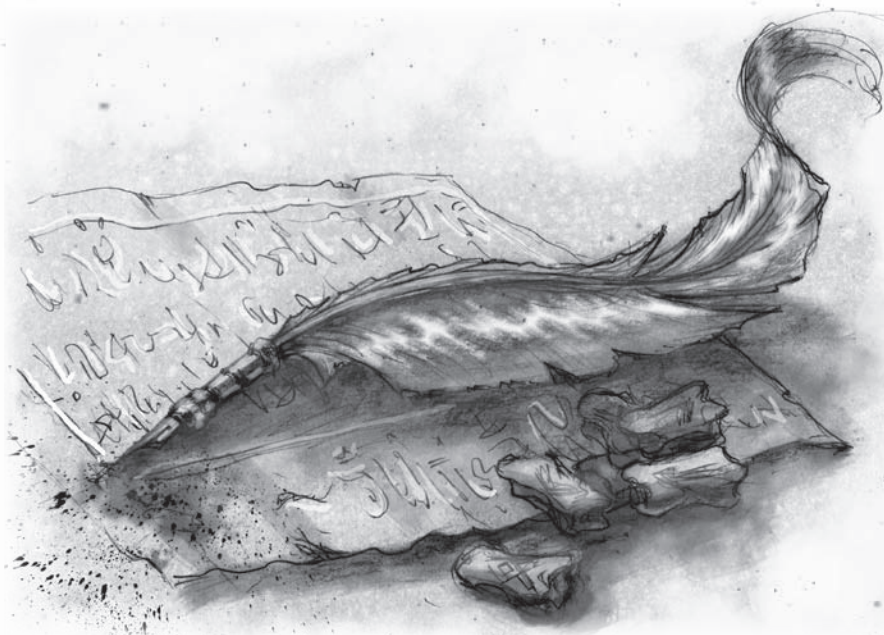
### *Seal of Solomon (Artifact ●●●●●●●●)*

Durability 5, Size 1, Structure 6

**Mana Capacity: 15**

One of the greatest Hebrew monarchs to ever sit the throne of a united Israel was Solomon the Wise, son of David. King Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem and placed the Ark of the Covenant in its walls. Legend says that God was so pleased with the temple and with the reign of Solomon that He offered Solomon any one wish. In humility, Solomon asked only for wisdom and God, pleased by this, gave him not only wisdom but a ring that bore the true name of God within a six-pointed star. The ring gave Solomon power over demons, which he used to force the demons to build new constructions throughout the nation of Israel. The ring became known as the Seal of Solomon and the six-pointed star the Star of David. When Solomon died after a triumphant 40 year reign, a demon tricked one of Solomon's widows into giving it the ring. To ensure the Seal could never be used by humans to enslave its kind again, the demon hurled the ring into the sea, where it was devoured by a fish and was lost.

The use of the word "demon" in the stories of Solomon is subjective. In the times of the writings that speak of the Seal, nearly any intelligent, otherworldly creature that didn't revere God was dubbed a demon. Some accounts of the uses of the Seal of Solomon say it allowed him not only to control demons, but also animals and *jinn*.



## P'tak

**Description:** Vaguely dog-like in appearance, the p'tak stands three feet tall at the shoulder and walks on all fours. Its hide is a bald, mottled grey-green color, with strange squirming bumps that move just under the skin. Each of the p'taks legs ends in a stubby, four-fingered hand, complete with opposable thumbs and steely-gray claws. The head of the p'tak is aquiline with a blunted beak filled with tiny rows of teeth. The dirty-yellow eyes of the p'tak are set in two rows of three.

**Storytelling Hints:** P'tak are possessed of limited intelligence and are mainly creatures of instinct. Just smart enough to follow the orders of its summoner, when a p'tak becomes uncontrolled it falls back into its instinctual hunt-kill-eat pattern of existence. Fearless, p'tak will never retreat in the face of overwhelming odds, instead attempting to call more of its kind to aid it (see below). A p'tak sounds a terrifying dissonant roar when it attacks; a noise that seems to go straight to the brain. If killed, the body of the p'tak melts away to nothingness.

Unlike most beasts from the Fallen World, a p'tak makes no effort to kill its prey before it begins to feed. The creatures attack to debilitate rather than to kill and then proceed to slowly devour their victim, feasting in such a way as to keep their prey alive as long as possible. Though unverifiable, mages speculate that p'tak enjoy the sounds and sensations of pain and terror fully as much as they enjoy eating the flesh of their victims.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 0, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** None

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Deceptive Stride) 4, Brawl (Tooth and Claw) 5, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Bellowing Roar) 5

**Willpower:** 2 (maximum 10)

**Essence:** 15

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 23 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 3

**Health:** 9

**Armor:** 2 (unnatural hide)

### Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Claw	2(1)	14	Ignores Armor
Bite	3(1)	15	Ignores Armor

### Numina:

• **The Color of Futility:** The mottled hide of a p'tak shines a dull, yellowish color that saps the will of anyone who stares too long at the entity. Any character who watches a p'tak for more than one turn must roll Resolve + Composure minus the total number of turns spent watching the creature. If the roll succeeds, the character suffers no ill-effects. If the roll fails, the character begins to believe she is doomed and loses a point of Willpower. Any character reduced to zero Willpower as a result of this effect falls into a catatonic state until removed from the p'tak's vicinity. Each point of Willpower lost by



a character is absorbed by the p'tak and it may absorb any number of Willpower each turn up to its maximum.

- **Fetid Humors:** A p'tak isn't made of flesh and bone in the way humans understand. The body of a p'tak *seems* organic, but alien humors run beneath what passes for its skin. Exposed to the material realm by wounds, these humors react with the reality of the Fallen World in unexpected ways. Each wound suffered by a p'tak increases its Armor Rating by one. P'taks never suffer from wound penalties and may spend one Essence each turn to heal a point of damage (always healing the most serious damage first).

- **The Spaces In-Between:** An uncontrolled p'tak quickly reverts to its instinctual behavior, hunting and attacking any nearby prey. Inside the mouth of the creature are sponge-like sacks that absorb the blood of their unfortunate victims and stores it. Each time a p'tak bites a sentient creature (only sentient blood is stored), half the damage inflicted by the bite is converted into stored blood, to a maximum of six stored points. If an uncontrolled p'tak is outnumbered by its prey or stalks a creature obviously stronger than it, the p'tak uses the stored blood and the Willpower stolen from its victims to summon more of its kind. Once per day, a p'tak may summon others of its kind as an instant action that requires the p'tak to spend five points of Willpower and three points of blood. P'tak summoned by other p'tak are considered uncontrolled and it should be easy to see how a serious infestation could happen. Some rumors say that if enough p'tak use their summoning power at the same time, they can open the way for much more dangerous entities to enter the Fallen World.

Because of a p'tak's innate summoning ability, mages must be cautious in their battles with p'tak not to present an initial threat strong enough for the creature to immediately begin summoning backup. Smart cabals will hide their numbers from the creature, sniping at it from the shadows until they are sure they can kill the thing before it can call for help.

Modern Awakened scholars that have studied the legends believe that ring might have had influence over any entity non-native to the Fallen World. A handful of mages believe the entire Solomon myth might be a reference to the power of humanity over the Supernal being lost in the sinking of Atlantis and the severing of the realms. They point out that the ring was lost to the sea in the same way Atlantis was, both events ending humanity's magical supremacy. More recently, the journal of a missing Moros, recovered from her sanctum in Greece at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, described the discovery of a ring with properties and design similar to the Seal of Solomon. According to the Moros, her cabal found the ring in the body of an enormous fish that had been causing problems for local fishermen. The last journal entry before her disappearance states that she and her cabal were intent on traveling to Israel to determine the truth about their discovery.

The Seal of Solomon is a golden ring with a filigree of a six-pointed star. Through some oddity of mystical design, the ring will only fit on the ring-finger of the owner's right hand. The Seal holds a persistent power that makes the wearer immune to possession and shields his mind from the influences of any sentient being alien to the material realm. Wearing the ring allows the user to speak and read any language, including extradimensional languages. By spending a point of Mana and a point of Willpower, the owner of the Seal of Solomon can attempt to banish any creature not native to the material realm. The owner rolls his

Wisdom rating versus the current Willpower of his target in an extended contested action with a target number of 10. If the user wins the contest, his target is banished. If the target wins the contest it is immune to the banishment powers of the Seal of Solomon for a year and a day. The Artifact can also be used to break pacts made between beings of the material realm and alien outsiders. To break a pact the owner touches the Seal of Solomon to the forehead of the supplicant and both spend a *dot* of Willpower. It is worth noting that most entities won't appreciate being cheated out of their due and are likely to seek alternative means to punish those involved in breaking the pact.

Mages that own the Seal of Solomon are expected to behave wisely and honorably, and the ring punishes them if they do not. Any roll made to resist degeneration while in possession of the Artifact suffers a one die penalty.

*Symbol of Negation (Artifact ●●●●●●)*  
Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 5

**Mana Capacity:** None

The Symbol of Negation is a small, flat disc (about the size of the top of a soda can) made from bronze, etched with a single Abyssal rune on both sides. For mages, the metal of the Artifact is painful to touch, searing bare skin with an icy chill. Obviously Abyssal in nature, even carrying the Symbol of Negation has a negative effect on mages, reducing their maximum amount of Mana by one. The

Artifact has zero Mana Capacity and cannot be recharged; any Mana directed at it is simply absorbed and devoured. Typically, the Symbol of Negation is placed in a necklace setting that allows it to be worn and utilized without having to touch it directly.

The Symbol remains quiescent until brought into the presence of Awakened magic. Each time a mage casts a spell within 50 yards of the Artifact, the runes on it glow with a soft, amber light. The very nature of the thing opposes magic and, even unbidden, the Artifact attempts to counter any spell cast within its reach. All spells cast within sensory range of the owner suffer a -2 penalty. The owner maintains enough control over the Symbol of Negation to keep it from interfering with his own spells and, by concentrating, can direct its power toward specific targets. Each time an opponent within sensory range casts a spell, the user may spend one Willpower as a reflexive action to attempt to focus the Artifact's hatred of magic to counter the magical effect. The owner rolls the Artifact rating of the Symbol (seven dice) and if she gains more successes than the Potency of her opponent's spell, the casting is disrupted and negated.

The secrets of making a Symbol of Negation are unknown to mages and they can only be obtained by bartering with an Abyssal being. Along with any other agreements made, the cost of purchasing the Artifact is always a *dot* of Gnosis, plucked from the soul of the prospective owner. As is the case with the creation of a soul stone, carving out Gnosis limits the mage's future magical potential and should be considered an act of hubris for mages of Wisdom four or higher (roll three dice). The Gnosis is used to forge a Symbol of Negation and to bind the Artifact to the owner. A Symbol can be taken by force and used by another mage, only as long as the original owner remains alive. If the mystic link between the mage and the Artifact is broken, the Symbol of Negation fades away, its Abyssal power released to poison the Fallen World.

### *Writs (Imbued Item ●●●●●)*

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2

**Mana Capacity:** None

A Writ is a specially prepared Imbued Item intended to assist mages or Sleepers with summoning, banishing and binding spells. Each Writ is prepared with a specific summoning in mind and the nature of that summoning determines the method of creation. A Writ that is created to assist in the summoning of an entity from Stygia would be created using items mystically sympathetic with that Supernal Realm, such as lead, embalming fluid and paper (paper can easily be construed to represent Death and Matter). The mage might use the lead to fashion his writing implement, mix the embalming fluid with his ink and use the lead pen and ink/embalming fluid mixture to scribe his spell of summoning on the paper for later use.

Along with the usual requirement for making an Imbued Item (see **Mage: the Awakening**, p. 225), creation of a Writ requires an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll with a target number of 10, with each roll equal to 20 minutes. Using a Writ allows a Sleeper to summon, banish or bind creatures from other realms (usually to their peril), excepting the Supernal. Even through use of a Writ, the connection a Sleeper has to the Supernal is too tentative to achieve direct contact. Used by a mage, the process used to manufacture a Writ empowers his spell and gives the casting roll the rote action quality. If two or more Writs are used in concert to produce the same effect, the casting can be performed as a teamwork action (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134), provided every Writ was created by the same mage. A group casting does not benefit from the rote action bonus.

### *Supernal Echoes*

Even if not all mages can agree on whether Atlantis and its Celestial Ladder were a myth, most mages do agree that the Supernal Realms used to be much closer to — or even co-existent with — the Fallen World. Similarly, most mages are willing to admit that whatever event served as the catalyst for the separation was likely cataclysmic. There can be little doubt that this cataclysm was sudden and violent. Pieces of both realms were likely sundered and cast adrift in an alien landscape. Standing as they did on the border of the Supernal and material realms, the Watchtowers could very likely be an example of the material realm lost to the Supernal. The Artifacts dubbed Supernal Echoes by Pentacle scholars are remnants of the Supernal stuck in the material.

Most Supernal energies or creatures stranded in the material realm quickly dissipated after the sundering. Those that survived were bound to physical manifestations and became the Artifacts or other magical tools chased by mages to this day. Rather than being bound, Supernal Echoes were transformed; their Supernal energies calcifying into physical forms. Without the pure energy of the Supernal to power them, Supernal Echoes fell into dormancy, waiting, as it were, for an infusion of mystical force to revive them. It takes a canny eye, a fair amount of occult knowledge and a certain mystical sympathy for a mage to discriminate between one of these calcified remains and a standard Artifact. Viewed with mage sight, Supernal Echoes only reveal their magical nature to Arcanum similar to the Supernal Realm from which they originated. Only mages using mage sight of Death and Matter Arcana would glimpse the magical potential of a Supernal Echo from the tomb land of Stygia, for example. Viewed with other Arcanum, the object would appear just like any other mundane item.

Supernal Echoes take the shape of physical objects relevant to their resonance or that have been touched by the



Supernal in some way. A single raindrop that originated in the Aether might have seeped into the ground and taken on the shape of a diamond. These forms aren't fixed. Echoes are somewhat psychoactive in nature, taking on forms that fit in with their surroundings, even if those surroundings change. A Supernal Echo from the Primal Wild — buried in the foundations of a building — that originally calcified in the shape of an extinct animal might change shape to that of a rat or pigeon. Regardless of the form they take, Supernal Echoes share the enhanced durability of normal Artifacts.

Even after their mystical nature has been revealed, most mages are likely to believe they've stumbled across an Artifact of some sort. Certainly Supernal Echoes can be used as simple Artifacts. They store Mana and provide a minor boost to spell casting, but this is the least beneficial manner to employ the power of a Supernal Echo. Mages that correctly identify the Supernal Echo for what it is realize the rare treasure they hold. Though it isn't possible to return the Echoes to the Supernal to recharge them, the magical wellsprings called Hallows can revive the powers of the Echoes. Placed in a Hallow, Supernal Echoes absorb the free Mana that flows from such places and work changes on the Hallow that resonate with the Supernal Realm to which the Echo belongs. A fully energized Supernal Echo is a powerful magical tool and resource. The cost of reviving and using the Echoes can be steep, but most mages find the price is right.

Used as a simple Artifact, Supernal Echoes have a single persistent power that grants a +1 bonus to all spells cast with an Arcanum resonant to the Echo (see chart below for Supernal resonances). Supernal Echoes start out with zero Mana, but can be recharged in the same way as other Artifacts. Unlike "true" Artifacts, Supernal Echoes do not regenerate Mana on a daily basis. Supernal Echoes can hold a total of 11 points of Mana. (For more information on Artifacts, see **Mage: the Awakening**, p. 80.) Mages that study a Supernal Echo can uncover its true potential with research and experimentation. Experimentation is left as a roleplaying exercise, while research is performed as a standard extended action.

#### Supernal Resonances

Realm	Arcana
Aether	Forces and Prime
Arcadia	Fate and Time
Pandemonium	Mind and Space
Primal Wild	Life and Spirit
Stygia	Death and Matter

Once a mage figures out the manifest potential of a Supernal Echo, the next step is to secure a Hallow in which to "plant" the Echo. Supernal Echoes absorb all ambient Mana from a Hallow, meaning no mage can gather Mana while an Echo is present. Only Mana that flows directly

from a Hallow is pure enough to be absorbed for the purposes of recharging an Echo. Mana from other sources is stored in the Echo in the same way as Artifacts without contributing to the overall recharging. Echoes require a total of 35 Mana before they revive. If an Echo is removed from the Hallow at any point before reaching the 35 Mana threshold, the Echo immediately returns to dormancy and the process must begin anew.

A revived Supernal Echo begins to alter the nature of a Hallow, injecting its surrounding with hints of its Supernal home. An Echo from the Realm of Celestial Spheres might generate a constant static charge in the Hallow or cause the walls (or surroundings) to weep phantasmal rivulets of water, spiked with Prime. An Echo from the Realm of the Lunargent Thorn might create a localized field of slowed time or mystically bar entry to the Hallow to anyone who has recently broken a promise. Even though these atmospheric effects are magical in nature, and even if they come in solid form, they can't be used as Tass. Supernal Echoes continue to absorb all potential Mana from a Hallow after they revive. If a revived Echo is removed from a Hallow, the Echo returns to dormancy and must be revived anew. The Hallow will revert to its usual nature after 24 hours. For mages with a magical nature resonant with a revived Supernal Echo, stepping into the Hallow is like stepping into a reflection of that Supernal Realm. Some mages find the experience exciting and intoxicating, others are moved to tears by the renewed knowledge of what was lost.

Being what they are, Mages that take time to study a revived Supernal Echo eventually attempt to devise ways of using the Echo to provide more than interesting special effects. These studies can either be acted out in-game or the Storyteller can call for an extended research action. Regardless of method, characters should eventually discover they can manipulate the Supernal Echo to produce specific effects. Manipulating a Supernal Echo to produce an effect requires more from a mage than simple concentration. The mage must provoke reaction by exciting the Echo with physical stimuli or activities, similar to performing an oblation. A Supernal Echo from the Primal Wild might respond to a mage that cuts his hand then repairs the damage with a spell. An Echo resonant with Pandemonium might respond to an illusion that frightens onlookers. If the stimuli are deemed acceptable by the Storyteller, the character then rolls Arcanum + the favored Resistance Attribute of the mage's Path (Arcanum is determined by the Supernal resonance of the Echo). Mages that follow a Path that favors different Arcana than the Supernal resonance of the Echo suffer a -3 penalty to the roll.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Both the Supernal Echo and the mage suffer a paradox backlash. The Echo loses two points of Structure and the mage is subjected to an Anomaly (see **Mage: the Awakening**, p. 271).

**Failure:** No effect is generated.

**Success:** The intended effect is generated.

**Exceptional Success:** As above and the mage gains Mana equal to successes rolled.

With success, the character can generate one of the following effects:

- **Commune:** By drawing additional Mana from the Hallow, the Supernal Echo can summon the image of a Supernal entity to speak with the mage. The mage can ask the entity a number of questions equal to his highest ranking Arcanum resonant with the Supernal Realm contacted. Summoned entities will answer questions to the best of their ability and within their areas of understanding (see pp. 71 for more about Supernal entities). Generating this effect drains the Hallow of 10 potential points of Mana (i.e. the next 10 points of Mana that *would* have been produced by the Hallow).

- **Harvest:** By drawing additional Mana from the Hallow, the Supernal Echo can produce manifestations, called shards, of its Supernal home for use by the mage outside the Hallow. The exact form these manifestations take is dependant on the Supernal resonance of the Echo. A Supernal Echo resonant with Stygia might produce shards in the form of shattered pieces of tombstones. An Echo from the Aether might create shards in the form of tissue-thin images of angels. Shards can be drained of their energy as a reflexive action during a spell casting to increase the Potency of a spell at one-to-one ratio. Using a shard — or sometimes even carrying one — can have side effects (see the sample Supernal Echoes below for examples). Up to five shards can be harvested at one time and generating a single shard drains the Hallow of three potential points of Mana (i.e. the next three Mana that *would* have been produced by the Hallow).

- **Summon:** Not without reason, a Supernal Echo is rarely put to this use. An Echo *can* be forced to summon a Supernal entity, ripping it from the Supernal Realms (see p. 71 for more about Supernal entities). The summoned entity is bound to the mage that called it up and *must* obey his commands. Forcing a Supernal Echo to generate this effect permanently drains a Hallow of all Mana (the Hallow simply ceases to be) and destroys the Echo.

Below are five sample Supernal Echoes. Note that Supernal Echoes have no dot rating: this is intentional. These items are intended to be discovered during play and, honestly, the standard Artifact scale doesn't really apply. For reasons explained above, Supernal Echoes do not have a Mana Capacity listing.

### *Arcadian Ivy*

Durability 5, Size 5, Structure 8

It's possible that a single seed, tossed on the winds of Fate, was separated from Arcadia, coming to rest in the fertile soil of the material realm, to spawn Arcadian Ivy.

One of the rare living Supernal Echoes, Arcadian Ivy looks, smells (and presumably tastes) just like the common ivy that can be found creeping up walls or waylaying fences. Viewed with the magic of Fate or Time, Arcadian Ivy takes on a different hue: that of gleaming silver. Glistening coils of Arcadian Ivy wrap themselves in the double helix of infinity and sport tiny glittering thorns. Shining here and there among the ivy can be found golden-red roses that tinkle gently when touched by the wind. Transplanting Arcadian Ivy from where a mage has found it growing can be difficult and time consuming. With mundane plants, simply taking a snipping of the ivy would be sufficient to birth new growth. In order to move Arcadian Ivy, the mage must find the center of its power, the place where the feel of the Supernal is strongest and prune away the rest of the plant. The heart of the magic can then be transported to a Hallow and replanted in fresh soil.

As Arcadian Ivy absorbs the Mana from a Hallow it begins to grow, extending tendrils throughout the Hallow. When the Ivy has absorbed enough Mana to revive, it sprouts fresh flowers and the air around the Hallow becomes thick with an exotic fragrance that smells differently to each person. Time slows for those inside the Hallow, so that an hour spent near the Ivy is mere minutes to the outside world. A promise spoken in the presence of Arcadian Ivy is just as binding as a formal oath, backed by magic as per the Fate spell, "Swearing an Oath" (see **Mage: the Awakening**, p. 153). Indeed, promises made are one way of exciting the Ivy to generate an effect.


Used to Commune, stray leaves and fallen petals are swept into the air by a sudden breeze and form themselves in the shape of the Arcadian the mage intends to question. Harvesting the Ivy requires the mage pluck the roses from among the thorns and carry the flowers with him. The roses will not wilt even after they've been Harvested and their fragrance scents the mage who carries them, making him more likely to be trusted even when he shouldn't be (+1 to all Manipulation rolls). Any promises made while carrying a shard from Arcadian Ivy *must* be kept to the letter (not necessarily the spirit) of the agreement. The mage is simply unable to intentionally break their word. Drawing the magic from one of these lovely shards causes the rose to shrivel to dust. If Arcadian Ivy is used to Summon, the shining silver of the plant fades to a dull gray and the plant dies, slowly rotting away from rust-colored blight.

### *Celestial Lightning Rod*

Durability 5, Size 4, Structure 9

Lightning that escaped the Aether before the sundering of worlds raced across the skies of the material realm until it was drawn down to the Earth, attracted by the pull of iron. In time, Sleepers dug the iron ore from the ground and hammered it into new shapes, never diluting it with other metals. Eventually, the iron was reshaped into the form of a lightning rod and affixed to a roof. Even in its





slumber, the Celestial power within called to the mundane lightning of the Fallen World, delighting in the showers of sparks. Viewed with the magics of Prime or Forces, the Lightning Rod glows a vivid, electric blue. Spotting the Lightning Rod is the most difficult part of obtaining it. Even mages don't look up all that often to consider the ornaments people have tacked onto their roofs. Lightning Rod in hand, a mage can easily transport the Supernal Echo and affix it to the highest point of a Hallow.

Storm clouds tend to gather over the Lightning Rod as it absorbs the Mana of a Hallow. When the Lightning Rod has gathered enough Mana to revive, it begins to emit a low humming noise, fills the air with the smell of ozone and shocks anyone that touches it. Artifacts left in the Hallow overnight are drawn toward the Lightning Rod, like iron filings to a magnet and regenerate an additional point of Mana. The Hallow crackles with enough ambient electricity to overload delicate electronic equipment, burning out their computer cores. The intentional "sacrifice" of such electronic items can be used to excite the Echo. Resonant mages (at least three dots in Forces) that perform such a sacrifice can tap into the ambient power to cast their daily spells without expending Mana.

Used to Commune, the Lightning Rod reverses its charge and splits the air with a bolt of liquid lightning that splashes down into a puddle. By peering in the sparking water, the mage can see and hear the Celestial he wishes to question. Excited for Harvesting, the Lightning Rod oozes floating, golf ball sized spheres of the same liquid lightning. These shards are cool and pliant to the touch, feeling vaguely like water balloons. Any mage carrying one of these shards feels the calm remoteness of a gathering storm and gains a +1 bonus to all Composure rolls. When drained of their magic, the shards explode in tiny bursts that deal one point of resistant bashing damage to the user. If the Lightning Rod is used to Summon, it draws all the energy of the Hallow to it before imploding and vanishing forever.

### *Nightmarish Statue*

Durability 4, Size 3, Structure 7

The terrors that reverberate through the endless vaults of the mind take on tangible and illusory substance in the Realm of Nightmares. This energy, trapped in the Fallen World, coalesced in the shape of a grotesque onyx statue, its featureless profile hinting at angles that oughtn't to exist. Worshipped as an aspect of the gods by the primitive humans that found it, the Nightmarish Statue passed down through the eons from tribe to tribe until it was collected as an archaeological curiosity or fell into darkness. A mage might find the Statue as part of a museum exhibit or while delving among the ruins of a lost city. Viewed with the magics of Mind or Space, the Nightmarish Statue becomes even more disturbing, combining the worst features of

whatever most terrifies the mage with its skewed geometry. Depending on location, seizing the Statue from its resting place may be as simple as claiming the Supernal Echo or as complex as overcoming high-tech security.

As the Nightmarish Statue absorbs the Mana of a Hallow, its dimensions seem to grow and shrink, though it always occupies the same amount of space. Upon its revival, the sensation of being watched by the Statue fills the minds of those who visit the Hallow. Half-remembered nightmares flicker in the places between shadows, along with visions of atrocities committed halfway around the globe. Fear is an unspoken language and movement is an illusion of the mind. Anyone within the Hallow can communicate telepathically (willing or no) and mages needn't lift a foot to physically travel from place to place inside the Hallow. The easiest method of manipulating the Statue is by giving in to the terror it creates. Mages that sleep in the Hallow have awful nightmares, which excite the Supernal Echo to generate the desired effect.

Used to Commune, the Nightmarish Statue assumes the likeness of an inhabitant of Pandemonium. The shifting faces of these entities answer questions in faint voices that resonate in the mind. Harvesting the power of the Statue is a trial of the mind. Shards in the form of nightmares are injected, one after another, into the consciousness of the mage. Until the mage drains the nightmare shards to boost his spells he is subject to the Nightmares Flaw (see sidebar). By choosing to endure horrors for the sake of power, the mage gains a steely determination while haunted by a shard (+1 to all Resolve rolls). Used to Summon, the Nightmarish Statue shrieks and wails before crumbling to ash.

### Mental Flaw: Nightmares

Some people are naturally predisposed towards nightmares, perhaps as a result of events they have witnessed or just as the result of a weak psyche. People with this Flaw dread the hours they must give over to sleep and do so as little as possible. Each time the character beds down for the night she must roll Resolve + Composure. With success the character manages not to dream at all and regains the normal point of Willpower. If the roll fails, the character is plagued by nightmares and doesn't gain the benefits of a peaceful night's rest. Storytellers should feel free to modify the roll based on elements such as the Morality rating of the character, derangements, recent events or use of sleeping aids.

## Primal Totem

Durability 4, Size 2, Structure 6

They say that curiosity killed the cat. In the case of the Primal Totem (distinct from the entities of the Primal Wild), curiosity trapped the idea of the cat in the Fallen World. Drawn by the nature of the animal it emulated, this Supernal Echo was prowling along the borders of the material realm when the cosmos divided. Rather than be swept away forever, the "cat" focused its energy into a wooden figurine. The figurine, the Primal Totem, endured, its wooden form becoming petrified over the passing of time. The cat slumbers, dormant, in its rocky form, appearing to be nothing more than an oddly shaped hunk of petrified wood to those without the Sight to see. Viewed with the magics of Life or Spirit, the outline of the cat becomes more distinct and the figurine warms to the touch. The Primal Totem has spent years in tourist shops, dusty and ignored by Sleeper shoppers, decades in rock collections and centuries in the burial mounds of chiefs. Found, the Primal Totem can usually be acquired easily enough; an exchange of cash is usually all that's required to part the Echo from a Sleeper owner.

Spirits of all kinds, but especially cat spirits, tend to congregate around a Hallow while the Primal Totem absorbs Mana. When the Echo revives, it opens a doorway to the Shadow Realm, in the Hallow. Called a *locus* by shapeshifters, the doorway isn't quite as porous as a Verge, it is a place where spirits gather and may more easily pass into the material realm. The cat spirits act as guardians to the doorway, keeping more unwholesome spirits at bay. Living cats are drawn to the material side of the doorway, clustering in great furry heaps around the Primal Totem. In an odd way, the presence of the cats, both seen and unseen is comforting. Any wounded character who is brought into the Hallow heals naturally at three times the usual rate and the effects of magical healing are doubled. Mages with the ability to speak the Spirit Tongue find the cat spirits are unusually easy to communicate with and are agreeable to simple requests. Caring for the



cats by feeding and grooming them is one method of exciting the energies of the Primal Totem.

Used to Commune, the Primal Totem casts the reflection of the creature called upon in the cats' eyes, the entity's voice a disembodied specter issuing from the cats' open mouths. Spirit cats follow a mage that Harvests the Echo, silently pacing in Twilight, each spirit invested with a shard. The mage must take care not to offend the spirits by breaking their Ban or the spirits will desert him. If, for example, the Ban forbids the cats from getting wet, the mage must avoid water at all costs. In return for honoring their Ban, the spirits lend the mage some of their agility, granting him a +1 bonus to all Dexterity checks. The spirit cats stretch and yawn when a shard is drained, before retreating back to the Shadow Realm. Used to Summon, the Primal Totem becomes briefly animate, turning smaller and smaller circles in place as it slowly dwindles from sight. The door to the Shadow Realm is slammed shut and the cats abandon the Hallow.

## Stygian Coffin

Durability 5, Size 2, Structure 7

It's hard to pinpoint exactly what escaped from Stygia before the Supernal Realms were closed that calcified in the form of the Stygian Coffin. To Sleeper eyes, the Coffin is an old, unremarkable hinged box covered in fading gilt. Viewed with the magics of Death or Matter, the Stygian Coffin is made of solid gold with intricate carvings depicting death as a grinning skeletal reaper. Though it appears empty, each time the Coffin is opened, the mage remembers some possession he has lost or some loved one that has died. The very nature of the Stygian Coffin seems to confound Sleeper ownership. It is left behind during a move, misplaced after renovations or absently set out at the curb as trash. A mage is just as likely to find the Coffin in a trash bin as in a thrift store.

As it absorbs Mana, the Stygian Coffin brings a feeling of sepulchral melancholy to the Hallow. Mundane items left unattended have a tendency to go missing and visitors to the Hallow have a keen sense of their own mortality. Upon revival, the Coffin causes the air inside the Hallow to go still and material objects that enter the Hallow feel strangely malleable. Influenced by the nearness of the revived



Supernal Echo, resonant mages can see clearly into Twilight without resorting to magic, and transmuting spells require no Mana expenditure. Mages can excite the energies of the Coffin by engraving the names of recently dead family members into stone, without the use of magic.

Used to Commune, the Stygian Coffin opens and a shadowy image of the entity called crawls out to stand before the mage and speak its answers. When the Coffin is Harvested, heavy, lead coins with the faces of long dead monarchs appear in the Coffin as shards. While a mage carries a shard, he is forced to see the ghosts of the restless dead that wander the Earth. An unwary mage quickly learns the ghosts can touch him and many do just that, their longing for physical contact overwhelming after years of ephemeral existence. Forced to constant alertness to avoid the unwanted caresses of the dead breeds a certain wariness and mages in possession of a shard gain a +1 to all Wits rolls. Used to Summon, the Stygian Coffin opens and draws the power of the Hallow into its empty shell before collapsing in a heap of common stone pebbles.

## Numina

The myriad entities that mages summon wield many of the same abilities as commoner sorts of spirits (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 321), but some possess more rarified supernatural powers. These Numina are typically *only* found in the summoned entities specified under their respective descriptions; in the majority of cases, the abilities are proprietary to the types of spirits listed for them. Gulmoth, for example, don't invoke Trials, while the chthonic beings of the Underworld have no understanding of an Anomaly Paradox, let alone how to create one.

**Accelerate:** This Numen is proprietary to a handful of potent Arcadian Supernal spirits, though rare accounts exist of beings from unknown realms — perhaps those in which time, itself, has no meaning — possessing this ability, as well. On its initiative in a given turn, the spirit spends five points of Essence as a reflexive action and may act twice that turn, though only one of its two actions may involve the use of an Influence or another Numen.

**Astral Sojourn:** This Numen is often possessed by spirits from the various layers of the Astral Realm and, sometimes, by those descending from Pandemonium or even from the Abyss. Certain other particularly

unusual spirits possess this Numen, as well. The spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power + Finesse, with success enabling the entity to ascend into the Astral Realm. In the event that its way is barred (by a spell, for example), the spirit's successes are compared to those of the effect confining it. By spending an additional point of Essence per passenger, the spirit can take along with it the consciousnesses of willing individuals, who are then subject to all of the customary rules of the Astral reaches.

**Binding Vow:** This Numen is shared by certain Supernal entities descending from both the Aether and Arcadia, though it is also known to a variety of other spirits from various realms (Acamoth and Gulmoth, included), and some which are native to the Fallen World. To create a Binding Vow, the spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power + Finesse as a reflexive action while acting as witness to a promise willingly sworn. Some entities may be willing to accept words freely spoken while under duress, while others may not. A person unwilling to accept the use of this Numen upon him may reflexively contest it, using Composure + Gnosis. The use of this Numen is in every other way identical to the Fate 4 spell, "Sanctify Oaths" (**Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 157–8); identical enough, in fact, that any Awakened magic used to alter a Fate-based oath can similarly effect the Binding Vow. Rumors exist of spirits capable of inflicting even more potent bindings upon others, using a Numen version of the Fate 5 spell, "Geas" (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 160).

**Create Anomaly:** This Numen is unique to Abyssal spirits — either Acamoth or Gulmoth — and enables such an entity to create an Anomaly Paradox, attuned to a single Supernal Realm, appropriate to the spirit's nature. The spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power + Finesse as an instant action. The effective Arcanum dot level to determine the size of the Anomaly is equal to the creature's Rank, with no upper limit: Subtract the entity's Rank from 10 to determine an effective Wisdom score for the purposes of the effect's duration. Acamoth and Gulmoth with this Numen are rare, as a certain degree of connection to a given Supernal Realm is necessary to create such a Paradox.

**Derange:** This Numen is common to Acamoth and Gulmoth, as well as certain Supernal spirits of Pandemonium, some alien beings from outside of the known Realms, and a few terrestrial spirits (particularly those aligned with madness and similar concepts). The spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power

+ Finesse as an instant action, reflexively contested by the target's Resolve + Gnosis. On a success, the entity inflicts a Derangement of its choosing on the target, which lasts for a number of weeks equal to the spirit's Rank. A given subject may only be targeted by one use of this Numen at a time; until her mind heals, a person's psyche cannot be shocked into further insanity by way of this particular power.

**Essence Conversion:** Typically, only Supernal spirits of the Aether and Abyssal entities possess this Numen. The spirit may, at will, spend points of its Essence as an instant action to add, on a one-for-one basis, to the Mana pool of a willworker, out to the maximum allowed by his Gnosis. Aetherial spirits sometimes use this Numen as a gift or to aid a Theurgist in time of hardship, while Acamoth and Gulmoth almost invariably use it as a bargaining chip in their negotiations. It is possible that other types of spirits know versions of this Numen that enable them to create the different sorts of mysterious energies required by other supernatural beings.

**Fortify Material:** This Numen is known to some Stygian Supernal entities, as well as to a handful of Fallen World spirits associated with craftsmanship, alchemy, industry, and the like. The spirit rolls Power + Finesse as an instant action. For each success, it may spend a point of Essence to improve one of the following: an item's equipment bonus, its Durability, its armor value, its armor piercing quality (also, an item without the armor piercing quality can be given one through the use of this Numen). Each one of these traits may be improved by a maximum number of points equal to the spirit's Rank. These alterations last for the remainder of the scene.

**Gauntlet Control:** This Numen is unique to certain Supernal spirits hailing from the Primal Wild, though rumors exist of its possession by a handful of alien spirits from the unknown realms outside of the Tapestry. The spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power + Finesse as an instant action, with each success enabling the spirit to raise or lower the local Gauntlet strength by one, to a maximum of five or a minimum of zero. Note that a Gauntlet reduced to zero automatically creates a Verge (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 282). In the event that a spirit's use of this Numen is contested (by another spirit with the same power, for example, or by a mage capable of influencing the Gauntlet), the party scoring fewer successes subtracts them from those of the party with more successes, and the Gauntlet strength adjusts by that many points in the winner's desired direction,

to the maximum amount allowed by the power used by the winner.

**Ghostly Presence:** Many Supernal entities from Stygia possess this Numen, as do many from the Underworld and some Fallen World spirits associated with death and other such concepts. The spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power + Finesse (penalized by the local Gauntlet strength) as an instant action to gain the ability to interact with (and be interacted by) ghosts in Twilight for the remainder of the scene. As an instant action, the spirit may activate or deactivate this ability, however many times it wishes, during the course of a scene.

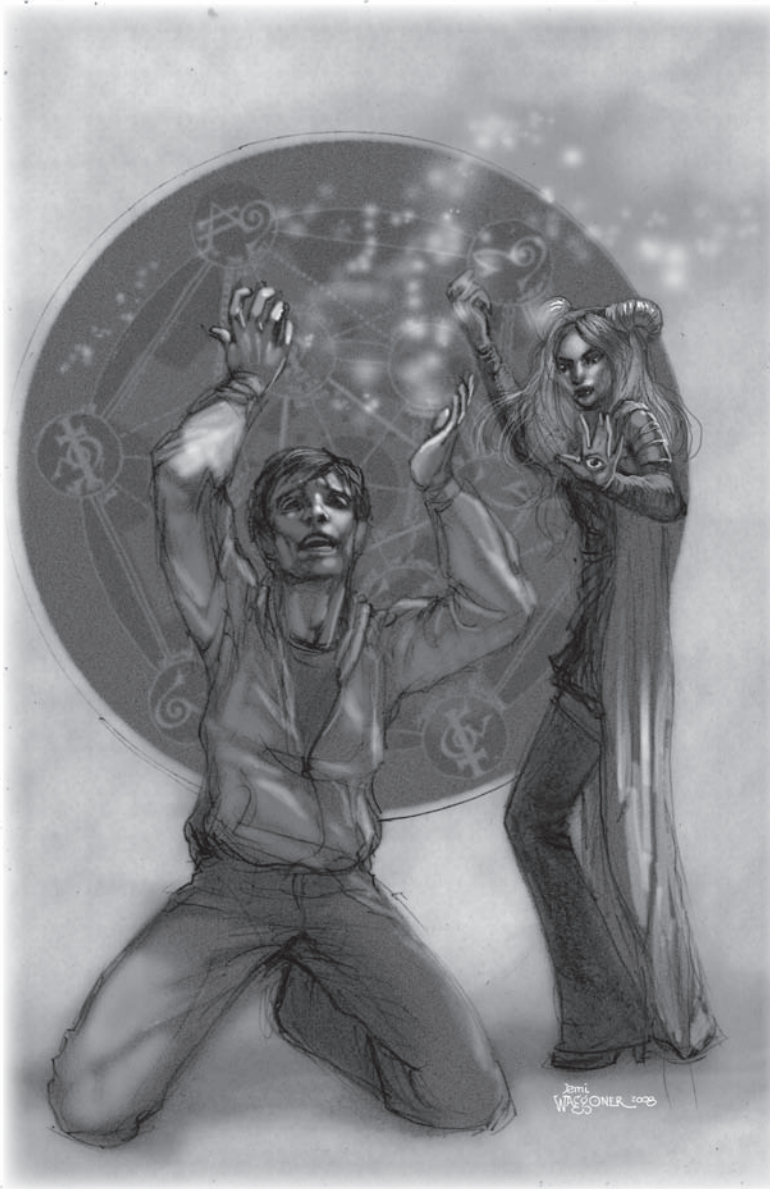
Some spirits of the Primal Wild possess a variant of this Numen that can be used to interact with Twilight familiars in a similar manner.

**Psychic Torment:** This Numen is possessed by a number of Daimonic Supernal spirits, as well as some Acamoth and Gulmoth, certain alien beings from unknown realms, and a few Fallen World spirits of suffering, despair, and similar concepts. The spirit rolls Power + Finesse, subtracting the target's Resolve. For each success, the target loses a temporary point of Willpower, to a minimum of zero. An individual may only be targeted by this Numen once in a given scene.

**Spirit Crown:** This powerful Numen is possessed only by a rare few spirits native to the Primal Wild. By spending a point of Essence and successfully rolling Power + Finesse as an instant action against another spirit (which reflexively contests with Resistance), the Primal entity may exert control over that spirit for the remainder of the scene, dictating its actions as the controlling spirit wishes. Other Supernal spirits not native to the Primal Wild are immune to the use of this Numen, as are certain alien entities from outside of the Tapestry, but even Acamoth and Gulmoth can be bound through its use.

**Trial:** This Numen is unique to Supernal summonings and is only possessed by such entities for the purposes of testing the worthiness of the summoner by the standards of her Path's Realm. The spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power + Finesse as a reflexive action to create the willworker's Trial (which is typically a standardized, rather than personalized, scenario of some sort); this may take the form of an otherworldly vignette with which the mage must interact, a puzzle to solve, an ordeal to overcome, or any other form appropriate to the realm from which the entity descends. Often, mages subjected to Trials feel as though they are brought to the very border of a





Path Realm, though the Trial exists within the soul of the individual, rather than manifesting externally.

A mage is capable of refusing a Trial, though this almost always ends the Supernal summoning prematurely, as the spirit judges her unworthy of aid or guidance. Even if the willworker accepts and embarks upon the Trial, it can be quite easy to fail in many cases; though the Supernal spirit *might* determine a supplicant to be worthy if she strongly embodied the virtues of her Path, even in failure.

See the Supernal entities of Chapter Two for numerous examples of the Trial Numen in use. Note that

not all Supernal beings possess Trial, as not all require tests of the specific sorts created by this Numen.

**Underworld Gate:** This Numen is used only by some Supernal spirits of Stygia and those native to the Underworld, and potentially by a scant few Abyssal entities. The spirit spends a point of Essence and rolls Power + Finesse as an instant action, with success opening a doorway into the Underworld for the remainder of the scene. By spending an additional five points of Essence a day, however, the spirit may keep the Underworld Gate open for considerably longer. The Underworld Gate must be opened at the location of a doorway or other portal (the mouth of a cave, the shaft of a well, or a free-standing arch, for example) and may be freely used by any being on either side of the gate for as long as it remains open.

**Usurp Vice:** Certain Daimonic Supernal spirits possess this Numen, as well as a handful from the Aether, and a number of spirits native to the Abyss. A handful of especially potent goetic demons also know this Numen, as do some Fallen World spirits aligned to disparate vices (or the concept of vice as a whole). Whenever a character within sensory range of the spirit would regain Willpower through the indulgence of her Vice, the spirit may reflexively roll Power + Finesse, reflexively contested by the target's Resolve + Gnosis. If the spirit succeeds, the character does not recover a point of Willpower (though she is treated as though she did, meaning that

subsequent actions that resonate with her Vice will not yield a point of Willpower); instead, the spirit gains a point of Essence.

**Versatile Energies:** Certain rare spirits from various alien realms possess this bizarre Numen, which enables them to spend points of Corpus, Essence, and Willpower interchangeably. It is possible that a handful of spirits from elsewhere (perhaps associated with adaptability, evolution, or other such concepts) might possess this Numen, as well, or a slightly more limited form of it (only enabling direct conversion between two of the three traits, for instance).

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*Do you see these circles? Do you know what they are? What they mean?*

*Oh, I'm sure you've seen their like, before,  
and you're thinking of several clever answers to my questions,  
none of which is the answer.*

*These are the doorways through which I welcome wonders and terrors  
into this Fallen World and bind them to my service.*

*And, so, these circles are wonder and terror. They are power.*

*— Heliodromus, Mystagogue and Summoner*

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