



MONTE COOK'S ARCANAE UNEARTHED:

# MYSTIC SECRETS

THE LORE OF WORD AND RUNE



A SOURCEBOOK BY MIKE MEARLS



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BY MIKE MEARLS

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INTRODUCTION:

# The Power of Magic

*If there's magic, it's fantasy.*

*That's one of the simplest ways to describe fantasy in terms of games and fiction.*



**M**agic plays a key role in almost every fantasy setting, and the world of *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* is no different. If magic is rare, when it does appear, it's an important event. If magic is common, then the race for power becomes a competition to see who can master the mightiest spells and artifacts. Beyond those simple descriptions, magic is different for every fantasy world.

In the Lands of the Diamond Throne, magic plays an important but sometimes subtle part in daily life. The sibecai farmer who performs a ritual to learn when to plant his crops uses magic in much the same way as the magister who hurls mighty bolts of energy at his foes. They might operate on a different scale, but at the end of the day they both need a touch of magic to make their way through the world.

*Mystic Secrets: The Lore of Word and Rune* focuses on how magic is different in the Lands of the Diamond Throne. It looks at rituals, runes, and other factors that separate *Arcana Unearthed* from other settings you may have gamed in. Whether you are a doughty warmain or a cunning magister, there's something in this book for you to use. The chapters cover the following topics:

- **Chapter One: Rituals and Ceremonies:** The folk of the Diamond Throne place a lot of faith in the power and meaning behind their rites. While many of these acts are valuable

for their emotional and symbolic rites, others create magical effects valuable to adventurers. From bonds—close links between people and things—to the various ceremonies practiced by each race, this chapter provides you with everything you need to know about the rituals of the land.

- **Chapter Two: Runes of Might:** Runes are far more than a system of writing or symbols. They embody many of the concepts important to making the world of the Diamond Throne the unique place it is. This chapter provides more options for runchildren, introduces their sworn enemies—the horrific heralds of annihilation—and gives information on binding and using minor rune manifests. It also describes new runes for runethane player characters (PCs) to master.
- **Chapter Three: Mystic Sites of the Diamond Throne:** The land is alive with magic. In some areas, it is so powerful that it alters how spells function and creates other potent effects that clever people can bend to their own uses. This chapter looks at how magic and history can alter locations within the land and provides three sample locales.
- **Chapter Four: Spells of Power:** The spells of the Diamond Throne lands are as unique as the people who cast them. This chapter provides new spells directly useful to casters of all types, from 1st to 9th level.
- **Chapter Five: Magic Items:** The new items in this chapter, including rune weapons and rune templates, can provide a potent boost to any character.

## HOW WILL THIS BOOK IMPROVE MY GAME?

All too often in games, magic becomes a mundane part of the background. A spellcaster who can send explosive balls of flame at his enemies has all the wonder and mystery of a loaded pistol. *Mystic Secrets: The Lore of Word and Rune* tries to counter that tendency by focusing on the unique aspects of *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* and emphasizing the everyday magic that can touch a character's life.

Runes and ceremonies are vital to the folk of the Diamond Throne. Barely a day goes by when they do not see a rune or complete a minor ritual. By investing magical power in such things, these rules emphasize runes and rituals. Characters might complete a helpful ceremony before

heading out on an adventure and should recognize the power and importance of runes. Whenever possible, the new rules given here are grounded and justified within the setting's context. Nothing exists in a vacuum—you won't see any floating bonuses, modifiers, or special abilities that mean little beyond the numbers and rules on a character sheet.

This emphasis makes *Mystic Secrets* useful to all characters, not just spellcasters. While the new spells and items are slanted toward such magic-using PCs, the rituals, rune manifests, and bonds are potent tools for any heroic character.

## USING THIS BOOK

*Mystic Secrets: The Lore of Word and Rune* is designed in segments, allowing you to pick and choose the parts of the rules to use in your campaign. As a DM, it is best to read through this entire book and find the parts that appeal to you. Over time, you may find the opportunity to introduce rituals or new runes to the characters. Don't forget that non-player characters (NPCs) and villains are just as likely to use these new abilities as the player characters themselves. If the players don't take rituals seriously, they may do so after their enemies turn ceremonial magic against them.

With its emphasis on bringing out some of the unique aspects of *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*, this book fits effortlessly with games that use material from *The Diamond Throne* campaign sourcebook. Even if you use a homebrewed setting based on *Arcana Unearthed*, the rules here draw logical conclusions from the tone and feel of the core book. The introduction of *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* covers the themes and ideas explored here, along with some insight into the design process.

Finally, even if you don't play or run an *Arcana Unearthed* game, it's fine to use the material here in any fantasy campaign. The ceremonies and rituals are balanced against character level, as are the rune manifests (see Chapter Two). Since ceremonies and rituals cost money to complete, you can use the standard guidelines for character wealth or simply limit the amount of treasure you make available in the game to control their use. The spells in Chapter Four can be ported over without change, as can the mystic sites in Chapter Three.

## BREAKING IT DOWN

As mentioned earlier, this book is of use to spellcasters and nonspellcasters alike. The new rituals in Chapter One can benefit any class, as they pres-

ent flexible new abilities that characters can gain simply by paying a gold piece cost. Warmains, champions, totem warriors, and mage blades in particular find the new rules for item bonds useful, because they allow these characters to forge a greater attachment to their favorite items. Since mage blades can take Knowledge (ceremony) as a class skill, they can quickly master the various rituals needed to establish a bond with a weapon, such as their athame. Greenbonds, runethanes, witches, akashics, and magisters can use Knowledge (ceremony) to master a broad range of rites to aid the party or even establish a bond of friendship among the characters.

The new rules for runes in Chapter Two obviously benefit runethanes, as they broaden their selection of abilities. The minor rune manifests—spirits you can summon and bind to perform a minor service—can prove useful to any character with ranks in Knowledge (runes) or Knowledge (ceremony). As your characters gain ranks in those skills, you can learn more ceremonies from Chapter One and/or the rituals needed to bind rune manifests. The expanded rules for runechildren give you options for joining the ranks of these heroes, while the dreaded heralds of annihilation give the DM new options for villains.

Chapter Three's mystic sites present a set of rules DMs can use to show how the land can affect and alter magical effects. The three sample sites provide a launching pad for adventures and serve as examples of highly magical locales.

The new spells in Chapter Four are useful to any character with a talent for magic. Chapter Five's new magic items—rune weapons—are primarily helpful for combatants, but the rune templates give you a method to increase any magical item's utility.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in *Mystic Secrets* appear on Monte Cook's website. To find the links to these free web enhancements, visit the book's product page online at [www.montecook.com/Mystic.html](http://www.montecook.com/Mystic.html).

This book refers to spells, feats, and other rules introduced in *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*, and also to rules from the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM.

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### Malhavoc Press

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## CHAPTER ONE:

# Rituals and Ceremonies

*In the world of the Diamond Throne, rituals form an important part of daily life. Many merchants and travelers engage in the Ritual of the Road Home before departing on a journey. A traveler kneels before the doorstep of her home, sprinkles dirt and sand from the ground there into her boots, and ties a small string around the door handle before departing.*

of the Road Home described above draws on two important symbols. The length of string tied to the door handle symbolizes the bond between the traveler and her home, while the dirt sprinkled into the boots shows the link between her path and her point of departure.

## SACRIFICE

A ritual demands some sort of sacrifice from those engaged in it. This symbolic willingness to give up material wealth demonstrates belief in a ritual. In many ways, belief is more important to a ritual than the actions taken to complete it. Stories and folk tales abound of those whose lack of faith led to their downfall, as a trusted ritual simply refused to work for them. Completing a ritual usually requires one to burn or otherwise consume incense, spices, oils, or other components. Generally speaking, the more expensive the sacrifice, the more powerful the ritual.

## CONNECTIONS

Rituals tend to draw a link between two separate people, places, or things. The Ritual of the Road Home creates a link between a traveler and his home. Other rituals form bonds between two people, between a person and a god, and so forth. The symbols in a ritual usually represent the person, place, or thing that the ritual's user wants to become connected to, while the sacrifice serves to illustrate his belief and trust in that connection.

## GAME MECHANICS

In terms of the game rules, ceremonies are a little like spells that anyone can cast, provided that you have the proper components and complete the actions associated with the ritual. Thus, ceremonies have two types of costs, measured in gold and deeds. You can usually buy the components needed to complete a ritual, but the actions it demands might require an entire adventure. Most of the simplest rituals require actions no more complex than speaking a few simple passages, completing a commonplace task, and using a set of mundane—though perhaps expensive—components.

**W**hile this behavior might strike you as silly or superstitious, in the lands of *Arcana Unearthed* these rituals are soaked with minor, though useful, magic. The dirt placed in a traveler's boots ensures that, regardless of where she wanders, she will always know the way back home. The string tied to the door handle remains in place until the traveler arrives at her destination, at which time it rotates so the knot points downward. If the traveler is taken prisoner or slain, the knot comes undone.

## THE BASICS

A ritual or ceremony (the terms are interchangeable) may be informal or codified into a complex rite. Its effects may be slight or great. Regardless, all rituals share the following basic themes.

### SYMBOLISM

Rituals are steeped in symbols and signs. They are abstract thoughts and hopes given a physical representation. For example, the Ritual





Some rituals may require an extensive quest to find unusual components, such as scales taken from a 1,000-year-old dragon, the eye of a slayer who has killed 100 men, or an orb of gold forged in the fires at the heart of the world. These ceremonies and rituals call upon epic powers that can change the course of history. The “Creating Rituals and Ceremonies” section starting on page 18 provides tips on balancing the cost of a ceremony and the power it provides.

Not every ritual has a gold piece cost for its components, and the vast majority of them have effects that cannot be measured in game mechanics. Before battle, a giant warmain may whisper the names of each warrior from her family who died in battle in the past century. While this personal ritual might not give her a bonus to attack rolls, it helps calm her mind and breed confidence that her ancestors watch over her.

## PERSONAL RITUALS

This section covers the personal rituals that have arisen among the people of the Diamond Throne lands. In game terms, a personal ritual has only minor costs to you (if any) and offers you only a story effect (not an in-game effect). Such ceremonies require only a few

moments of concentration, focus, and a few symbolic actions. This kind of ritual offers additional color to the roleplaying experience—it represents the simple benefits that farmers, merchants, and servants enjoy in their daily lives.

A character may know a total number of personal rituals equal to his Intelligence score. He can define which ones he knows during play. For example, a character about to enter a contract with a litorian chieftain could conduct a personal ritual that brings luck to both parties. This has no in-game effect, but the color and detail it adds to the game help bring the world to life.

## POWER RITUALS

As their name suggests, power rituals are far more potent than the personal rituals described above, although they include the same facets of symbolism, sacrifice, and connection. These ceremonies may demand important, expensive, and rare components, but they deliver magical effects to those who complete them. These rituals are popular with adventurers, travelers, and others who brave dangerous regions. Many adventurers learn a few power rituals in the course of their training and journeys.





## LEARNING POWER RITUALS

The rituals listed in this section are common throughout the land. Anyone can learn them, and many of them form an important part of daily life, provided you are the proper race.

A starting character knows a number of power rituals equal to 1 + his Intelligence modifier. There are three ways to learn new power rituals. First, as a character gains levels, he learns new power rituals if he gains ranks in Knowledge (ceremony). For each rank gained above 4, a character automatically learns one new power ritual.

In the second method, a character can take a week of study and a successful Knowledge (ceremony) check (DC 20) to fully learn a ceremony from someone who already knows it. PCs who lack this skill can attempt an Intelligence check with the same DC. You must study with your teacher for four hours each week to make this check.

In most cases, however, commoners use the third method to gain a power ritual: They spend long days and weeks learning these rituals from their parents and teachers. After six months of instruction, a character automatically learns a ritual, as long as his Intelligence score is 6 or higher.

Player characters can learn rituals in these latter two manners in addition to gaining ranks in Knowledge (ceremony). This reflects the fact that a ritual is nothing more than a complex series of chants and other acts. Most people can learn one with sufficient time and study. Regardless of the method a character uses to learn them, however, he cannot learn more than his maximum number of power rituals, as defined above.

Chapter Two: Runes of Power presents rituals related to rune manifests, elemental creatures that embody a specific runic concept or trait. In place of a power ritual, characters can choose to gain access to the ceremony needed to summon and bind one of those creatures. At lower levels, when characters have less money to spare on ceremonial components, these rituals make good choices.

## POWER RITUAL DESCRIPTION KEY

This chapter uses the following headers to describe the various power rituals offered here:

**Prerequisites:** A ritual may require a character to have certain skills or abilities in order to use it. For example, some rituals function only for spellcasters. Other rituals have racial prerequisites, reflecting the fact that only certain races can learn and use a particular ritual. For instance, a ritual with the “litorian” and “faen” keywords can be used only by those races.

**Components:** The materials needed to complete a ritual, along with their gold piece cost if applicable, are components. Unless otherwise noted, the process of completing a ritual consumes the components. One must buy new ones for each attempt.

**Actions:** Some rituals require special actions. For example, a ceremony for preparing a newly made forge might require a Craft check. Completing complex rituals might require daunting quests. The cere-

mony description lists the exact amount of time needed to complete the actions in parenthesis alongside the actions subhead.

**Effects:** This section lists the game mechanics that cover the consequences of the ritual.

Some of the descriptions below refer to colorful story elements, such as “speaking the twelve promises of the watcher’s fidelity” or “chanting the three maledictions against predators and thieves.” The actual words to these mantras are left open to individual players or DMs to create for their characters.

## GENERAL POWER RITUALS

All player character races can know the ceremonies listed in this section. Note that the vast majority of ceremonies in use throughout the land have no special magical effect. Power rituals are listed here because they affect the game’s mechanics, but your character might engage in other ceremonies to commemorate a new venture, recover from an illness, and so forth. Not everyone knows all power rituals, but in most villages a wise woman or elder should know a few of them.

### ARTISAN’S EXERCISE (GENERAL)

You achieve a clarity and focus of mind that allow you to attack your work with renewed vigor. The ritual shows you the fruits of your efforts in your mind’s eye, which allows you to modify your current actions to reflect the result you viewed.

**Components:** Diamond dust worth 50 gp and a small mirror worth 10 gp. This ritual does not consume the mirror.

**Actions (30 minutes):** Spread the diamond dust upon the mirror’s surface, then meditate for a short time. When your mind is clear, hold one of your tools or the object you’re working on above the mirror. As you stare into the reflection, you see visions of your work for the day. With the insight this prophecy gives, you can seek to avoid problems or adjust your work accordingly.

**Effects:** This ritual can grant one of two benefits. You can opt to gain a +4 bonus to a single Craft check for the day, such as a check made to mark your progress in a work, or you can opt to reroll a single Craft check you make. You must decide which option you wish to use before resolving the Craft check.

### BLESSING OF THE HEALTHY BODY (GENERAL)

Commonly performed by surgeons, midwives, and others who might tend to the ill, this ritual draws on a sick individual’s familial love and support to grant her the strength needed to throw off a disease.

**Components:** Four tears shed over the victim’s illness gathered in a glass phial, rare herbs worth 25 gp boiled in a stew

**Actions (4 hours):** Boil the herbs in a pot, adding the tears once the water begins to boil. Each person who donated the tears must then briefly dip a bare hand into the hot water (suffering 1 point of damage), showing their support and willingness to sacrifice for their loved one. Let the mixture stand for four hours before giving it to the afflicted.

## POWER CEREMONIES AND RITUALS

### General

<i>Artisan's Exercise</i>	<i>Grants a bonus to Craft checks</i>
<i>Blessing of the Healthy Body</i>	<i>Grants a +2 bonus to resist disease</i>
<i>Clear the Mind's Eye</i>	<i>Heals Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma damage faster</i>
<i>Dance of Celebration</i>	<i>Commemorates an important event</i>
<i>Reveal the Lost</i>	<i>Reveals location of lost item</i>
<i>Ritual of the Friendly Path</i>	<i>Shows the distance and direction to a spot</i>
<i>Ritual of Greetings</i>	<i>Determines a stranger's disposition</i>
<i>Ritual of Parting</i>	<i>Keeps track of ally's status over long distances</i>
<i>Ritual of Shared Repast</i>	<i>Creates additional food</i>
<i>Rumors of Wind and Rain</i>	<i>Teaches of upcoming weather</i>

### Ceremonies of Humanity

<i>Explorer's Benediction</i>	<i>Grants a basic knowledge of an unexplored area</i>
<i>Meditation of the Adaptive Mind</i>	<i>Changes a feat or skill</i>
<i>Ritual of Sustained Effort</i>	<i>Grants a bonus when engaged in long-term work</i>
<i>Song of Heroic Deeds</i>	<i>Spreads news of your deeds</i>

### Ceremonies of the Faen

<i>Incantation to Shared Libations</i>	<i>Grants faster healing during celebration</i>
<i>Oath of God's Remembrance</i>	<i>Grants a bonus when you discover a god</i>
<i>Ward of Hearth and Home</i>	<i>Grants a bonus to sense intruders</i>

### Ceremonies of the Giants

<i>Chant to Faithful Defense</i>	<i>Keeps track of a friend's condition</i>
<i>Chant to Stone's Spirit</i>	<i>Grants faster Craft checks when working with stone</i>
<i>Focused Effort</i>	<i>Grants a bonus to one skill, penalties to others</i>
<i>Homage to the Eternal</i>	<i>Ancestor's wisdom grants you a bonus</i>
<i>Insight of the Ages</i>	<i>Grants an intuitive glimpse into a decision</i>
<i>Oath of Retribution</i>	<i>Grants a bonus to avenge a friend's loss</i>

### Ceremonies of the Litorians

<i>Oath of Life Debt</i>	<i>Allows you to pledge service to one who has saved your life</i>
<i>Reflection of the Inner Eye</i>	<i>Grants confidence and faith in your honor</i>
<i>Test of the Red Claw</i>	<i>Tests a litorian's honor</i>

### Ceremonies of the Mojh

<i>Exercise of the Veiled Script</i>	<i>Makes script illegible to nonmojh</i>
<i>Finding the Lost Thread</i>	<i>Allows you to relive an event from your life</i>

### Ceremonies of the Sibeccai

<i>Exercise of Deep Sleep</i>	<i>Grants prophetic dreams</i>
<i>Remembrance of the Wild</i>	<i>Grants a bonus to natural attacks</i>

### Ceremonies of the Verrick

<i>Meditation of the Body</i>	<i>Improves your natural healing through meditation</i>
<i>Meditation of the Splintered Mind</i>	<i>Focuses your mind on a single skill to grant a bonus</i>
<i>Meditations on Truth</i>	<i>Improves the mind's defenses against psionics, trickery</i>



**Effects:** The person who drinks the mixture gains a +2 bonus to all saving throws to recover from a disease or poison for the next 24 hours. This bonus does not apply to diseases she is newly exposed to.

#### CLEAR THE MIND'S EYE (GENERAL)

Through ancient relaxation techniques and mantras designed to calm the battered mind, you improve your body's natural healing.

**Components:** A thick, ruby-encrusted clay bowl worth 100 gp, scented oils and herbs worth 200 gp. This ritual does not consume the clay bowl.

**Actions (24 hours):** Use the bowl to boil water, adding the oils and herbs throughout the day. Four times during the day, kneel before the boiling waters, inhale the steam from them, and repeat the healing mantras of Ul-Mantol, a leper whose disease proved resistant to magic. This giant, one of the first oathsworn, followed that path to repel the disease from his body. His mantras form part of many oathsworn characters' training, and they have acquired a powerful, symbolic value to others as well.

**Effects:** If you currently suffer ability score damage to Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma, you heal an additional point of damage in one of those attributes after resting for the day.

#### DANCE OF CELEBRATION (GENERAL)

Through the act of dance, you mark an important event in your life and share it with your friends and neighbors. This ritual makes the memories of the event all the more vivid, granting you better insight into its importance.

**Components:** Those who want to gain this ritual's benefits donate food and drink worth 500 gp and diamond dust worth 100 gp.

**Actions (1 day):** Present the food and drink to at least 15 guests. As they eat, drink, and celebrate, spread the diamond dust over an open area where the dance is to take place. Once the guests are sated, gather them into a circle and perform one of the five movements of sacred commemoration.

**Effects:** You gain added insight into the event that gave cause for the celebration. In game terms, select a single encounter that you overcame as part of the events. You (and only you) gain an experience point bonus of 10 percent for that encounter. You may gain this ceremony's benefits only once per year.

#### REVEAL THE LOST (GENERAL)

You slip into a trance and call out to a personal item you lost. In this calm state, your mind forms a clear vision of the object you seek.

**Components:** A golden thread worth 25 gp

**Actions (10 minutes):** Tie the thread around your finger and meditate on the item you seek. As a mental image of the item forms in your mind, you feel a tugging sensation on your finger that leads you to it.

**Effects:** You can locate any single personal object that lies within 100 feet of your location. A personal item is defined as anything you have owned or carried for more than one month.

#### RITUAL OF THE FRIENDLY PATH (GENERAL)

A favored ritual of explorers and wanderers, this benediction establishes a tie between a traveler and his destination. While he is on the road, he always knows the relative direction toward his goal and approximately how many days it takes to travel there based on his current mode of transportation and the intervening terrain.

This ritual can only be used to establish a tie to a city, town, village, or other place inhabited by those who are friendly or neutral toward you. For example, it fails to work if your destination is a hidden treasure vault or a castle held by a hated enemy. This ritual depends on amity and welcome to create its sympathetic tie.

**Prerequisite:** You must have traveled to this destination at least once before in your life.

**Components:** A needle left floating in a small cup of water and a fistful of dirt from the place to which you wish to journey

**Actions (10 minutes):** Place the dirt on the ground at your point of departure, forming it into a small pile. Set the cup atop it, with the needle in at least an inch of water. You and your companions kneel around the cup, join hands, and stare into the water. After a few moments, the needle spins around once for each day it will take you to arrive at your destination. When it is done, a brief image of your destination appears in the water. You then gain the benefits of this ritual (described below).

**Effects:** Until you arrive at your destination, or for a number of months equal to your Intelligence score, you always know the relative direction to your destination and can roughly estimate the number of total days of travel it will take you to arrive there, based on whatever means of transport are available to you. You gain a +2 insight bonus to Intuit Direction checks while this effect lasts.

#### RITUAL OF GREETINGS (GENERAL)

This elaborate ritual is used to ensure that those met on the road have good intentions. Few travel in the wilderness or in areas infested with thieves without knowledge of this ceremony.

**Components:** A piece of bread or some other morsel of food

**Actions (1 minute):** Both parties offer greetings in their native language, display their open hands, and place a piece of food on the ground. Then, while still facing each other, they move in a half-circle to pick up the food and take a bite. Usually, the two end with their backs to the other's friends.

**Effects:** If the food tastes good, the visitor means no harm. If it tastes bland, she is neutral. If it tastes putrid, she and her allies plan treachery. Note that the DM must determine this general measure

based on the NPC's current attitude. You could turn a hostile litorian into a friend, or give a friendly human a reason to attack you. The ritual by no means delivers an immutable answer.

#### RITUAL OF PARTING (GENERAL)

Used by friends on the verge of separating for a long period of time, this ritual helps maintain a tie between friends despite the miles between them.

**Components:** A small, steel bar, about 4 inches long, soaked in quicksilver. The process of creating this item costs 1,000 gp.

**Actions (1 minute):** The friends who wish to perform this ceremony each take hold of the bar. They exchange farewells and an oath to meet again. When their farewells are done, the bar splinters into pieces.

**Effects:** So long as all parties keep a piece of the bar, they can learn the others' general health and mood by grasping the piece and concentrating for 30 seconds. Any party who grasps the bar for a minute learns the relative distance and direction to his counterparts.

#### RITUAL OF SHARED REPAST (GENERAL)

You share a meal with an ally or friend, and in so doing turn a small amount of food into enough to feed you both.

**Components:** Food and drink for one meal, sacrificial coins or goods worth 5 gp

**Actions (1 minute):** Split the food and drink into two equal shares. Take the sacrificial offerings and burn them in the fire used to cook the meal or to provide light and warmth during the meal.

**Effects:** If you have a one-day supply of nonmagical food and drink, this ritual produces enough to last two people for one day. You can use this ritual only once per day, and you cannot use it multiple times on one supply of food. You cannot, for example, apply it three times to transform one day's worth of food into an eight-day supply. You cannot store the food for later use. You and the person who took part in the ritual must eat it during the course of the day.

#### RUMORS OF WIND AND RAIN (GENERAL)

This useful ritual allows you to gain insight into the weather for the coming week. While not always accurate—the spirits of wind and rain are capricious and flighty—it proves helpful for farmers and travelers across the land.

**Components:** A small net woven from silk worth 25 gp. The ritual leaves the net intact, allowing you to reuse it.

**Actions (30 minutes):** You and three friends sit in a circle, each holding one edge of the net. Your friends must remain quiet and still while you speak the litany of praise to sky, cloud, rain, and sun. Once this is done, the four of you stand and toss the net into the sky. It floats aloft for 15 minutes before slowly descending to the ground.

**Effects:** When the net lands, you can tell by sight and touch the general weather conditions for the next seven days. Seven bands now





cover the net, one for each day of the coming week. Each band along the net may be moist, dry, warm, cool, etc., to give you a general impression of how the weather will develop.

## CEREMONIES OF HUMANITY

Rituals devised and used by humanity tend to reflect this race's ability to fit into any environment, deal with a wide array of obstacles, and adapt to many situations. Humans are daring, curious, and ambitious, leading them to push the borders of knowledge ever outward.

### EXPLORER'S BENEDECTION (HUMAN)

Wherever the bounds of civilization lie, humans can be found there pushing them back. Some of the most accomplished explorers are human. This simple ritual has long been a favorite of those who venture out into unexplored territory. It gives an explorer the opportunity to look into the unknown and gain some shadow of the future.

**Prerequisite:** Wisdom 13. Only the wise and perceptive can gain useful insight from this ritual.

**Components:** A glass vial, a gold-edged black cloth worth 50 gp, and a mixture of perfumes, oils, and spices worth 500 gp, plus an accurate map of the region (left intact after the ceremony).

**Actions (1 hour):** Fill the vial with dirt collected from the ground on the night of the new moon. Wrap this vial in the black cloth. This cloth must be soaked in the mixture of spices, oils, and perfumes. On the night of the full moon, unwrap the cloth and open the vial. Then rub the dirt into your hands and point at the place on your map that you wish to learn about. In so doing, you gain insight into that location. Upon completion of this ritual, the cloth crumbles into dust and the mixture dries.

**Effects:** You gain basic knowledge of an area you wish to enter. You learn the character of its terrain—such as mountainous, desert, or jungle—and become aware of its typical weather. You must have an accurate map that shows the place's relative position, even if it is not depicted on the map. For example, you could point at the blank, outer boundary of a map to learn what lies beyond its edge. You gain a +2 competence bonus to Wilderness Survival checks made in that region for seven days after you enter it. You also gain a +2 bonus to Listen and Spot checks made there. Your DM defines the region's size, but usually it measures about 50 miles in diameter, centered on the spot where you pointed on the map.

### MEDITATION OF THE ADAPTIVE MIND (HUMAN)

Humanity is renowned for its ability to adapt to new circumstances. This ritual is perhaps one of the most important tools humans have in molding their skills to face a challenge, as it allows them to abandon old talents and abilities in favor of new ones. Few people conduct this ritual more than two or three times in their lives, as it is difficult and arduous to complete, but many human children in borderland areas learn it at a young age.

**Components:** A fistful of clay worth 1 gp, a small diamond worth 1,500 gp, and a tiny figurine of you worth at least 500 gp

**Actions (48 hours):** Place the figurine within the clay, working it so that the figure is trapped in the middle. Meditate over the clay for 24 consecutive hours, all while whispering the story of your life as you know it. When you reach the point in your life at which you first learned the ability you wish to discard, press the diamond into the clay and alter the rest of your history to reflect the ability you want to learn in its place. When the 24 hours of meditation have passed, you sleep for another 24 hours. When you awaken, the clay and its contents are gone, and you have acquired a new ability at the cost of the old one.

**Effects:** You can drop a feat and replace it with a new one or remove a skill from your list and gain a new one with an equal number of ranks. The skill you want to learn must be a class skill. You can perform this ceremony once per year. If you attempt it more often than that, it fails to work.

### RITUAL OF SUSTAINED EFFORT (HUMAN)

Humanity has long been known for its industrious ambition. This ritual taps into this legacy, allowing those who undergo it to perform a long, arduous task with great skill and energy. This ritual is commonly enacted before great civic projects, such as building a new bridge, and even before epic battles and sieges. It lends strength and endurance to its participants, allowing their effort to persist long after others' would falter.

**Prerequisite:** At least 10 people must participate in this ritual.

**Components:** Each participant must hold a tool or item appropriate to completing the task at hand, such as a shovel, hammer, or weapon. (The tool is consumed in the ritual.) They must each sprinkle 10 gp worth of gold dust upon their brows before the ritual begins.

**Actions (30 minutes):** All of those who participate in this ritual must form a great line, standing shoulder to shoulder at the site where their toil is to take place. The first person in line then walks along the line, tapping her weapon or tool against each of her fellows until she reaches the end. This continues until each participant has walked the length of the line, then the tools all crumble into dust.

**Effects:** For one week after completing this ritual, each participant gains a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution checks. This bonus applies only if the participant is within 500 feet of the ritual's site.

### SONG OF HEROIC DEEDS (HUMAN)

This song spreads word of your deeds far and wide. A swirling wind surrounds you, collects the memories of your recent accomplishments, and spreads them across the land. Folks you have never met suddenly become aware of your deeds.

Ambitious heroes use this ritual to spread their fame, while bandits, thieves, and other criminals sometimes employ it to frighten and intimidate those unfortunate enough to dwell near their territory.

**Components:** A fistful of feathers worth 5 gp, a small tin horn worth 10 gp, and a scroll with the story of your most recent heroic (or villainous) deed written upon it in gold ink worth 25 gp



**Actions (4 hours):** You or an ally must write a brief account of a deed you completed within the past week. This can be almost anything—a victory against a fearsome monster, a duel against a hated enemy, or the rescue of a family from a burning house. (The account must be truthful, or the ceremony fails.) Once the scroll is complete, you must spend four hours reading its text in a soft whisper. Once you are done, you must tear the scroll into small pieces, mix it with the feathers, and throw it all into the air while sounding the horn. All of these materials, including the horn, burst into dust that carries word of your deed on the wind.

**Effects:** All creatures with Intelligence 5 or higher within 10 miles of the place where you completed the ritual learn the contents of the scroll. (They realize that a Song of Heroic Deeds was responsible for their new awareness.) Many times, unworthy deeds or capricious, irrelevant news causes this ritual to fail. However, a truly heroic deed spurs its power and can increase your fame and earn you the admiration of many. As a rule of thumb, you gain a +2 competence bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks in areas where your legend is known.

## CEREMONIES OF THE FAEN

Many faen ceremonies draw on this race's unique perspective on religion. Discovering and honoring new and forgotten gods is an important part of many faen's lives, and the rituals that grew around this practice reflect it. Other rituals spring from their love of hedonism and their concern for defense and safety from attackers.

### INCANTATION TO SHARED LIBATIONS (FAEN)

A common ceremony enacted before feasts, parties, and other gatherings, this ritual draws on the shared spirit of friendship, benevolence, and the restorative power of good cheer to lift a faen's spirits.

**Components:** 500 gp worth of fine food and drink that must be consumed during the course of the ritual. Those who eat the food must include all the faen who wish to gain the ceremony's benefits, along with their guests. Nonfaen can indulge in the food and drink.

**Actions (6 hours):** Before eating, those who take part in the feast each must fill a goblet of wine, ale, or some other potent beverage and serve at least one sip to every other person present while



exchanging greetings. Repeat this process with each person present offering a piece of food to the others. The subsequent party must last for at least six hours. Most faen begin this ceremony near midnight and continue it until dawn.

**Effects:** Each person who participates in this ceremony heals double the hit points healed by up to two spells cast on him at the end of the party. For the duration of the party, any ability score damage or continuing negative conditions that affect any faen are suppressed; they return when the celebration ends. Nonfaen who participate in the ceremony gain its benefits, but only a faen who knows this ceremony can lead it.

#### OATH OF GOD'S REMEMBRANCE (FAEN)

The faen continually rediscover forgotten gods or make the acquaintance of deities who are secretive, shy, or simply easily overlooked. By invoking this ritual, a faen attunes her senses to the gods that lie just beyond her perception. Shortly after completing the ritual, she can beseech one of these deities for aid, provided that she is in a situation in which the god can aid her.

**Components:** 50 gp worth of incense and other offerings, which is burnt during the course of the ritual. One may complete this ritual without the incense offering (in fact, it is usually done in this manner), but it offers none of the game effects given below.

**Actions (1 hour):** Shortly after waking up, you must burn the offerings to the gods while chanting the names of each of the gods you have already discovered. Once this chant concludes, you become attuned to the various moments of revelation that showed you the existence of the deities you have uncovered up to this point. This process opens your mind to discovering new gods.

**Effects:** While attempting a skill check, saving throw, or ability check, you may discover a god and gain a +1 competence bonus from this deity as thanks for the sacrifices offered. You must name the god and its sphere of influence, which must have some bearing on the check or save. A faen can gain the benefits of this ritual once per week.

#### WARD OF HEARTH AND HOME (FAEN)

Due to their diminutive size, the faen must remain ever vigilant of bigger, more aggressive creatures that could attack their homes. This ritual is perhaps the most ancient of all the faen traditions. It takes advantage of the eyes and ears of all the creatures in an area, creating a harmonious living web that alerts the faen when danger draws near.

**Prerequisites:** A character can enact this ceremony only in an area where one or more faen has dwelled for at least a month.

**Components:** Food worth at least 500 gp, consisting of meat, grain, sugar, and other foods that wild animals would find appealing.

**Actions (3 days):** Scatter the food in a circle around the settlement. Leave it in place for at least three days. During this time, no faen can attack any wild animal in the area. Animals in the region will approach the village to take small pieces of the food. After three days, the ritual is complete.

**Effects:** All faen who dwell in the settlement gain a +2 bonus to Listen and Spot checks while within 10 miles of the ritual's site. This benefit comes from a mild psychic bond with all the wild animals in the area, allowing residents to attune their senses to the environment and spot trouble as it draws near. This benefit lasts for one year before it must be renewed.

### CEREMONIES OF THE GIANTS

Ritual and ceremony play a key role in the lives of many, if not all, giants. They have ceremonies for almost every occasion, and most giants see them as important actions that give their lives meaning.

#### CHANT TO FAITHFUL DEFENSE (GIANT)

As a race, the giants see themselves as caretakers and guardians. They consider it their role to preserve other, weaker races from the depredations of monsters and other threats. The Chant to Faithful Defense establishes a personal tie between a giant and one other creature that takes part in the ceremony.

**Components:** A gold chain worth 100 gp

**Actions (10 minutes):** Wrap one end of the chain around your wrist and extend the other to the person you wish to defend. She then wraps the chain around her wrist. You then speak the 12 promises of the watcher's fidelity.

**Effects:** So long as you are within 1 mile of your partner in this ritual, you remain aware of her general physical condition, including remaining hit points, and her relative location. You can gain this benefit with only one person at a time. The recipient must be willing.

#### CHANT TO STONE'S SPIRIT (GIANT)

This useful ritual allows a giant to see and draw forth the true shape contained within a block of stone. When used *en masse*, it allows the giants to create massive fortresses or entire cities in a much shorter time than usual.

**Components:** 50 gp in gold dust and a set of masterwork tools (the ritual leaves the tools intact).

**Actions (10 minutes):** Hold one or more of the pieces of stone you intend to sculpt, and focus on them while meditating. Then sprinkle the gold dust upon them. You enter a dreamlike state in which you see the stone in the shape that you should sculpt it. This state lasts for the rest of the day, allowing you to effortlessly carve it into shape.

**Effects:** For every 50 gp of gold dust consumed by this ritual, you may make one additional Craft check per week to measure your progress on a single project.

#### FOCUSED EFFORT (GIANT)

Through this ritual, a giant focuses his determination and effort on a single area of activity. While his other talents lie fallow, he achieves greater mastery in the one area into which he pours his energy.

**Components:** A glass lens—such as one used for a spyglass—worth 100 gp



**Actions (1 hour):** Place the lens on the ground at noon on a sunny day. Focus on the lens, staring into it while meditating over the talent you wish to improve. Soon, sunlight reflected from the lens pierces your mind, invigorating your chosen talent while temporarily burning away some of your skill in other abilities.

**Effects:** You gain a +4 bonus to a single skill of your choice for 24 hours. However, you suffer a -2 penalty to all other skill checks during this period.

#### HOMAGE TO THE ETERNAL (GIANT)

This simple ritual is an appeal to the dead for aid in the coming day. A giant beseeches them for wisdom and guidance in her actions. The character makes this general appeal to her giant ancestors or others who may lend her aid in her hour of need.

**Components:** A gift of any sort worth at least 50 gp

**Actions (30 minutes):** Bury the offering in loose soil and sit before it in quiet meditation. Once you have achieved focus and tranquility, try to dig up the gift. If it is gone, the ancestors have heard your appeal.

**Effects:** At some point during the coming day, you receive a vision or hear the voices of your ancestors. Their calming influence and advice give you a +1 insight bonus into one check, save, or attack roll. Your DM picks an opportune moment for this bonus, based on the conditions of the game. Have faith in the ancestors. They will lend their wisdom when you need it the most.

You gain the benefits of this ceremony once per every 50 gp you invest in it. Your DM should develop your ancestors' names and personalities, as they may speak to you across the ages when they aid you.

#### INSIGHT OF THE AGES (GIANT)

Giants believe that their ancestors can provide insight across the boundaries of death. This ritual allows giants to reach out to their forebears to receive counsel for a difficult decision.

**Components:** A gift of any sort worth at least 100 gp

**Actions (1 hour):** Place the gift in a small fire. While the flames burn, meditate over the decision you face. Breathe in the fire's smoke. Soon, you slip into a shallow trance and contact one of your ancestors.

**Effects:** You may pose a single question to the ancestor you contact. Your ancestor then provides an answer. This answer can take the form of a Knowledge check with a result of 20. Otherwise, you can ask a single question whose answer includes up to 15 words. For every additional 50 gp you offer, you gain a +2 bonus to the Knowledge check result or your ancestor can speak an extra five words.

Your ancestor has no special insight or knowledge beyond the lore he accumulated in life. He may lack the information needed to answer your question, particularly if it pertains to current events. In the case of a Knowledge check, assume you contact an ancestor who studied the appropriate area.





### OATH OF RETRIBUTION (GIANT)

Although giants are caretakers, they can be terrible foes when someone attacks or wrongs their charges. The Oath of Retribution compels giants to seek out and deal justice to any who harm their friends. It allows the giant to share the memories and pain the friend endured as the character relentlessly tracks the villain responsible for the misdeeds.

**Components:** An arrow with a head forged of silver worth 200 gp, and a shield inlaid with a small gem worth 100 gp (all components are consumed in the ceremony)

**Actions (1 hour):** After you chant the three maledictions against predators and thieves, hand the shield to the wronged party. This person holds the shield above his head while you swear an oath to avenge his loss. Throw the arrow into the air. It will disappear into the sky, but its shadow on the ground shall point in the direction of your enemy until justice has been served.

**Effects:** If a friend or ally suffers a loss of any sort, you always know the relative direction to the party he considers responsible for the crime. At noon each day, the shadow of an arrow appears on the ground, pointing you in the right direction. You gain a +1 competence bonus to all efforts to track your quarry and damage against this foe. You cannot use this ritual again until you have brought your target to justice.

You can gain these benefits only against a foe who injured a close personal friend or relative. As a rule of thumb, your relationship must have persisted for at least a year before you attempt this ceremony.

Conducting the Oath of Retribution ritual does not make one an oathsworn nor does it confer upon a character that class' abilities.

### CEREMONIES OF THE LITORIANS

The litorians' sense of personal honor is reflected in their rituals, many of which test characters' fidelity to their morals or give them insight into their own personal codes of ethics.

#### OATH OF LIFE DEBT (LITORIAN)

One never enters lightly into this solemn ritual, for it ties a litorian to someone who has saved her life. The litorian must do her best to repay this debt through faithful service or some other deed.

**Components:** None

**Actions (30 minutes):** To begin the ritual, sit within a circle scribed in the sand or dirt and reflect upon all the possibilities your life may yet offer you. With each thought, give thanks to the one who saved you. Then seek out this person and formally pledge to repay the debt.

**Effect:** The person to whom you give the life debt may ask you for one service. Typically, you might act as a trusted companion and servant for up to one full year, though service that involves danger may cut this time to six months. In either case, you generally must obey the holder of the life debt, though you do not have to kill or attack others on his behalf. You must defend him to the best of your ability and cannot betray his trust. If you do so, you immediately fall dead, as though the death you avoided through your patron's actions has returned to call.

A litorian never enacts this oath lightly. If a person arranges to save the litorian in order to gain her service or otherwise attempts to abuse this oath, during the ceremony the litorian finds that she cannot focus upon the possibilities of her life—the ritual fails.

A litorian who breaks a rightful oath suffers a  $-1$  penalty to attacks, checks, and saves per day until she repents. This penalty increases by 1 point each day.

Conducting the Oath of Life Debt ritual does not make one an oathsworn. Neither does the ceremony confer upon a character that class' abilities.

#### REFLECTION OF THE INNER EYE (LITORIAN)

This important ceremony encourages a litorian to cast an eye inward, showing him the true nature of his heart and giving him the courage and fortitude to fight difficult battles.

**Components:** A small agate worth 100 gp

**Actions (10 minutes):** Stare into the agate by the light of the morning sun. Let the light dance off it until you notice a single crack appear on its surface. Follow this crack while reflecting on your honor. The agate crumbles to dust, but in your mind's eye its true form remains.

**Effects:** The next time you are involved in a battle or encounter that hinges on your personal honor, you gain a +1 morale bonus to attacks, checks, saves, and damage for the duration of the fight. This bonus reflects the confidence this ritual granted you, as you examined your inner self and by doing so strengthened it. Your body may fail, but your honor will endure. You and your DM must agree that the encounter is important to your personal honor.

#### TEST OF THE RED CLAW (LITORIAN)

Litorian strangers commonly use this ceremony when they meet on the plains. They size each other up in mock combat, tasting blood and, in so doing, learn the strength of each others' honor. Few litorians decline to participate in this ritual, as such a decision is a sure sign of guilt.

**Components:** A fistful of gold dust worth 50 gp that is cast on to the ground as the ritual begins

**Actions (30 minutes):** When two strange litorians meet, they may test their honor by wrestling for five minutes. Both sides engage in elaborate, scripted maneuvers that result in both of them drawing blood from the other (inflicting 1 point of damage to each combatant). The gold dust purifies the arena.

**Effects:** By the end of this ceremony, both litorians have gained an insight into the other's actions:

- An honorable litorian, even if he takes actions that may go against others' wishes, bleeds so that his blood seeps across his fur, close to his body.
- A dishonorable litorian bleeds freely, leaving drops on the ground around him as his blood seeks to escape his betraying nature.

## CEREMONIES OF THE MOJH

The mojh commit few ceremonies of their own, as they draw much of their lore in bits and pieces from tomes passed down from the days of the dragons. Some mojh explore ancient ruins in the hope of uncovering forgotten books that describe rituals they can use. Others seek to create wholly new ones, drawing on the study of runes and magic to unlock the true potential of their heritage. The few ceremonies the mojh have developed themselves serve as useful tools in their quest for knowledge.

### EXERCISE OF THE VEILED SCRIPT (MOJH)

The mojh prefer to let their writing speak for them, a trait reflected in this subtle but useful ceremony. Through this ritual, mojh characters can communicate to each other secretly, masking their true intentions behind banal words.

**Components:** Ink mixed with quicksilver (50 gp of this mixture is enough to write one full page of script), two pieces of parchment

**Actions (10 minutes):** Place your claw upon a blank sheet of parchment while clearing your mind. Then bring the true message you wish to convey to the surface of your thoughts. Now place the parchment you wish to write on atop this sheet. With your eyes closed, grasp your quill, place it on the paper, and clear your mind again. When you open your eyes, a simple, innocent message is written in your handwriting on the top paper. Burn the bottom one.

**Effects:** Any mojh who reads the seemingly normal note will hear your voice in its head speaking your true message. This message may contain up to 25 words.

### FINDING THE LOST THREAD (MOJH)

Mojh scholars and explorers use this ritual to place themselves in a trance. While in this state, they can cast their minds back to specific times and places in their lives and recall their memories with clear precision. Each time a mojh uses this ceremony, it forgets more of its previous life as a human—thus, some mojh enter this dream-state as often as possible.

**Components:** A small mirror, a silk blindfold, incense, and strong spices (total cost of 25 gp per use for all components)

**Actions (1 hour):** While staring into the mirror, eat the spices to cloud your sense of taste, wear the blindfold to cover your eyes, and hum softly to distract your hearing. When you can see your own reflection through the blindfold, you have attained the trance needed to find the thread of your memory.

**Effects:** You replay one passage of your life in detail, as if you are experiencing it again directly. This replay can last as long as 10 minutes. During this period, you cannot interact with your environment in any way. However, you do gain perfect, total recall of anything that you originally learned during that period but have since forgotten. For example, if you once read a list of names you could see it again through this ritual. You can only recall facts that you could reasonably remember from your actions during the original event. For



instance, you could not recall the full contents of a book that you flipped through, unless you somehow managed to read the entire thing in the 10-minute period.

In exchange for this beneficial effect, you lose one memory from your life before you became a mojh (player's choice).

## CEREMONIES OF THE SIBECCAI

The sibeccai have adopted many giantish customs, including their creators' heavy use of ceremony. Sibeccai rituals tend toward the loud and raucous rather than the quiet and introspective, however. Their fascination with dreams also plays a role in some of their rites.

### EXERCISE OF DEEP SLEEP (SIBECCAI)

This common sibeccai ritual creates a mindset that readies the character for a prophetic dream. This ceremony, usually conducted shortly before bed, puts a sibeccai into such a state of exhaustion that the character plunges deep into the realm of dream.

**Components:** Sirrasa's leaf (a rare herb worth 100 gp per dose), a sack with food for one day, a dagger, and a walking staff. This ritual consumes only the Sirrasa's leaf.

**Actions (10 minutes):** Before sleep, run around your campsite or dwelling five times, all while wearing a full set of clothes and carrying a heavy burden. Eat the Sirrasa's leaf and complete the run again in the opposite direction. Thus exhausted, prepare your sack of supplies, dress for a long journey, and go to sleep.

**Benefits:** During the night, you engage in a long series of dreams that take you to the vistas of your future. When you awaken, these images seem dull and difficult to understand. However, at one point in the near future you will receive an important revelation tied to your dream. This takes one of two forms. Either your DM tells you that a course of action is a good, bad, or neutral choice, or you gain a +1 competence bonus to attacks, checks, and saves for the duration of an encounter that you dreamed about. Your DM decides when the



dream plays a role in the adventure. Optionally, he can give you a useful clue for an encounter, such as a monster's weakness, a password needed to open a magical gate, or some other knowledge you gained in your dream.

#### REMEMBRANCE OF THE WILD (SIBECCAI)

The sibeccai have a complex attitude toward their genesis. While they see themselves as superior to other races by virtue of their close relationship with the giants, they can easily slip into a more feral state when among their own kind. This ritual seeks to bridge the gap between a sibeccai's animal background and civilized state.

**Components:** A bone and meat taken from a freshly killed beast and 500 gp of rare herbs and spices

**Actions (1 hour):** Cook the meat and bone in a stew pot, seasoning it with the spices and herbs. Present the meal on a platter with fork, knife, and spoon. But when you sit down to eat, remove the meal from the platter and devour it with your hands rather than the utensils.

**Effects:** By placing you in a state somewhere between your feral and civilized halves, this ritual grants you a +1 competence bonus to your natural or unarmed attacks during the next day.

#### CEREMONIES OF THE VERRIK

Aloof, inscrutable, and contemplative, the verrik use rituals to gain a superior perspective on the world. Their concept of contextual thinking extends to many aspects of their lives, including their ceremonies. Verrik rituals tend to be simple and practical. A verrik sees them as tools to help complete a job; their symbolism takes second rank to their utility.

#### MEDITATION OF THE BODY (VERRIK)

By casting their thoughts inward, the verrik can examine themselves with a detached, careful eye. While rumors of verrik who use this ritual to heal their injuries exaggerate its effectiveness, it does prove helpful in overcoming diseases, poison, and similar troubles.

**Components:** A clay cup (not consumed in this ritual) and a mixture of healing herbs and rare spices worth 75 gp

**Actions (1 hour):** Mix the herbs and spices in a broth and hold it in a clay cup while sitting upon the bare ground. Focus on the cup, the fragrance of the broth, and the heat it radiates. When your mind's eye wanders from the cup to your own body, mentally examine your injuries and organs for signs of distress.

**Effects:** Completing this ritual grants a +2 competence bonus to any Heal check made upon you. In addition, you gain double the benefits of natural healing for the day, if applicable. This benefit lasts for one day. You can choose to burn this bonus to immediately stabilize if you are dying. A verrik can enjoy the benefits of only one Meditation of the Body at any given time.

#### MEDITATION OF THE SPLINTERED MIND (VERRIK)

This psionic exercise allows a verrik to clear his mind of unwanted emotions in order to focus on a goal. He pictures the task before him, places it within the context of the world as a whole, and in so doing lets unimportant matters fall by the wayside. Thus attuned, he is ready to work.

**Components:** A small silver chime worth 200 gp (not consumed in the ritual) and incense worth 100 gp

**Actions (30 minutes):** Upon waking from sleep, sit before the chime and picture in your mind the task at hand. Strike the chime, then meditate upon your goal. The power of the ceremony sustains the tone—audible only to you—for the duration of the ritual. When the chime's tone stops, you have focused your mind and are ready to begin your task.

**Effects:** Pick a single skill. This ritual grants you a +1 competence bonus to all checks with it for the next three days.

#### MEDITATIONS ON TRUTH (VERRIK)

Through this ritual, the verrik can focus their senses and gain an intuitive awareness of the world. Their ability for contextual sight allows them to discern inconsistencies in others' actions.

**Components:** A small ball of wax and any item worth 100 gp or more

**Actions (30 minutes):** Divide the wax into four parts. Place one quarter on each ear and eye. Meditate over the item you have chosen to sacrifice for this ceremony. When your mind is clear, the wax falls free and reveals that the item has become a crumbling piece of junk.

**Effects:** You gain a +1 competence bonus to Sense Motive checks and a +1 competence bonus to saves against psionic spells and effects for the next three days.

## CREATING NEW RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

As discussed earlier, players or the DM can create personal rituals as needed to offer more color to the roleplaying experience. Such ceremonies have no magical game effect and take relatively little time and effort on the part of the character.

The benefits granted by power rituals are limited in scope. As a rule of thumb, power rituals can duplicate 0- and 1st-level simple spell effects; they shouldn't duplicate the effects of complex or exotic spells. However, this is simply a guideline for the general range of effects that a power ritual can have. When creating your own rituals, try to avoid simply duplicating the effects of spells. Otherwise, the rituals become merely substitutes for spells. Rituals tend to last longer than spells, usually at least a day and up to a week.

In addition to the guidelines below, when creating a new ritual, consider its application. A power ritual should provide a benefit in combat only rarely, and even then it should always be a passive benefit rather than an active one. A passive benefit helps characters avoid danger. An active one allows them to endanger others. Thus, a bonus to a save is a

passive effect and a good fit for a ritual. A bonus to attacks is usually too good to include in this category unless it works against a single, specific target or only in particular narrow conditions.

## BENEFITS

Power rituals should have effects that prove useful in specific situations. They might provide information that makes life somewhat easier for the characters, but they should never on their own provide concrete, final answers. For example, a ritual might point the characters in the direction of the town they want to visit, but it doesn't give them any specific warnings of danger they may meet along the road.

For noncombat uses, power rituals can provide up to a +2 skill bonus for as long as six hours. Higher bonuses or durations should remain the province of only a select few power rituals.

Power rituals designed to protect or preserve a person or thing should deal in saving throws rather than Armor Class bonuses or extra hit points.

Rituals should almost always provide bonus types that do not stack, such as competence or insight bonuses. They should always provide flat bonuses, such as +1 or +2, instead of one determined by a die roll or a character's ability score modifier. Such rituals would be easy to abuse, as PCs could try again and again until they get a high roll or could use spells to boost their ability scores to gain an increased benefit from the ritual.

In general, err on the side of making a power ritual too weak rather than too powerful. Since these rituals are known to almost everyone, they tend to confer minor effects rather than flashy powers.

## DURATION

A power ritual should last long enough for its benefits to have some effect on a character. For example, an attack bonus against a sworn enemy may remain in place until the ritual's user defeats that foe.

This is a very useful tool that allows a ritual to serve a purpose without becoming too powerful.

## COMPONENTS

A power ritual's components should rarely exceed 200 gp total. In general, rituals with a limited use, such as a bonus you enjoy only once, should have a cost of 50 gp for a +1 bonus and 100 gp for a +2 bonus. A bonus that lasts longer should have a cost of 150 to 200 gp.

Rituals that confer information are more difficult to judge. Use the existing power rituals as a guideline. Generally speaking, 50 gp is worth common information that the PCs could find with enough research, 100 gp buys rarer information, and 200 gp or more covers obscure topics that they could not otherwise research. Reduce this cost by one or two categories depending on the information's utility and applicability. For example, learning the weather for the coming week is useful for a farmer, but an adventurer only needs this information in a narrow range of situations.

## BONDS

A group of adventurers swears an oath always to help and defend one another, regardless of the risks. A warmain consecrates his weapon, granting it a truename and making it as much a part of his fighting talents as his training and experience. These are examples of bonds, powerful magical connections that strengthen over time with the help of ceremonies. Bonds have the ability to gather and focus energies that are more potent than other rituals. They are common among adventurers, elite bodyguards assigned to protect a king, and small, tightly knit communities.

Bonds are an example of a specific type of ritual that creates a connection between people or things. They usually require a sustained

## BONDS

### Friendship

#### *Bond of Friendship*

*Brothers in Arms*

*Chorus of Spells*

*Death Is No Barrier*

*Defensive Formation*

*Hold the Line*

*Words of Encouragement*

*Grants a bonus to saves against fear, allows use of other bond rituals*

*Grants a bonus to attack rolls while adjacent to ally*

*Grants an ally one of your spell slots*

*Return from the dead to help allies*

*Prevents ally from being flanked*

*Grants allies bonus to Armor Class*

*Grants an ally bonus to skill check*

### Items

#### *Item Bond*

*Awaken the Slumbering Spirit*

*Banner of Glory*

*Bond of the Everpresent Item*

*Charm of Good Fortune*

*Eternal Ally*

*Foe Slayer*

*Icon of Renown*

*Item becomes harder to damage, gains truename*

*Add magical traits and abilities to item*

*Grants attack, save bonus to allies once per day*

*Calls item to your hand*

*DM gives you bonus to single die roll each day*

*Your weapon is unbreakable*

*Grants bonus to initiative and damage against chosen enemy*

*Item's reputation grants bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidate*





effort to strengthen them, but in time they can reward your faith and fidelity in a cause. A bond is something no one enters into lightly. Once established, a bond requires an active effort to sustain. Turning your back on a bond invites bad luck and disaster. And, should one member of the bond betray it, ill fortune can spread to all who are bound to him.

In terms of game mechanics, bonds work just like any other ritual. They require components, call for specific actions, and provide magical effects in the form of bonuses and other special abilities. However, bonds also offer two additional wrinkles. If you take actions that run counter to the spirit of a bond, you suffer penalties. And, after completing the initial ritual needed to create a bond, you can perform additional rituals to strengthen it and gain more benefits from it.

There are two types of bonds, each defined by what they tie a character to. Bonds can create a link between you and your friends or between you and an object, such as a sword.

## BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

In the Lands of the Diamond Throne, oaths and pledges are powerful forces that can take on a life of their own. Bonds of friendship illustrate this truth. When friends and allies enter into this bond, they form a magical link that even death cannot break. Warriors joined in a bond of friendship fight better as a team than alone. Spellcasters joined by these bonds can combine their efforts to produce mighty effects.

In return for these abilities, the members of a bond are expected to remain faithful and loyal to each other in the face of any threat. Betraying a bond of friendship turns the magical energy that once sustained and supported you into a potent venom. Few who betray their friends escape unscathed, leaving only the most black-hearted villains liable to risk it.

## CREATING A BOND OF FRIENDSHIP

Forming a bond of friendship is a long, subtle task that demands far more than a few expensive components and a ceremony. Only friends who have faced deadly threats and risked their lives for each other have the level of faith and trust needed to form this bond. In many ways, a bond of friendship comes into being not because of any conscious decision. Rather, it grows to reflect the love and fellowship that links a small group.

Before attempting the ceremony to cement a bond of friendship, a group of 10 or fewer allies must meet the following requirements:

- Each member must have saved the lives of two or more friends within the group. In turn, each member must have had his own life saved at one time by one of the friends.
- The friends must have spent at least one year together and faced life-threatening dangers on at least four separate occasions.
- Each person in the group who has a truename must reveal it to everyone else in the group.

If you and your friends meet these requirements, you slowly become aware of a growing link between you. You start to complete each other's sentences. You move to aid each other in battle without speaking. Slowly, the realization dawns that a mystic bond has formed between you all. At this point, you must complete the Ritual of Friendship to cement this link. Not every group of friends makes this step, as it demands utmost faith and dedication.

## RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP

This ceremony is always different between each group that performs it. Those who have completed it say the ceremony seemed to create itself as they went along. Regardless of its exact form, it always has the same basic requirements and a few shared traits.

**Components:** Each person who wishes to enter the bond must sacrifice a personal memento worth at least 1,000 gp. This symbolizes the individual's willingness to give up a valuable personal item for the good of the group. This could be treasure looted from a defeated foe, a set of scrolls, or anything else that has personal and monetary value. One does not simply buy a nice-looking trinket from the local market for this ritual.

**Actions (12 hours):** The friends meet in a secluded spot, build a fire, and sit around it with their hands joined and their offerings before them. Each then speaks of every other member of the circle, describing what each person means to his life and recounting an important event in their relationship. He then casts his sacrificial item into the fire.

What happens next depends on the group. In some cases, when the last item hits the flames, the fire goes out and the entire world seems to fade away. The friends are all overcome with panic, but if they hold onto each other and have faith, they awaken from this nightmare. Other times, the members enter a dreamlike state in which they face some terrible opponent together. In this dream, they must make a sacrifice to aid their friends in order to defeat their foe.

If the circle of friends passes this test, they all awaken in the morning united by a bond of friendship.

**Effects:** The Ritual of Friendship initially fills every member of the fellowship with a powerful sense of *esprit de corps* and a deep, almost tangible emotional connection.

The members of this bond gain a +4 bonus against fear effects while they can see any of the other members. They also can determine the relative location and distance of any other member of the fellowship by concentrating for one minute and thinking about that person.

If a member of the fellowship dies, all of its members instantly know it and gain a mental image of the killer or the circumstances of the death.

**Penalties:** If any of the group knowingly and maliciously acts to break the bond of friendship, such as by betraying or murdering an ally, the entire group suffers a curse. (This curse cannot be negated by *remove curse*.) The friends lose most of the bond's



benefits but can still determine each other's location. You each suffer a  $-1$  luck penalty to all attacks, checks, and saves for one year and a day.

A broken bond can be re-established, but you have to pay all the costs for it again, and the group cannot attempt it until after the curse effect is gone. You can form a bond of friendship with a different group of people even during this period, however.

You can be in more than one bond of friendship at a time. In addition, a group can add a new member or members to its existing bond of friendship by paying all the costs for the ritual again and conducting the ceremony anew with the entire group, including the new member(s).

### BOND OF FRIENDSHIP RITUALS

Once you have established a bond of friendship, you can complete additional rituals to strengthen it. These rituals are based on the actions your friends complete together. Not all of the rituals demand the participation of every member of your circle.

Throughout this section, the words "friends" and "allies" are used interchangeably to refer to the members of your circle.

#### BROTHERS IN ARMS (BOND OF FRIENDSHIP)

You have fought beside your friends dozens of times, facing death and defeating your foes together. In battle, you intuitively cover for each other and combine your efforts for victory.

**Components:** Each person who wishes to gain this bond's benefits must offer goods worth 1,000 gp.

**Actions (6 hours):** You and your companions must practice fighting alongside each other for six straight hours. Each hour, someone must trade weapons at least once, until you all have fought using at least one weapon owned by an ally.

**Effects:** You gain a  $+1$  morale bonus to attack rolls if one of your allies is adjacent to you while you fight. You work together to combine your efforts, drawing on your experience and the proximity of a trusted ally to improve your efforts.

**Penalties:** If you break the bond of friendship through treachery or betrayal, you (and only you) suffer a  $-1$  penalty per adjacent ally during combat for one year and a day.

#### CHORUS OF SPELLS (BOND OF FRIENDSHIP)

The strength and harmony of your friendship extends to your magical talents. You and your allies can combine casting efforts to produce more powerful effects.

**Components:** You and your allies must each scribe or purchase a scroll of your highest-level spell.

**Actions (6 hours):** Burn the scrolls in one small fire in a lengthy magical process. Then scribe the rune for friendship upon your left hand using the ashes.

**Effects:** As a standard action, you can provide an ally with a single spell slot of any level from your repertoire that he can use to laden a spell. (See *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*, Chapter Eight: Magic.)



You also can provide him with a slot whose maximum level equals half the value of your highest spell slot. He can use this slot to cast a spell as normal. Your ally must use this slot on his next action. He cannot bank it for later use.

**Penalties:** If you betray your friendship, you (and only you) lose the ability to cast your highest-level spells for one month.

#### DEATH IS NO BARRIER (BOND OF FRIENDSHIP)

Friendship is stronger than death. By pledging eternal alliance and camaraderie, even the veil of the afterlife cannot keep you from your friends.

**Components:** Each participant in this bond must offer sacrifices worth 500 gp.

**Actions (1 day):** You enact a funeral ritual for each member of the bond, followed by a birth ritual for each. You then burn the offerings and bury them in a grave at the funeral's site.

**Effects:** Even death cannot prevent you from fulfilling the debt of friendship, an honor that you owe to your fellowship. If you die, you can at any point in the campaign return for 1 round to take any action as normal. You may use this ability only once, even if you are raised from the dead and die again.

For the purpose of your return, assume that you have your full allotment of spell slots and the equipment you commonly used at the time of your death. You appear within 30 feet of any of your allies and may either take a standard action, absorb an attack that would hit and damage an ally (after the damage is rolled), or allow your ally to succeed automatically at a saving throw. When your action is complete, you salute your allies and disappear.

If you absorb an attack or grant a successful save, you might parry a blow, counter a spell, or knock an ally to the ground.

**Penalties:** If you break this bond, you (and only you) lose its benefits. If you die, you cannot be raised by any means.

#### DEFENSIVE FORMATION (BOND OF FRIENDSHIP)

You and your allies watch each other's backs during a fight, preventing your enemies from taking advantage of any lapses in your defense.

**Components:** A pair of pickled eyes from the Verdunian forest bat for each member of the bond. Each pair is worth 1,000 gp.

**Actions (8 hours):** Each member of the bond must fashion a necklace from the pickled eyes and wear it so that the eyes are set at the back of their necks. They must then practice fighting together for eight hours, trading necklaces until each person has worn a necklace carried by each other member of the bond. At the end of this time, the eyes disappear.

**Effects:** You can help defend an ally who is flanked. If you are adjacent to an ally, you can prevent one opponent of your choice from receiving a flanking bonus. You shield your friend's back and make it difficult to get off an easy shot against her. You name the target of this ability as a free action and can change it each round.

**Penalties:** If you betray your bond, your enemies gain a +4 bonus to their attack rolls when you are flanked, rather than a +2 bonus. They inflict +1d6 points of damage when they attack in this manner.

#### HOLD THE LINE (BOND OF FRIENDSHIP)

You and your allies fight as one group, defending each other from attacks and coordinating your defense.

**Components:** Each participant must buy and sacrifice a suit of masterwork heavy armor.

**Actions (1 day):** While wearing the sacrificial armor, you and your allies must practice fighting for a full day. Each hour, you must remove a piece of the armor and allow a friend to hold it during practice. In time, you must carry a strap, plate, or similar piece from each ally. At the end of the ceremony, you must bury the armor together. It disappears into the ground.

**Effects:** You gain a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class while you stand directly adjacent to one of your allies. You move to maximize each other's defenses, using your shields and weapons to defend each other.

**Penalties:** You (and only you) suffer a -1 penalty to Armor Class for a year and a day if you betray your friends.

#### WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT (BOND OF FRIENDSHIP)

You know exactly how to support and aid a friend. Almost intuitively, you offer him words that remind him of his past accomplishments and lend confidence to his current actions. Alternatively, you perfectly time your own actions to aid his efforts.

**Components:** Each member of the circle must write an account of his greatest deeds in golden ink. The materials for this cost 500 gp.

**Actions (4 hours):** Each member of the bond reads the others' accounts. They then gather the accounts, burn them, and rub the ashes into their hands.

**Effects:** When you make a skill check to aid an ally's efforts, you gain a +2 bonus to your check. You can attempt this check in combat if you are within 30 feet of an ally and have line of sight to him, even if you could not normally aid in the skill check.

**Penalties:** You (and only you) suffer a -2 penalty to all skill checks for one year and a day if you break your bond.

## ITEM BONDS

Perhaps the most common of the bonds, an item bond creates a link between you and a single tool—such as a weapon—that you have used in a variety of dangerous situations. Over time, the item becomes an important part of your legacy and reputation. As the connection grows, you can use a variety of item bond rituals to cement the bond and give it a tangible existence.

An item bond grants an inanimate object a truename, allowing it to grow and gain power much like a living creature. While only in the rarest cases does an object gain true sentience, a named item is always an important object. If you gain control of an enemy's bonded

item, you can use it to grant him bad luck or project spells and magical effects against him across great distances. Thus, one never enters into an item bond lightly.

### CREATING AN ITEM BOND

To form an item bond, you must have used a tool or weapon for at least 10 years or wielded it in six dangerous situations. Your DM judges whether a situation can be considered dangerous, but as a rule of thumb you must have been under real threat of dying. For example, a 10th-level warmain would not count a fight against a few 3rd-level goblin warriors as life threatening. Generally speaking, a dangerous fight reduces you to less than 10 percent of your starting hit points. If you are defeated, that encounter does not count toward the requirement. The weapon must aid you in victory, not in defeat.

You can create only one item bond. If an item to which you are bonded is destroyed, you can attempt to repair it, but you cannot simply pick up another weapon and grant it a truename.

### RITUAL OF ITEM BONDING

Generally speaking, these rules are aimed at forming an item bond with a weapon. A few of the item bond rituals (see below) are useful with tools and other items one wields in skill checks, but most adventurers form item bonds with a weapon. The basic effect of these rules is to let you spend gold and experience points to grant a weapon magical abilities, allowing it to grow with you as you gain levels. DMs who choose to use these rules should take care to use the suggested character wealth by level rules from Chapter Five: Campaigns in the DMG.

**Components:** The tool or item you wish to bond with must be masterwork. You can pay to improve a standard weapon to masterwork as normal. In addition, you must pay 2,000 gp and 200 XP in material components. Usually, this ceremony requires diamond dust, molten gold, and a small amount of your blood.

**Actions (12 hours):** Bathe the weapon or tool in the molten gold. Then pull it from the mixture and sprinkle the diamond dust over it. Once this is done, trickle drops of your blood across its length. Wrap the item in a set of bed sheets that you have slept in for at least one month and allow it to sit overnight. When you unwrap the weapon in the morning, the bond is formed.

**Effects:** The weapon now has a truename. You should also grant it a nickname you can use in casual conversation, one that reflects its history and relationship with you. The bond grants it double its hit points and a +2 bonus to its hardness. By concentrating for one minute, you can determine the relative direction and distance to your weapon. If it is on another plane, you learn which plane but cannot determine its exact location until you travel there. You also can now use item bond rituals (see below) to grant it new abilities and slowly awaken its nascent personality.

Finally, anyone who wishes to destroy your item must make a Will saving throw (DC 10 + your level + your Charisma modifier) to take action against it.

If you form a bond with a weapon, no one can ever use it to attack you. It becomes a +1 weapon. A tool or other item grants a +1 enhancement bonus when you use it.

**Penalties:** Any opponent who possesses this weapon or tool can cast touch spells upon you by touching your item. You also suffer a -4 penalty on all saves against spells cast by someone who holds your bonded item.

### ITEM BOND RITUALS

As the connection between you and your bonded item grows, you can use a variety of additional rituals to deepen the bond and award the item special abilities.

#### AWAKEN THE SLUMBERING SPIRIT (ITEM BOND)

When you form a bond with an item, you create a new destiny and fate for it. Its truename awakens the true potential locked within it. Over time, you can bring out this “slumbering spirit” via this powerful ritual. You awaken new capabilities and magical talents within the item and, in time, can bring forth the personality within it.

**Prerequisite:** You can use this bond only if you have the Bonded Item feat with the item you wish to awaken.

**Components:** In this ritual, you must spend gold pieces equal to the standard cost needed to add the desired magical trait to your item.

**Actions (1 day):** The exact actions needed to complete this ritual vary by the type of ability you wish to grant your item. For example, you can grant your item intelligence by calling out the spirit trapped within it. You might call out to it, play music, or even host a party with several close friends to commemorate its birth. To grant an item the *flaming* ability, you might have to climb an active volcano and thrust it into an active lava flow.

**Effects:** You can grant a bonded item new magical abilities and perhaps even awaken its intellect. Your item gains the full use of any abilities you choose to bestow upon it via this ritual. This bond is usually used to grant abilities to a weapon.

#### BANNER OF GLORY (ITEM BOND)

Your blade has guided you to victory time and again. Each time you draw it in battle, its legend grows. Your weapon’s history inspires your allies, giving them faith that victory is always at hand.

**Prerequisite:** This ceremony is available only for weapons. You must have a base attack bonus of +10 to use it.

**Components:** The blood of a great enemy you defeated (in game terms, a foe with a level or Challenge Rating above your level at the time you defeated him) and an offering worth at least 2,000 gp. This offering is usually weapons and armor from defeated enemies.

**Actions (1 day):** Build a pyre and place your weapon in it, beneath this ritual’s offerings. While the pyre burns, drizzle the blood on the ground around it. You must then tell the stories of your greatest victories. You must stand and talk for 24 consecutive hours. While you





speak, the flames will continue to burn. When you are done, the fire goes out, leaving behind nothing but your weapon.

**Effects:** Once per day, you can hold your weapon aloft and inspire your allies with a short speech as a full-round action. You and any allies within 100 feet of you gain a +1 morale bonus to attacks, damage, checks, and saves for one minute.

#### BOND OF THE EVERPRESENT ITEM (ITEM BOND)

The bond you have formed with your item is so strong that you can call the item to your hand from a distance. Your item will come to you, as long as your enemies do not restrain it.

**Components:** This ritual requires rare alloys and the services of an expert tattoo artist. These components are worth a total of 2,000 gp.

**Actions (1 week):** You must gain a tattoo of your item on the palm of your left or right hand. After you receive the tattoo, meditate on your item before sleep for two nights. A rune will appear in your visions each night. You must then scribe that rune onto the item using gold, silver, or a similar rare metal mixed with quicksilver and a vial of your own blood.

**Effects:** As a full-round action, you can call your bonded item to your hand. It appears in your grasp at the start of your next action. It must be within a mile of you for the summons to work. If the item is within 30 feet of you, you can call it as a free action—it appears in your hand immediately.

#### CHARM OF GOOD FORTUNE (ITEM BOND)

Your item has seen you through enough successful ventures that it has acquired an aura of good luck. Perhaps you painted your life's masterpiece with a bonded brush or defeated a terrible beast with a bonded axe. With your item in your hand, fate is on your side.

**Components:** A four-leaf clover, a gold and jeweled horseshoe worth 2,000 gp, and a set of dice that rolls “7” seven consecutive times

**Actions (1 week):** Reduce the dice to powder and separate it into two piles. Mix one pile with water and drink it. Sprinkle the powder of the other pile over your item. Tie the clover to the horseshoe and cast it into the sea or a lake seven times. Each time, the waves shall return it to your feet. On the eighth throw, toss both your item and

the horseshoe. Only your item shall return, but it carries with it the horseshoe's luck.

**Effects:** Once per day, your item grants you a +4 bonus to a single die roll of your DM's choice. This represents the random nature of luck, as you cannot control it or count on it. However, this die roll should always be something relatively important. Your DM describes how the luck influences the die's outcome.

#### ETERNAL ALLY (ITEM BOND)

The magical bond between you and your item is eternal. So long as you live, that magic strengthens your item and makes it impossible to break.

**Components:** Rare metals, gems, and quicksilver worth 5,000 gp

**Actions (1 week):** Forge the required metals and gems into a replica of your weapon or tool. Meditate over your item and its bejeweled twin for three days. Then cast the gaudy replica into the lava of an active volcano. So long as the replica remains within the volcano, your weapon proves unbreakable.

**Effects:** Your weapon always succeeds in any saving throw it must attempt and it never takes hit points of damage from attacks or spells.

#### FOE SLAYER (ITEM BOND)

You swear vengeance or death to a single foe, and your oath extends to your weapon. It quivers in your hand when your enemy draws near, thirsty for blood.

**Prerequisite:** You must select a single foe who has wronged you or your allies as the target of this ritual. This ceremony is available only for weapons.

**Components:** A drop of your blood, a memento of the person you wish to avenge (if applicable), a sacrifice in gold and jewels worth 2,000 gp, and a small effigy of your enemy

**Actions (1 day):** Cast a sack containing your sacrifice and the effigy into the sea. At daybreak, the sack will wash ashore. If it contains only the effigy, your cause is righteous and you gain the benefits of this ceremony. If the sack contains only your sacrifice, your cause is without merit or is doomed to fail.

**Effects:** You gain a +2 bonus to damage against your chosen enemy and his or her agents. You gain a +2 bonus to initiative if you can see your foe at the start of an encounter.

#### ICON OF RENOWN (ITEM BOND)

Your item becomes a part of your legend. When others see your tools or your blade, they recognize the greatness that lies within you.

**Prerequisite:** You must have a base attack bonus of +10, caster level 10th, or 13 ranks in a skill related to your item (such as Craft) to use this bond.

**Components:** A diamond, ruby, and emerald, each worth 800 gp

**Actions (1 week):** Meditate over the great deeds you have completed with your item, then write out three copies of your account of them. Wrap each gem with one copy of the accounts and burn them. Spread the ashes over your item and let it sit for one day.

**Effects:** You gain a +2 competence bonus to all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks while the people you are speaking with can see your bonded item.



CHAPTER TWO:

# Runes of Might

*Runes are a key form of magic in the lands of the Diamond Throne. Runethanes scribe them upon objects and people, imparting magical abilities. The rune manifests, creatures given sentience by the power of a runic concept, walk the land and serve those who know the proper rituals. The runechildren stem the tide of evil and darkness, while their opposites, the heralds of annihilation, seek to destroy the very runes that form the foundation of creation. As the basic building blocks of many concepts fundamental to our understanding of this world, runes are a force on par with—if not greater than—the basic elements.*

person is simply a message or sign. One scribed by a runethane is a powerful magical nexus that can create a wide variety of effects.

This section introduces a variety of new runes for runethane characters. They are categorized into lesser, advanced, and greater runes, along with runes of power. Runethanes can select them in addition to the runes given in Chapter Three: *Classes of Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*.

Since you may wish to introduce these rules after a runethane has already gained a few levels and made several rune choices, this section introduces an optional rule you can use to keep a runethane's options open. When a runethane gains a level, he can choose to replace a single rune of each type (lesser, advanced, greater, power) that he already knows with another of the same type. In this manner, a runethane can take advantage of new runes introduced to the game. This rule also gives runethanes some flexibility in terms of their development over many levels without giving them an important advantage in a single encounter or adventure.

Runethanes master new runes all the time. This flexibility reflects their ability to meditate and study a rune in depth. Just as other casters must choose which spells to ready, a runethane can opt to halt his studies of one rune to master another. Later, he might reverse this decision. To a runethane, a rune is much more than a symbol or an ordered collection of lines and slashes. It is an arcane structure that holds within it the secret of all creation.

## NEW LESSER RUNES

Lesser runes tend to deliver effects equivalent to 1st- or 2nd-level spells. The new runes below each count as one rune toward a runethane's total number of scribed runes (see Chapter Three: *Classes of Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*) and require a full-round action to create.

**Rune of Alliance:** This mark of friendship is an applied rune that one can use on creatures. With a single use, the thane can scribe this rune upon a number of willing creatures equal to his level. Anyone who sees the rune instantly knows that these creatures are friends—a useful way to indicate an alliance. One use of this rune

This chapter takes an extensive look at runes, providing new rules and options relating to their use. Runethanes receive new runes they can select as they gain levels. Expanded rules for runechildren present alternate powers for these heroic figures, while their sworn enemies, the heralds of annihilation, reveal themselves for the first time. In addition, this chapter expands on the concept of rune manifests: beings that embody a rune's basic concept and can be bound into service for short periods.

## RUNETHANES

With their extensive training and in some cases intuitive sense for symbology, runethanes are the masters at scribing, deciphering, and using runes. While others must content themselves with summoning and binding rune manifests (creatures that embody a rune's concept; see page 28), runethanes are the only ones capable of directly scribing and manipulating the power of a rune. A rune scribed by another



is enough to mark your allotment of allies; you do not have to mark them all at the same time.

**Rune of Doom:** One can only scribe this strange applied rune upon the severed head of a slain opponent. If someone then throws the head at another member of the opponent's race, it bursts into a halo of baleful energy. Throwing the head is a ranged touch attack with a 10-foot range increment. It inflicts 2d6 points of damage to creatures of the affected race. The process of using the enruned head destroys it, whether the attack hits or misses. If the attack misses, the head disintegrates harmlessly. The head has no effect on creatures of a different race.

**Rune of Ill Fortune:** This dreaded rune haunts its target with bad luck. Anyone under its effects suffers a -1 luck penalty to attacks, checks, saves, and Armor Class. This penalty lasts for 10 minutes per runethane level. It can be used as a touch-trigger or applied rune.

**Rune of Iron:** This enchanted object rune strengthens and fortifies an object, granting it a +2 bonus to hardness and multiplying its current and maximum hit points by 1.5.

**Rune of the Long Strider:** This useful applied rune provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Climb, Jump, and Swim checks. In addition, it grants its recipient a bonus of +5 feet to speed. It lasts for 10 minutes per runethane level.

**Rune of Wind's Flight:** One can apply this enchanted object rune to a weapon or a missile, such as an arrow. It doubles the weapon's range increment. Note that it has no effect on a bow or other weapon that launches missiles. The weapon that flies through the air must receive this rune.

## NEW ADVANCED RUNES

An advanced rune is roughly equal to a 3rd- or 4th-level spell. It requires a full-round action to create and counts as two runes toward a thane's total.

**Mark of Honor:** Runethanes commonly use this applied rune to flag a warrior or spellcaster as honorable, trustworthy, and reliable. It grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks and a +1 enhancement bonus to Armor Class so long as the recipient refuses to strike a defenseless foe, never lies, and shows mercy, honor, courage, and wisdom. A single infraction causes this rune to disappear.

**Rune of Distance Death:** This enchanted object rune allows even an unwieldy weapon to fly through the air with ease. It grants a weapon that cannot normally be thrown a 10-foot range increment. Upon a hit, the weapon inflicts its normal damage. Apply the user's Strength modifier for a one-handed weapon. This rune lasts for 10 minutes per runethane level.

This rune does not give you any special ability to pick up a heavy weapon or object. You can use it only with weapons that you can normally wield in one or two hands.

**Rune of the Ram:** The potent *rune of the ram* creates a concussive force that knocks creatures and objects to the ground. This touch-trigger rune forces anyone who comes into contact with it

to make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half runethane's level + runethane's Intelligence bonus) or suffer 3d6 points of force damage and be knocked prone. Inanimate objects suffer 1d6 points of force damage per the runethane's level, with a maximum of 20d6 points of damage.

**Rune of Skill:** This rune grants a +4 enhancement bonus to a single skill of the runethane's choice. An item that receives this rune confers the appropriate bonus to those who use it as part of a check, while a creature bearing the rune gains the bonus to the skill as normal. This bonus lasts one hour per runethane level. One can use the *rune of skill* as a touch-trigger, applied, or enchanted object rune.

**Rune of Vengeance:** This applied rune holds a terrible curse for anyone who slays or destroys its recipient. An attacker who lands a killing blow or the injury that drops the rune's bearer to unconsciousness and then death suffers 10d6 points of damage, with no saving throw allowed. In the case of a nonliving target, this rune inflicts 5d6 points of damage. This damage also applies to whoever breaks or destroys an invested object. Once activated, the rune's power is exhausted and it must be rescribed.

**Seeker Rune:** In addition to the time needed to create a *seeker rune*, the thane must scribe it in blood taken from an enemy. One can only apply this enchanted object rune to arrows, bolts, sling stones, and other ammunition. A creature attacked with an item bearing this rune loses any cover bonus to Armor Class and concealment against the attack, though the attacker must be able to target it as normal.

## NEW GREATER RUNES

Greater runes provide power equal to 4th- or 5th-level spells. They require one minute to scribe and count as three runes toward a runethane's total allowable scribed runes. Unless otherwise noted, these runes last until the runethane chooses to erase them or they are otherwise destroyed.

**Bane Mark:** This dreaded enchanted object rune is one of the runethane's most fearsome weapons. Unlike other runes, it requires a full day to prepare. The runethane must name a single, specific individual's truename as part of the process of creating this rune. When a character strikes a target with a weapon bearing the *bane mark*, the victim must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half runethane's level + runethane's Intelligence bonus) or suffer 10d6 points of damage, half on a successful save.

**Repelling Rune:** This enchanted object rune repels creatures of a specific type of the runethane's choice, such as aberrations or oozes. Any creature of the chosen type must make a Will save (DC 10 + half runethane's level + runethane's Intelligence bonus) to approach closer than 60 feet. On a successful save, the creature can move but suffers a -2 penalty to attacks and checks while in this area. Thanes who choose humanoid or outsider as the type to repel must select a single subtype as well. This rune lasts five minutes per runethane level.



**Rune of the Feather:** An item invested with this enchanted object rune becomes lighter and much easier to handle. A normal object is reduced to one-half its weight, while a weapon counts as one size category smaller than normal. The enruned weapon inflicts its normal damage despite its lower weight; its weight shifts and flows to make it easier to handle while retaining its cutting edge or heavy bludgeon.

This rune doesn't make a nonweapon object any easier to handle. For example, a massive log would still be too unwieldy and awkward to use as a club, while a suit of armor still hinders movement. The armor's bulk and inflexibility offset its weight, as most suits are designed to distribute their weight evenly just as they are.

**Rune of Radiance:** This rune, which one can use as an applied or touch-trigger effect, creates a storm of energy. It generates a halo of energy around the object or person it affects, inflicting 5d6 points of damage in a 5-foot spread (runethane selects a single type of damage for the rune to inflict). The creature or object bearing this rune, along with anything in its space, takes no damage. This storm continues for 1 round per two runethane levels. A creature can suffer damage from this rune's energy field only once per round. A Reflex save (DC 10 + half runethane's level + runethane's Intelligence bonus) halves this damage. If the creature or object bearing the *rune of radiance* moves once it activates, whether under its own power or someone else's, the effect immediately ends.

**Rune of Spell Slaying:** This touch-trigger rune has a baneful effect on magical spells. Anyone who touches it is affected by *dispel magic* as cast by the runethane as a targeted dispel.

## NEW RUNES OF POWER

Second only to the ultimate rune, runes of power are roughly equivalent to 6th- and 7th-level spells, though they tend to be more focused in utility. A rune of power counts as four runes toward a thane's limit, and it takes a full minute to create one. Unless otherwise noted, these runes last until the runethane chooses to erase them or they are otherwise destroyed.

**Rune of Body and Mind:** This mighty applied rune grants its recipient a +2 enhancement bonus to a single ability score of the runethane's choice. A creature can receive more than one of these runes, though obviously using two or more runes for the same ability is a waste, as enhancement bonuses do not stack.

**Rune of Flight:** This applied rune confers spectral, gossamer wings upon its recipient. They grant a flying speed of 30 feet with average maneuverability. The wings require a space at least 10 feet wide to move and function.

**Rune of Martial Prowess:** By tapping into the runic knowledge of skill at arms, this rune confers a unique combat ability upon its bearer. As an applied rune, it grants access to one feat of the runethane's choice. The bearer must meet the feat's prerequisites as normal. A creature can receive only one of these runes at a time.

**Rune of Spell Defense:** This applied rune creates a defensive shield around its recipient, neutralizing spells cast upon her. She gains spell resistance equal to 10 + runethane's level.

## RUNE MANIFESTS

Runes possess a power far beyond their simple ability to convey a concept or serve as a system of writings and markings. They represent magic in an encoded, physical form that runethanes can craft and manipulate to produce a variety of arcane effects. Some runes have such a strong tie to a basic, fundamental concept of reality that they literally take on a life of their own. The power contained within such a rune grows and develops to encompass the thoughts, emotions, and history behind its concept, giving rise to a being that mirrors the rune's traits—a rune manifest.

A rune manifest embodies a rune and expresses its meaning through its actions. Most rune manifests are simple creatures, glimmers of magical energy with the lowest form of sentience. A few manifests, particularly those that embody powerful or well-known runes, are every bit as intelligent as a giant, human, or verrik. (Four examples of intelligent rune manifests appear in *Legacy of the Dragons*.) These manifests seek to increase their rune's power and stature by spreading its concept across the land. For instance, a battle rune manifest seeks to ignite warfare, while a disease rune manifest slips into a settlement and leaves a horrible plague in its wake.

**Intelligent rune manifests** are liable to be a threat to any settled area; their zeal and narrow-mindedness invariably lead them to clash with other creatures. They rarely stray from what they see as their duty to spread the concept their rune embodies. Manifests have great difficulty relating to intelligent creatures capable of having several priorities or pursuing more than one goal at the same time. From a rune manifest's point of view, all that matters is the propagation of its concept. The creature finds it incomprehensible that others could hold differing views. The single-minded behavior of intelligent rune manifests leads some sages to question whether they are truly sentient. In certain cases, they appear to be merely physical projections of fundamental runic motivations.

While intelligent rune manifests are troublesome at best and deadly at worst, minor rune manifests are useful tools that many spellcasters and commoners call upon for aid. By means of a simple ceremony, anyone can summon and bind a minor rune manifest into service for a short time.

**Minor rune manifests** lack the physical form and personality of independent manifests, but they embody simple concepts that make them useful as tools and aids. A healing manifest can cure an injured warrior's wounds, while a speed manifest can help a character cover a long distance more quickly. These creatures exude their runic concepts, channeling them into the masters that bind them when ordered to do so. Calling and commanding manifests is a relatively uncommon practice, since the rituals used to summon them carry a gold-piece cost, but knowledge of these rituals is widespread.

All rune manifests, whether intelligent or minor, lack truenames. As individual parts of a greater concept, they display much less individuality than other intelligent creatures do.

Portions of this section originally appeared in *Legacy of the Dragons*.



**Valor of the Faithful Defender (left):** This ancient rune's origins are lost in the mists of history. Some believe it was the seal of an ancient order of knights who died to the last man defending their sovereign lord against an invading army. Others believe its iconography depicts a shield and helm and draws its power from that symbolic connection. Regardless of its origin, it is commonly used to bind a valor rune manifest (page 32).

**Spring's Beauty (right):** This rune has been found scribed upon the walls of a variety of ancient sites, many of which predate recorded history. Research into the akashic memory reveals that this symbol depicts a flower on the banks of a river. It was the first attempt to express the concept of beauty in writing, and as such has tremendous symbolic power.

## MINOR RUNE MANIFESTS

A minor rune manifest embodies a single, specific concept that is both simple and direct. It lacks a true material form and cannot directly manipulate, or in turn be manipulated by, physical objects and energy. However, it can channel its essence into a creature that binds itself with the rune manifest.

Calling and controlling a minor rune manifest requires a ritual with a cost measured in gold pieces to reflect the components and materials needed for its completion. Once called, a manifest remains with its summoner for one week or until its master uses the energy of the rune by activating it. At that time, the bond between the creature and the manifest breaks.

Unless otherwise indicated in the description of a specific rune manifest, activating a minor rune manifest is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

The ceremony needed to call a minor rune manifest requires one

hour of work and the proper material components (the cost of these components is given in each manifest's description below). At the ceremony's climax, the minor rune manifest appears as a burst of energy, then resolves into runic form on the dominant hand of the creature who called it.

This rune shimmers and moves slightly, a clear sign that separates it from a standard rune or a runechild's mark.

A manifest's effects cannot be dispelled by magical means, because they represent a primal, elemental alteration to the creature receiving them. For example, a litorian who activates a strength rune manifest grows slightly larger as her muscles gain definition and size.

At any given time, a character can have bound to her a number of minor rune manifests equal to 1 + her Charisma modifier (minimum one). The force of one's personality measures how well one can call and bind rune manifests.



## MINOR RUNE MANIFEST CEREMONIES

You can choose to learn the ceremonies needed to bind a minor rune manifest via the rules for learning new rituals in Chapter One. In addition, you may learn these ceremonies as part of the Knowledge (runes) skill. You master one ceremony if you have 4 ranks in that skill, and an additional one for every rank above 4 that you gain. Unless otherwise noted, activating a called rune manifest is a standard action.

**Amity:** These rune manifests are unique in that they always appear in pairs. The ceremony that calls them requires two creatures to work together. When they complete it, the manifests called in the ceremony grant them a special tie. Once during the next week, either participant may send a telepathic message of no more than 50 words to the other. The recipient hears the words in his mind spoken in the sender's voice. *Cost:* 100 gp.

**Antivenom:** This strange rune manifest can counteract the effects of any poison introduced into its user's body or noxious substances its summoner is exposed to. It grants a +2 enhancement bonus to all saves against poison for one hour after activation. *Cost:* 150 gp.

**Beauty:** This rune manifest enhances its summoner's physical beauty and appeal. When activated, it provides a +2 enhancement bonus to all Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks for one hour. *Cost:* 75 gp.

**Calm:** This rune manifest grants serenity, clarity, and peace to those who use it. When it is activated, this manifest's user gains a +2 morale bonus to all Will saves and a +5 morale bonus to Concentration checks for one hour. *Cost:* 300 gp.

**Communication:** A useful tool for envoys and explorers, this rune manifest grants you the ability to communicate with any intelligent creature in a crude, simple, but nonetheless intelligible manner. When you activate this manifest, select a single target. You can communicate sentences of up to three words in length with that creature, and you understand the gist of what the target creature says to you. This manifest works only with verbal communication. The target creature must have a language and the ability to speak. This manifest lasts for one hour. *Cost:* 300 gp.

**Death:** Cruel warriors and others who delight in slaying their enemies favor this dreaded rune. A death rune manifest lurks near its master, waiting to snuff the spark of life from any living thing. The first time its summoner approaches within 10 feet of an unconscious creature that has fewer than 0 hit points, it springs into action. Its victim loses 2 hit points per round rather than 1 while dying and has only a 5 percent chance to stabilize. After the manifest latches onto a victim in this manner, the manifest's connection with its summoner breaks. Note that the summoner cannot direct the death rune manifest's attack; it springs upon the first available victim it encounters. *Cost:* 300 gp.

**Defense:** This rune manifest wards off attacks and protects its master, granting her a +1 deflection bonus to Armor Class for one hour. *Cost:* 300 gp.

**Diligence:** Drawing on the power of sustained, unflagging effort, this manifest lends strength and determination to anyone who faces a difficult task. When activated, the diligence manifest grants a +4 competence bonus to the final result of any attempt to take 20. *Cost:* 50 gp.

**Fear:** Enveloping its summoner in a palpable aura of fear, this manifest grants a +2 bonus to all the character's Intimidate checks for 10 minutes after it is activated. Its summoner seems slightly larger, more imposing, and more fearsome than normal thanks to this aura. *Cost:* 75 gp.

**Focus:** This rune manifest lends the clarity of mind and relentless determination needed to bear down on a goal, regardless of distractions. When the summoner activates this manifest, he may choose to ignore one single source of penalties to an attack or skill check for one action he takes in the next 10 minutes. He attempts the action as normal without that penalty but suffers other penalties as normal. Note that this has no effect on factors that increase a skill check's Difficulty Class, improve a foe's Armor Class, or otherwise grant bonuses to a target or enemy. It works only on factors that impose a direct penalty to one's check or attack. This has no effect on spell failure percentage due to armor. *Cost:* 100 gp.

**Foresight:** This rune manifest grants its summoner a brief glimpse into the immediate future. It is activated at the start of an encounter (this is not an action; it can take place even if it's not the summoner's turn). When activated, it allows its master to ignore the effects of surprise for the current encounter. He may act as normal during the surprise round. *Cost:* 300 gp.

**Fury:** A fury manifest sets all who draw near its summoner on edge, as its seething rage remains barely in check. When activated, it confers a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution at the cost of a -4 penalty to Armor Class for a number of rounds equal to 2 + the summoner's base Constitution modifier (not including the benefit of this rune manifest's increase to Constitution). In addition, its summoner cannot use any Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based skills during this effect's duration, nor can she cast spells or use magic items that require activation. *Cost:* 300 gp.

**Greed:** While truth, health, and happiness are fundamental building blocks of the world, concepts such as greed are just as important to the fabric of creation. When activated, a greed rune manifest allows its summoner to determine the exact gold piece value of a single item he holds. He may use the rune manifest once before its service expires. *Cost:* 15 gp.

**Hate:** A hate manifest instills a seething rage into its summoner, allowing her to fuel her efforts with raw emotion directed against a specific opponent. When a character activates a hate manifest, she must select a single target in her line of sight. Against this target, she gains a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls and a +2 morale bonus to damage rolls for 10 rounds. *Cost:* 100 gp.

**Healing:** This rune manifest can channel healing energy to its summoner to bind minor wounds. When activated, a healing manifest cures 1d8 points of damage. It then inflicts 1d4 points of subdual damage on its summoner. *Cost:* 50 gp.





**The Toothless Serpent (left):** Legend holds that the world was once overrun with a breed of poisonous, aggressive serpents. These intelligent creatures used their deadly venom to intimidate other sentient beings. The gods, upset that one species held such power over the others, struck a bargain with their wayward creation. The serpents achieved immortality in the form of this rune. In return, they left the world. Some folk claim that these runes sometimes shift and move of their own accord because of the serpent spirits within them.

**Nameless Rune (right):** Runethanes sometimes catalog the emergence of a new rune, especially as new creatures appear and bizarre events come to pass. This nameless rune was discovered by Gar-Yolarien within the weave of a rune-bedecked robe he crafted. The appearance of a new rune is taken as an omen of great events to come, but none can guess their nature and form. Only in the aftermath of the rune's event does its true meaning become apparent.

**Health:** A health rune manifest strengthens its summoner against disease, infection, and other threats. When activated, it grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution for one hour. *Cost:* 600 gp.

**Knowledge:** Valued by sages and magisters, this rune manifest confers a bit of lore upon its master. When activated, a knowledge manifest grants 5 ranks in a Knowledge skill that its summoner does not possess or a +5 competence bonus to a Knowledge skill its user already has. These benefits last one hour. *Cost:* 200 gp.

**Laughter:** Favored by diplomats, arbiters, and others who must enter tense situations, a laughter rune manifest brings relief, joy, and brotherhood to the world. When activated, a laughter manifest grants its summoner a +2 competence bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks for five minutes. In addition, it brings a sense of peace and comfort to the immediate area. Any creature within 50 feet of

the rune manifest's summoner refuses to take violent actions against him for 1d4 minutes after the laughter manifest is activated. This effect does not apply to creatures in combat or those with a clear, obvious, or driving reason to attack the summoner. For example, a laughter rune manifest could prevent a group of suspicious litorians from attacking a wandering minstrel, but it would not help him if they recognized him as a thief and trickster who had stolen from their kin. *Cost:* 200 gp.

**Life:** Drawing on the power of the Green, this rune manifest helps sustain its summoner in the face of deadly injuries. This rune manifest activates automatically when its summoner falls unconscious due to hit point loss. It allows her to roll twice when checking to stabilize hit point loss, taking the better of the two results. This effect lasts until the summoner dies or stabilizes. *Cost:* 50 gp.



**Light:** This handy rune is a boon to all who explore dark places, such as caves, ruins, and other dangerous locales. It can be used in one of two ways. As a free action, its summoner may command the rune manifest to shed light in a 30-foot radius. This illumination, shed from directly above the summoner, lasts four hours. The user also can command the light rune manifest to ready itself. In this case, it automatically activates as described previously if the summoner enters an area of darkness. This proves particularly useful for areas where one's primary light source may go out.

A light rune manifest cannot be snuffed by water, a lack of air, and so forth. It cannot counter magical darkness effects of any level. While it cannot be dispelled, any darkness effect overrides its light—although the manifest continues to function, it simply cannot pierce the darkness. Light and night (see below) rune manifests immediately cancel each other out. *Cost:* 50 gp.

**Luck:** Luck rune manifests are perhaps the most popular type of minor manifest. Its activation grants a +2 bonus to any die roll its summoner's player is about to make, after which it dissipates. This benefit also can be used after a die roll, but it provides only a +1 bonus. *Cost:* 100 gp.

**Magic:** Popular with investigators and others who must deal with magic but have no skill with it, a magic rune manifest can sense and alert its master to the presence of magical auras. When activated, it grants the equivalent of *detect magic* for one hour. However, it can reveal only the auras and magical nature of items its summoner touches. The character may concentrate as normal to learn more about the item and may make Spellcraft checks to learn more about the auras, even if he lacks that skill. While using a magic rune manifest, a character can analyze one item at a time. *Cost:* 75 gp.

**Night:** A favorite rune manifest of those who prefer stealth to a more direct approach, a night manifest creates an inky area of pure darkness. When activated, it fills a 10-foot spread with mundane darkness. Nonmagical sources of light fail to penetrate it, but magical light of any sort illuminates the area as normal. Light and night rune manifests immediately cancel each other out. When activated, the night rune manifest can either be set to radiate darkness in the spot where it was activated or it can move with its user. One cannot place it on an object or some other creature. This rune manifest creates darkness for 10 minutes before its power runs out. *Cost:* 75 gp.

**Sight:** This manifest sharpens the eyes and provides insight into things that normally remain hidden from sight. When activated, it provides the benefits of low-light vision and a +2 competence bonus to all Spot checks for one hour. *Cost:* 75 gp.

**Sleep:** This useful rune manifest ensures that its summoner enjoys a full night of restful sleep, regardless of the situation at hand. Upon activating this manifest, its user can fall asleep under any conditions. Even if she wears heavy armor or is forced to stand, she sleeps as normal. *Cost:* 35 gp.

**Strength:** A strength rune manifest confers vigor, power, and might to its summoner. When activated, it grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength for one hour. *Cost:* 600 gp.

**Sustenance:** This rune manifest provides nourishment to anyone who summons it, drawing on its nature to maintain a character's strength and fortitude in the face of starvation or thirst. When activated, this manifest provides its user with the equivalent of a day's worth of food and water, as though he has eaten a filling meal. The character may go 24 hours without food or drink. *Cost:* 15 gp.

**Truth:** As a shard of the fundamental nature of truth, this rune manifest reacts strongly to any falsehood. When activated, it listens to any conversations its user can hear. When it hears a falsehood, it sends a subtle tremor of magical energy through the summoner, granting a +2 bonus to all Sense Motive checks made to detect a lie for one hour. *Cost:* 150 gp.

**Valor:** Fueled by the deeds of great heroes, a valor rune manifest strengthens its summoner's confidence and fills her with steely resolve. When activated, it confers immunity to all fear-based effects for one hour. *Cost:* 150 gp.

**Vigilance:** Drawing on the concepts of dedication, watchfulness, and security, this rune manifest grants its summoner the ability to note threats before they fall upon him. For eight hours following activation, the vigilance manifest automatically awakens its user if an opponent passes within 60 feet of him. If the character is already awake, it grants a +2 competence bonus to all Listen checks for one hour. *Cost:* 200 gp.

**Wisdom:** A wisdom rune manifest channels the thoughts and advice of a thousand revered scholars. It taps into the akashic memory, granting temporary insight into pressing matters. This rune manifest allows its summoner to treat a single Knowledge skill as trained for one skill check with a +4 competence bonus. *Cost:* 100 gp.

## RUNECCHILDREN

As champions of much that is good and pure in the world, the runechildren inspire hope in the downtrodden and hapless. They are always quick to take up an inspiring cause. Akashics can tell hundreds of stories of runechildren who selflessly gave their lives for a cause, died while defending the innocent, or threw down an oppressive or rapacious tyrant.

Some believe that runechildren are champions of the Green, but few greenbonds agree with that assessment. Their relationship with the heralds of annihilation (see page 36) also argues against the link, but many consider the Green an ally of the force responsible for the runechildren, if not their creator. The Dark is an enemy of both.

Across the world, even in the dimmest corners of the akashic memory, runechildren have always arisen in times of crisis. Even these characters themselves can only guess at their origin. It is obvious that a benevolent force spawned them, but the exact nature of their genesis may stay a mystery.

See *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*, Chapter Two: Races, for rules for playing runechildren.



## ALTERNATE RUNECHILD POWERS

Runechildren exhibit a wide array of powers. The abilities listed in *Arcana Unearthed* cover the basic talents that most of them develop, but sometimes a character may exhibit unique abilities. These runechildren usually arise in the midst of a specific event relating to their origin. Other times, they gain new abilities based on their past actions, class levels, and other abilities. The distinctive rune that marks their flesh reflects their main focus.

Upon becoming a runechild, a character may opt to select one of the following packages rather than using the standard rules from *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*.

### CHILD OF MAGIC

Your magic guided you to the runechild's path. While others work spells for their own gain, you recognize that the ability to cast spells is a wondrous gift that should benefit all. Spellcasters who sequester themselves in their towers, content to ignore the world, are just as much a problem as a tyrannical mind witch who uses her powers to dominate and control others.

Children of magic bear a rune of knowledge, power, or magic. They are typically magisters, witches, greenbonds, or runethanes, though a few mage blades follow this path. They see magic as a powerful force for good, but one that is only as benevolent as the person who wields it. Thus, they work to defeat evil spellcasters and convince others to turn their magic to charitable ends.

These runechildren track down and defeat spellcasters who use their magic to take advantage of mundane folk. Of all the runechildren, children of magic are the most likely to maintain a correspondence with their fellows, going so far as to form informal guilds and networks in areas. They frequently use their magic to remain in contact and coordinate widespread efforts. Many of them recruit spies from among commoners, shopkeepers, and other simple folk, for villainous spellcasters are often too arrogant to recognize such people as a potential threat.

**Powers:** A child of magic gains a +1 bonus to the save DC of the spells he uses against spellcasters. He also gains a +1 luck bonus to all saves against spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. In addition, a child of magic with Intelligence 11 or higher possesses a set of special level-based magical abilities. These abilities function the same as standard runechild powers, save that the child of magic uses Intelligence to modify his powers' save DCs.

Level	Choose From These Abilities
5–6	<i>Empower spell</i> or <i>lesser enhance magical flow</i>
7–8	<i>Greater enhance magical flow</i> or <i>scrying</i>
9–12	SR 10 + runechild's Hit Dice
13–16	<i>Spell turning</i> or <i>spellmaster</i>
17–18	<i>Spell magnet</i> or <i>wave of life</i>
19–20	Arcane supremacy (once per day, cast any non-exotic spell of 7th level or lower) or <i>immortality</i> (self only)



## CHILD OF SHADOW

At first glance, your rough clothes and simple weapons may not seem like the outfit of a runechild, but your enemies have learned the hard way that some runechildren prefer stealth to magic or heavy weapons. You are the shadow that slips into the despot's chambers or the thief who steals the greedy merchant's treasure and distributes it to the poor. Your methods might not always seem honorable, but no one can argue with your results.

The child of shadow uses guile and cunning to defeat an opponent who appears far stronger. The corrupt governor's mercenaries mean little to someone who can slip from their sight. Even the sharpest sword is useless against a target it cannot find.

Children of shadow are usually marked with a rune of quiet, illusion, or stealth. They are frequently akashics or unfettered. A few rare oathsworn belong to this group. Children of shadow usually arise in the face of an overwhelming menace, one that cannot be defeated through sheer force of arms.

The children of shadow seek to protect the weak from the strong by turning their enemies' advantages against them. A merchant who relies on extortion to keep local farmers' crops cheap finds his thugs ambushed and soundly beaten. A child of shadow might steal a cruel despot's crown or deliver a map of his castle to the resistance group that seeks to dethrone him. In some areas, tyrannical rulers have (justifiably) become so paranoid of children of shadow that they offer bounties on anyone who displays runes of any sort on their bodies. Having the wrong tattoo can become a criminal offense in these lands.

**Powers:** A child of shadow gains a +2 luck bonus to all Sneak checks and a +1 bonus to all initiative rolls. Not only are they difficult to spot, but they strike before their enemies are prepared. In addition, a child of shadow with Dexterity 11 or higher possesses a set of special level-based magical abilities. These abilities function the same as standard runechild powers, save that the child of shadow uses Dexterity to modify her powers' save DCs.

Level	Choose From These Abilities
5–6	<i>Cloak of darkness</i> or <i>subtle steps</i>
7–8	<i>Dimensional door</i> or <i>invisibility</i>
9–12	Friend of shadow (you may attempt a Sneak check to hide even when under direct observation once per day) or <i>open door</i>
13–16	<i>Incorporeal form</i> or <i>phase door</i>
17–18	Master of shadow (+5 competence bonus to Sneak checks at all times) or <i>portal to another plane</i>
19–20	<i>Immortality</i> (self only) or <i>shapechange</i>

## CHILD OF VENGEANCE

You became a runechild to right some wrong or because you helped bring a villain to justice. Perhaps you punished someone for crimes committed over many years, or you personally swore vengeance for some terrible deed against your loved ones.

A rune of revenge, loss, or retribution marks the child of vengeance. Most such runechildren favor the fighting arts. They are usually warmains or champions, though a few magisters and greenbonds follow this path as well—particularly those who seek and destroy undead creatures that ravage forests and other fertile ground.

The children of vengeance are the sworn enemies of all heralds of annihilation (see page 36). They seek them out, sometimes assembling in small warbands to defeat their quarry. Such a gathering is terrible in its majesty. These runechildren become so consumed in their task that nothing short of death can sway them from their course.

**Powers:** A child of vengeance gains a +1 luck bonus to all attacks. He also gains a +2 bonus to damage against undead creatures. In addition, a child of vengeance with Constitution 11 or higher possesses a set of special level-based magical abilities. These abilities function the same as standard runechild powers, save that the child of vengeance uses Constitution to modify his powers' save DCs.

Level	Choose From These Abilities
5–6	<i>Drain away speed</i> or <i>icebolt</i>
7–8	<i>Chains of vengeance</i> or <i>curse of vengeance</i>
9–12	<i>Scrying</i> or <i>spell of challenge</i>
13–16	<i>Feedback strike</i> or <i>ride the lightning</i>
17–18	Final vengeance (anyone you slay is affected by <i>permanent rest</i> )
19–20	<i>Consume soul</i> or <i>trap soul</i>

## CHILD OF WAR

The child of war is born in fire and fury. When the world needed someone to stand against evil, you stood, sword bared, ready to give your life to save others. The child of war is by no means violent or bloodthirsty. Many of these runechildren see violence as a tragic, ultimately pointless exercise forced upon them by aggressors. You fight in the hope that your descendants won't have to.

Children of war bear runes of combat, battle prowess, or death. Some of them conceal their runes, as aggressive or arrogant swordfighters sometimes challenge them under the mistaken belief that children of war love combat or represent the pinnacle of fighting ability. They are typically warmains, champions, mage blades, and totem warriors.

The children of war always seek to participate in just wars. They may band together, but usually they spread out to help as many folk as possible along the battle lines. However, they are rarely found at the sites of great battles, unless the enemy is obviously malicious or evil. Instead, they protect groups of refugees, defend small villages from raiders and foraging armies, and help protect the wounded from scavengers or murderous looters.

A few children of war, akashics known as the Warkillers, have united into a small, secret sect. Dedicated to making war as

unpalatable a choice as possible, they hunt down and assassinate generals and nobles who, in their view, are too quick to turn to aggressive military actions when dealing with neighbors.

**Powers:** Children of war gain a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class. They can lose this bonus to grant any person adjacent to them a defensive bonus. In this case, the bonus becomes a +2 circumstance bonus to Armor Class, as the child of war fends off attacks meant for her ally. In addition, a child of war with Strength 11 or higher possesses a set of special level-based magical abilities. These abilities function the same as standard runechild powers, save that the child of war uses Strength to modify her powers' save DCs.

Level	Choose From These Abilities
5–6	<i>Lesser battle healing</i> (3/day) or <i>true strike</i> (3/day)
7–8	<i>Spirit of prowess</i> or <i>strength to strike</i>
9–12	<i>Bloodblade</i> or <i>gird the warrior</i>
13–16	<i>Finger of destruction</i> or <i>spirit of war</i>
17–18	Lord of battle (your allies within 100 feet gain a +2 competence bonus to attacks and AC)
19–20	DR 10/magic (DR 15/+1) or <i>immortality</i> (self only)

## RUNECHILD FEATS

The following ceremonial feats reflect the special rituals that runechildren of all types can complete to awaken new powers. Runechildren enjoy a close connection to the world, one that guides them to places where their aid is needed most. Their feats assist them in helping others and defeating evil, as befits some of the most benevolent folk in the Lands of the Diamond Throne.

Only runechildren may acquire the new feats described here. Characters who lose their runechild status for any reason can no longer use these feats.

As ceremonial feats, each of them carries a cost of 100 gp in ritual ingredients and supplies (see *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*, Chapter Five: Feats).

### CALMING INFLUENCE (CEREMONIAL)

Your mere presence helps your allies combat magical effects that can alter their minds and emotions. You inspire them to fight off such attacks and instill them with bravery in the face of terror.

**Prerequisite:** Caster level 10th, runechild

**Benefit:** You help your allies overcome fear and similar effects. Any ally within 30 feet of you gains a +2 competence bonus to all saves against mind-affecting and fear effects. This bonus remains as long as you are active and able to communicate with them. If you are somehow silenced or pass beyond your allies' view, they lose this bonus.

### DEFENDER OF THE WEAK (CEREMONIAL)

When an attack threatens your friends, you strike first in a quick blur, slaying your enemies before they can land a blow. These attacks come with supernatural speed, spurred on by your magical nature.

**Prerequisite:** Base attack bonus +11, runechild

**Benefit:** You can make a counterattack against those who strike your allies. As a standard action, you enter a defensive stance and ready yourself. Anyone who attacks one of your allies provokes an attack of opportunity from you. Your attack lands before the foe can complete his attack. As usual, you must threaten a foe to attack him, and you use your allotment of attacks of opportunity as normal.

### PURIFYING STRIKE (CEREMONIAL)

The power that made you a runechild can also smite and destroy your enemies. When battling opponents who work against your goals as a runechild, you can invoke this power to defeat them.

**Prerequisite:** Base attack bonus +9, runechild

**Benefit:** Once per day, you gain a bonus to a single melee attack's damage. This bonus is equal to your Hit Dice total. You must choose to activate this ability before making your melee attack. The target of this ability must be someone who actively works to victimize the weak or otherwise inflicts pain, misery, and terror on others. If you activate it against an ineligible target, you do not gain the bonus damage, and this ability is considered used for the day. It is also considered used for the day if you activate it before making an attack that misses its target.

### SENSE OF THE LAND (CEREMONIAL)

You can sense the presence of evil creatures and tumultuous events over wide distances. The world calls out to you with its need, allowing

## NEW CEREMONIAL FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
<i>Calming Influence</i>	Caster level 10th, runechild	You help your allies overcome fear and similar effects.
<i>Defender of the Weak</i>	Base attack bonus +11, runechild	You can counterattack those who strike your allies.
<i>Purifying Strike</i>	Base attack bonus +9, runechild	You can invoke your power to smite your foes.
<i>Sense of the Land</i>	Wisdom 13, runechild	You can sense the presence of evil creatures and tumultuous events over wide distances.
<i>Stirring Leadership</i>	Charisma 13, runechild	You excel at leading others.
<i>Voice of Reason</i>	Charisma 15, Diplomacy 13 ranks, runechild	You can temporarily force others to listen to you.



you to track down enemies who wrongly think they can commit their crimes without punishment.

**Prerequisite:** Wisdom 13, runechild

**Benefit:** Once per day, you can perform a short ritual to establish a connection with the land. You might press your bare hand against the ground to communicate with the land, or perhaps you take in long, deep breaths to listen to the rumors on the wind. Regardless of the exact ceremony, it requires 15 minutes of focus. When you complete the ritual, you gain a general impression of the status of the area in a 15-mile radius around you.

For each cardinal direction (north, south, east, west), you gain a general impression of crimes, battles, disasters, and other recent troubles. In game terms, you can sense four basic levels of distress as follows:

*Calm:* The area is peaceful, prosperous, and healthy. Aside from petty crimes, such as muggings or simple robbery, nothing serious has occurred in the past three days.

*Tense:* Scanty rainfall, poor crops, and other issues plague the area, but none pose a serious threat. Crime might be commonplace, but nothing more serious than nonlethal assault has taken place in the past three days.

*Strained:* The area faces a pending disaster or has recently endured one. At least one and perhaps as many as 10 murders of innocents have taken place there.

*Dire:* The land is in the midst of a catastrophe, such as a drought, plague, or war. Many innocent folk have died, and more may die soon unless someone puts a stop to the marauders active in the area.

**Special:** A greenbond runechild with this feat gains a +4 bonus to all caster power checks made to use the greenbond's bind with the Green class ability.

This power makes no special note of those who die honorably in battle, of thieves who betray and murder their fellows, and similar deaths. It detects only unjust crimes. A sibeccai knight who died in an honest jousting accident would not create a strained condition, but if his enemies conspired to create the "accident," this ability would register the region as strained.

### STIRRING LEADERSHIP (CEREMONIAL)

You excel at leading others. Under your direction, your followers work faster, coordinate their actions better, and remain steadfastly loyal to their leadership.

**Prerequisite:** Charisma 13, runechild

**Benefit:** This ability allows you to rally and lead peasants and other commoners. Any of your allies within 100 feet of you who have half your Hit Dice or less gain a +2 morale bonus to attacks, checks, and saves. This bonus lasts until the crisis comes to an end and extends to situations outside of combat. For example, if you led an effort to create an emergency dam to stem rising floodwaters, the workers under your command would gain the bonus to any Craft and Strength checks needed to build the levee.

### VOICE OF REASON (CEREMONIAL)

A stirring orator, you can bring calm to even the most chaotic situations through the use of your commanding voice and magnetic presence. As a runechild, you find that sometimes a few careful words can do more good than a hundred swords.

**Prerequisites:** Charisma 15, Diplomacy 13 ranks, runechild

**Benefit:** You can temporarily force others to listen to you. If you spend a full-round action to do nothing but deliver a short speech calling for attention, you can make a Diplomacy check. This check's result becomes the DC of the Will saving throw that everyone present must attempt in order to take actions other than listen to you for the next minute. You cannot elect to allow some of the targets present, such as your allies, to avoid this save.

While under the effects of this ability, those around you remain vigilant. Characters previously involved in combat retain their initiatives and do not count as flat-footed if attacked. They can delay their actions until they see any sort of hostile maneuver. If they expect trouble, they may act as normal, should they see or hear anything the DM judges as suspicious. This ability functions only against creatures that share a language with you.

As a runechild, you must use this ability responsibly. It is intended to stop fights or end bickering, not serve as a weapon or distraction. If you abuse it, you may lose your status as a runechild. If this ability leads to a fight due to treachery by you or your allies, you lose the ability to use it for one month and suffer a -4 penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks as your guilt hangs over you like an aura.

## THE HERALDS OF ANNIHILATION

Few accounts of them, whether written or otherwise recorded, exist in the world. They are creatures of legend—if they are truly alive. They are one of the greatest threats known to the Lands of the Diamond Throne, so daunting that even the dramojh feared and hunted them.

They are the heralds of annihilation, strange beings said to arise from a mortal's dedication to the destructive power of the Dark. They serve no banner, though they may ally themselves with mortals when such a maneuver serves their aims. Rather, they stand for the utter and complete annihilation of everything.

Heralds of annihilation exist to work terror and death across the land. They poison wells, burn fields, and unleash hordes of the living dead. They wield strange powers over runes, crafted items, and other materials created by living hands. They can undo the efforts of even the greatest artisans, reducing works of art into dust with a wave of their hand. Their nihilistic desires extend to everything.

These creatures prefer to work with the undead, though as mentioned above they sometimes ally with the living if it suits them. An alliance with a herald of annihilation can end only in doom. Many of them slay those foolish enough to work with them, turning their more useful victims into undead vassals.



Many sages consider the heralds of annihilation the opposite of runechildren. Herald enjoy a strange power over and relationship with runes. Many believe they seek to destroy the primal runes that formed the words of creation. By erasing these words, they can utterly annihilate existence. Some akashics fear that the heralds have already achieved a few victories on this grim crusade. Here and there in the akashic memory exist jagged rents that scream in agony when an akashic tries to inspect them closely. Who can say what beautiful wonders have been erased from the world? With their first attacks, the foul heralds undoubtedly would have targeted the most wondrous, inspiring concepts and beings. Emotions, entire continents, and whole races may have fallen victim to this ghastly plot.

Most heralds of annihilation travel with a coterie of undead creatures. Many of these companions have class abilities, particularly levels in magister or akashic.

Only fools would follow a herald of annihilation, and a few desperate madmen do serve them. Some of these subordinates crave the raw power that the path of annihilation offers. They see the objects of their devotion devastate cities, slaughter commoners by the hundreds, and carve their names into the pages of history. Many such followers are simply insane; these individuals serve as bearers and servants but inevitably feed a herald's undead minions. Other cohorts are more dangerous. Skilled in magic and arms, they seek to master the path of annihilation for their own twisted reasons. Those who can survive become the next generation of heralds.

## THE NATURE OF DESTRUCTION

Heralds of annihilation are quite literally a cosmic force nested within a physical shell. Like runechildren, they exhibit a variety of powers and a set of unique markings that demonstrate their nature. Unlike those benevolent protectors, however, their powers are wholly destructive in nature.

Just as runechildren bear a rune on face or hand, heralds of annihilation gain a distinctive series of marks. Whatever their race, their skin slowly turns a dark grey. Their hair falls from their scalps, and their teeth rot. Their eyes turn into tiny, black orbs, while their noses seem to waste away. As a herald gains power, he transforms slowly into a featureless, twisted grey creature. As adherents of utter annihilation, they destroy their own identity as a sign of their own devotion. Many heralds show signs of self-mutilation to help hasten this process. They may pluck out their eyes, sew their mouths shut, or slice off their own ears. Despite these changes, the dead, scarred flesh that takes the place of their organs and features perfectly mimics the flesh it replaced. Herald of annihilation have no special sensory handicaps or benefits.

In game terms, a herald is represented by a template race much like a runechild's; the herald sacrifices a character level in exchange for the powers of annihilation (see next page). In addition, heralds have access to a variety of feats, ceremonies, and other abilities that





only they can use. The path of annihilation changes those who follow it into something else—something that sees the world far differently than any mortal.

### BECOMING A HERALD

Almost everyone who becomes a herald of annihilation chooses this path. Many are champions of destruction, while others simply crave power and the opportunity to use it against others. Heralds usually gain visions of ultimate decay—of a cosmos utterly devoid of life—in the aftermath of a particularly horrific deed. Even the most black-hearted villains may turn away from this sight, but others find themselves filled with a tremendous longing. Those who embrace this eternal nothingness become heralds of annihilation.

Not all heralds are humanoid. Some are terrible monsters that slowly descend along the path of annihilation. Driven by an insatiable thirst for devastation, they prey upon the weak and murder intelligent creatures whenever they have the opportunity.

A herald must have at least 6 Hit Dice. To become heralds, player characters must give up the next class level they would normally gain. Otherwise, an NPC or monster gains a +1 modifier to its Challenge Rating. Obviously, the herald of annihilation is meant to be a villain, not a player character.

### HERALD POWERS

Heralds gain several benefits from their dark status. They enjoy a +1 bonus to their highest ability score and a +1 profane bonus to all checks and saves. In addition, the power of utter annihilation grants them several special abilities.

**Aura of Death (Su):** All heralds of annihilation exude an aura of death that enhances undead while draining vitality from the living. Living creatures must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half herald's HD + herald's Charisma modifier) or suffer 2 points of temporary Strength damage. The herald gains 5 temporary hit points for each person who fails this save and suffers the Strength damage. These hit points disappear 10 minutes after the herald gains them.

This power functions on all living creatures within 10 feet of the herald but can affect a particular creature only once per day. If a creature makes its save, it does not have to attempt one again for 24 hours.

Undead creatures gain a +2 profane bonus to attacks, checks, and saves while within 60 feet of the herald. The herald does not gain this bonus if he happens to be undead, however. Undead creatures also gain fast healing 1. (If the undead already has fast healing, it gains only the +2 profane bonus from this aura.)

**Destroy Rune (Su):** This power reflects the horrific goal of all heralds of annihilation. As a standard action, a herald can destroy a single rune by making a Charisma check with a profane bonus

equal to half his Hit Dice. The Difficulty Class of this check equals 10 + the level of the runethane who crafted the rune. If anyone other than a runethane created the rune, it is automatically destroyed. However, a runechild's supernatural rune remains unaffected by this power unless the runechild is dead. Destroying the rune on a dead runechild's body robs the victim of his runechild status if he is ever raised from the dead.

**Eternal Annihilation:** A herald of annihilation is so driven by his black deeds that his soul transcends the limits of flesh. Through sheer willpower and the blessings of the Dark, his physical form knits wounds closed and fights on. He gains fast healing 4.

**Immortality:** A herald with 15 HD or more becomes immortal. He survives on the raw power of the Dark, allowing him to persist long after his natural body processes begin to expire.

**Undead:** A herald with 20 HD or more gains the corporeal undead template, as presented in Chapter Nine: Spells of *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*. The power of the Dark fully consumes his living soul, turning him into a mockery of life.

**Additional Powers:** In addition to these abilities, when the herald gains a new Hit Dice total listed below, he may choose one of the powers given for its range. The herald chooses once for each range. A herald who starts with more than 5 HD gains abilities for each range he meets or surpasses. For example, a 10 HD herald would pick one power from the 5–6 list, one from the 7–8 line, and one from the 9–12 list.

If the power listed is a spell, the herald uses it with a caster level equal to his Hit Dice. He uses Charisma to modify the power's save Difficulty Classes.

Unless otherwise noted, a herald of annihilation can use a power once per day.

Level/HD	Choose From These Abilities
5–6	<i>Cloak of darkness, compelling command, or darkvision</i> (always active)
7–8	<i>Lesser animate the dead</i> or <i>control undead</i> (3/day)
9–12	<i>Greater animate the dead</i> or <i>bloodblade</i>
13–16	<i>Call undead</i> or <i>finger of destruction</i>
17–18	<i>Animate undead legion</i> or <i>curse of languishing death</i>
19–20	<i>Consume soul</i> or <i>wave of death</i>



## HERALD FEATS

In addition to their inherent magical powers, heralds of annihilation gain access to several unique feats and abilities that draw upon a close association with the Dark. All of the following are ceremonial feats. They draw upon rituals that increase a herald's bond with the Dark, infusing her with additional negative energy and allowing her to manifest frightening new abilities.

Only heralds of annihilation may select these feats, as these dreaded servants of the Dark are the only ones who can complete the rituals needed to gain them. As ceremonial feats, each of them carries a cost of 100 gp in ritual ingredients and supplies (see *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*, Chapter Five: Feats).

### AURA OF MENACE (CEREMONIAL)

Your presence unnerves simple creatures, causing them to shy away from you reflexively. Even intelligent beings have trouble focusing their thoughts when you are near.

**Prerequisites:** Charisma 15, Intimidate 16 ranks, truename, herald

**Benefit:** Any living creature coming within 60 feet of the herald must make a Will save (DC 10 + half herald's HD + herald's Charisma modifier) or suffer a –2 morale penalty to attacks, checks, and saves. Those with Intelligence 3 or lower immediately flee the area. They can do nothing for the next 1d8 rounds other than move at their maximum speed away from the herald of annihilation.

### BEFOUL THE LAND (CEREMONIAL)

Your toxic presence breeds sickness and blight all around you.

**Prerequisites:** Truename, herald

**Benefit:** All mundane plants—those without Hit Dice—within 30 feet of the herald immediately die. This ability remains always in effect.

Once per day as a standard action the herald can cause a flare in the negative energy that surrounds him. Plants with 1 HD or more must make Fortitude saves (DC 10 + half herald's HD + herald's Charisma modifier) or suffer 4d8 points of damage. Animals become sick and nauseated when the herald activates this ability. They also must make Fortitude saves or suffer 1 point of temporary Strength damage when the herald uses this feat.

## NEW CEREMONIAL FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
<i>Aura of Menace</i>	Charisma 15, Intimidate 16 ranks, truename, herald	Living creatures recoil from your dark aura.
<i>Befoul the Land</i>	Truename, herald	The land withers and dies as you pass.
<i>Black Flame Strike</i>	Base attack bonus +11, herald	You summon an aura of black flame around your weapon.
<i>Lord of the Dead</i>	Charisma 13, truename, herald	You command undead creatures.
<i>Touch of Annihilation</i>	Caster level 17th, Touch of Death†, truename, herald	You can annihilate creatures.
<i>Touch of Death</i>	Caster level 11th, truename, herald	Your touch is baneful to the living.



### LORD OF THE DEAD

Lord Score	Cohort Level	NUMBER OF MINIONS BY LEVEL/ECL					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1 or less	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	1st	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	2nd	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	3rd	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	3rd	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	4th	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	5th	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	5th	—	—	—	—	—	—
9	6th	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	7th	5	—	—	—	—	—
11	7th	6	—	—	—	—	—
12	8th	8	—	—	—	—	—
13	9th	10	1	—	—	—	—
14	10th	15	1	—	—	—	—
15	10th	20	2	1	—	—	—
16	11th	25	2	1	—	—	—
17	12th	30	3	1	1	—	—
18	12th	35	3	1	1	—	—
19	13th	40	4	2	1	1	—
20	14th	50	5	3	2	1	—
21	15th	60	6	3	2	1	1
22	15th	75	7	4	2	2	1
23	16th	90	9	5	3	2	1
24	17th	110	11	6	3	2	1
25+	17th	135	13	7	4	2	2

#### BLACK FLAME STRIKE (CEREMONIAL)

You call upon the power of the Dark to aid you. It takes the form of a flickering black fire that surrounds your weapon or a single natural attack.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +11, herald

**Benefit:** The herald summons an aura of black flame around his weapon. It remains for a number of rounds equal to 4 + herald's Charisma bonus and grants a +4 bonus to damage. In addition, anyone struck by this attack must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half herald's HD + herald's Charisma modifier) or suffer 1 point of temporary Constitution damage.

#### LORD OF THE DEAD (CEREMONIAL)

The Dark calls undead creatures to your banner. You are so infused with its seductive power, they cannot help but obey.

**Prerequisites:** Charisma 13, truename, herald

**Benefit:** The herald commands a number of undead creatures, which serve her with all their might, gladly sacrificing themselves for her glory. The minions gained are based on her lord score (see table).

*Lord Score:* A herald's lord score equals her Hit Dice + Charisma modifier. Mighty heralds draw undead minions to them like moths to a flame. The lord score never suffers any penalties nor does it gain any bonuses due to the herald's actions. The undead that follow the Lord of the Dead are compelled by the Dark to obey her every command, including suicidal ones.

*Cohort Level:* The herald can attract a cohort of up to the listed cohort level. The cohort is always an undead creature. The Lord of the Dead can recruit undead monsters rather than classed undead if their ECL equals the level listed here. Otherwise, create an NPC using the undead template from Chapter Nine: Spells in *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*. The NPC may have the listed levels, plus he gains the template.

If one's cohort is destroyed, the herald of annihilation must wait one month to perform the ritual needed to gain this feat again to replace him.

*Number of Minions by Level:* The herald of annihilation can lead up to the indicated number of followers of each level. These followers are undead creatures (created with the *Arcana Unearthed* templates in

Chapter Nine: Spells), with their indicated levels in expert or warrior. Alternatively, the herald may recruit creatures as minions. An undead creature counts as a minion with a level equal to its ECL + 1.

Once per month, the herald can perform the ritual needed to gain this feat to replace any lost undead minions.

#### TOUCH OF ANNIHILATION (CEREMONIAL)

You are a walking agent of the Dark. Your touch can bring fundamental annihilation to living creatures on the verge of death.

**Prerequisite:** Caster level 17th, Touch of Death† (see below), truename, herald

**Benefit:** The herald can annihilate creatures with a touch. Once per day, she may make a touch attack against a single foe. If she hits, that foe must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half herald's HD + herald's Charisma modifier) or be immediately annihilated if and *only* if his current hit points are less than half the herald's total Hit Dice. Annihilated creatures are erased from history. No one remembers they ever existed, and they can be raised only if someone manages to solve the riddle of their existence. Who can say how many valiant champions have disappeared from history's pages, destroyed by this terrible power?

#### TOUCH OF DEATH (CEREMONIAL)

The terrible power of the Dark is never far when you are near. With a touch, you can slay those whose spirits and physical bodies are too weak to resist your foul energy.

**Prerequisite:** Caster level 11th, truename, herald

**Benefit:** The herald of annihilation's touch is baneful to the living. Once per day, he may make a touch attack against a single foe. If he hits, that foe must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half herald's HD + herald's Charisma modifier) or be immediately slain if and *only* if her current hit points are less than the herald's total Hit Dice.

#### HERALDS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Heralds of annihilation make perfect villains. Their dedication to the utter destruction of life causes all creatures—even those divided by bitter rivalries, racial hatreds, and political struggles—to ally

against them. The most successful heralds work in secret. A herald of annihilation who rampages across an otherwise peaceful land simply makes himself a target.

Most heralds rely on other, larger events to mask their actions. During a war, they may operate in the open. Observers might write off their attacks and pillaging as the actions of a few deserters or a gang of bloodthirsty robbers. Heralds often work in the shadow of natural disasters and other calamities. Sometimes they operate in secret to help foment such events. An ambitious, intelligent herald of annihilation might uncover a powerful ceremony that can awaken a dormant volcano. In the aftermath of the eruption, he and his undead followers descend upon the scattered bands of survivors. Needless to say, heralds excel at making an already miserable situation even worse.

Becoming a herald of annihilation provides a convenient power boost to an already dangerous opponent. The process of becoming a herald can warp and change a person. Feel free to change a villain's feat selection or even his class levels to throw the players an unexpected threat. Salarrian the Venomous might once have been a feared champion of death, but after becoming a herald of annihilation he might gain levels as an akashic, as well as a variety of new feats to reflect the warping process he underwent.

Play a herald of annihilation as an utterly amoral fiend. These villains have no qualms about sacrificing others, betraying what few alliances they enter, and doing whatever it takes to defeat their enemies. A herald might target a player character's family or loved ones. He could start a fire in a crowded street at the height of a drought.

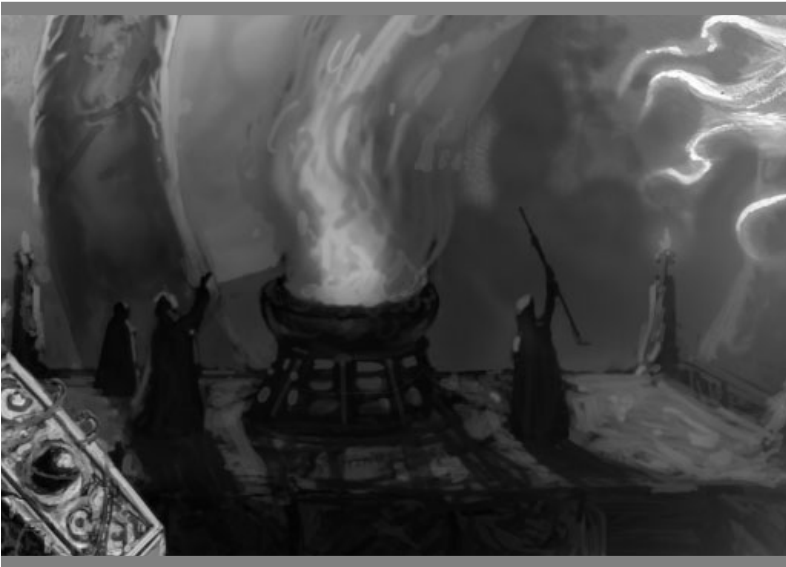
In terms of long-term goals, heralds of annihilation are dangerous precisely because they have none, aside from spreading death and destruction. One cannot reason with a herald—he sees negotiation as nothing more than a pause in the slaughter. Many heralds disguise their true nature to lull their enemies into a false sense of security. They may use thick cloaks, masks, or even disguises created with makeup, wigs, and other tools. The player characters might struggle against a villain for months without realizing his true nature.



CHAPTER THREE:

# Mystic Sites of the Diamond Throne

*Magic saturates the air of some places in the Lands of the Diamond Throne, making spellcasting there far easier than normal. In other regions, arcane energy is as rare as water in a desert. Summoning the power of a spell there is a trying, difficult process. Just as mountains, hills, and forests create a physical geography, so too does the fabric of magic and history create a variety of strange formations and currents that change as you travel across the land.*



**T**his chapter presents a number of locale traits you can use to model the variable magical geography of the Diamond Throne. Throughout the vast majority of the land, magic works as normal, and the geography has no effect on other actions a character might take. These locale traits are noteworthy because they are so rare. Some spellcasters can spend their entire lives traveling the land without ever encountering one. On the other hand, adventurers frequently venture into precisely the sort of strange venues that host these disturbances.

## SITES OF POWER

As a land ripe with magic, the Diamond Throne holds a variety of sites where magic burns bright. The three sample locations described here are meant to serve two roles. First, they show how you can use locale traits, history, and the effects of powerful, ancient ceremonies to shape your game. Second, you can use them as settings for adven-

tures. The player characters may have to journey to these sites of power to defeat a foe, complete an important ceremony, or find an ancient treasure needed to overcome some threat.

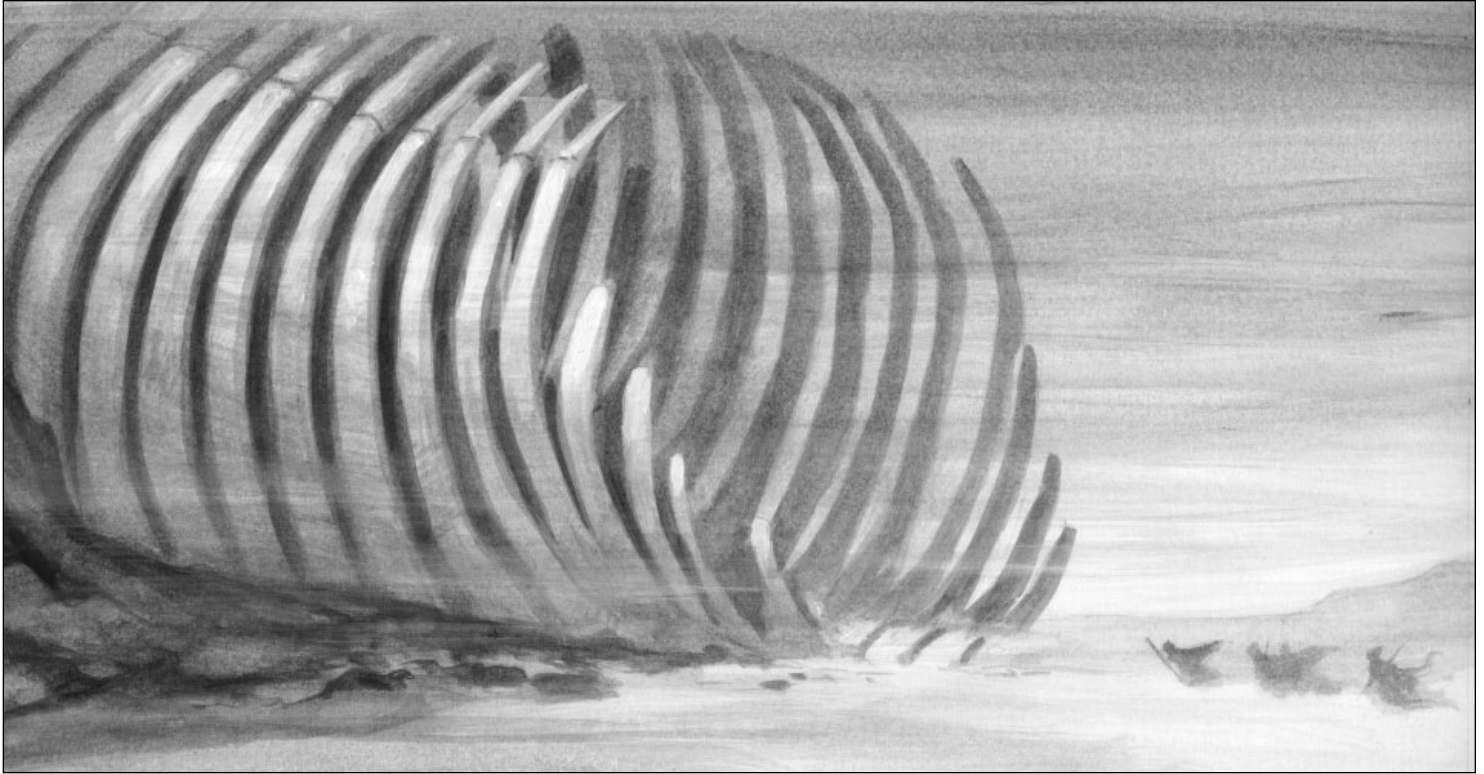
## THE BONE CATHEDRAL

Great bones rise into the sky like clawed fingers emerging from the earth. The air hangs heavy with the weight of history, and even the smallest pit dug into the ground reveals ancient bones, corroded weapons and armor, and other legacies of this place's past. This is the Bone Cathedral, a nexus of magical power. Ages ago, an enormous dragon died here, perhaps at the hands of the legions of warriors that lie buried in the sands around its remaining bones. A traveler in the Southern Wastes could wander for years without noticing this place. Yet many seek it, for it is a place of great power.

The Bone Cathedral earned its name from the formation of titanic bones that emerges from the ground at the site. The dragon's ribs arc upward to create a simple structure, curving slightly inward to form a sort of roof. At the center of this formation stands a stone platform upon which rests a simple altar. A host of ancient runes carved into the platform speak of war, peace, death, and accord. A ceremonial fire pit is dug within the boundary of bones.

## OVERVIEW

The Bone Cathedral is the resting place of an unnamed wyrm. Based on its size and the lore of dragons remaining in moldering old tomes, the beast must have been two thousand years old before it died. None can say who built the cathedral from its bones. Akashics who plumb their memories for lore of this place write of towering figures who looked like men but stood at twice their height. A few folk believe these were giants, but giant history shows no record or sign of travels to the continent that far back in history. Others believe that some other race—perhaps one long since destroyed, or one that fled across the sea to the west, or even the ancient chorrim—was responsible for constructing this place.



In any case, the akashics know that here at the cathedral, a great truce was once struck. The dragons served as one of the parties in the truce, and the slain dragon bore some role in the genesis of the peace. But this place was not always so peaceful, as visitors here can tell, for the cathedral presents them with emotionally charged vestiges of long-ago events. One can still hear the ancient clash of steel on dragon scales, the crackle of wyrm fire, the screams of dying men, and even the last, frightening draconic roar as it dwindles to a faint death rattle. War and friendship. Peace and death. The Bone Cathedral is a place of contradictions.

Few people can remain within the Bone Cathedral for long. The ebb and flow of such varied emotions puts a continuous, subtle strain upon the mind. Spellcasters have been known to avoid the place, while even the dullest peasant finds it slightly unnerving. What none can deny is that the tumultuous history of the cathedral has transformed it into a fountain of mystic energy. The polar opposition of the events wrought here—a great battle and a lasting peace—creates a tension that some rituals seem to feed upon. Some people even claim that the weight of history is so great here that it makes the story of the world unravel and fray. Those perceptive or wise enough sometimes perceive fleeting but powerful insights into the future at this place.

#### LOCALE TRAITS

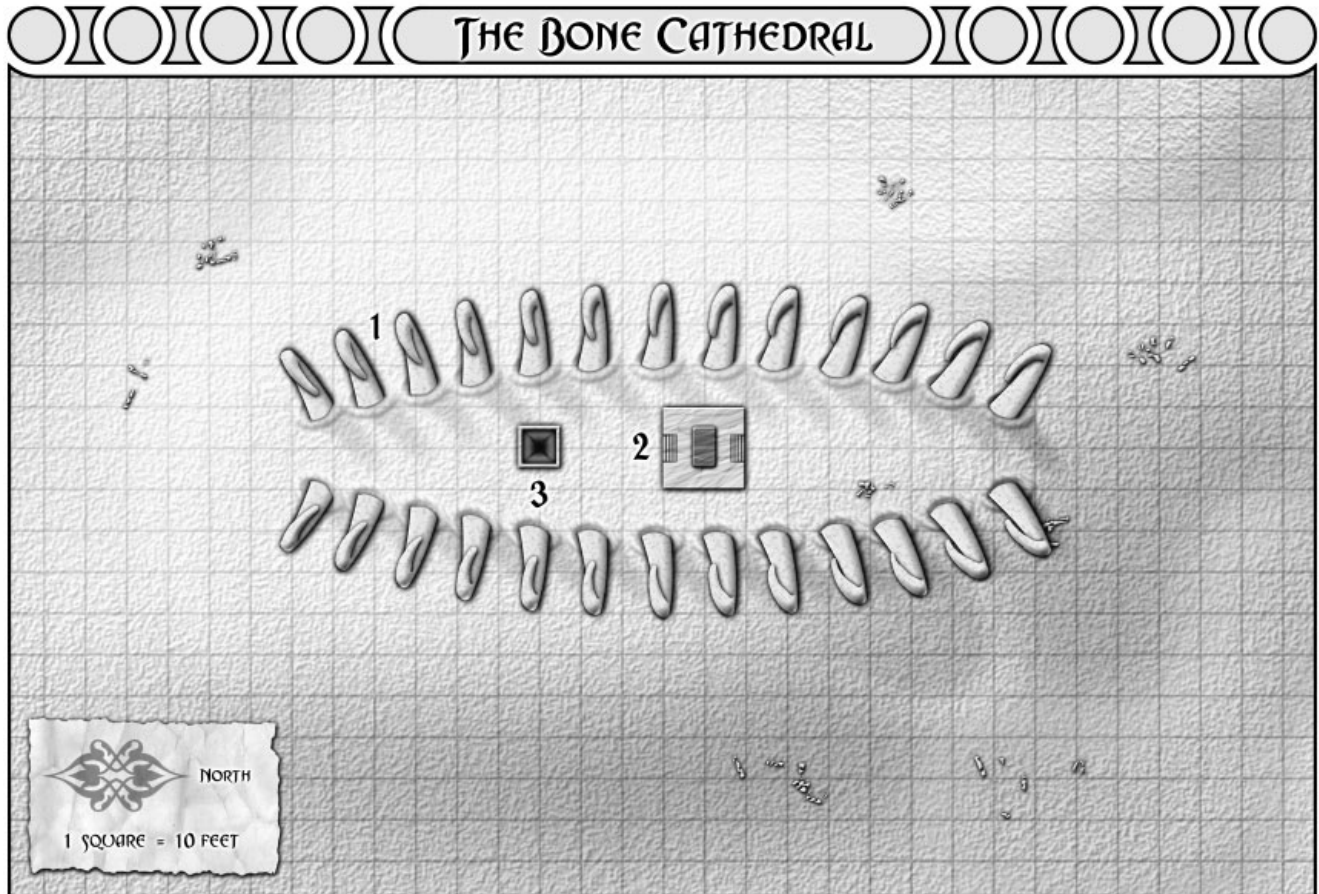
The tension and power that reside within the Bone Cathedral grant it a number of different locale traits:

**Arcane Tension:** Magical energy crackles and hums here, yet it remains strained and torn between the cathedral's dual nature. Whenever a caster uses a spell here, she must attempt a caster power check (DC 15). On a failed check, the magical backlash stuns her for 1 round. For example, casting a fire spell might create a sudden surge of watery energy that flashes over the caster. On a successful check, she not only controls the power, she may use the heightened effects of the spell without using a higher-level slot, if she so chooses. Needless to say, apprentices tend to avoid this place, while mighty casters exult in its power.

**Far-Sighted Might:** Verrick characters and any creature with the dragon type gain a +2 morale bonus to attacks, saves, and checks attempted within 1 mile of the cathedral. The long-lived dragons, with their perspective based on a life span that bridges the centuries, can understand and appreciate the symphony of contradictions that give this place its power. The verrik, with their unique worldview, describe the site as stepping into a gentle tornado of history, one that places an enlightening lens over all of reality.

**Magic Rich:** The energy behind spells permeates this entire area like a refreshing rain. Casting the most difficult spells feels as easy as humming a tune. Your spell slots all count as one level higher than normal here. For example, you could use a 1st-level slot to cast a 2nd-level spell or to gain a 1st-level spell's heightened effects. You can willingly count a slot as a lower level if you so wish.

**Nexus of Power:** Rituals performed within the cathedral seem to gain power from the locale. Energy flows through the simplest



ceremonies, imparting upon them gravity and weight far beyond normal. In game terms, a ritual held here gains no special bonuses. However, while performing it, one witnesses spectral figures of armored humanoids, dragons, and other strange visions coalescing from wisps of energy that ebb and flow through the area.

More importantly, many believe that a variety of mighty rituals can *only* be performed successfully on this site. Cultists who seek to resurrect dead gods, small cabals who wish to seal their oaths of fealty with a mighty bond, and other groups seek out the cathedral to perform their rituals here.

**Shifting Paths:** Those who seek the Bone Cathedral must travel for many days before it appears to them. In some ways, the act of seeking this place is part of a ritual needed to find the path that leads to it. Anyone who wishes to find the cathedral must wander in the Southern Wastes for five days, eating and drinking only the supplies they carried with them when the journey began. During this time, they must forswear the use of all spells. The seekers must risk ambush in the night and fight any monsters or raiders they encounter with swords, bows, and other weapons. On the morning after the fifth day, the seekers awaken with the cathedral visible 5 miles in the distance. There is no other way to journey to or leave the cathedral, including magical means.

When a traveler leaves the cathedral, it slowly fades over the horizon. When it is finally gone, the traveler finds herself within a few miles of the spot in the Southern Wastes where her pilgrimage began many days ago.

**Veil of Secrecy:** Divination spells of any sort fail to penetrate within 1 mile of the cathedral. Similarly, they fail to work against those at the site and those engaged in the travel ritual needed to find it.

#### LOCATIONS

Refer to the map of the cathedral above when using this location key.

**1. Bones of the Dragon:** The dragon's ribs rise more than 50 feet into the air at their highest point and form a structure roughly 200 feet long. At its widest point, the cathedral measures 40 feet between the two rib walls. Basalt pillars sunk deep into the sands anchor the bones in the ground. These pillars have twice been excavated, revealing that they in turn rest upon cyclopean granite blocks. What lies below the blocks, none can say. The swirling sand makes excavation difficult, though that has not stopped several bands of explorers from attempting to uncover the vaults and passages said to lie beneath the bones. Not a single trace of these efforts remains, a testament to the power of the wind and sand, and the difficulty of the task.



**2. Basalt Altar:** Atop a basalt slab rests a simple altar constructed from rough-hewn black rock. The stone here has proven resistant to the elements and any efforts to carve markings into it. Only a single rune—*eltahnth*, or “eternity”—mars its surface. This is a favored site for visitors to conduct rituals and ceremonies. Petitioners usually bedeck the altar area with additional decorations or ritual items, including great cauldrons, bowls, and similar objects. Some of them remain scattered about, left behind in the aftermath of a ceremony.

**3. Fire Pit:** This deep shaft resembles a 10-foot wide, hollowed basalt column sunk into the sand. It extends down at least 50 feet. Rumors persist of hidden doors and magical gates secreted somewhere along its length, but if visitors ever uncovered these portals, they died before sharing the tale. During the height of an important ritual, it is customary to burn great quantities of incense, rare herbs, and other offerings in this fire pit. Despite repeated use over the centuries, the bottom looks free of scorch marks. Soot, ash, and other filth from the fires seem to disappear with the sunrise.

#### ADVENTURE IDEAS

As a nexus of power, the Bone Cathedral is an ideal location for a ceremony that requires tremendous magical energy. DMs are encouraged to create new rituals that characters can perform only here. The dragon’s bones serve to focus the ambient power that surrounds the cathedral, while the site’s apparent importance in the ancient days makes it a potent symbol. The stringent requirements to find the cathedral make it a daunting challenge for the characters, as they risk making a single mistake that forces them to start their trek over again.

Rumors persist that the cathedral has several levels of catacombs and tunnels beneath it, but visitors have yet to penetrate them. These tunnels supposedly house ancient tombs of the warriors and dragons who built this site. While a great multitude of treasure is said to rest here, those who find it may provoke their doom. According to legend, anyone who attempts to steal the treasure and carry it away from the cathedral shall suffer a terrible curse. As the raiders journey from the site, a gigantic dust storm shall swoop down upon them and throw them into a vast, merciless plane of air, clouds, storms, and stinging sand. Strange flying creatures dwell here: massive aerial beasts with enormous shells that hold small islands of trees, open water, and vicious animals. Most travelers stay lost forever on the winds, but a few might be lucky enough to land on one of these living islands. But even those fortunate souls still have to find a way home.

In the end, the dust storm would expunge the tunnels and channels dug in the sand, leaving the cathedral apparently untouched. Perhaps a few of the powerful artifacts hidden within the catacombs hold the key to liberating the treasure or escaping with a mighty item. But between the Bone Cathedral’s traps, undead guardians, and strange monsters spawned by the site’s powerful magic, few interlopers would survive the tunnels long enough for the storms to claim them.



#### THE INFINITE LIBRARY

Floating high above the land on a cloud woven from the pure stuff of elemental air, the Infinite Library is a repository for all knowledge contained within the akashic memory. As new information flows into that great pool of knowledge, book after book appears from thin air on the library’s shelves, filling themselves with the new collected lore. In this way, all that has come to pass—and, in some cases, all that shall come to pass—rests upon its shelves.

The Infinite Library is one of the greatest akashic nodes in the world, if not the greatest. However, it exhibits a variety of traits that make it differ radically from more traditional nodes, at least as akashics understand them. The library floats high in the air, so high that many mistake it for a large cloudbank. As far as anyone can tell, this aerial realm never hosted a large, bustling city or other settlement where memories could gather and coalesce. Almost anyone, not just an akashic, can take advantage of the library’s focused knowledge. If you can read a book, you can pull a tome from a shelf and explore its contents.

#### OVERVIEW

The Infinite Library consists of a sprawling marble structure situated atop a floating chunk of rock. A thick white mist surrounds the library, camouflaging this aerial island as a thick, ponderous cloud. Should a few birds flutter down from the sky with apparent concussions, the library may float nearby (but only a few canny sages know that).

Reaching the library is no easy task. Only those with the magical means to fly to its upper surface can travel there. There are no other paths, as far as anyone knows. Even the most talented akashics have failed to uncover any in the depths of the akashic memory.

Judging from its exterior, the Infinite Library looks like a one-story, squat stone building roughly 500 feet long and 100 feet wide. It lacks windows and has only a single pair of granite doors set before a simple dirt courtyard. These doors are always closed but unlocked. The thick mist obscures vision beyond 5 feet, but several search parties have used surveying tools, rope, and other measures to chart out the library’s exterior dimensions. The library’s interior seems to extend far beyond its outer size, however.

Perhaps through some trick of geometry, or via a fold in space and time, the inside of the library is literally infinite in size. A sage could spend decades here and still find new passages and galleries, each filled with tome after tome of knowledge. All of these books are written in a firm, steady Common script, yet there seems to be little organization behind their shelving. Most visitors describe a slight sense of desire, fear, and ambition settling over them as they enter the building. By giving in to this vague disquiet, a visitor allows her feet to carry her instinctively to the book she seeks. After minutes, hours, days, or even weeks—for no one can say how long a given quest may take—a seeker will finally discover the tome she needs.



*Illus. Sam Wood*

Some sages believe that the Infinite Library is a physical manifestation of the akashic memory as a whole. As more knowledge pours into it, the library spawns additional halls and shelf after shelf of new volumes. This theory holds some merit, as several her-

alds of annihilation (see Chapter Two: Runes of Might) have attacked this place. Some believe that these would-be destroyers, along with other monsters that may have simply wandered into the place, still stalk the halls. Several groups of explorers have disappeared within the library, though whether they met their end at the hands of an invader or still walk the infinite halls in search of a specific book, no one knows.

#### LOCALE TRAITS

The Infinite Library's most notable locale traits are its stacks of books and its infinite nature.

**Infinite Halls:** The Infinite Library lives up to its name. One could walk through its halls forever without coming across the same stacks twice. You could seek a book and find it in two completely different areas. However, you can always find your way back to the entrance hall. If at any time you wish to return to the entrance hall, you need only decide to leave the library. After going through 1d8 rooms, the next area you enter will be the entrance hall. Visitors sometimes report seeing other searchers open a door from the entrance into, for example, a room decorated with red velvet curtains and a thick, soft carpet. A few moments after closing the door, opening it again reveals an austere, stone chamber that resembles a basement.

Many of the infinite chambers hold strange furniture, stairs leading up or down to other levels of the library, and various curiosities. The furnishings can be destroyed, but they crumble to dust if you attempt to carry them out of the room where you found them. The same process destroys any books you attempt to carry from the rooms that hold them.

**Storehouse of All Knowledge:** Anyone who wishes an answer to a specific question that could be contained in the akashic memory must attempt a Wisdom check when entering the library. Subtract the result from 30. The difference is the number of days, hours, or minutes it takes to find the correct book, per the table below.

Time Units	Knowledge Sought
Days	Rare, something known only to a dozen or fewer people
Hours	Obscure, strange, or otherwise esoteric
Minutes	Basic facts, Knowledge check (DC 25 or less)

Sometimes, a seeker may uncover a book in the process of writing itself. In this case, you can read history and memories as they are made. A reader might follow along as a great battle plays out halfway across the world, reading as each army makes attacks, rallies its soldiers, and plans its victory. Finding these books is tremendously difficult. The seeker makes a Wisdom check, then subtracts the result from 50, treating the difference as the number of weeks needed to find the right book. In this case, the seeker may find the book after the events he seeks have taken place.

## LOCATIONS

The location descriptions for the Infinite Library cover the entrance room and present a random room generator you can use to create chambers within the building. Otherwise, you can design new chambers as you see fit.

**Entrance Chamber:** This vaulted, towering room seems too tall to fit within the squat library. A balcony runs along the long chamber's edge, an iron railing preventing visitors from tumbling over the side. Several narrow spiral staircases grant access to this balcony. Dozens of black, iron doors stud the walls on both floors, each leading to an unguessable series of chambers and boundless shelves of lore.

Debris left behind by previous expeditions covers the floor here, including old scraps of food, tents, simple furnishings, and so forth. Few people dwell within the library for long, as merely browsing the books grants access only to pointless tales or trivial information. Those who come here usually seek a specific answer, and upon finding it, they continue on with their lives. The library needs no one to look after it. Small parties of explorers, roaming monsters, and even lone sages wander the halls, but you could visit this place for a year without encountering them.

**Galleries:** The Infinite Library's galleries are, indeed, endless. When the player characters journey into them, you can use the table at right to generate their contents, if you like.

Each room contains 1d6+1 exits and is 3d6 × 5 feet wide and long. There is a 25 percent chance of finding stairs leading down to a door, a 25 percent chance to find stairs leading up to a door, and a 10 percent chance that the room has 1d3+1 levels connected by ladders or stairs.

## ADVENTURE IDEAS

The Infinite Library is the perfect place for adventurers who need to uncover an important clue or track down the answer to a question. Perhaps the player characters' enemies also must visit it, leading to a chase through the halls' many chambers.

The characters might find a rare map that seems to point to a lost treasure hoard within the library. By following a specific series of doors, they can enter the space between the infinite galleries: strange white corridors that link the site's most important rooms together. The characters might enter a pocket dimension where every thought or event that has ever arisen lives. They could meet doppelgangers of historical figures, mythic creatures, and heroes, and perhaps track down a long-lost artifact.

The PCs might have to venture into the library to find a lost person, or at least uncover the explorer's fate. By seeking the answer to the same question as the missing explorer, they can trace his route and perhaps rescue him. Monsters might roam the halls, perhaps dimensional beasts that slip through the library's strange geometry and the folds in time and space that bind this location together.

## GALLERY CONTENTS

### d20 Result

- 1 The chamber resembles a stone cellar.
- 2 The chamber resembles a richly appointed sitting room with rare, expensive furnishings.
- 3 This chamber is a cave with books stacked on the floor and odd symbols painted on the walls.
- 4 The room feels as if it is a cabin on a ship. It sways slightly, and visitors hear the sounds of waves pounding against it.
- 5 This room is a small, simple library with wooden shelves and burning lamps.
- 6 While the wooden walls mark this as a room, the grassy floor, bushes, and small trees make it feel like a forest. The books are stacked in neat piles.
- 7 The floor here is a shallow basin filled with water. The books are kept on raised shelves, while the walls and floor are tiled.
- 8 This chamber is a crypt with an empty coffin and books stored within niches carved in the walls.
- 9 This place is the interior of a simple log cabin, with books kept in crude handmade bookshelves.
- 10 Brightly lit and elegantly appointed, this place resembles an emperor's reading room.
- 11 This chamber has bare, wooden walls and books tossed in messy piles.
- 12 This place is utterly dark. The walls are painted black, as is the floor, as well as any furnishings. Books lie scattered about the floor.
- 13 Dust hangs thick in the air here, and the walls are made of cyclopean stone blocks stacked atop each other. The books are kept in stone shelves carved into the walls.
- 14 A small fountain bubbles in the middle of this room, surrounded by bookshelves arranged in concentric circles.
- 15 This chamber looks partially wrecked. While bound by stone walls, the interior is chocked with rubble and other debris. The books are slashed and burned.
- 16 This place is a featureless room with smooth, grey stone walls. The books lie on the floor in a runic pattern.
- 17 The floor here is fresh, damp earth. Several patches of recently disturbed earth suggest that someone has dug one or more pits here. Visitors can find the books buried within the earth.
- 18 The floor here is made of unbreakable glass that reveals a dimly lit oceanic scene. Fish swim through the water while kelp drifts on the sea bed. The books here are stored on shelves carved from enormous shells.
- 19 This plain room has rows of bookshelves. Its one unique trait is the faint scent of smoke hanging in the air.
- 20 Crafted from bone, this chamber seems a grim cathedral to death. The shelves are made from bones taken from countless animals.



## THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

High in the Bitter Peaks stands Mount Arathamis, reputed to be the tallest peak in the world. According to myth, legend, and rumor, Mount Arathamis is the doorstep of the world. From here, one must only take a step off the right cliff face to arrive anywhere across the Lands of the Diamond Throne. The mountain is a powerful nexus of earth elemental energy, serving to focus and radiate it across the land. A canny traveler might slip back and forth from the mountain to any spot in the world. According to legend, even mythical realms beyond mortal knowledge lie within reach of the mountain's pathways.

However, few have the skill, toughness, and experience needed to survive the difficult journey up Mount Arathamis' daunting slopes. In addition to the obvious physical hazards, including a lack of oxygen, bitter winds, and searing cold, a variety of terrible monsters infests the mountain's lower levels. Choose appropriate monsters from the list below:

- Basilisks
- Chimeras
- Cyclopes
- Elementals (earth, fire)
- Giant eagles
- Goblins
- Griffons
- Harpies
- Rocs
- Trolls

The dramojh supposedly exploited Mount Arathamis' power to their own ends, and their legacy lives on in the monsters that dwell upon it.

### OVERVIEW

The Roof of the World dwarfs the other peaks that cluster around it. For such a powerful site, Mount Arathamis is easy to find. Even a simpleton could pick out the mountain from its lesser neighbors.

Refer to "Climb" in Chapter Four: Skills in *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* for details on handling strenuous ascents such as this.

The pathways at the mountain's very peak access strange, mystical hubs of power similar to a travel line, a trail of energy that makes magical travel easier (see Chapter One: People and Places in *The Diamond Throne*). However, these elaborate magical trails connect to far distant lands and require unorthodox ceremonies to activate. For instance, accessing a passage to the other side of the continent might require a traveler to throw himself off a cliff on Mount Arathamis. After falling several hundred feet, he disappears and arrives at his destination. Needless to say, dozens—perhaps even hundreds—of undiscovered travel nodes rest upon the mountain's peak. Popular myth holds that the dramojh mapped and used the travel nodes. For more on how they work, see "Locale Traits" at right.

Supposedly, an ancient, as-yet undiscovered fortress lies hidden somewhere deep within the mountain. This fort reportedly holds a scale model of the upper peak, along with descriptions and maps of all its travel nodes. One of the travel nodes at the peak is said to connect to this retreat, providing a two-way path to and from the map chamber. Undoubtedly, monsters, traps, and a variety of powerful spells guard this fortress from intruders. Should a would-be warlord uncover it, he could gain a strategic advantage that could bring a small kingdom under his thumb—perhaps even the entire continent, if he had sufficient military power.

### LOCALE TRAITS

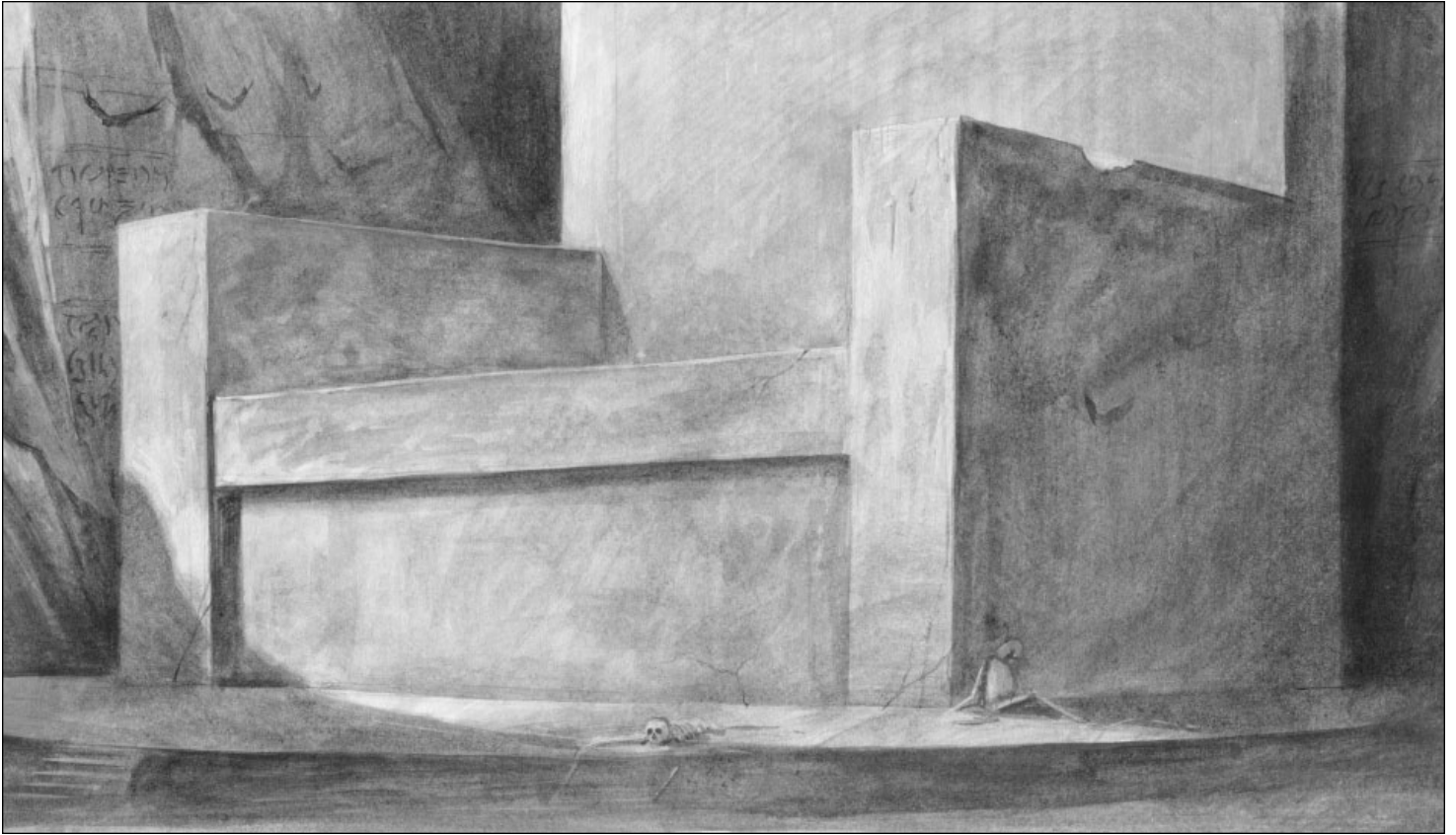
Besides its inhospitable weather, difficult climb, and dangerous monsters, the Roof of the World's most notable locale traits are its travel nodes: magical pathways that allow those who perceive them to travel great distances very quickly.

**Forbidding Clime:** The terrible wind and searing cold of Mount Arathamis are as much a by-product of the extreme altitude as the ebb and flow of energy from the many travel nodes. Consult Chapter Eight: Environment in the DMG for information on extreme weather and high winds. Both of these factors should play an important role in any encounter or adventure on Mount Arathamis. In addition to the natural weather, the magical influence on the cold and wind helps to sap a character's strength and endurance. For each day spent on the mountain, a spellcaster must attempt a Fortitude save (DC 20) or lose one of her highest-level spell slots. The winds not only carry the terrible cold but drain magical energy to help feed the travel nodes.

**Travel Node:** A travel node is a fold in space, a gap that a canny observer can use to bridge two places with a journey of a single step. Most travel nodes require a ritual to activate them. This ritual is simple and rather generic, though sometimes you must study the node to learn how to activate it. Usually this ritual requires a demonstration of trust, such as walking into a node blindfolded or with eyes closed. Once the ritual is complete, you need only move through the node to activate it. You usually disappear from your current location and reappear at your destination, seemingly out of thin air.

Nodes connect two points, and some allow for a return trip. When you complete the ritual associated with a node, you create a lasting tie to it that you can use to journey back to the Roof of the World. Simply by walking through the point where the travel node delivered you and completing a simple ritual, you jump through space to arrive back at the mountain. In some cases, the proper ritual allows you to begin your trip at the node's far end.

Most travel nodes are difficult to spot with the naked eye. While a few are decorated as obvious portals—with statues, arches, and other adornments—most are invisible arcane constructs. In many cases, any construction at a travel node exists to mark its location and aid travelers. However, the dramojh destroyed many of these markers as they explored the Roof of the World, to prevent other folk from making use of them.



*Detect magic* reveals a travel node as a shimmering, pulsing sphere of powerful transmutation magic. If you succeed at a Spellcraft check (DC 25) while peering at a travel node in this manner, you gain a brief glimpse of its far end.

Not only are travel nodes difficult to spot, many of them are located in areas that make them challenging to access. The most infamous example of a troublesome node is the east cliff portal. This travel node floats 100 feet directly below a cliff's ledge. While sprytes and spellcasters capable of *flight* have little trouble reaching it, others must rely on a well-aimed jump to slip through. Rumor has it that a particularly vicious band of gangsters sends informants and those who owe them debts through the far end to their doom.

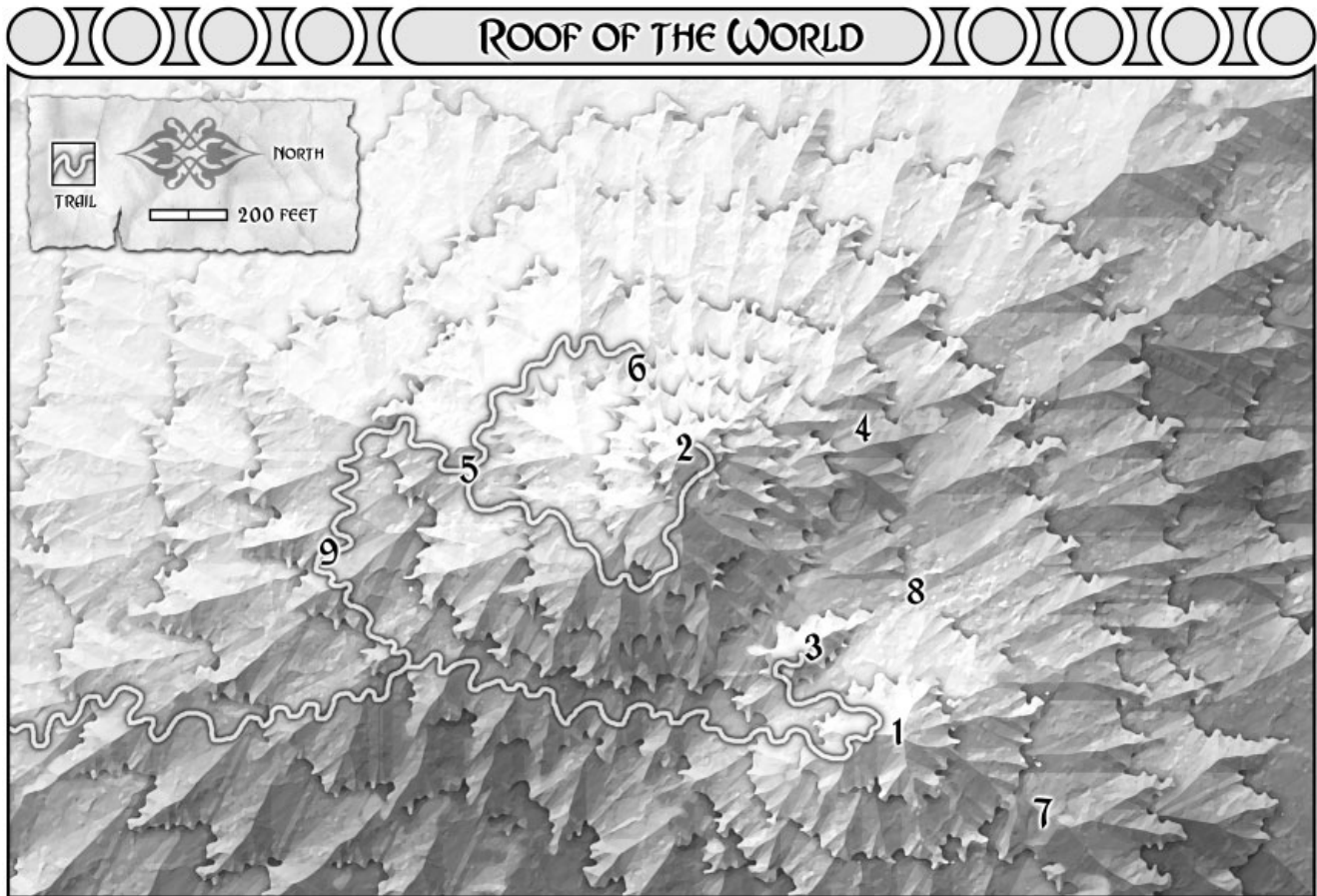
In terms of game mechanics, a travel node operates as a *teleport* spell cast by a 20th-level caster. The ritual needed to use one requires no more than a full-round action and takes no special abilities to learn. Simply watching someone demonstrate the ritual a few times is enough for one to master it. Each node has a different ritual, but they are generally close enough in form and symbolism that once you learn one ritual you can guess at others. A Knowledge (ceremony) check can determine the ritual needed to open a node. This check ranges from DC 15 for simple rituals to DC 20 for more complicated ones, and DC 25 or 30 for strange, idiosyncratic rituals. You can attempt this check (which your DM

makes in secret) if you have learned at least one ceremony needed to activate a travel node. You cannot determine whether the ritual succeeds until you attempt it.

#### LOCATIONS

The numbers in the location key below correspond to points on the Roof of the World map on page 50.

**1. Throne of the Far Seer:** This enormous stone throne rises almost 40 feet into the air. It is far wider and broader than normal for a chair, revealing the tremendous girth of the creature for whom it was built. In the ancient days, the draconic lord of the Roof of the World, Anomenar of the Lofty Eye, held court here. Whether Anomenar crafted the travel nodes or merely discovered them none can say, but the dragon's legacy lives on here. Carved along the rocky slopes around his throne are ancient hieroglyphs and mosaics that can reveal to the diligent inspector the location of various travel nodes. The dramojh allowed this site to remain intact, as even they never fully deciphered the clues left here. This place serves as a convenient point to give the characters a clue or information about a lost travel node. However, a ruthless band of cyclopes prowls this area. They consider the throne to be a sacred place for their god, the Stone Lord, and so they slay all heretics who venture here.



**2. The Roof of the World:** At this point, the highest spot in the Lands of the Diamond Throne, the winds howl and shriek, the cold lashes at exposed skin, and the mountain itself seems to move slightly, as if to send anyone arrogant enough to climb it tumbling to his doom. This place holds tremendous symbolic and magical power. Any spell from the divination school gains impressive might when cast here, for it is said that every word spoken in the lands below, no matter how quietly, flies upon the wind and eventually makes its way here. If you cast a divination while standing at this point, you gain a +5 bonus to your caster level and to the spell's save DC. In addition, you may multiply its range by 10 or extend it to 100 miles, whichever is more advantageous. However, the winds are as fickle as they are useful. If you attempt to cast more than one divination spell from this point per week, it has the reverse of its normal effect. For example, the target of *scrying* views you instead of the other way around. If a spell reversed in this manner allows for a saving throw or spell resistance, you automatically fail those checks.

**3. The Hermitage:** At one time, long before the *dramojh* ravaged the land, this small, fortified stone castle served as a gathering place for artists and expert craftsmen who wished to study and meditate far from society. The power of Mount Arathamis allowed them to cast their eyes far and wide over the land. The resulting visions in their

art and works were unparalleled, and many of the finest tools, works of art, and weapons ever crafted were made here and placed on display in the Hermitage's many galleries. Those who came here forswore all contact with the outside world. They so cherished their works that they shut themselves away like hermits to improve their abilities and focus their attention on creating the greatest works the world has ever known.

The ruthless *dramojh* slaughtered the peaceful folk who dwelled here. However, they did not enjoy the fruits of their victory for long. Some force—a terrible, crushing, invisible thing—destroyed the *dramojh* who attempted to loot the galleries of the Hermitage. Even when the fiends attempted to set fire to the place, the thing in the galleries killed many of their number and prevented any damage to the structure.

Since then, the Hermitage seemingly has remained empty. Many adventurers dream of reclaiming it, but the difficult journey has thus far prevented any large expeditions. Trendethious the Seeker led a small party here over a decade ago, but no word has been heard from him since. Seekers who scale the mountain tend to avoid this place. Large, shambling figures have been seen near it, and eldritch lights spill from its windows by night. Even the cyclopes, trolls, and other monsters that dwell upon the mountain give this

place a wide berth. Undoubtedly, some strange force and its minions infest the Hermitage's upper levels, lower storage cellars, and catacombs, but no reliable news has surfaced with details.

**4–9. Travel Nodes:** Various known travel nodes of Mount Arathamis are marked on the map. Some of them are on the main paths up the mountain, but others are located some distance off any trail. Details about them appear below.

**4. The Stair to the Sea:** A short stairway has been carved into the ground here. The stairs simply descend into a pit and terminate at a flat, stone floor. A travel node to the shore of the Great Eastern Sea rests here, roughly 150 miles east of Sormere. A gang of smugglers sometimes uses this two-way gate to move contraband from the shore to the continent's interior. They have recently made some inroads into kidnapping schemes but have yet to put their plans into action.

**5. The Air Gate:** So named for its location roughly 100 feet below a cliff, traveling through the Air Gate requires either flight or a well-aimed jump. It empties just above a deep pool in the haunted lands of Verdune and offers one-way travel.

**6. Hall of Kings:** A long stone hall contains a collection of six nodes, each arrayed within a stone niche. According to legend, six former kings of the land used to meet in this hall to maintain the peace and resolve disagreements. Their statues once graced this place, along with frescoes of their great achievements, but the dramojh destroyed these objects long ago. The gates lead to an ancient ruin in Verdune on the shores of Lake Ravish, a small keep near De-Shamod currently occupied by the giant magister Re-Thurru, a villa overlooking the Great Eastern Sea, an island east of Khorl, a location near some Vnaxian ruins, and a wooden fortress suspended from a thick grove of trees in the Harrowdeep. All of these gates provide for two-way travel.

**7. The Drowned Way:** A small natural spring bubbles here, forming a circular pool bounded by a carved stone lip. The dramojh defaced the carvings that once covered the rocky walls surrounding this place. To access this node, which allows for two-way travel, you must swim 10 feet down into the pool. You emerge in a small pond within the northern reaches of the Harrowdeep.

**8. The Pillars:** This pair of stone monoliths frames a travel node that leads to a spot in the air above the Floating Forest. However, a slight variation in the ritual needed to use this node sends a traveler to a small tower situated upon an island in Lake Ravish instead. The node to the Floating Forest allows for only one-way travel, but the tower node functions in both directions. The tower once belonged to a verrik witch, who used it to conduct expeditions to the lake's depths. The constructs she built, along with bound spirits and other guardians, still watch over the fruits of her labors.

**9. The Great Mirror:** This 10-foot-tall mirror is framed with gold and silver. Intricate patterns depicting angelic figures, roaring waves, and birds in flight once bedecked this frame, but the dramojh long ago destroyed them. Anyone who draws close to the mirror can sometimes (Listen check, DC 10) hear the distant sound of the ocean. This travel node allows anyone who completes its ritual to step into the mirror and enter a passage of magical force that runs

along the bottom of the Great Eastern Sea. Supposedly, this passage leads to a fabulous aquatic city that some unknown group built in the early days of the world. Mighty domes protect the majestic coral spires from the water and pressure, while floating orbs of pure light cast a radiance through the deep sea's dark waters. The dramojh may have left some of their followers here to take refuge from the giants' relentless assault.

## ADVENTURE IDEAS

The Roof of the World can serve as a convenient starting point for a continent-spanning campaign or adventure. Once the PCs reach it, they can explore and use the nodes to visit a wide array of areas. Let your imagination run wild when designing new travel nodes. Some might lead to mythical lands or other worlds, while others could deposit the characters in long-abandoned fortresses, citadels, dragon lairs, and other places.

A villain might attempt to use the travel nodes for her own foul ends. The PCs might face an attack by the same assassin at several, distant points during the course of a journey. Perhaps their allies come under attack on the same night, despite being hundreds of miles apart. A villain who exploited the nodes of the mountain could play havoc with the entire continent.

The dramojh ruins deep within the mountain, with their supposed maps of the area, would make a valuable prize for anyone. Perhaps the Hermitage harbors even more lore, though the horrors that guard it will not surrender their holdings without a fight.

## MAGICAL LOCALE TRAITS

The three sites described above have introduced quite a number of magical locale traits, which you can use as presented or sprinkle into locations of your own design. And there are plenty more such traits to discover throughout the Lands of the Diamond Throne. You can use the ones detailed below in your own campaign to alter how spells work in a specific areas of your choosing. For instance, at the heart of a mighty volcano, cold spells might falter while fire magic runs out of control. Most of these new traits provide general rules that you can apply to a template or descriptor of your choice.

**Baneful Influence:** Ages ago, a great crime, a shattered oath, or some other wrong brought a terrible curse against the people who once dwelled here. Their descendants dare not walk this ground, for their crimes echo in the fabric of the area. Spells gain a malevolent tinge when cast against them, burning flesh and battering aside their defenses.

Pick one or more specific races or species. When members of the chosen group(s) are targeted by a spell in this area, they suffer a –4 penalty to saves and spell resistance. When they attempt to cast a spell, they suffer points of electricity damage equal to the spell's level.

These areas can be deceptive, for their effects are sometimes difficult to notice. For example, a ruined human city might appear lush and filled with life. Animals caper down the ruined avenues, while vines and trees grow among the ancient walls. However, a closer inspection reveals hundreds of skeletons tangled in the roots and





dirt. Monoliths erected at each of the city's gates bear runes of death, woe, and doom.

**Energy Flux:** In some areas, a specific type of magical energy is stronger or more plentiful than normal. Spells that draw on this energy type are more powerful here than elsewhere, as they can access the unusually intense available energy. In other cases, a specific type of energy might be weaker than normal. Spells that draw on this energy type are weaker here than usual.

The energy flux trait features two forms: high and low energy. When you use it, pick one or more spell descriptors, such as earth or force. Spells with the chosen descriptor(s) are always cast as heightened in high-energy areas and as diminished in low-energy places. A single area might have high energy for one descriptor and low energy for another (as in the volcano example, above).

An area usually has an energy flux that reflects its nature or history. A burning desert created in the aftermath of a magical explosion might have a high-energy level for fire spells but a low-energy level for positive energy spells.

**Imprint:** The magical character of some areas is so overwhelming that every spell cast there is imprinted with its special nature. However, only spellcasters who have some sort of affinity or connection to the place might gain this benefit. For example, spells cast by the followers of a god within their holy temple might be infused with sacred power.

Within an area that features an imprint, any spell cast by an eligible character is imprinted with a particular spell template. An eligible character is defined based on the location. Usually one must have some sort of connection to the place to be eligible. In other cases, any caster can be considered eligible and gain the benefits of the template. (For more on spell templates, see Chapter Eight: Magic in *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*.)

Imprinted areas emerge when a single locale has seen repeated use of a single magical template, usually over centuries, or at the site of some important magical event that ties to a particular template. For example, an ancient battleground that hosted a clash of hundreds of thousands of warriors might grant every spell cast there the war template.

**Magic Poor:** Magic poor areas are the opposite of sites with the "magic rich" trait detailed in "The Bone Cathedral" (see page 43). Within magic poor areas, spells barely function. A magister's incantations sputter and fail, requiring more energy than normal to power them. In a magic poor locale, you must use a spell slot one level higher than normal to cast a spell. For example, a 5th-level spell requires a 6th-level slot. If you want to laden a 6th-level spell, you would have to spend two 7th-level slots.

While magic rich areas sometimes arise near a mighty artifact, gates to other worlds, or other sites of burgeoning arcane energy, only a trickle of magic flows through magic poor locales. These areas usually appear in the aftermath of a tremendous spell, the creation of an artifact, or a similar momentous and energy-consuming magical event. A traumatic event can drain the magic from an area for centuries, usually leaving behind a grey, empty wasteland. While plants

and animals might return to the area, magic takes much longer to take root and flourish.

**Outside the Akashic Memory:** Due to some trick or fold in space and time, some areas remain forever outside the akashic memory. The events that transpire there never join the story of the world in the great collective memory. You cannot use any akashic class abilities or any item that draws on the akashic memory to learn of events that occurred in this place. For the sake of maintaining game balance, DMs should use this trait only very rarely.

**Surge:** The practice of magic requires that arcane energy move in reliable patterns. After all, a spell that causes different effects each time you cast it would be a difficult tool to use. In some areas, the flow of magic reverses, increases to an avalanche, or stops utterly at seemingly random intervals. When casting a spell in this type of area, roll 1d6 and 1d10. If the 1d6 roll is odd, subtract the 1d10 result from a spell's damage, duration (in whatever time units it uses), and save DC. If the 1d6 roll is even, add the 1d10 result to those parameters.

An area wracked with the surge trait is usually in a state of flux. A planar gate might be on the verge of opening there, an otherworldly creature might dwell nearby, or a powerful magister might be in the process of forging a mighty artifact near the site.

## OTHER EFFECTS

The traits listed here are by no means an exhaustive catalog of how the environment can alter spells. The environment can change the numeric effects of a spell, such as range, duration, or damage. It can even alter some of the fundamental parts of a spell's effects, such as the energy type it uses or the descriptors it employs.

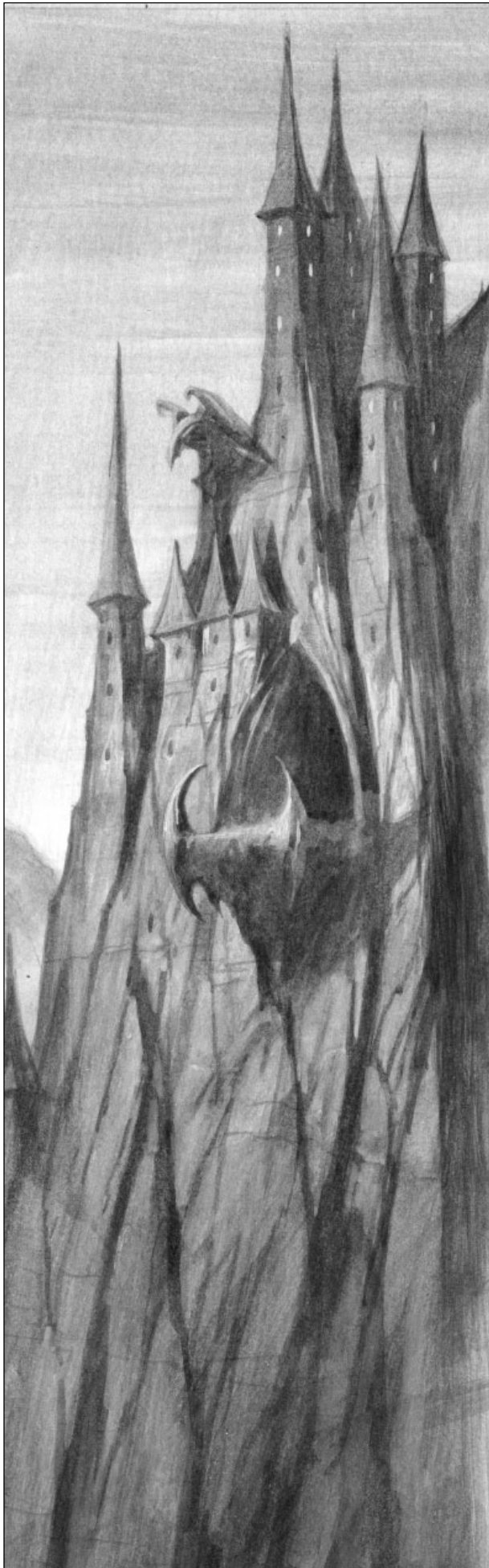
Use the examples above as a basis for the environmental effects you can use. Remember that in a roleplaying game, anything is possible. If you can imagine it, you need only to translate it into game mechanics.

## STORY LOCALE TRAITS

Part of the fun of a roleplaying game is the chance that anything wondrous can happen. Some of the most memorable effects you can create draw on features that have nothing to do with spellcasting or even the game rules. For example, at the site where some human warriors slew a terrible dragon long ago, draconic creatures might suffer penalties to their attacks. The trees of an ancient forest that thrive on magical energy and are drawn to it might sway and bend toward spellcasters in their midst, providing a convenient flag for anyone who seeks a caster.

Spells and power may flow as normal, but ancient rituals and events may linger in the air. Story locale traits provide purely flavorful effects or allow you to alter game effects other than magic in a particular location. The priests of a benevolent deity may gain a bonus to Heal checks in their sacred hospital. The verrik who defend an isolated mountain fortress that turned aside an enormous dragoon assault might gain a morale bonus to attacks.

Such story traits are based on the echoes of history or powerful rituals completed in an area. Actions taken centuries ago can resonate



through the years, their power still strong enough to bend events in the present. In many ways, the story of history becomes a great, elaborate ritual that shapes the world. Each of the sample story locale traits below includes ideas on how and why it might arise in an area.

**Exultant Power:** At the site of an ancient hero's triumph, those who defend the kingdom he helped found fight with renewed energy and vigor. At an area of exultant power, the positive energy and ancient strains of a great triumph help spur those who can hear its music on to great deeds.

Pick one or more specific races or species. When members of the chosen group(s) are in this area, they gain a +1 morale bonus to attacks, checks, and saves. As they fight, visions of the ancient victory flicker at the edge of their minds, inspiring them to glory.

**Home of Despair:** This place was the site of a great sadness, such as a massacre, a terrible plague, or some other catastrophe. Any who enter it must fight to maintain a high spirit, as the weight of sorrow tugs at their minds.

Any who enter the home of despair must attempt a Will save (DC 20, though it can range from 10 to 30 depending on the scope of the tragedy). Those who fail this save suffer a -1 morale penalty to attacks, checks, and saves. The sadness that fills this area feels almost suffocating, as it extinguishes hope and makes even the sharpest mind dull with fear and trepidation.

At the DM's option, some NPCs and player characters may be exempt from this penalty. A murderous villain may gain the opposite effect from this locale, as the scent of death and bloodletting fires her shriveled heart and grants her a dark hope.

**Sacred Ground:** Consecrated to a great, benevolent deity—or perhaps the site where a divine being walked the earth—this location sings with positive energy. The Green may be overwhelmingly powerful here, allowing plants to grow thick and healthy. The air feels fresh and alive, while those who bear malice in their hearts grow fearful.

On sacred ground, violence is anathema. Anyone who wishes to attack another person—whether with sword, bow, or spell—must attempt a Will save (DC 25, though stronger areas may have DC 30 and weaker areas may have DC 20) to complete the action. Those who fail this save cannot attack anyone on the sacred ground for 24 hours. If they themselves are attacked, they may assault only those who first struck them.

Areas of sacred ground sometimes arise at the spot where two or more parties struck a treaty or an alliance that put an end to a war. Over time, many of these sites become popular spots for negotiations of all types.

## OTHER EFFECTS

The range of story locale traits is limited only by the bounds of your imagination. Think of them as historical events or rituals that extend their influence into the present day. Consider how the event or its significance might affect a character. As shown above, a great victory can prove inspiring, while a tragic defeat could spread sorrow and fear. Oaths, curses, and similar effects are also prime fodder to generate story traits.



As a rule of thumb, keep the penalties and bonuses offered by a story locale trait to the +1 to -1 range. Ideally, these traits should reflect an area's heritage, but they shouldn't overwhelm the characters. The exception to this is a trait that targets only a specific type of character or creature. In this case, you can increase the penalty or bonus to +/-4. If the characters suffer from this penalty or their enemies gain its benefits, you should increase the encounter level by 1 point.

When creating or using a story locale trait, be sure to consider how and why it evolved. Reflect this development in your description and presentation of a site. Ideally, the player characters should have some idea of why they suffer a penalty or gain a benefit from an area's history or nature. In this case, you can use the game rules to enforce a location's particular look or feel. Describing the grisly scene at an ancient rock used for centuries as a sacrificial altar is one thing. Granting those who use the altar a bonus to damage takes this description to the next level, particularly if your descriptions illustrate how the rock's fell influence causes wounds to open wider and deeper or blood to flow faster.

The best story locale traits are usually specific, in that they affect one type of saving throw or action. For example, a haunted house might confer a penalty to saves against fear effects. The more exact a penalty, the clearer the relationship between a site's history and its influence on the characters. If you go with a specific effect, you can also opt to increase the total bonus or penalty without putting the PCs (or their enemies) at too great a disadvantage. The fewer times the modifier comes into play, the less effect it can have on an encounter's outcome.

## USING LOCALE TRAITS

In general, try to keep all locale traits to limited areas or employ them only in places where the characters can reasonably deduce their presence. For example, it makes logical sense that fiery magic might not function well in a frigid area, particularly one in which the ice and cold have an arcane origin. If you use locale traits in a capricious or arbitrary manner, you might confuse or frustrate the players. These traits are designed to reinforce the feel, history, and nature of a place, not overwhelm the characters' abilities.

Not every locale trait needs to have an effect on combat. Modifiers to skill checks, particularly Diplomacy or Sense Motive, can have an important impact on social situations. For example, a den of sibeccai thieves might commit many of their scams at a specific booth in a tavern. The thieves have performed a minor ceremony commemorating great lies and cheats of the past, slowly giving that small, specific area a trait that confers a +2 competence bonus to all Bluff checks. An observant character might notice that stories of famous or legendary liars are scratched into the booth's table, while nearby chairs are all marked with runes of deceit and sluggish thinking.

Locale traits can provide a convenient, easy way to illustrate the link between history and the current events in your game. Perhaps the sibeccai thieves in the example above are the spiritual descendants or followers of a renowned trickster. The booth where they enact their schemes was his favorite place to have a drink while hatching a plan with his underlings. The world of the Diamond Throne is alive with history that you can use to shape the setting today.

# Spells of Power

*The Lands of the Diamond Throne are home to hundreds of spellcasters, from solitary greenbonds who dwell amid nature to magisters who gladly hire out their services to the highest bidder. Thus, a wide range of casters has developed new spells to suit every need.*

**S**pells are as unique as the folk who created them, reflecting the goals, methods, and philosophies of a multitude of magic-users over the generations. Some spells gain in popularity, only to fall by the wayside as new ideas rise to replace them. In other cases, spells are rare or difficult to learn without the aid of a master.

## SPELL LISTS

The new spells presented in this chapter are designed to fit with the ones introduced in Chapter Nine: *Spells of Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*. As in that book, they are categorized by level and complexity in the lists that follow, but their descriptions appear in alphabetical order by name starting on page 56 to facilitate reference during play.

### O-LEVEL SPELLS

#### SIMPLE

**Knot:** You gain a +5 competence bonus to a single Use Rope check to tie a knot.

#### COMPLEX

**Blacksmith's Aid [Fi]:** You gain protection against mundane flames.

### 1ST-LEVEL SPELLS

#### SIMPLE

**Blade Anchor [E]:** You cause a metal weapon to freeze in place.

#### COMPLEX

**Lashing Viper [El]:** Electric snake can deal damage, disarm, or trip target.

### 2ND-LEVEL SPELLS

#### SIMPLE

**Earth Curse [E]:** You create a zone of tainted ground difficult for burrowing creatures to manage.

#### COMPLEX

**Baneful Transfer [NE]:** You transfer your injuries to a foe.

**Battle Mark [Ps]:** You mark a single opponent for elimination.



**Earth Hammer [E, Pl]:** You create an earthen weapon to smite your foes.

### 3RD-LEVEL SPELLS

#### SIMPLE

**Strength of Stone [E]:** Target melds with stone, gaining strength and stability.

#### COMPLEX

**Mind Spike [Ps]:** You disrupt an opponent's arcane energy, decreasing the DCs of his spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities.

### 4TH-LEVEL SPELLS

#### SIMPLE

**Mind to Magic:** You suffer 2 points of temporary damage to spellcasting key ability but increase spell DC by +2.

**Volley of Bolts:** You create a great volley of arrows that rains down upon your foes.



## COMPLEX

**Shadow Lance** [NE]: You create a shard of negative energy that strikes a foe.

## 5TH-LEVEL SPELLS

### COMPLEX

**Banish Armor**: You cause a target's armor or shield to disappear temporarily.

**Cloak of Shadow** [D, NE]: You create a cloak of negative energy that protects you, hides you, and attacks others.

## 6TH-LEVEL SPELL

### COMPLEX

**Thunder Clap** [S]: Blast of sonic energy deals 1d6 points of damage/caster level, knocks opponents prone, deafens.

## 7TH-LEVEL SPELL

### EXOTIC

**Arcane Channel**: You create an aura around a foe that makes her more vulnerable to your spells.

## 8TH-LEVEL SPELL

### COMPLEX

**Sunfire** [Fi, L]: You open a portal to the sun, bathing an area in fiery light.

## 9TH-LEVEL SPELLS

### COMPLEX

**Banish From the Earth** [E]: You cause a chunk of earth beneath a target to fly, carrying him hundreds of miles away.

### EXOTIC

**Tidal Wave** [W]: You create a tidal wave that can devastate a coastal city.

## SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

### ARCANE CHANNEL

Conjuration

**Level:** 7 (Exotic)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** One minute/level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You create a mystical link between the arcane energies you command and your target, leaving him vulnerable to successive spells that you cast at him. The target loses his spell resistance against your spells and suffers a  $-4$  penalty on all saves against your magic. These penalties apply only to spells that you cast. Effects from your super-

natural abilities, class abilities, spell-like effects, and magical items do not gain this benefit.

**Diminished Effects:** The target suffers a  $-2$  penalty on saves against your spells. His spell resistance against your spells suffers a  $-5$  penalty.

**Heightened Effects:** In addition to the effects given above, the spell's duration becomes one hour per level.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged  $\times 2$ , constant  $\times 2$ , spell-completion  $\times 2$

### BANEFUL TRANSFER

Transmutation [Negative Energy]

**Level:** 2 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Creature touched

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

With a touch, the wounds you have sustained vanish from your body and erupt upon the target you touched. You heal 1d8 points of damage and inflict a like amount upon your victim.

**Diminished Effects:** This spell heals and inflicts only 1d4 points of damage.

**Heightened Effects:** The target of this spell receives no Fortitude save.

### BANISH ARMOR

Abjuration

**Level:** 5 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)

**Target:** One creature's armor or shield

**Duration:** 1 round/level

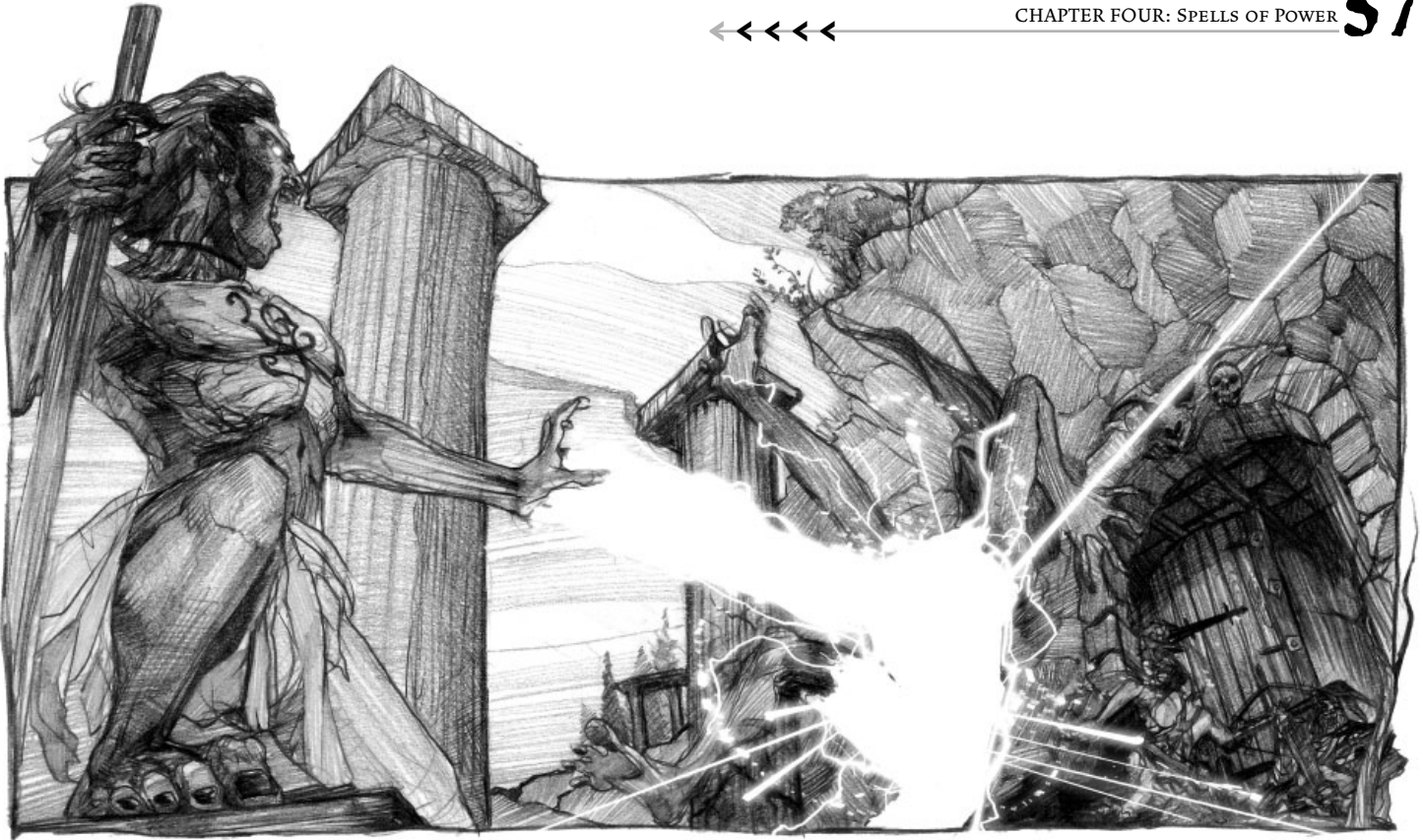
**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

With this spell, you send a creature's armor into a pocket dimension for a short time, displacing it across reality and away from its user. The target loses any benefits to Armor Class and other abilities that armor offers until it returns at the end of the spell's duration. At that time, the target regains the armor's full benefits.

*Banish armor* can also target a creature's shield, but it cannot affect both armor and shield—you must pick one. It works only on armor the target creature is wearing or on a shield the target creature is holding. The spell has no effect on natural armor and items that give an armor bonus to Armor Class but are neither a suit of armor nor a shield.

**Diminished Effects:** You partially banish a suit of armor or shield, causing it to confer only half its bonus to Armor Class. Its other abilities, if any, function as normal.



Illus. Kieran Yanner

**Heightened Effects:** You banish both the target's armor and shield.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged  $\times 2$ , constant  $\times 2$ , single-use  $\times 1.5$ , spell-completion  $\times 2$

## BANISH FROM THE EARTH

Evocation [Earth]

**Level:** 9 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Long (400 feet + 40 feet/level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

You imbue the ground beneath a target with a massive surge of gravity, causing it to soar through the air and carry the creature upon it far from you. The target's space determines the size of this chunk of earth—it's just big enough for the creature to fit on it. The chunk of earth smashes through the roof of a building and carries any items that fit wholly upon it along for the ride. The rock lands  $100 + 4d100$  miles away in a random direction, though it always comes down on dry, stable ground due to the spell's strong attunement with earth magic.

If the spell's target crashes through a roof, multiple stories of a building, or other obstacles, he suffers  $1d6$  points of damage per four caster levels. If cast underground, this spell fails to move the victim but it does smash him for  $1d6$  points of damage per two caster levels as he crashes into the cave's ceiling before dropping back to the floor with the chunk of earth.

The earthen chunk moves with incredible speed through the warps and folds of an earth elemental plane. It delivers the victim to his new location before his next action.

*Banish from the earth* leaves behind a 10-foot-deep pit that occupies the space formerly occupied by the victim.

**Diminished Effects:** The target is delivered to a place  $1d100$  miles away from his launch site. He receives a Reflex save to dodge the spell's effects. The pit left behind measures only 5 feet deep.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged  $\times 4$ , constant  $\times 3$ , single-use  $\times 2$ , spell-completion  $\times 2$

## BATTLE MARK

Divination [Psionic]

**Level:** 2 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)

**Target:** One foe and up to three allies



**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You create a strong connection among up to three of your allies (one of whom may be yourself) that allows them to fight with superior insight and cunning against a single foe. Your opponent may attempt a Will save to negate this link. If she fails, the allies gain several benefits against her. All of the spell's targets—both opponent and allies—must be within its range and line of effect when the spell is cast.

The allies affected by *battle mark* gain a +2 insight bonus on attacks and damage against the foe, as they perceive her defenses, combat style, and preferred tactics. In addition, the opponent gains only half the normal Armor Class bonus for cover. Your allies know when to attack her to minimize her cover as she peeks around a corner or moves to attack. Finally, your allies may re-roll any checks for concealment against the target. They must accept the second roll's result if they opt to use this ability.

This spell does not literally mark the targets.

**Diminished Effects:** Your allies do not gain the insight bonus to attacks and damage.

**Heightened Effects:** The insight bonus to attacks and damage increases to +4, and this spell lasts one minute per level.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged  $\times 2$ , constant  $\times 2$ , spell-completion  $\times 2$

## BLACKSMITH'S AID

Abjuration [Fire]

**Level:** 0 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Creature touched

**Duration:** 10 minutes/level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

While this spell remains in effect, the target gains the benefits of fire resistance 1. In addition, the target cannot be set on fire. Any attack that would set him alight, such as burning oil, inflicts its initial damage but does not cause continuing damage. This benefit applies to any attack or spell that uses the rules for setting a target on fire (see Chapter Eight: Glossary of the DMG). Spells that inflict continuing damage work as normal.

**Heightened Effects:** The spell confers fire resistance 2.

## BLADE ANCHOR

Transmutation [Earth]

**Level:** 1 (Simple)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)

**Target:** One metal weapon or item

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Reflex negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You draw upon the nature of elemental earth to create a magical anchor between a single weapon and the rock and dirt around it. By subtly altering the weapon's elemental character and manipulating magnetism and gravity, you momentarily freeze it in place. Casting this spell upon a weapon used by another character freezes it in place for a moment as the character attempts to attack. The weapon's wielder must attempt a Reflex save; if it fails, he loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class until his next action, regardless of any class abilities that may allow him to retain it. In addition, he cannot attempt attacks of opportunity until his next action.

*Blade anchor* has no noticeable effect on a weapon no one is wielding. The freeze effect is too subtle to disrupt someone who isn't actively waving the weapon or using it to defend herself.

**Diminished Effects:** On a failed save, the weapon's wielder cannot attempt attacks of opportunity until his next action, but he does not lose his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

**Heightened Effects:** The weapon's wielder cannot use it to attack until the end of his next action. (He can draw and use another weapon, however.) When his action ends, the affected weapon falls to the ground in the space he occupied when the spell targeted him.

**Magic Item Creation Modifier:** Charged  $\times 1.5$

## CLOAK OF SHADOW

Conjuration [Darkness, Negative Energy]

**Level:** 5 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Creature touched

**Duration:** One hour/level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

This dreadful spell creates an inky shroud of darkness that bathes one creature in negative energy. From a distance, the effect takes the form of what looks like a black cloak, though inspection at close range reveals it as a blob of energy surrounding the recipient.

The *cloak of shadow* confers several useful benefits. Its wearer gains a +2 deflection bonus to Armor Class and a +10 bonus to all Sneak checks, whether they are made to evade sight or move quietly. The cloak's wearer can choose to expend its negative energy in one powerful attack. This strike requires a ranged touch attack, with a maximum range of 50 feet and no range increment. If the attack hits, the target must make a Reflex save or the cloak blinds her as it wraps around her face and head. The cloak attempts to choke her, requiring her to hold her breath until she can remove it with a Strength check (DC 15). Others can aid her in this attempt or make a check on her behalf. This Strength check is a standard



action. Once removed, or if its victim falls unconscious, the cloak disappears.

**Diminished Effects:** The cloak cannot be used to attack. Its duration becomes 10 minutes per level.

**Heightened Effects:** The cloak can attack three times before its wearer loses its benefits. In this case, it generates a globe of black energy while retaining its form around its wearer.

## EARTH CURSE

Transmutation [Earth]

**Level:** 2 (Simple)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** 0 feet

**Area:** 30-foot radius

**Duration:** One minute/level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

You reach into the earth beneath your feet, creating a zone of baleful energy that makes it impossible for burrowing creatures to attack you from below. A burrowing creature cannot travel through the earth within this spell's area. The spell's radius extends downward and outward from you, creating a bubble of earth that shifts and turns to make such travel impossible. Note that if tunnels or other passages exist in the area, creatures may pass through them as normal.

**Diminished Effects:** This spell lasts only 1 round per level and has a 20-foot radius.

**Heightened Effects:** This spell lasts 10 minutes per level and has a 40-foot radius.

## EARTH HAMMER

Conjuration [Earth, Plant]

**Level:** 2 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

You reach into the ground, digging your hands into the dirt, and draw forth a hammer-shaped weapon consisting of rock, earth, and an intricate weave of woody roots and plants. This weapon throbs with the power of the Green, allowing you to destroy undead creatures and other threats to the woodlands with a single devastating strike.

When wielded in combat, the *earth hammer* grants you a base attack bonus equal to your total character level. It offers a +2 enhancement bonus to attacks and damage. It inflicts 2d6 points of damage, 4d6 points against undead and outsiders, in addition to the normal modifiers you receive for damage in melee combat.



The *earth hammer* is a two-handed weapon that inflicts bludgeoning damage.

**Diminished Effects:** The hammer loses its enhancement bonus and the ability to knock foes prone.

**Heightened Effects:** Targets struck by the *earth hammer* must succeed at Fortitude saves or be knocked prone as the earth buckles and sways beneath their feet. The magical force batters the earth beneath the hammer's target, causing the ground to shudder and shift wildly.

## KNOT

Transmutation

**Level:** 0 (Simple)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** One hour or until discharged

You gain a +5 competence bonus to a Use Rope check you complete within the spell's duration. If you take 20 or take 10, apply this bonus to your final check's result.

**Heightened Effects:** You gain a +10 competence bonus to your next Use Rope check within the spell's duration.

**Magic Item Creation Modifier:** Constant ×2

## LASHING VIPER

Conjuration [Electricity]

**Level:** 1 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** See below

**Spell Resistance:** Yes



This spell creates a shimmering, serpent-shaped field of crackling electric energy where you designate within the range. The serpent immediately lashes out at a target creature, slithering around its foe to shock him, tangle his legs, or even wrench his weapon from his grasp.

To attack, the viper can attempt one of several different actions. You can issue a command as part of casting this spell that allows you to dictate which attack form the serpent uses. If it receives no command, it attempts to trip its foe.

To trip a foe, the viper forces its target to attempt a Reflex save against this spell. If he fails, the viper tangles his leg and causes him to fall prone. For each size category the target is above Large, he gains a +4 bonus to this saving throw.

Instead, the viper can attempt to bite its target. In this case, it must make a touch attack against the target, using your caster level as its base attack bonus. If it hits, it inflicts 1d8 points of electricity damage on its target.

By conjuring the viper near a target's torso, you can order the viper to disarm its target. The viper's target must attempt a Reflex saving throw. If the save fails, the serpent disarms him.

**Diminished Effects:** The snake can only damage its target, not trip or disarm him. For the viper to hit, you must succeed at a ranged attack. The snake deals 1d4 points of electricity damage.

**Heightened Effects:** The snake may attempt two of its three attacks immediately upon appearing, rather than just one. The target must save against each separately, if appropriate.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged  $\times 1.5$ , constant  $\times 1.5$

## MIND TO MAGIC

Transmutation

**Level:** 4 (Simple)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** 1 round/level

You transform the raw cognitive ability to handle and manipulate magic into arcane energy. The process damages your intellect but gives you the power to use a spell. *Mind to magic* inflicts 2 points of temporary damage to your spellcasting key ability score for the spell's duration. In return, it allows you immediately to swap one readied spell of any level for some other spell on your list of known spells. The lost points return when the spell ends.

Note that the damage to your intellect affects your ability to cast higher-level spells and also may cause you to lose spell slots. These abilities and spell slots return when this spell's duration expires.

**Diminished Effects:** You suffer 4 points of temporary ability damage in order to change a readied spell.

**Heightened Effects:** You suffer 4 points of temporary ability damage in order to change two readied spells.

## MIND SPIKE

Evocation [Psionic]

**Level:** 3 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You form a bolt of mental energy that strikes your foe and robs her of the spell power she has collected. On a failed save, your opponent's spell save Difficulty Classes and the Difficulty Classes of any supernatural and spell-like abilities she possesses are reduced by 2 points.

**Diminished Effects:** The target's DCs are reduced by 1 point.

**Heightened Effects:** The target's DCs are reduced by 3 points.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged  $\times 1.5$ , constant  $\times 1.5$

## SHADOW LANCE

Evocation [Negative Energy]

**Level:** 4 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** 1 round/four levels

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates (see below)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You create a long, jagged shard of raw negative energy and hurl it at a single target. The shard strikes with unerring accuracy, flooding its victim with fell energies. The target suffers 1d8 points of damage for every two of your caster levels.

In addition, the negative energy continues to inflict a baneful effect on the target after it inflicts its damage. Each round of the duration, including the round on which the shard struck its target, the target must succeed at a Fortitude save against this spell or suffer 2 points of temporary Constitution damage. A *dispel magic* or similar effect can prevent the *shadow lance* from inflicting additional Constitution damage.

**Diminished Effects:** The spell does not inflict Constitution damage.

**Heightened Effects:** The *shadow lance* inflicts 1 point of temporary Strength damage in addition to the Constitution damage each round.

## STRENGTH OF STONE

Transmutation [Earth]

**Level:** 3 (Simple)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Creature touched



**Duration:** One hour/level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

This spell causes rock and stone to flow from the earth and wrap around the target's lower body, protecting him from harm and making it difficult to dislodge him. The target suffers a  $-10$  foot penalty to speed but gains a  $+1$  natural bonus to Armor Class and a  $+2$  enhancement bonus to Strength.

In addition, the target cannot be tripped, pushed, or otherwise moved from his current position by physical means. Spells such as *teleport other* affect him as normal.

The target of this spell must stand upon bare earth to gain its benefits. If he is forced into the air or otherwise removed from contact with the ground, he loses the spell's benefits until he stands on the ground once again.

**Diminished Effects:** The target does not gain the Armor Class and Strength bonuses.

**Heightened Effects:** Not only does the target gain the benefits described above, he also can feel vibrations through the earth. He gains tremorsense with a 10-foot range, as the impact of creatures moving along or through the ground echoes through his earth-embraced legs.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged  $\times 1.5$ , constant  $\times 2$

## SUNFIRE

Conjuration [Fire, Light]

**Level:** 8 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Area:** 60-foot cone

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude half

**Spell Resistance:** No

This potent spell creates a gateway that links to the sun. The gate appears in front of you and opens outward, creating a cone of searing light that blasts your enemies to cinders. Your opponents suffer 1d6 points of fire damage per caster level (maximum 20d6). In addition, undead creatures that fail their saves are instantly destroyed. Other creatures are blinded for 1d10 minutes. If a creature has any weaknesses to sunlight exposure, it suffers them in addition to the spell's normal effects.

**Diminished Effects:** This spell inflicts a maximum of 15d6 points of damage. In addition, the light neither blinds its targets nor destroys undead creatures.

**Heightened Effects:** Outsiders that fail their saves are instantly destroyed. All other creatures are instantly set ablaze. In addition to the above effects, they suffer 2d6 points of fire damage per round until they spend a full-round action dousing the flames or succeed in a Reflex save against the spell's Difficulty Class.



### THUNDER CLAP

Evocation [Sonic]

**Level:** 6 (Complex)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/level)

**Area:** 30-foot radius

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude half

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You create a tremendous burst of sonic energy that crackles and explodes in thunderous fury. All creatures within the spell's area of effect suffer 1d6 points of sonic damage per caster level (maximum 15d6), half damage with a successful Fortitude save. In addition, those who fail the save are permanently deafened. Creatures of size Medium or smaller are knocked prone by the spell's explosive force, even if their Fortitude saves succeed.

**Diminished Effects:** The spell neither deafens its targets nor knocks them prone.

**Heightened Effects:** Even creatures who successfully save are deafened for 1d4 rounds, while the spell knocks prone Large or smaller creatures.

### TIDAL WAVE

Evocation [Water]

**Level:** 9 (Exotic)

**Casting Time:** One hour

**Range:** 10 miles

**Effect:** One mile-wide wave

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

You create a monstrous tidal wave that slams across the coast, flattening buildings, swamping ships, and causing widespread destruction. The wave is 1 mile wide and moves a total of 5 miles from a starting point of your choice, which must be within 1,000 feet of your position when you complete the spell. At least half of the wave's movement must take place in a body of water.

Any ship caught in the wave's path is swamped. All on deck are flung into the ocean unless they succeed at Balance checks (DC 20) to remain aboard. The ship has a 50 percent chance of sinking. If it does not sink, it faces a further 50 percent chance that the wave leaves it upside down.

Any sea creatures or swimmers caught in the wave must make Swim checks (DC 30) to avoid being swept along in it. Creatures

with a swim movement mode gain a +15 competence bonus to this check. A creature that cannot breathe water suffers 15d6 points of damage if it fails this Swim check. Otherwise, for five minutes after the wave passes, anyone in the water must make Swim checks as if the sea was rough (DC 25), while the seas calm.

The coastal area struck by the wave suffers severe damage. Any unfortified building is automatically destroyed. Castles, keeps, and similar structures lose half their hit points but remain standing. Anyone in the tidal wave's path suffers 5d6 points of damage and must make a Swim check (DC 25) to avoid drowning. Creatures who succeed in this check survive the wave with no further checks required. The wave drags those who fail the check along with it, forcing them to continue making checks once per minute for the next 10 minutes to avoid drowning. Sea creatures caught in the wave and cast ashore also suffer 5d6 points of damage. They remain stranded on land unless they can return to the water under their own power.

**Diminished Effects:** The tidal wave covers only 1 mile in distance and measures half a mile wide.

**Magic Item Creation Modifiers:** Charged ×4, constant ×4, single-use ×5, spell-completion ×2



## VOLLEY OF BOLTS

Conjuration (Creation)

**Level:** 4 (Simple)

**Casting Time:** Standard action

**Range:** Long (400 feet + 40 feet/level)

**Target:** Two creatures/caster level

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

You create a volley of arrows (two bolts per caster level) that rain from the sky to skewer your opponents. Each creature you target with this spell suffers an attack (base attack equal to your caster level + your spellcasting key ability modifier). Successful attacks inflict 1d8+1 points of damage. You cannot direct more than one attack against a single creature. Each arrow must be sent to strike a different foe. If there are more arrows than targets, the extra arrows go to waste.

**Diminished Effects:** You can target a number of creatures equal to your caster level.

**Heightened Effects:** Your arrows inflict 2d6+2 points of damage.



## CHAPTER FIVE:

# Magic Items

*As we have already seen, the history of the Lands of the Diamond Throne is entwined with magic and ritual, word and rune. Such a rich past is guaranteed to have produced a legacy of unique and powerful items of magic.*



**G**eneral rules for magic items in this setting are covered in Chapter Three of *The Diamond Throne*. The chapter before you covers magical items worthy of note to any player character but especially for runethanes, mage blades, magisters, and other spellcasters with a knowledge of runes. DMs might want to equip heralds of annihilation (see Chapter Two: Runes of Might) with some of these items as well.

## RUNE WEAPONS

Inscribed with mighty symbols that evoke the power of words and magic, rune weapons are all forged with a pattern that transfers to the weapon something of the rune's basic traits and character. Only a character with training as a runethane or with extensive knowledge of runes can craft these weapons, as creating them requires ranks in Knowledge (runes). A weapon must be magical or masterwork in order to receive the benefits of a rune. These magical weapons derive their power and energy from the fundamental power of a rune.

Rune weapons tend to be more powerful than normal versions, as they tap into the fundamental forces of the world for their power. Runechildren—and in some cases, heralds of annihilation—have the innate ability to create these items. They must go through the process of magic weapon creation as normal, but they need no special training with runes.

Some rune weapons gain additional powers in the hands of a runechild or a herald of annihilation. A weapon's runic nature reacts to such characters in strange ways, unlocking previously latent abilities held within it. Other folk can use these weapons as normal weapons of their type—they simply cannot take advantage of their unique runic nature.

Rune weapons are rare and strange compared to other magical items. The energy that flows through the typical *+1 longsword* is stable, reliable, and consistent. A rune weapon ebbs and flows with the cosmic power of the rune it bears. A *darkness* weapon might seem to shrivel and grow small in the light of the noonday sun, while an *ice* weapon surges in might when it is brought into a glacial region. A rune weapon loses half its hit points in an area that is, in the DM's judgment, baneful to its nature. In regions that are strong with the energies it embodies, its hit points increase by 50 percent. Otherwise, it functions as normal.

## RUNE WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITIES

The weapon special abilities below can be conferred upon a masterwork or magic weapon to create a rune weapon.

The price listed for a rune weapon is the cost that you must pay to add the rune feature to an already existing masterwork or magic weapon. If you want to design a rune weapon from scratch, simply add the listed cost to the price of the rest of the weapon's features. The price given here applies to either a single melee or ranged weapon or 50 missiles, such as arrows or bolts.

**Agony:** A weapon scribed with this rune bends and shifts, its metal and wood groaning slightly as it writhes. An *agony* weapon pulses and writhes with raw pain. Those struck with it flail and spasm with the searing, torturous pain that floods them. An *agony* weapon inflicts +1d6 points of damage and causes its victim to



suffer a  $-2$  competence penalty on all attacks, checks, and saves until the end of his or her next turn.

Even the *agony* weapon's wielder must endure its baneful effect. Anyone who wields it suffers 1d6 points of damage. The wielder suffers this injury once per day. An *agony* weapon's effects, both against its targets and its user, do not apply to constructs and undead.

In the hands of a herald of annihilation, an *agony* rune weapon inflicts +2d6 points of damage. In addition, once per day it can emit a searing scream that causes 3d6 points of sonic damage against all creatures within 30 feet, including the weapon's wielder. A Fortitude save (DC 15) halves this damage.

Strong necromancy; caster level 14th; Knowledge (runes) 17 ranks, herald of annihilation, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 12,000 gp

**Corrosion:** This horrific weapon is composed of a shiny green metal that glistens with moisture in the light. Coated with acid, it inflicts an additional sting with each injury, as the caustic substance seeps into wounds. *Corrosion* weapons must usually be kept in sheaths lined with a thin layer of stone. Otherwise, they burn through scabbards and other gear.

A *corrosion* rune weapon inflicts +1d6 points of acid damage. In addition, those it strikes suffer 1 point of acid damage for each time the weapon hit them on the previous round. Apply this damage immediately before a victim's action. On a critical hit, this weapon inflicts 2 points of temporary Charisma damage as it burns and mutilates its victim's body and face, in addition to normal critical hit damage.

In the hands of a herald of annihilation, a *corrosion* rune weapon inflicts +1d8 points of acid damage and causes 3 points of temporary Charisma damage on a critical hit.

Moderate transmutation; caster level 9th; Knowledge (runes) 12 ranks, herald of annihilation, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 8,000 gp

**Darkness:** At first glance, this terrible weapon looks as if it was carved from a single unblemished chunk of obsidian. In truth, it consists of the pure, inky blackness of the Dark. Occasionally, the spectral forms of those whose lives it has claimed float along the weapon's surface. Their horrified looks and writhing torment bespeak of the terrible ills these weapons spread.

A *darkness* rune weapon inflicts +2d6 points of damage against all living creatures. It can cast *cloak of darkness* on its wielder on command, though this effect ends if the wielder drops or otherwise loses possession of the weapon. On a critical hit, the *darkness* weapon inflicts a negative level if its victim fails a Fortitude save (DC 20).

Heralds of annihilation relentlessly hunt these weapons, for in their villainous hands, *darkness* rune weapons achieve tremendous power. When wielded by a herald of annihilation, a *darkness* rune weapon inflicts +4d6 points of damage against living creatures; the Fortitude save required to resist the negative level increases to DC 24.





Strong necromancy; caster level 15th; Knowledge (runes) 18 ranks, herald of annihilation, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 18,000 gp

**Feral:** This weapon is scribed with runes of fury and power, allowing its wielder to transform into a savage warrior. Once per day, the wielder can invoke the *feral* rune weapon's power as a standard action. He gains a feral appearance or, if a sibeccai, litorian, or mojh, his bestial traits become more pronounced. The wielder gains a +4 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution for 10 rounds. He also gains the scent special ability, and he may make natural attacks with his bite and newly sprouted claws as secondary strikes at a –5 penalty to attack rolls. These attacks inflict damage based on the wielder's size:

Size	Bite	Claw
Tiny	1d2	1d3
Small	1d3	1d4
Medium	1d4	1d6
Large	1d6	1d8
Huge	1d8	2d6
Gargantuan	2d6	2d8
Colossal	2d8	4d6

Strong transmutation; caster level 12th; Knowledge (runes) 15 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 18,000 gp

**Flame:** This weapon is a living flame, captured and bound into the pattern of the rune of fire and forged into a weapon. To an observer, it looks as though you hold a raging inferno, vaguely shaped like a weapon, in your hand. This weapon inflicts +2d6 points of fire damage in combat and grants its wielder immunity to fire. Once per week, one can command it to take the form of a Huge fire elemental that obeys its wielder's commands. If slain in this form, it transforms back into its weapon shape but remains a dead, ashen ruin for 1d4 days. After that period, it bursts into flame once more and regains its powers. On a critical hit, it sets its target on fire. A burning target suffers 4d6 points of fire damage at the beginning of its action each round until it succeeds at a Fortitude save (DC 25).

In the hands of a runechild, a *fire* weapon becomes a purifying brand that blasts evil into cinders. Against undead it inflicts an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful hit. Furthermore, any target that has murdered an innocent being also sustains this bonus damage.

A herald of annihilation causes the flames to become sickly and grey. In his hands, the weapon inflicts its bonus damage on living creatures rather than undead.

Strong evocation; caster level 14th; Knowledge (runes) 17 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 20,000 gp

**Ice:** Sages claim that ice once covered the world, and judging by this weapon's potency, its runic properties are mighty enough to support that claim. An *ice* rune weapon transforms into frigid ice as strong as steel. It inflicts +2d6 cold damage on a successful attack. In addition, its wielder gains cold resistance 20 while he holds this weapon. On a critical hit, a small sliver of the *ice* weapon breaks off into the opponent. Each round for 1d4 rounds, the foe must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer 4d6 points of cold damage as the shard tears through his body.

Strong evocation; caster level 14th; Knowledge (runes) 17 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 24,000 gp

**Lightning:** Forged with a lightning bolt captured in a bottle, this weapon crackles and hums with electrical energy. It literally transforms itself into a shaped, stable bolt of lightning. Its wielder must wear a special leather glove to use it without harming herself. The glove and weapon grant electricity immunity. The weapon arcs energy in all directions when it hits, causing 1d6 points of electricity damage to the target and all creatures adjacent to it. On a successful critical hit, the weapon erupts into a bolt of lightning that rears back and hammers its target yet again; the wielder may make another attack using her best base attack bonus against the foe.

Moderate evocation; caster level 10th; Knowledge (runes) 13 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 11,000 gp

**Madness:** This weapon cackles and shrieks as it swings through the air. All who stand near its wielder find strange images creeping into their minds: terrifying sights that slowly push them to the edge of madness. A *madness* weapon corrodes the mental stability of all who spend time near it when it is wielded in battle. It destroys its wielder's psyche, slowly transforming the character into a murderous psychopath.

Whenever a *madness* weapon strikes a target, all creatures within 10 feet of the wielder must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 16) or suffer 1 point of temporary ability damage to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. A character's ability scores cannot drop below 3 due to this damage, nor must a character make a saving throw against this effect more than once per round. The creature struck by the weapon also must attempt this save. If he fails, he acts at random on his next action. There is a 50 percent chance he does nothing but babble and shriek. In this case, he loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. Otherwise, he attacks the nearest creature in melee using whatever weapon he has in his hands. If he has no weapon readied, he uses unarmed attacks.

The wielder of a *madness* weapon suffers 1 point of permanent Wisdom drain each week he carries it. When the wielder's Wisdom drops to 0, he becomes a mindless killing machine who stalks the land. If he is a player character, he becomes an NPC under the DM's control at this point.



A herald of annihilation does not suffer this Wisdom drain. Instead, she gains a bizarre insight into the world as the weapon whispers strange secrets to her. While she carries the weapon, she gains a +2 insight bonus to all Listen and Spot checks.

Moderate enchantment; caster level 10th; Knowledge (runes) 13 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 12,000 gp

**Mind:** This runic weapon is composed of the fundamental rune of the mind, consciousness, and thought. It cuts through its target's psyche with the same ease with which it sunders steel and bone. On a hit, in addition to inflicting its normal damage, the weapon requires a target to succeed at a Will save (DC 20) or suffer 1 point of temporary Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma damage (your choice). On a critical hit, the wielder automatically inflicts 2 points of damage to one of those three abilities.

Strong enchantment; caster level 13th; Knowledge (runes) 16 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 14,000 gp

**Rock:** Representing the foundation of the world, the basic structure of all reality, weapons with the *rock* rune can tear apart lesser armaments. These weapons transform into solid rock, though they remain as light as normal.



However, when swung they gain their true weight just before impact. This weapon inflicts +1d6 points of damage due to this weight and bulk, and its wielder can choose to count the weapon's damage as bludgeoning if desired. Changing damage types is a free action that the wielder can take once per round. When used to Sunder a weapon or item, a *rock* rune weapon inflicts double damage due to its weight, mass, and affinity for wood, stone, and steel.

On a critical hit, a *rock* weapon knocks its target prone unless she succeeds at a Fortitude save (DC 20, +4 bonus per size category above Medium).

Moderate transmutation; caster level 8th; Knowledge (runes) 11 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 10,000 gp

**Song:** This intricately carved weapon features dozens of small holes drilled into its haft, bludgeon, or blade. When used in combat, it produces a whistling, keening melody. This song heartens the wielder's allies and shoots terror into the hearts of his foes. Each round the wielder uses a *song* rune weapon to attack, he grants his allies a +1 morale bonus to attacks, checks, and saves. His enemies suffer a -1 penalty to attacks, checks, and saves. This is a mind-affecting effect.

On a critical hit, the *song* rune weapon sings a short piece about its victim, revealing some shameful event of his past or the secret of his truename. The target must succeed at a Will save (DC 20) or suffer a -4 shame penalty to attacks for the rest of the encounter. (Creatures that lack a language are immune to this ability.)



Moderate evocation; caster level 8th; Knowledge (runes) 11 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 8,000 gp

**Sun:** A weapon scribed with this rune begins its life as a normal metal and wood item. But once the process of scribing and consecrating the runes upon it is complete, it becomes a glistening item of pure, solid light. This weapon inflicts +2d6 points of damage against undead and outsiders. On command as a free action, it can shed light as the spell *greater glowglobe*. A second command douses this light. Even when this effect is extinguished, the *sun* weapon sheds light in a 10-foot radius. On a confirmed critical hit, the *sun* rune weapon blinds its target for 1d4 rounds.

When wielded by a runechild, a *sun* weapon gains several additional powers. It inflicts +4d6 points of damage against undead and outsiders. It blinds a target for 2d4 rounds on a critical hit. Once per day, it can project a beam of powerful light as a ranged touch attack with a range of 100 feet. This attack inflicts 6d6 points of damage against undead creatures and outsiders.

Moderate evocation; caster level 8th; Knowledge (runes) 11 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 14,000 gp

**Wind:** A favored weapon of spies, assassins, and others who rely on stealth, a *wind* weapon consists of a gale caught in a sack and forged into a weapon. Only the vague outline of its form belies its presence to an observer, requiring a Spot check (DC 25) to notice it (DC 20 if a character carries it in her hands). A *wind* rune weapon strikes hard and fast. Its wielder can make an additional attack each round at her highest base attack bonus. On a critical



hit, the weapon unleashes a tremendous blast of air. Its target must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 25) with a +4 bonus per size category above Medium or be knocked 10 feet away from the attacker.

Moderate abjuration; caster level 9th; Knowledge (runes) 12 ranks, runechild, or runethane, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 30,000 gp

## RUNE TEMPLATES

In much the same way casters add spell templates to their spells, crafters of magic items can apply rune templates to magical items. These templates reflect the item's unique construction and magical abilities. Usually, items with rune templates have been constructed using rare, difficult to master formulas that draw on the power and energy of runes. Only runethanes and casters with sufficient ranks in Knowledge (runes) can grant such a template to a magical item.

This section introduces seven different rune templates. A runethane or spellcaster with sufficient ranks in Knowledge (runes) can add these templates to any permanent magic items they create. After a character applies a template to an item, the item gains the template's listed powers. Its price and aura are then modified as listed below to reflect the item's new abilities.

Some rune templates are inappropriate for certain types of items. For example, the dark template is incompatible with items that use spells with the light descriptor. Runes can conflict with the magical energies that course through the items they mark. When they are diametrically opposed, the item usually ceases to function. Thus, runes are found only on items that draw on powers compatible with their nature.

The magical auras and strengths listed below for each rune template apply in addition to the ones that applied to the item before the application of the template.

**Dark:** The runes that describe the Dark are so dreadful that few living creatures dare scribe them. Items created with this template are made for undead hands. Any living creature that attempts to use one suffers 4d6 points of damage. An undead creature with a Dark item gains a +1 bonus on all saves and +1 hit point per Hit Die.

Moderate necromancy; caster level 6th; Knowledge (runes) 9 ranks or runethane; Price +4,000 gp

**Eternity:** This rune template grants an item the ability to survive for untold ages. It strengthens the item's physical form and allows it to persist indefinitely. The item becomes impossible to damage, save for one specific destructive act chosen by the DM. For example, perhaps one can destroy an *eternity ring of invisibility* only by searing it with the acidic breath of an ancient dragon or *eternity bracers of armor* by melting them in the fiery lava of an active volcano. All other attacks fail to damage the item.

Moderate abjuration; caster level 8th; Knowledge (runes) 11 ranks or runethane; Price +4,000 gp

**Fire:** An item with this template remains immune to nonmagical fire damage and confers fire resistance 10 upon its bearer. Against creatures with the fire subtype the bearer receives a +1 bonus to attack rolls, as they recognize and fear the power of this rune.

Moderate evocation; caster level 6th; Knowledge (runes) 9 ranks or runethane; Price +12,000 gp

**Life:** The power of life sustains creatures in the face of pain, misery, and disaster. This rune on a magic item combats disease and death, providing a +2 bonus to all saves against poison, disease, and massive damage. Once per day, it can heal its bearer of 2d8 points of damage.

Moderate conjuration; caster level 6th; Knowledge (runes) 9 ranks or runethane; Price +3,000 gp

**Peace:** The rune of peace on an item dispels violence, driving thoughts of war from all who come under its power. The item's bearer gains a +1 insight bonus to Armor Class. Once per day, he can invoke the rune's might to bring a halt to fighting. All creatures within 100 feet of him must succeed at a Will save (DC 20) or they



stop fighting until they are attacked or until the item's bearer makes a violent action.

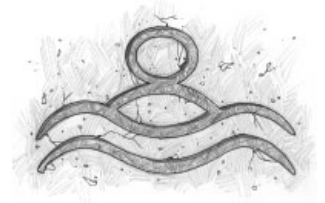
Moderate enchantment; caster level 10th; Knowledge (runes) 13 ranks or runethane; Price +4,000 gp

**War:** Infused with the rune of war, violence, and destruction, an item with this template turns its bearer into an avatar of battle. He gains a +2 competence bonus to all attacks and damage with melee and missile weapons, but not spells and other effects.

Strong abjuration; caster level 13th; Knowledge (runes) 16 ranks or runethane; Price +16,000 gp

**Water:** This item confers the ability to breathe water upon its bearer as long as she keeps it in her possession. She gains a swimming speed equal to her land speed and uses that movement mode rather than the Swim skill. If she must make a Swim check, she gains a +10 competence bonus to it.

Moderate transmutation; caster level 6th; Knowledge (runes) 9 ranks or runethane; Price +4,000 gp



*Illus. Toren "MacBin" Atkinson*



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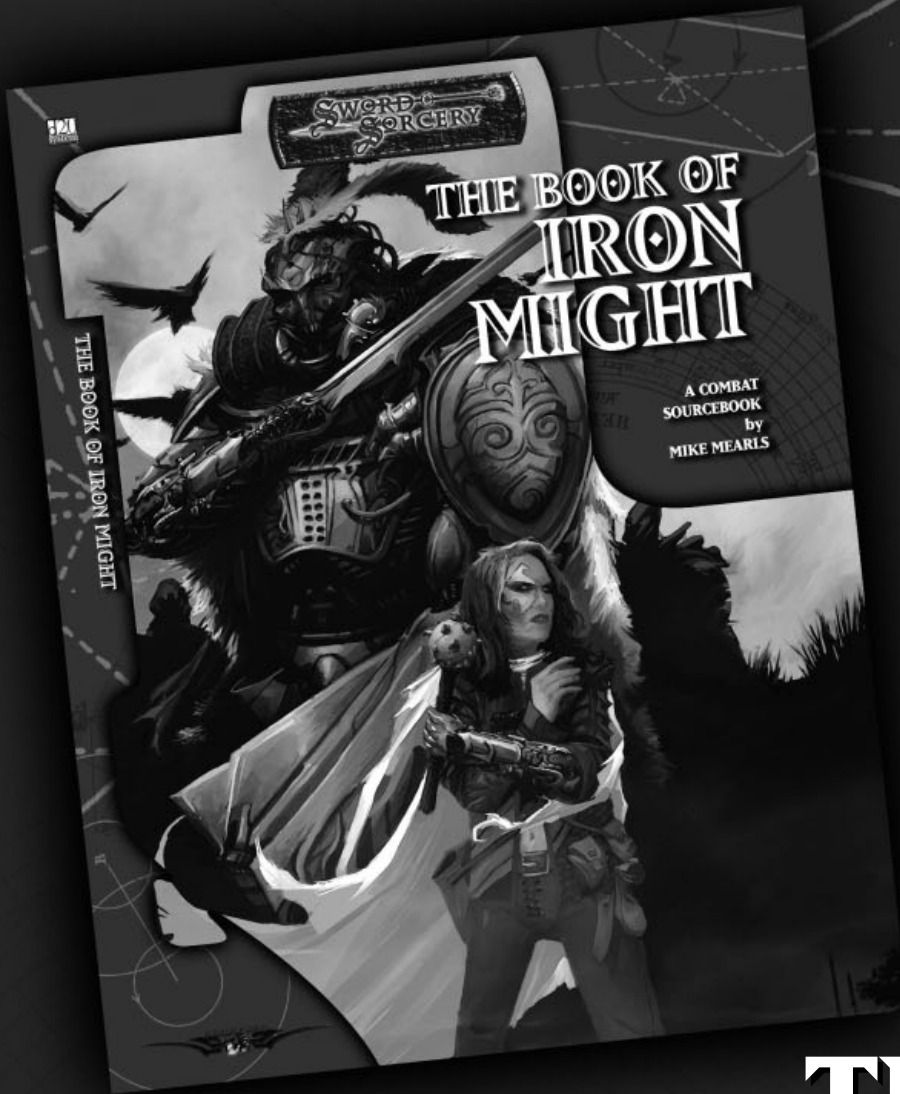


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