



CJ CARELLA'S

WITCHCRAFT



CJ CARELLA

George

A GAME OF MAGIC AND DARK SECRETS

THEY ARE THE GIFTED. FEARED FOR THEIR UNIQUE POWERS, THEY HAVE BEEN HOUNDED FOR CENTURIES, AND FORCED TO PRACTICE THEIR ARTS IN SECRET.

THE TIME FOR HIDING IS OVER.

A TIME OF RECKONING DRAWS NEAR. IT MARKS THE END OF AN ERA AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ONE -- OR THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL THINGS. THE CHOICES THE GIFTED MAKE WILL DETERMINE WHAT THE FUTURE WILL HOLD.

WitchCraft is a complete roleplaying game. In it, you will find:

A fantastic setting filled with magic, witches, sorcerers, psychics and the mystical.

Detailed character creation rules for the Gifted, Lesser Gifted, Mundane and Bast.

A full exposition of the Unisystem rule mechanics, useful for any game in any time period.

Background information on six Associations: the Wicce, the Rosicrucians, the Sentinels, the Cabal of the Psyche, the Twilight Order and the Solitaires.

Comprehensive descriptions of four Metaphysical Arts: Magical Invocations, The Second Sight, Necromancy and Divine Inspiration.

An overview of the supernatural elements of the WitchCraft setting, including spirits, ghosts, undead, and other creatures from beyond mundane existence.



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WITCHCRAFT

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Reader discretion is advised.

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A Word to the Wise

The WitchCraft RPG is, first and foremost, a work of fiction meant to entertain. A number of facts have been mixed with a liberal dose of fantasy in these pages, and people who seek information, spiritual guidance, or an excuse to do stupid things should look elsewhere. The witches in this game are as unrealistic as the wizards in Tolkien's tales; none of the secret organizations and conspiracies in this book are meant to be exact replicas of real world groups.

Having said that, I would like to point out a few real facts. Wicca is a real world religion, based on ancient folk beliefs and practices from Europe. During the Middle Ages and the Reformation, followers of Wicca were persecuted by the Christian Churches. Wicca has nothing to do with Satanism, and is a religion with as much legitimacy (if perhaps a less comprehensive organization) as Christianity or Buddhism. The "Wicce" in this book (Wicce is nothing but the female form of the ancient Anglo-Saxon word Wicca, or

Wise One) are portrayed as having some of the beliefs and principles of real world Wiccans, but are as fantastic as the Christian-oriented, monster-hunting Sentinels also depicted in this game. To learn more about Wicca, go to a local library or bookstore; there are plenty of non-fiction books on that subject.

Finally, anybody who has problems distinguishing fantasy from reality and who thinks this or any other game depicts actual occult practices should stay away from this and similar books. They should also stay away from television, books of all kind, and most forms of mass media; in fact, they should not leave their homes. Any off-beat soft drink commercial may prompt them to jump off a tall building. Parents of minor children should, of course, exercise their judgment as to whether this and other roleplaying games are appropriate for their children. Everyone else, I hope you enjoy this book.

-- Carlos J. Martijena-Carella

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	4	Chapter Five: Associations	160
Summary of Chapters	14	The Wicce	166
Conventions	15	Brotherhood of the Rose Cross	170
Roleplaying	16	Society of Sentinels	175
The WitchCraft RPG	17	The Twilight Order	179
		The Cabal of Psyche	183
Chapter Two: Setting	18	The Solitaires	186
Chapter Three: Roles	36	Chapter Six: Metaphysics	190
Character Concept	41	Magic	194
Character Type	50	Essence	194
Character Associations	56	Invocations	195
Attributes	67	Using Essence Defensively	199
Qualities and Drawbacks	71	Intent and Magic	199
Skills	89	The Crowd Effect	200
Metaphysics	101	Random Essence Effects	201
Possessions	101	Rituals	201
Finishing Touches	102	Places of Power	202
Archetypes	103	Times of Power	203
		Symbols of Power	204
Chapter Four: Rules	120	Items of Power	204
Dice	123	Group Magic	205
The Basic Rule	124	Essence and Immortality	208
Tasks -- Using Skills and Attributes	124	Lesser Invocations	209
Tests -- Using Attributes Alone	124	The Sight	225
Unskilled Attempts	125	Necromancy	237
Resisted Tasks/Tests	126	Divine Inspiration	242
The Rule of 10	126		
The Rule of 1	127	Chapter Seven: Supernatural	248
The Outcome Table	128	Spirits	258
Getting Scared	130	Nature Spirits	260
Turns	132	Elementals	262
Running Combats	132	Wildlings	264
Multiple Actions	134	Ghosts	266
Close Combat	134	Relentless Dead	269
Improvised Weapons	135	Vampyres	272
Ranged Combat	135	Bast	276
Damage	137	Demons	277
Poison	140	Seraphim	279
Disease	142	The Mad Gods	281
Armor	143	Minions of the Mad Gods	282
Breaking Things	148	Dark Covenants	285
Injury	149	The Combine	288
Recuperation	153		
Diceless Roleplaying	155	Chapter Eight: Chroniclers	290
Experience	157		
		Appendix	298



Chapter One 4



Chapter One Introduction

Desmond's Motor Lodge Pennsylvania 2:13 a.m.

The motel room was small, the bed had a thin and springy mattress, and the faded carpeting had a faint, moldy smell. It was the best he'd been at in over a month, and this time he had actually been able to pay for it with what he made playing the guitar. The local coffee house patrons had coughed up enough cash to let him buy a full tank of gas for his Harley and get a motel room. Even better than the money, the emotional response of the crowd had left him feeling slightly buzzed. A responsive, willing audience was better than booze, better than drugs, better than . . . well, better than almost anything.

Dan switched the TV off; he was glad he didn't get a chance to watch that crap too often. As he settled down to sleep, he considered his plans. He could stay in town for a couple more days; a couple of college girls seemed pretty interested in becoming better acquainted with him. On the other hand . . .

A glowing female head appeared over his bed. Dan started, nearly falling out of bed. "What the . . . ?"

"It's been a long time, Daniel Gaiman."

Fiona. Damn. "Why the hell won't you use a phone, Fiona? It's a lot less expensive."

The glowing head's pretty features narrowed in annoyance. "You know very well that locating you precisely enough would be even more energy-consuming, both in power and time. But that is not important. We have need of you."

Crap. Not that he was surprised. A witch in Rhode Island didn't spend the energy to contact a wanderer in Pennsylvania for no reason.

"You know I don't get involved anymore. I don't even practice the Craft." Well, he told himself, not much, at least.

"This is very important. Lives are at stake."

Dan sighed. "They always are. Tell me what's going on and I'll tell you my response." Which will probably be 'Screw off,' he thought.

"Somebody in your area is awakening Math-Shagraa."

"Nah-what?"

"I forgot you never bothered to learn much beyond the basics. Math-Shagraa is one of the Mad Gods."

Triple crap. "In Pennsylvania? Who's doing it?"

"As far as we can tell, one Gifted magician. A Solitaire, perhaps. Or, more likely, somebody who stumbled onto a book nobody should have written, somebody with enough raw power to use what he discovered."

"So, what do you want me to do? Aren't there any Covens around?"



"Two, actually. One is nearly powerless; only two of the Gifted among them, and both of lesser power. It was one of them who first sensed what was happening. The other will not deal with us; they may or may not do something, but we dare not wait and see."

"Any others?" Many among the Wicce refused to accept the fact that they were not the only ones who could work magic in the world.

"We'd have to find them; it would take more time than we are likely to have. We cannot send our entire Coven there, so we need you to help. If we cannot gather thirteen, we must try with five; failing that, we will do what we can with three."

Daniel considered this. Thirteen, seven, five, three; there was power in any such combination of numbers, the larger numbers being the more powerful. "So, if I decide to take part in this insanity, who are the other two?"

"The strongest Gifted in the area, and Julianne."

Julianne. He already felt vaguely sick; hearing that name made his guts twist. "I'm surprised she'd want to work with me," he managed to say evenly.

"This is too important to make allowances for petty personal feelings. She will do as she must. As you must."

Petty? Julianne and I almost killed each other! "I could say no, y'know. I've been living a nice quiet life for almost a year."

"If it harm none, do what you will," Fiona's glowing head said. "Will your inaction bring no harm?"

Dammit. "I will be there."

**White Rock, Pennsylvania
Harrison House
5:57 a.m.**

The dawn's sunshine stung Ben Harrison's strained eyes. He had not slept a wink all night; as soon as he closed his eyes, images too horrible to comprehend forced him into terrified wakefulness. His throat was raw after thirteen hours

of continual chanting; he had been sipping Kool-Aid all night long but had eaten nothing. Despite the hunger and fatigue wracking his body, he did not stop. Another day, and he would be done. Then hunger and fatigue would mean nothing.

The teenager sat on the floor. The Marilyn Manson T-shirt he was wearing was dirty and damp with his sweat. Dry blood was caked over his left cheek and forehead; it was not his own. His parents had left him under the care of Aunt Beth, hard-drinking Aunt Beth, who had not even noticed Ben creeping up behind her with a butcher knife, and had barely struggled as he murdered her. He had needed her blood to draw the circle to summon the being called Math-Shagraa — not its real name, since its real name would burst the eardrums of humans and liquefy their brains should it be spoken out loud — into this world.

The book had been in his aunt's attic for decades. Aunt Beth had told Ben that her great-grandfather had collected strange books until his nervous breakdown and eventual death in an insane asylum. "I should have burned them long ago," she had commented when Ben started rummaging in the attic. "But it's the only legacy of my family, and I just can't bring myself to do it. You should stay away from the attic, Ben." What little humanity remained in the chanting teenager knew that the books should have all been burned and their ashes scattered in the wind; now it was too late. Despite his aunt's warnings, he had sneaked into the attic, had opened dusty boxes, and had found the books. And among them, he had found the Book that had changed his life.

Ben opened the Book; the leather and the parchment in the pages had been made with human skin; he knew that instinctively. His readings had utterly warped his mind, making him sensitive to some things, utterly callous to everything else.

Ben continued chanting.

Inside the blood circle on the wooden floor, something unspeakable started taking shape.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 3:21 p.m.

Julienne knew it was necessary to work with Daniel; the rest of her Coven was already involved in a dangerous ritual, and she was by far the best in the arts of Banishing and Cleansing. Julienne must go to White Rock and confront the evil being raised there. But to do it alone would be madness; other people with the Gift would be needed to deal with the defenses a servant of Nath-Shagraa would have prepared against intrusions. Daniel was nearby; even better, he was an accomplished magician. The facts did not banish the burst of anger she felt when she first saw him at the bus station. Four years, and he had barely changed. Still wearing his hair long, he hadn't bothered to shave for a few days. His jeans and shirt were worn but clean, and he still favored that silly cowboy hat. And he glowed with stored Essence; to a Gifted such as her, his magical shields burned bright, a gorgeous display of magical light that the Mundanes crowding the station did not notice. Make that not quite notice; people seemed to draw away from Daniel, respecting his personal space, unwittingly kept at bay by the protective energies swirling around him.

Daniel was letting his shields show as a message for her. He was ready to defend himself should she decide to carry on their last argument, and he was purposely keeping her away from his inner self. His aura, thoughts and emotions were hidden securely behind the glowing shields. In a way, she reflected, that had always been the case.

"You're late," he said, coolly and without emotion.

"Coincidence, I hope," Julienne replied in the same tone. "Or perhaps not. When a Power of this magnitude is being awakened, chance will bend to favor Its purposes."

"I know," he said, raising an eyebrow, a sign of annoyance she knew well. He obviously felt he did not need a lecture.

She could not care less about what he felt. "Have you secured a car?" Julienne had no desire to ride pillion on his motorcycle. Such close physical proximity would be painful in too many ways. She had her own shields around her, although she did not make them flash openly; the magical constructs would not prevent physical contact, but the two shields would grate against each other, sending psychic reverberations lancing through both magicians.

Daniel nodded. "Laura is waiting outside with a car." He sounded dubious when he mentioned the Wicce woman that would be joining him and Julienne in the effort to stop the Mad God. "She's awfully young, Julienne. I don't think she is up to this."

"We need her; she has the strongest Talent in the area aside from you," she replied as they left the station.

"We're gonna get killed," Daniel muttered under his breath, but followed her.

White Rock, Pennsylvania 4:12 p.m.

Ben Harrison stopped chanting for the first time in twenty-three hours. "They are coming," he said. His voice sounded hoarse and inhuman to his own ears. The living room had grown dark; the abomination growing within the circle seemed to be sucking the light in the house into itself, like the black holes Ben had learned about in science class. At the same time, a different type of darkness seemed to be seeping into his mind, blinding him and at the same time making him know things. He knew outsiders would eventually find the farmhouse.

The chanting started again, but it had a different pitch and tone. In the parlor, Aunt Beth's body started stirring. It sat up with jerky, mechanical movements. Ben smiled as he sensed the corpse start to change, to be remade in Nath-Shagraa's image.

"That should take care of them," he said to himself, and went back to work.

Outskirts of White Rock, Pennsylvania 6:37 p.m.

They had to stop at a gas station to fuel up and ask for directions. They were getting close, but even *Julienne's* best rituals had yielded no success. Her failure was making her irritable, she knew, but most of her anger was focused on the shiftless bastard whom *Fate* had forced to her side once again.

Laura, the local woman — a girl, really, *Julienne* had to admit — had not been as helpful as *Julienne* had hoped. *Laura* was staring fixedly forward, her short blonde hair disheveled, her complexion pale. She had been biting her lips throughout the entire trip, hard enough to draw blood. And that was after *Daniel* had woven shields around her, protecting the girl from the worst of the psychic malaise that suffused the area. The problem was that *Laura* was a Seer with only rudimentary knowledge of magic. The girl was too sensitive to the waves of alienness that were but the harbinger of the *Mad God's* coming.

Daniel came back to the car. "I think we're in luck," he said. "The guy at the station, he might have just a touch of the *Second Sight* himself. He just couldn't stop talking about something weird going on at the *Harrison* farmhouse. I think that's the place."

"We'll have to try it," *Julienne* said coldly. For the next several minutes, the drive was made in silence.

Julienne knew they were on the right track when they were within half a mile of the farmhouse. Although there were no clouds in the sky, it was getting darker as they approached. An increasingly oppressive feeling began to affect her at about the same time.

Laura snapped briefly out of her semi-trance to stare out the window. "Look!" she said, pointing toward the surrounding fields.



"Crap," *Daniel* said between clenched teeth. *Julienne* said nothing, but could not stop a short gasp.

Several cows were in the fields on both sides of the road. Some were running in circles; others lay on the ground in a mess of blood and entrails. Even as they watched, several of the remaining animals turned on one of their own, goring and kicking. As their victim fell twitching, six cows surrounded it and howled up at the sky. *Julienne* had grown up on a farm; she had never heard ani-

mals make such a noise, and she prayed never to hear it again.

Daniel's knuckles were white on the steering wheel. "You're not thinking of quitting, are you?" *Julienne* said. He glared at her for a moment, but then looked down. "I won't let you down this time, *Jules*," he said in a subdued voice.

He had not called her Jules since weeks before the final fight so many years ago. Daniel had not been ready to follow her path, to give himself fully to the duties of the Coven — to commit himself not only to Julianne, but also to the responsibilities of the Gifted. He had made this perfectly clear by seducing a young student, and making sure Julianne found out about it. In a rage, Julianne had done the unthinkable: used her magicks against a fellow Wicce out of anger. The mage duel had been short and fierce, and had ended with the guest house of the Coven going up in flames. Daniel rode off in a cold fury, and Julianne had to pay a painful price undoing the harm she had caused.

"See that you don't, Daniel," she hissed. "See that you don't."

White Rock, Pennsylvania
7:11 p.m.

"It's cold," Daniel muttered. "Colder than a witch's t . . ."

"Shut up," Julianne growled.

He grinned at her in defiance but said nothing else. Even his feeble attempt at humor had been grossly inappropriate. The fact that he was trying to get a rise out of Julianne was just proof of how scared he was.

Daniel Gaiman did not scare easily. Even after leaving the Coven, he had been in his share of tight spots, supernatural and otherwise.

None of his previous experiences had prepared him for the sight he and his two companions faced after cresting the shallow hill. It had been his idea to leave the car a short distance behind. "No sense advertising our presence," he'd said, and Julianne, bless her cold heart, had agreed.

Looking down at the farm, he now realized that they could have driven an M-1 tank into it and nobody would have been the wiser. In fact, having a tank around might not have been a bad idea. Daniel had a .38 revolver with him — he hated guns, but sometimes magic could not compete with a bit of lead traveling at thousands of feet per second — but the weapon seemed woefully inadequate.

It had gotten very dark and very cold, impossibly so for high summer. Despite the darkness, they could clearly make out the Harrison farmhouse. It was surrounded in a sickly purple glow that made his temples throb if he stared at it too long. The purple light was pulsating around the property — and every pulse made it extend a little further, shine a little brighter. Daniel's magical senses were screaming inside his head. He knew that something was growing inside the house, was becoming fused with the house, and would soon consume the entire area as a prelude to the slaughter to come.

"So are we going to do it or what?" he said. They had been staring at the madness below for several minutes now.

"We must wait a little longer," Julianne said. She had always had a good eye for judging a magical matrix, for understanding the weavings of a spell — and discovering its weak points. "Soon the three of us will be able to turn the caster's own Essence against him."

"Or her," he said sharply. Julianne was always ready to cast males as the villains. It had been just one more reason for his refusing to join her little magic club, although he had to admit it was only a small one. The enormity of what he had been asked to do, to stand guard over the world, waiting for things like this to rear their ugly heads, had been too much, too soon. He had wanted to enjoy life; Julianne only cared about her personal Crusade (and hadn't she been angry when he had called her cause that? To Julianne, the Crusades and the Inquisition were two sides of the same hated coin). He'd had to make a break, and cheating on her had seemed like the easiest way to do it . . .

"It's time," Julianne said, cutting through his reveries. Daniel shook his head; for a few seconds he had actually managed not to pay attention to the Harrison house. The glow was much bigger and brighter. "Let's get started."

The three of them held hands, making a small circle at the top of the hill. Julianne led the chant, calling on Diana and Cerunnos, on the

powers of *Nature and Balance*. Daniel and Laura lent her their strength, and by being three, the closed circle they made added its own power as well. With his mind's eye, Daniel could see *Julienne* start to glow even through her shields, as *Essence* built up inside of her.

Laura screamed in mindless terror. Her wide eyes stared at something behind Daniel.

Forcing himself not to let go, he turned his head.

Some . . . thing was rushing up the hill towards them. Torn pieces of an old-fashioned green dress clung to the creature, the only indication that it had once been human. It ran on all fours like some ungainly animal; the head was a wide-mouthed horror, with a yards-long tongue that was swinging back and forth like a tentacle. The monster's eyes protruded from stalks extended far beyond the once-human eye sockets. It gibbered in sadistic glee as it rushed towards the circle.

Daniel let go of the circle. He was dimly aware of *Julienne's* cry of anger and despair, and even caught a brief flash of her thoughts: *Betrayed again*. No time for explanations; no time — no energy left — for magic. His fingers groped for the gun just as the monster closed.

It might have been a woman before, but it now massed far more than any two men. Its lumbering charge knocked Daniel and *Julienne* to the ground. The lolling tongue darted towards Laura. Her scream was abruptly cut off as the pinkish coil whipped around her throat and squeezed. The girl was yanked towards a fanged maw large enough to swallow a human head.

There was a single, horrible crunching sound.

Daniel fired from the ground, emptying the gun as fast as he could pull the trigger. At least four of the six shots scored on the beast. Reddish-black ichor spurting from its wounds, the creature let go of Laura's corpse and turned toward him. The .38's hammer made a pitiful metallic sound — empty. The thing's tongue whipped towards him. Daniel managed to interpose a hand, and the obscene limb wrapped itself

around his right forearm instead of his neck. It tightened its grip, and Daniel was insanely reminded of one of those machines that take blood pressure; his right hand went numb almost immediately, and the useless gun dropped to the ground. He tried to dig his heels in; as a result he wasn't pulled but dragged towards the creature's mouth.

"No!" *Julienne* screamed. She had been storing the combined *Essence* of the circle. She released a portion of the magical energies against the monster.

A wave of white light washed over the creature, and it ignited like a paper doll in a blowtorch's flame. The tongue released Daniel an instant before it burst into flame, and then the creature was rolling down the hill, a howling, greasy, flaming ball. It came to rest against a tree, setting it ablaze as well.

Julienne helped Daniel to his feet. "Laura . . . ?"

"Dead," he replied.

"Only the two of us, then," she said. "It won't be enough, I believe."

Daniel wanted to be angry, to scream abuse at her, at her Coven for sending only one of their members, for dragging him into a suicide mission. Instead, he grimaced and said "Do you want to live forever?" before taking her hands in his and channeling what little power he had left into the incomplete invocation. *Julienne* nodded, and carried on.

A small beacon of light shone on the hill, a candle flickering against an approaching storm.

Inside the Harrison House

7:18 p.m.

The thing that had once been *Ben Harrison* felt the destruction of the *Beth-creature* but did not pause in its chanting. Over the last ten minutes, painful boils had erupted throughout his skin; some had burst, and he was now covered by a new film of slimy blood, all his own this time. As above, so below: the corruption he was bringing to the Earth was first working its will

on his body. Ben had little concern over matters of the flesh anymore. His senses had been twisted and transformed, enabling him to see the early manifestation of *Nath-Shagraa* without being destroyed. He could also sense the magic ritual of the intruders being resumed. It was of no consequence; the *Beth*-creature had done its job, killing one of the *Three*, leaving the circle undone, too weak to stop what he had started. Soon the chanting would be over, and he and his master would become as one. Then he would show the interlopers that their friend's death had been no small mercy.

The shape in the darkness had become huge, and was barely contained within the circle that had served as its womb. It was about to burst free when Ben felt a sudden surge of energy coming from outside. *Nath-Shagraa* roared in angry surprise.

The magical attack was precisely timed, and backed with more power than should have been available. The connection between Ben Harrison and *Nath-Shagraa* was severed. The growing form inside the circle collapsed unto itself.

For one searing instant, Ben was no longer protected from the horrors he had been trying to unleash. His mind and soul were utterly obliterated — and an instant later, his body, and the entire house, followed suit.

Outside the Harrison House 7:19 p.m.

Daniel watched the house implode, the walls and roof sucked into a spot on the ground. It didn't look as impressive as it should; he had seen more dramatic renditions in the movies. But what the destruction lacked in the *FX* department it more than made up in psychic emanations. Only his shields saved him from having his brains turned to jelly. He, *Julienne* and the newcomers all staggered under the furious mind-screams of *Nath-Shagraa*.

Help had arrived suddenly and unexpectedly. Daniel had not even noticed their arrival until somebody had spoken behind him. "We ask for

permission to join your circle." Without missing a beat, *Julienne* had nodded, and five more people had joined in, making it seven, a strong number. *Julienne* had taken the added power and done what she had always intended — shut down the doorway between *Earth* and whatever dimension *Nath-Shagraa* came from.

The dust settled in the bare patch of ground that once held a house. The psychic waves of mindless rage also subsided, but Daniel knew that people for miles around would be having nightmares for several weeks, and that anybody staying in this area for more than a few hours would be tormented by even worse dreams. The taint of the *Mad Gods* did not die easily. The danger over, Daniel turned to see who his rescuers were.

Not of the *Wicce*, that was for sure. There were three men and two women, ranging in age from twenty to over fifty. They were all dressed in expensive suits, more appropriate for a Chamber of Commerce meeting than for an expedition against the supernatural. And he had sensed their magic as they added their power to the invocation. He had seen the rigid, carefully organized weaving of the flows of *Essence*. "*Rosicrucians*," he said. Ceremonial magicians, who sought control rather than balance. Not Daniel's favorite people, but they had indeed saved the day.

Julienne looked even less happy than Daniel, but she spoke first. "You have done all of humankind a favor."

The oldest man present was balding and had a sharp gray goatee. Behind thick spectacles, his eyes considered the two *Wicce* like a corporate *CEO* appraising a competitor. "We know. We would have come sooner, but it was a four-hour drive, and it did not seem prudent to tip our hand by relying on *Magick*." He seemed to be implying that his merry band would have teleported here otherwise. Hey, Daniel told himself, maybe they could. Two of the younger members were letting their shields show, and they were damn strong, close to his own in power. Maybe

Julienne's Coven could match the raw power of this group — and maybe not.

"I believe the danger is over," the man continued. "I think my organization will purchase this property to ensure that this incident does not happen again."

Julienne obviously did not like the idea of surrendering an area of unstable magical and dimensional energies to a "rival" group, but she nodded stiffly. Daniel knew she wanted to grieve for Laura, but she would not lose control in front of the strangers.

Perhaps the Rosicrucian leader was more sensitive than he looked. "We will leave you to take care of your companion now," he said. "We will take care of the authorities."

Alone, Julienne turned to Daniel. "We will have to take Laura's body back to her Coven. They will know what to do."

Daniel nodded sadly. She was not going to lose control in front of him, either. Maybe if he hung around for a while, and did not take off as soon as possible, she would start trusting him again. Did he want that? He did not know.

He tried not to think about it as he helped carry the corpse of the young woman to the car.



Introduction

Tales of self-discovery have always been popular in fantasy fiction. Whether they depict a comfortable Hobbit realizing that he holds a magical item that may change the fate of the entire world or a waitress who finds herself targeted for destruction by a time-traveling cyborg, these stories place plain, normal people in terrifying and unusual circumstances. During the course of the stories, these people discover unexpected sources of heroism and strength within themselves. The *WitchCraft* roleplaying game (RPG) is designed to tell this type of tale. The protagonists (the characters created by the players) are people who discover they are Gifted or Mundane with unusual abilities and knowledge. The characters come to the realization that there are hidden forces and beings in the world, forces that are often malevolent and dangerous. By being numbered among the Gifted or knowledgeable Mundanes, or simply by stumbling onto the dangerous truths, the characters are in a position to make a major difference in the world. This will also put them in danger, for there are many who like the world just the way it is, and will go to any lengths to preserve it.

WitchCraft is also a game of magic and adventure. The characters can be heroes in the traditional sense, experienced warriors and magicians fighting unspeakable evils. It is a game of horror, where the strange and the bizarre lurk in the most unexpected places, where magic exists and beings that pretend to be human prey on unsuspecting people. This combination of horror, fantasy and present-day adventuring can be modified to produce any type of game desired.

Welcome to the world of *WitchCraft*. Do not go gentle into that good night . . .

The New Order

This revised Second Edition of the *WitchCraft* main rulebook completes the initial phase of a new era for the *WitchCraft* RPG line. As of the summer of 1998, Myrmidon Press no longer produces *WitchCraft* books. Eden Studios (the creative folks behind the *Conspiracy X* RPG and the *Abduction* card game) will now produce and market all *WitchCraft* (and future Unisystem) products. At a time when

gaming companies seem to be dropping like flies, Eden has been consistently expanding, supporting their existing game lines and developing great new games. For *WitchCraft*, this move opens all kinds of exciting possibilities.

This revised Eden Studios edition of *WitchCraft* cleans, clarifies and polishes a number of features of the game world, and the Unisystem. The changes are for the most part minor; most add to the previously published material. Some adjustment to the Invocation casting rules, the initial character points and the Quality, Drawback and skill lists are the highlights. Others are too numerous to mention here.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter One: Introduction contains these introductory remarks, and an overview of roleplaying.

Chapter Two: Setting covers the basics of roleplaying, and the *WitchCraft* universe. This information provides new and more experienced roleplayers with a good grounding in the game and its trappings.

Chapter Three: Roles details character creation for the players. Strong, interesting characters are the most important part of an interactive storytelling experience. Concepts, Types, Associations, Attributes, Qualities and Drawbacks, Skills, Metaphysics and Possessions are addressed in turn. The sections on the Associations are brief and focused on character generation. More in depth discussions of the individual Associations are contained in Chapter Five: Associations. The chapter finishes with a series of ready-to-play Archetypes.

Chapter Four: Rules provides a variety of game mechanics for adjudicating conflicts and bringing order to the storytelling experience.

Chapter Five: Associations reveals background information on a number of groups that inhabit and influence the *WitchCraft* world. This information is intended primarily for Chroniclers, but players may have access to it.

Chapter Six: Metaphysics presents a number of different abilities of Gifted characters. From Invocations to the Sight from Necromancy to Divine Inspiration, Gifted Powers vary greatly. Sources of Power are also discussed in the chapter.

Chapter Seven: Supernatural reviews a number of the more fantastic elements of the *WitchCraft* world. Background information on Animal Spirits, Elementals, Ghosts, Relentless Dead, Vampyres, and Demons is also discussed. The vastly more powerful Seraphim and Mad Gods are also given their due. Finally, evil Gifted humans are detailed.

Chapter Eight: Chronicling gives those that moderate and create *WitchCraft* Stories some direction and suggestions.

Appendix includes a glossary, a number of handy reference charts, an index and character sheets for the various Character Types presented in this book.

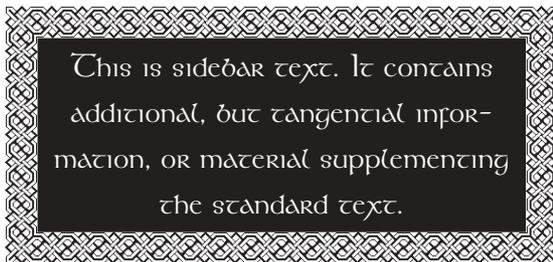
Conventions

Text Conventions

This supplement has a number of graphic features that identify the type of information presented. The text you are reading at the moment is standard text, and it is used for general explanations.

Certain other text is set off from the standard text.

This material is fiction presented to enhance or describe *WitchCraft* Stories and the *WitchCraft* world. For the most part it appears in this font. On special occasions, the look is different (see ancient parchment at p. 20) but the intent is the same.



This information provides ready-to-use examples of non-Cast Members that can be used as allies or Adversaries.

Dice Notations

D10, D8, D6 and D4 mean a ten-sided die, an eight-sided die, a six-sided die and a four-sided die, respectively. When a number appears before the notation, that number of such dice should be rolled, and their results should be added together. For example, 2D6 means roll two six-sided dice, and generate a result between 2 and 12. Multipliers are expressed after the dice notation. For example, 3D10 x 4 means roll three ten-sided dice, add the results together, and multiply that total result by 4. This generates a number between 12 and 120. A number in parentheses after, or in the middle of, the notation is the average roll. This number is provided for those that want to avoid dice rolling and just get the result. So the notation D6 x 4(12) means that players who want to skip rolling just use the value 12. Some notations cannot provide a set number because their result depends on a variable factor. For example, D8(4) x Strength is used because the Strength value to be plugged into that notation will vary depending on who is acting.

Gender

Every roleplaying game struggles with the decision about third person pronouns and possessives. While the male reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female, there is no question that it is not entirely inclusive. On the other hand, the “he or she” structure is clumsy and unattractive. In an effort to “split the difference,” this book and all books in the *WitchCraft* line use male designations for even chapters, and female designations for odd chapters.

Measurements

This book primarily uses U.S. measurements (feet, yards, miles, pounds, etc.). Metric system equivalents appear in parentheses. In the interests of ease of use, the conversions are rounded relatively arbitrarily. For example, miles are multiplied by 1.5 to get kilometers (instead of 1.609), meters are equal to yards (instead of 1.094 yards), pounds are halved to get kilograms (instead of multiplied by 0.4536), and so on. If a Chronicler feels that more precision is necessary, she should take the U.S. measurements provided and apply more exact formulas.

About the Author

C.J. Carella was born in New York and has lived in Peru, Venezuela, Connecticut, Florida, Michigan, and Connecticut once again. During his travels he has yet to experience any genuine supernatural events -- and he is not going out of his way to do so.

A full-time writer, C.J. has authored some fifteen RPG books for such companies as Steve Jackson Games and Palladium Books, as well as numerous articles for *The Familiar*, *Pyramid* and *White Wolf* magazines. *WitchCraft* was originally written for Myrmidon Press, and has been revised and reissued by Eden Studios.

When not writing, C.J. spends his free time on computer games, novels and comic books – research material, he says. He currently lives in West Haven, Connecticut, with a feline familiar.

Roleplaying

The book you hold contains a roleplaying game, its setting, and its rules. So what is a roleplaying game? Simply put, it is a combination of board game, strategy game, and improvisational theater. It is a more mature version of the games of “let’s pretend” that we all played as children. The rules are meant to avoid the old disputes about exactly what happened (“I shot you! You’re dead!” “Am not!”). To enforce the rules and provide a coherent setting, one of the participants assumes the role of Chronicler (known as Game Master or Referee in other contexts). The rest of the players assume the role of one character each, or a Cast Member. The player controls the actions of that character, limited only by the rules, the character’s abilities and limitations, and the player’s imagination.

Roleplaying games have been around for more than two decades. They run the gamut from mindless combat scenarios to nearly ruleless, story-driven acting exercises. The Unisystem, the game rules of the *WitchCraft* game, concentrates on the following elements. We consider these to be the main characteristics of a good roleplaying game.

Acting: Participants in a roleplaying game are acting out the part of a Cast Member, a fictional character (or, in the case of the Chronicler, several characters). The character may be as similar or different from the player as desired. Some players prefer to

take on the roles of heroic versions of themselves, while others want to “be in the shoes” of completely different people. Many elements of improvisational theater can be found in roleplaying. The player has to come up with the “lines” of her character as the storyline develops.

Storytelling: During a game, the Chronicler and the Cast create a story, shaped by the actions of the Cast Members and the conflicts and situations provided by the Chronicler. A Story is being experienced at the same time it is being written. Because there are multiple authors of this tale, however, the creators do not know how exactly how it will end. Each character’s actions impact the result, as do the conflicts and drama injected into the story by the Chronicler.

A Game of Chance: The uncertainty of not knowing the end of the story is enhanced in many games by the use of dice, cards and other randomizing elements. This gives roleplaying an aspect similar to sporting events and to games of chance: what will the outcome be? This provides an excitement similar to the feeling that many experience when watching a football game or a boxing match. The skills of the participants play a big role in what the results will be, but the final outcome remains uncertain until it is over. Some gamers prefer to reduce or even eliminate randomness altogether, preferring to let the needs of the story dictate the outcome. The Unisystem is designed to please both those who like the chance element, and those who wish to minimize it, or eliminate it outright.

An Outlet to Imagination and Creativity: Instead of being a passive form of entertainment, like watching television or reading a book, roleplaying exercises the players’ imagination and creativity. Each shares the responsibility of producing a good and entertaining experience. Each brings humor, drama and suspense to the game. In roleplaying, the goal is not to win, but simply to have fun and help others have fun.

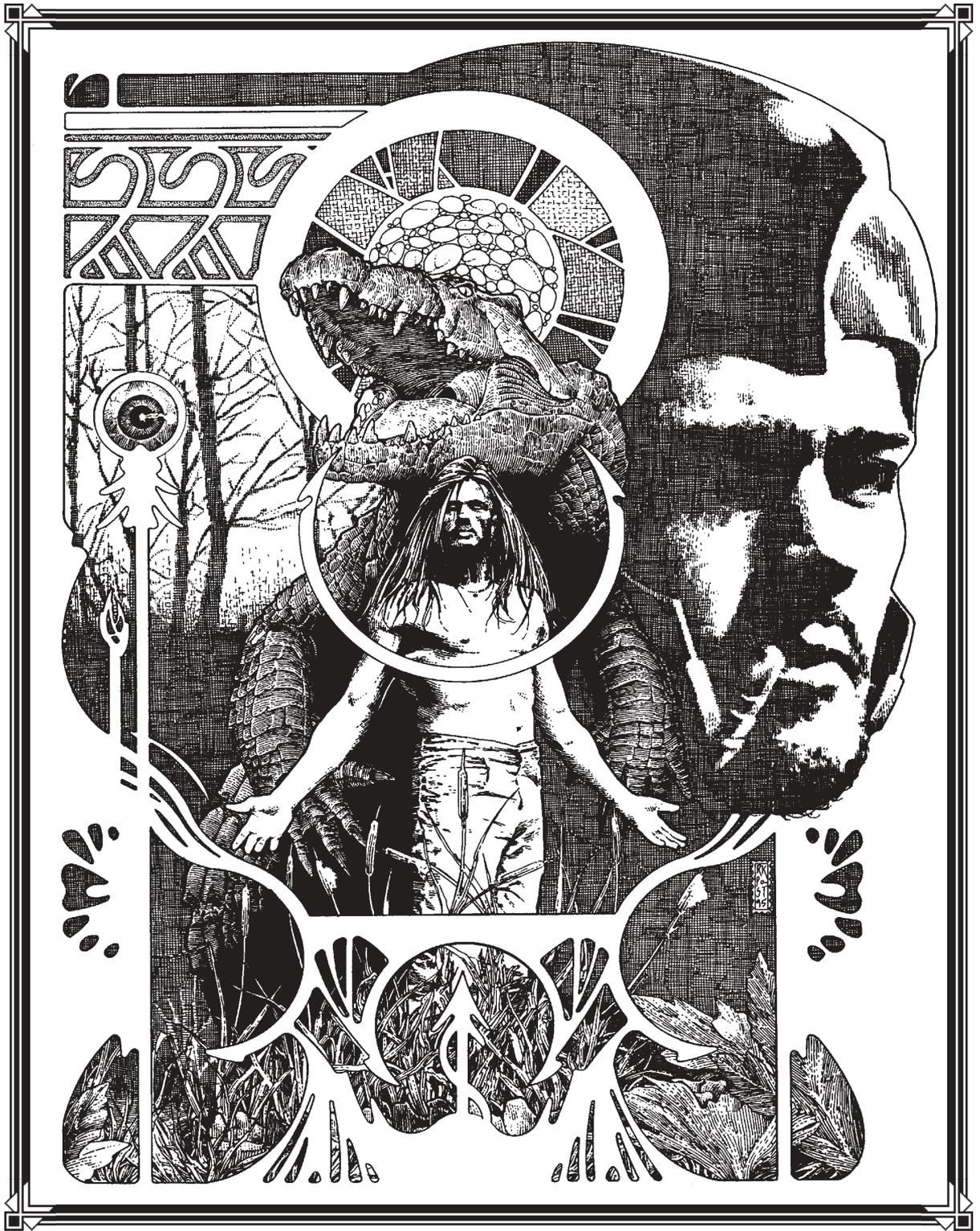
In sum, by playing a roleplaying game, the Chronicler and the Cast Members weave a Story together. The adventures, triumphs, and tragedies of the characters will be part of a larger tapestry. In effect, the gaming group is creating and experiencing a novel or play, experiencing the double thrill of the creative act and the enjoyment of reading a book or watching a movie.



The *WitchCraft* RPG

All roleplaying games have at their hearts the “What if . . . ?” question. In *WitchCraft*, the question is “What if you were a person Gifted with supernatural powers, or a Mundane familiar with the supernatural world?” What would you do if you could do things that most people only dream of, or experience things beyond imagining? What if those powers or knowledge also attracted the unwanted attention of strange creatures and shadowy organizations? By taking on the role of such a character, players have the chance to find out.

WitchCraft is a game that combines elements of horror (there are monsters in this world, and they hunt humans) with mystic self-discovery (characters have the power to work magic, read minds, speak with gods or spirits, or know those who do) and conflict (the characters may know the truth; what is she going to do about it?). The remainder of this book explains how to enter the world of *WitchCraft* and build Stories that challenge, amaze and delight players and Chroniclers alike.



Chapter Two 18



Chapter Two

Setting

In the Beginning, there was Essence, the Potentiality of all things to be. And the Creative Force, whom we would call the True God, wished for change, and Essence gave shape to Reality . . .

Two manner of beings were born in the cauldron of Creation. First were the Sephyr, who were sent forth to make the Creator's wishes come true; they were living tools of Creation, and they did their Maker's bidding. Then came the Naturas, the embodiments of all new aspects of Reality, the first sentient beings of the new universe . . .

The Creator moved on afterwards, leaving the Sephyrs and the Naturas to their own devices. There was strife and division among these ancient Powers as they multiplied and sought to gain mastery over each other. The most powerful Sephyr and Naturas followed the Creator into unknown parts, and were heard of no more. The others became Angels and Demons, ancient Gods and Spirits, the Dragons and Sidhe we know to exist between the folds of Reality . . .

When Humanity was born, it carried within the same Essence and Potentiality of the Creator. We were made in Its Image, and the Science of Magic is but an expression of the Creative Force. The Gods and Spirits, the Angels and Demons, they can be bound to our service, and many resent and fear us because of it. It was not our Creator who cast us out of the Garden of Eden, but Its jealous servants. And one day we shall rise high enough to reclaim what we lost.

-- Excerpts from Treatises On Reality, by Christian Haggis,
Rosicrucian Grand Master.

The World

We are born, live and die in the material world, what the Norse referred to as Midgard, Middle Earth, the place of the living named Malkuth in the Cabalistic Tree of Life. Even before humans learned to read and write, they knew that the physical realm was but one of many worlds, that there were other places we visited in dreams and trances, places we arrived in after we died or came close to death.

It was also well known that other beings also visited our world from their own realms.

Those who could see and interact with the other worlds were the first magicians and priests. Their connection to the realms of spirit allowed them to transcend the limits of the flesh. Some could talk with the souls of the dead, or with spirits of nature. Others could directly affect the material world with the force of their wills. They were the Gifted. They have been feared, worshipped and persecuted through the ages.

Eventually, beliefs in the Otherworlds became religions. Mistakes disguised as dogma hid and confused the truth. In Europe and the Americas, the Church protected its people from the supernatural and became the only legitimate conduit to communicate with the world of spirit. All others were persecuted, forced into hiding, or killed outright. Valuable knowledge was lost or suppressed; only a few dedicated believers kept the ancient secrets alive. Later still, as technology allowed humankind to master the physical world, belief in all things spiritual decayed. Why pray for luck and protection when electric lights, guns and concrete buildings provided comfort? The vast majority of people embraced the mundane and forgot the spiritual, except in a perfunctory way.

The Otherworlds do not care about belief or disbelief, however. They continued to exist, and those who knew how were able to cross over and acquire unique abilities, which they used for good or for ill. Instead of persecution, they had to face ridicule and skepticism. The same skepticism protected beings who looked human but were not. Able to operate in a world that neither knew of nor accepted their existence, the Predators of myth and legend were able to hunt with impunity. Ironically, the monsters of myth

and legend flocked to the large cities of Europe and the Americas, shunning the poor and primitive areas of the world where the ancient lore had not been forgotten. In the heart of the world of Reason, monsters lurked for centuries; their crimes remained largely undetected and for the most part unpunished.

This is the world of *WitchCraft*. On the surface, a world just like our own, but with a secret, dark side that can strike without warning. It is also a changing world, where the strange and the bizarre are becoming increasingly frequent.

The Time of Reckoning

Nature moves in cycles. Day follows night. Planets, stars and universes are born, grow old, and die. "As above, so below." This ancient magical formula indicates that all things, great and small, are bound by the same laws. From the smallest microbe to the mightiest spirit, the cycle is largely the same, with a beginning, middle, and end, followed by a new beginning.

The end of one such cycle is drawing near. The world, and all within it, are in a transition stage, a time of change that may doom humankind, or lead to a true Golden Age. Like many great events, it moves slowly, almost imperceptibly. The world of *WitchCraft* is undergoing a radical transformation.

Its first symptom is the increase in numbers of those with the ability to sense and communicate with the supernatural -- those who are called the Gifted. People born with the Second Sight, the ability to manipulate the world through mystical power, or the capacity to see beyond the barriers separating the living and the dead, become more numerous each day, and their actions can no longer be dismissed by Science. Even more disquieting is the increase in unexplained occurrences, disappearances and gruesome crimes. Predators from the Otherworlds are multiplying. More and more spirits of the dead are staying in this world instead of moving on. All this indicates an approaching time of crisis and chaos. The madman carrying a sign saying "The End is Near" may not be wrong. Those with greater understanding are beginning to believe that a Time of Reckoning is at hand. Their actions will determine whether the world will survive the process.

A walk in the night.

Mundanes by the hundreds, by the thousands, traipsing through the streets, confident in the neon lights that ward off the darkness. Happy drunks and yuppies going home after a show, people looking for sex or drugs or both, and vendors only too happy to oblige them. And then, of course, there are the others.

I see them as I walk. The spot that was now the street corner at Howard and Third had seen no less than a hundred people die in the past two centuries. It had been a Place of Power before the white men came; building a crossroads on its location only increased its strength. As I cross the street I see the ghost of the insane medicine man who continues to wage war against the invaders. He has gathered enough power to cause a car accident and claim more victims. I pause; hidden in the pockets of my trench coat, my hands make gestures of power. The ghost howls in fury as I dispel his power. Throughout the street, some people hesitate as if they had heard something, then shrug it off and move on. I do the same. The spirit will not be able to kill anybody tonight. He swears vengeance on me in an Algonquin dialect as I pass by. I ignore him; the spirit is bound to this location, and his power is weaker than mine.

Three blocks down, hookers display their wares. One is not what she seems. Too pretty for a street walker, her red hair cropped short, I know she has been a hooker since just after that term was coined; she was one of the original members of "Hooker's Division" in Washington D.C. — during the Civil War era. She smiles at me as I walk past. I nod to her. She is a Vampyre, but the little life force she drains from her customers is never enough to do harm. She knows that if she steps over the line, I will come after her.

A few blocks down, the streets become darker, less populated. Six Hispanic youths are sitting in front of an apartment building. One of them scowls at me; I am too white and too well dressed for this neighborhood. Before he does anything, one of his friends grabs his arm.

"Cool it, ese," he whispers. "He's a brujo." The gang members stare at me but let me pass unmolested. Most of them know the truth about the string of murders in Angel Square, and that I destroyed the entity responsible.

I have nearly completed my walk; a man can do only so much, and I can only put a portion of the city under my protection. As I am about to turn back, I sense something. A surge of power, ancient and evil. A demon. I head toward it. Maybe some stupid kid listened to the wrong record played backwards, or a conjurer's magic finally worked. Demons rarely use their powers openly, but sometimes they become angry enough to take direct action. Unless I get there soon, the imbecile who summoned the creature — and possibly an entire block of buildings — will be consumed by flames.

I start to run toward the source. I can see unearthly lights playing inside a building. A scream of primal terror echoes through the streets.

Just another night in my world.

The Gifted

Since the dawn of time, there have been people with the power to see and do things beyond the reach of others. They were accepted as shamans and medicine men, priests and sorcerers, hunted and reviled as witches, or mocked and institutionalized as madmen. They are the Gifted. Psychics and magicians, summoners of spirits or miracle-wielding saints, they are the selected few who can interact with the Otherworld. In theory, all humans have the potential to use these abilities; the Spark of Creation is in each of our souls. What most people lack is the will and the knowledge to make use of it. By choice or circumstance, the Gifted have managed to unleash this potentiality and are now able to influence the world around them in strange and marvelous ways.

The source of the powers of the Gifted lies in Essence, the primal force and element of reality. The Gifted are attuned to the flows of Essence, and they can hold and manipulate these energies, the powers of Creation itself. This attunement allows them to see many hidden truths, and to perform incredible feats.

This power does not come without a price, however. Being of the Gifted entails giving up the blindness that comforts and protects the mundane. In a world where monsters prowl in the shadows, ignorance is bliss. Knowing too much is always dangerous; there are those who will do anything to protect their secrets. Moreover, something about their very nature makes the Gifted more likely to become involved in strange and dangerous situations. Perhaps their link to the currents of Essence somehow leads the Gifted toward places and incidents where those flows are strongest. Perhaps they are “guided” by the Hand of Fate, God’s Will, or some Greater Power. In any event, no matter how much the Gifted try to lead quiet, peaceful lives, they will eventually find themselves in bizarre and life-threatening situations and adventures. As a result, many actively search out such situations, hoping at least to deal with them on their own terms.

The Gifted are the central characters of *WitchCraft*. Like the witches of old, they are often misunderstood and persecuted. In their hands is the power to save or destroy, to heal the world or send it to its doom.

Essence

The Tao of Asian culture. The Baraka of Arab mysticism. The Mana of the witch doctors of the South Pacific. The One Power. Essence is all that and more.

Beyond matter and energy, Essence is the basic building block of reality. It is present in all things, living and unliving. It also flows invisibly in pure form, undetected by most living things except on a primal, emotional level. Magicians learn to manipulate Pure Essence to change the world.

Pure Essence can be found in living beings; this is the energy that makes up the soul, the Ka of ancient Egypt and the Chi (“breath”) of Asian mysticism. Whereas matter and energy are emotionless forces that follow the laws of physics, Essence in its raw form is controlled by emotions and the creative impulse. In some ways, it might even be considered to be a living force, responsive to stimuli.

Essence, unlike common energy, is not an impersonal force. Even in its pure form, it has emotions, attitudes — it can even be good or evil. In living things, Essence is arranged in a matrix that stores the knowledge, memories and personality of the person or creature. After death, the soul lives on, moving on to other planes of existence, or, in the case of ghosts and other beings, remaining in the physical realm for one reason or another.

Mundanes, people without the powers or knowledge of the Gifted, often manipulate Pure Essence without being aware of it. Strong emotions often trigger a release of Essence; this is one of the causes (besides the typical biological ones) for the “drained” feeling people often experience after strong bouts of anger, fear or grief. The Gifted can control the release of Essence in numerous ways. They can also perceive the flows of this power, allowing them to “see” things and creatures that cannot be detected with lesser, more mundane senses.

He was a modern hunter among the teeming masses. His prey was a small boy, obviously lost and scared in the shopping mall. No one suspected him as he approached the crying child; the hunter looked like everyone's grandfather, his stooped body, white hair and kind, open face concealing a dark maelstrom of forbidden passions. The old man leaned over the little boy with a placating smile. "You look like you need a friend, kiddo," he said.

The child looked up. "I'm lost, mister." Apparently, his parents had neglected to warn the boy not to talk to strangers.

"Why don't you come with me? I'll take you to the central office, and they will call your parents right away."

The boy looked dubious for a moment, and then said "Okay."

As they walked, he took the old man's hand. The killer had to force himself not to tremble with anticipation. They still had to make their way out of the mall unnoticed. Nobody paid attention to the pair: a boy and a grandfather were not an uncommon sight. The old man was ready to surrender his prey should the child's parents appear; he had learned the virtues of patience. But nobody called out, nobody stopped them.

Even after they left the mall, the boy did not seem concerned. His tears had dried and he looked serious but calm. The old man hid his true smile behind a complacent facade. Soon new tears and worse would begin.

"Are we going away?" the boy asked as the old man opened the side door of his van.

"It's easier than walking all over the mall," the man said. "Come on, now."

The child jumped into the van. The old man followed. Time to secure the prey and be on his way. He closed the sliding door and turned toward his victim.

The young boy was staring at him intently. Something in his eyes made the old man hesitate for a moment. They seemed a little bit darker than before, even accounting for the darkness of the van. It didn't matter. The old man lunged, ready to stifle any outcry.

Small limbs met his grasping hands. Tiny hands grabbed the old man's wrists, and squeezed. Breath was driven from the killer's body by pure agony. He heard a crunching noise and his hands exploded in pain. The child heaved, and pushed the man down while still holding on to his wrists. Blood started running down the killer's arms.

The old man tried to scream, but the child was kneeling on his chest, stealing his breath. "Bad luck for you, old man," the child said, and the killer exhaled a wheeze of terror, for the voice was gravelly and totally inhuman. "In the order of things," the child-thing continued, "there are levels of predator and prey. You have finally met one who preys on your kind." Even as he spoke, the last vestiges of humanity melted away from the creature's face. Once again, the killer tried to scream, to howl out in horror. A small part of him found it ironic that he would spend his last few moments of life in the same mindless terror as that of his own victims.

The busy mall goers did not notice the slight rocking of the van, nor the small noises coming from inside. A small pool of dark liquid accumulated underneath, but everyone expects to see oil puddles beneath a car, and nobody noticed that the liquid was not oil.

Finally, it was over. A young boy opened the passenger door and left the van behind. Looking lost and forlorn, he vanished back into the crowded mall.

The Dangers

Every culture in the world has tales of strange and terrible creatures, beings of the night and darkness that prey on the unwary or helpless, beings of power that must be appeased lest they become enraged. The legends have been forgotten and trivialized, but the creatures of the dark continue to exist, and to hunt. One of the forbidden truths the Gifted learn in the course of their lives is that there are things that walk the world in human guise but which are utterly alien. Many of them need the Essence of others to survive, while a few have unknown purposes, but most are predators who hunt humans, protected by the unbelief of the mundanes. The predators come in many shapes and varieties, with different powers and weaknesses. Some are no threat to an adult human, and prey only on the young or the weak. Others are simply beings from the Otherworlds who venture into the physical realm, or the souls of the dead, who sometimes linger in search of revenge, redemption or immortality. Others have more devious or alien purposes. There are such beings as demons, who seek to tempt and corrupt the mundanes. These and others are nearly impossible to defeat without relying on Magic or other Gifted Arts. Their numbers and boldness have been growing -- a sign that the Reckoning is near.

The supernatural is not the only source of concern for the Gifted. Mundanes are perfectly capable of destruction, pillage and worse, for the sake of power, greed or their twisted lusts. There are those who poison and despoil the world for fun or profit, and are not afraid to crush anything -- or anyone -- that gets in their way. There are many groups of manipulators who enjoy tremendous power over the lives of the mundanes, and who will strike at anyone who threatens the secrecy upon which they thrive.

Whether brought about by the machinations of monsters or the blind greed of mundanes, the Time of Reckoning may destroy the world as we know it. Worse, it may replace it with something far worse. The Gifted and their allies are in a position to help determine the outcome. Every small victory will help.



The Covenants

The Covenants are gatherings of the Gifted, societies created over the centuries with the purposes of teaching, self-defense and, in some cases, the quest for power. No two are alike.

Each Covenant developed its own beliefs, cosmology, and customs. Some Covenants were designed as secret societies from their inception, keeping their very existence hidden from the people and authorities of their time. Others were forced into hiding during the time of persecutions that plagued Europe and the Americas. To this day, most Covenants continue to operate in strictest secrecy, both to protect their members from ridicule or outright persecution, and to hoard their precious secrets and powers from outsiders.

The level of organization and hierarchy in each Covenant varies widely. Some, like the Wicce, are little more than a collection of Gifted members with similar religious or magical beliefs, loosely banded together to assist their fellows in times of need. Others (the Rosicrucians and the Sentinels foremost among them) are highly organized and have an established chain of command. At the other extreme are “Covenants” like the Solitaires, who are less an organization than a class of Gifted, lumped into one category by other Covenants.

All these Covenants realize that the Time of Reckoning is drawing near; their occult knowledge and abilities have been able to detect and understand

the signs, and they have often benefited from the rise in the numbers of the Gifted. What they plan to do (if anything) about the troubles ahead varies from one group to another. Many are ignoring the signs; only a few are taking action.

There are dozens of different Covenants in the world, not counting the splinter groups, rebels, heretics, and other dissident factions within the various Covenants. Their sizes range from a few individuals to thousands of followers. Five are depicted in this book: the Wicce, the Rosicrucians, the Sentinels, the Twilight Order, and the Cabal of Psyche.

Others will appear in future publications. Naturally, Chroniclers and players are encouraged to devise their own Covenants.



Metaphysics

The Gifted have many abilities which allow them to transcend normal human limits. They are traditionally known as “Metaphysics” or “Arts” among occult circles. There are many Arts in the world of *WitchCraft*. The most common of these are the four depicted in this book: Magic, Sight, Necromancy and Divine Inspiration. Each has its own limitations and advantages. In some cases,

to practice one of the Arts one must forsake any interest or aptitude in the others, or accept a lesser degree of mastery in the rest. Some of the Gifted have managed to master more than one Art in their lifetimes, but most specialize.

So far, the woman had been a perfect hostage.

She had not struggled as they dragged her out of the bank, and she was sitting quietly in the back, sandwiched between Bruno and Leo. They would probably have to waste her after they left the Interstate, but Vic was no monster – he would make it a clean kill, a shot in the back of the head, quick and painless. He drove carefully, scrupulously staying within five miles of the speed limit. No sense attracting attention. Next to Vic, Gino laughed maniacally. Vic grimaced; they should never have let that psycho join in. Thanks to his itchy trigger finger, they were now responsible for nine murders – the seven bank employees and two luckless customers. After Gino shot the first one, they had no choice but to eliminate all the witnesses. And the law being what it was, you would fry as bad for one as for ten, so what could you do?

Vic sneaked a glance at the soon-to-become victim number ten in the rearview mirror. Late twenties, maybe, good-looking in a bookish way, wearing a flowery skirt, a denim jacket and sensible shoes, long brown hair running straight down, her blue eyes hidden beneath thick glasses. She had been the third customer, and Vic had decided they could use a hostage. She had been quiet and subdued since the hold-up, her eyes closed, her lips moving silently. Praying, probably. Couldn't hurt, Vic guessed.

The left front tire blew out. "Shit!" Vic was a good driver, and the car was going slow enough to let him keep control of the vehicle. After a short swerve, Vic led the car to the shoulder. The way the car staggered to a stop told him the tire was utterly destroyed.

"Damn! Gino, help me out. You two, keep her quiet." Bruno nodded and shoved the silenced Beretta pistol into her side. The woman gasped but said nothing.

"Why do I get to help you?" Gino asked insolently.

Because it's your fault we're in this mess, Vic thought but didn't say. "Because I'm running the show, butthead. Capiche?" Gino scowled but did as he was told. The two men went to

the back and opened the trunk. Gino was finally beginning to look worried; he kept staring at the highway, expecting a cop car to show up. Vic was less concerned. They had timed the robbery perfectly, shortly before closing. Nobody had seen them come in or out, and it would be hours before the people in the bank were missed. They would have a head start, and no witnesses. "Relax," he told Gino as they unloaded the spare and the jack. "Everything's under control." Vic closed the trunk . . .

. . . and saw Bruno and Leo, their heads lolling limply on the headrests, appearing to be unconscious – or dead. The woman was out of the car, hands down at her sides, staring at them.

Gino went for his gun – and fell to the ground, twitching. Vic saw the woman's eyes narrow in concentration. Gino kicked feebly at the ground, then lay still.

"Brain embolism this time," the woman said coldly. "Two heart attacks are going to be strange enough; three would be too much."

Old childhood stories came flooding back to Vic's mind. "Strega," he whispered in Italian. Witch. The woman smiled grimly.

Vic dropped the gun and fell to his knees. "I give up." Better to face life in prison or the gas chamber than this.

The woman nodded. "You have made a wise choice."

The police found a crack pipe in the car; the coroner did find some traces of drugs in the systems of the three corpses, but not enough to justify the freak deaths. The doctor knew his report was a lie, and he slept uneasily for many days afterwards. The woman's name was never released to the papers; shortly after the incident, she left the state, and could not be found. No matter; there was enough evidence found in the car to satisfy prosecutors. Vic discovered religion during the seven years between his sentencing and, after many appeals, his execution, and he died while praying for his soul.

What awaited him at the other end is another story for another time.

Magic

The most versatile and widespread of the Arts, Magic has been known and practiced throughout the world, in hundreds of different styles and cultural traditions. Whether performed by an Eskimo shaman in the frozen north, or a ceremonial magician in 20th-century London, Magic has the same basic elements: the will of the magician, a series of rituals and symbols to focus that will, and the belief that the will can affect the world. Essence is the fuel of Magic. Channeled by the will of the magician, Essence can affect reality in ways limited only by the knowledge and imagination of its wielder.

Magic works by the use of Invocations, the “spells” and rituals of legend. Each Invocation rules one small aspect of reality. An Invocation acts as a focus for the Essence released by the witch or sorcerer. Additional rituals or symbols also allow magicians to tap into the flows of Pure Essence that circulate invisibly around all things, greatly increasing the power available.

Becoming a magician is long, hard work. The apprentice’s world view must be reshaped through endless hours of study, meditation, and initiation rituals. Each Invocation learned does not involve a mere repetition of words or formulas, but involves a dedication almost unheard of in the materialistic world of today. Only those with the strongest aptitude and desire ever learn to master these abilities.



“Amanda is the most precious child,” Gloria said proudly to her friends, the other wives and mothers. They all agreed effusively, trying to allay Gloria’s concerns. “Still waters run deep,” Mrs. Rutherford added, somewhat lamely.

“Yes,” Gloria agreed. “She is a thinker, and so smart! It will take her a while to get used to things; kindergarten is such a new experience.” Again, her friends chorused their agreement, trying vainly to mask their concerns. Little Amanda had no friends; the other children seemed to hate her, to be afraid of her. She had been beaten up twice in the two months since school had started. In all fairness, it had been an ill-starred school year, what with the tragic death of the Gifford boy.

“She will be all right,” Gloria said, and hurriedly drank the last of her coffee, using the motion to help suppress the tears in her eyes.

In the backyard, Amanda played with her dolls. Her mother’s concern reached her from across the house. Amanda stopped playing for a moment; it always made her sad when Mummy worried so. And some of her friends were not being nice, some were happy that Mummy was unhappy. They better watch out, or something bad would happen to them, like it happened to Freddie Gifford, the boy who had kicked her. Freddie would not be coming back to school anymore. Amanda had made Freddie go away.

The little girl went back to her game. After making sure nobody was around, she concentrated. Her favorite Barbie stood up and started walking towards the dollhouse, her legs marching stiffly, one-two, one-two, like those soldiers in the old movies Daddy liked to watch. “One-two, one-two,” Amanda said softly.

Like good obedient soldiers, all the dolls stood up and started to march.

Amanda giggled.

The Sight

There have always been people who, without training in the magical Arts, have been blessed or cursed with the Second Sight, the ability to see and affect things with the mind alone. In the past, the Sight was considered to be another form of witchcraft, and those unfortunate enough to show signs of it were persecuted. Now, these so-called “psychic” abilities have become more widely accepted in popular culture, although the scientific establishment continues to deny their existence.

The powers of the mind are manifold. Those with the Sight, Seers, can communicate without words, move things without hands, see past physical barriers, and even catch glimpses of the past and future. How these powers are related is not known, but those Gifted with the Sight have the potential to learn and master any and all of those abilities. In some ways, their link to Essence is more basic than that used in Magic, for they can affect the physical world directly, somehow manipulating the Essence that exists within matter and energy, rather than the “pure” Essence of souls and spirits. The Seers can perceive the invisible worlds and the supernatural, but most of their power is confined to the material world.

The Sight is an inborn talent. Some of the Gifted have it; those who were not born with it can never gain it in life, although Magic can match or mimic many of its abilities. Some think that the Sight is actually a trait that characterized a subspecies within humankind, and that it may represent the next step in evolution. Others believe that these powerful abilities exist in all of us, but require extraordinary circumstances to be awakened.



Madame Slovana (born Gertrude Finn) was awakened from a sound sleep (courtesy of several ounces of the best Scotch her money could buy) by the doorbell downstairs. Her sleep was normally deep enough to allow her to ignore the sounds, but whoever was there kept ringing it for several minutes, finally rousing her into angry wakefulness. She looked out the front window of her apartment, right above her place of business. She could make out a young kid, no older than twenty-five (to Madame Slovana, anybody under her own fifty-three years of age was a child), fairly well dressed, standing determinedly at her door. She frowned at the sight. The youngster did not match the demographics of her clients (most of whom tended to be female, middle-aged, often lonely, and always endowed with more money than common sense). An angry relative, perhaps, come to confront her for bamboozling his aunt or mother or grandmother. Madame Slovana didn't need that. She ignored the ringing; the sign on the storefront said "Madame Slovana's Psychic Services Center. Sessions By Appointment Only" and she had no appointments today. Eventually, the kid would go away.

He didn't. "Listen!" he shouted. "I know you're in there! We need to talk; it's for your own good!"

That sounded like a threat. Madame Slovana spoke through the intercom system at the door of the storefront. She did not even try to use her phony Russian/Middle-Eastern/German/French accent. "Stop bothering me or I'm calling the police," she growled.

"Listen to me," the kid said. "Your life is in danger, and the police cannot help you. I'm the only one who can!"

Madame Slovana had heard plenty of lines during her checkered career, and had come up with some of the best ones herself. She was not impressed. "I'm calling the police right now," she said loudly into the intercom, and headed towards the phone to make good on her threat. The police didn't like her, but they had often come and stopped distraught friends and relatives of her clients from taking the law into their own hands.

She truly did not see anything wrong in what she was doing. Like those "psychics" on television, what she did was for entertainment purposes only. If anybody was stupid enough to believe that she – or anybody for that matter – could contact the dead, that was their lookout. Dead is dead, money talks, and let the buyer beware; that summed up Madame Slovana's philosophy.

Which did nothing to prepare her for the voice she heard when she put the phone to her ear.

"I am going to get you, Gertrude" the phone snarled instead of the dial tone she was expecting. The voice was unmistakable; it belonged to Lucille Metz, until recently one of Madame Slovana's best clients.

Until recently, that is, because Lucille Metz had died six weeks ago.

Madame Slovana was not so easily convinced, however. She hit the Reset button on her phone several times, trying to get the dial tone. Mrs. Metz's voice repeated her message over and over. That little twerp downstairs must have messed with the phone somehow.

Suddenly, a beautiful Elvis commemorative plate that hung on the wall by the door exploded, showering Madame Slovana with shrapnel. She shouted, more in surprise than pain. Another hanging plate (Madame Slovana was one of the Franklin Mint's best customers when it came to decorative china) exploded, then another. Some pieces started flying around the room like so many startled birds.

"What is happening?" she screamed at the top of her lungs. "What is happening?"

A blurry figure took shape in front of her, and Madame Slovana howled in terror, because the semi-transparent form was Mrs. Metz, complete with the fake red hair and expensive make-up she had worn in life. The spirit grimaced at her, revealing a mouth full of razor-sharp fangs. "I found out you had been lying to me all this time, Gertrude," the spirit hissed. "Gertrude! You aren't even Rumanian! You never contacted my dear David! I finally saw him again, and it turns out he hasn't had a good thought about me since he died! You took my money, and my hopes, and my dreams! And now," the ghost said, leaning over the gasping medium, "I'm going to get my pound of flesh."

Mrs. Metz shoved her right hand through Madame Slovana's forehead. The hand did not break skin or bone, but Madame Slovana shrieked in the purest agony; the heavy-set woman thrashed like a speared fish, anchored to the ghost and held there with superhuman strength.

"Stop!" The kid from downstairs rushed into the room; he must have broken in. Mrs. Metz's ghost hissed and released Madame Slovana, leaving her on the ground, panting and sobbing. The kid advanced towards the spirit. "I cannot let you do this," his voice echoed as he spoke to the ghost.

"Why not? She deserves it. All the lies . . ."

"It's not for her sake alone. If you kill her, you may acquire a taste for it, and may decide to stay in this world, punishing everyone who ever did you wrong. The chaos and grief you can cause will be greater than anything this charlatan has ever done."

Mrs. Metz's face became inhuman in her fury. "No!" The spirit sprang at the kid.

He extended his hands, and a flash of white light lashed out at Mrs. Metz. With a cry of agony eerily similar to Madame Slovana's own cries of pain, the ghost seemed to shrink into itself — and was gone.

The kid — the man — turned to the gasping woman on the floor. "She is gone. I tried to warn you; I almost did not get here in time." The echoes of pain still resonating inside Madame Slovana's head like the mother of all migraines seemed to underline his words.

"You're for real," she gasped. "You can actually control the dead." Despite the pain and fading terror, Madame Slovana started making calculations. Hire him, bribe him, anything, and she could make double, triple what she made now. "Listen, kid . . ."

"No, you listen. Most of your clients are old women. How many more have died in the last few years? How many more will die in the next few? You've hurt a lot of people, 'Madame Slovana.' And those who get involved in the supernatural — even fakes like yourself — often end up getting their just desserts in this life."

Madame Slovana's mother had not raised any fools. "What can I do?" she said pleadingly.

The man told her.

Madame Slovana's Psychic Services Center closed down for good that day. Refunds were mailed to as many former clients as could be found. Madame Slovana, Incorporated, filed for a Chapter Eleven shortly thereafter. In another city, far away from her former stomping grounds, Gertrude Finn became a fairly efficient, if somewhat ill-humored, White Castle manager. She had no further contacts with the supernatural, and died at the age of ninety-seven.

Her enigmatic last words, witnessed by the nursing home's resident doctor, were, "I'm coming for you, Mrs. Metz."

Necromancy

In the world of *WitchCraft*, death is only a state of transition, a move to a new stage of existence. The souls of the deceased, made up of pure Essence, can do many different things. Some Move On beyond the physical world to whatever reward or punishment awaits them. Many are reborn on Earth, their memories of the past deeply buried. And a few remain in the physical world, bodiless but refusing to die, invisible and often weak, but never powerless. The Necromancers are Gifted humans with the power to see, interact with, and even control the spirits of the dead that for one reason or another have remained in the material realm.

Necromancy does not come easily, or without a price. A traumatic event usually creates the link between the Lands of the Living and the Worlds of the Dead. Interestingly enough, many, if not most, Necromancers survived a brush with death early in their lives. Crib death, the strange malady that claims so many young lives, may be related to the creation of a Necromancer, for many of the practitioners of this Art survived the onset of crib death, but were forever marked by the contact. Many occultists have linked some of these deaths to the activities of lesser evil spirits; perhaps the Necromancers are the few with the strength to resist their depredations. As they grow up, they discover that they can see the spirits of the dead, and eventually, they can affect the spirit world in a number of ways.

Necromancy is the most misunderstood of the Arts. The term itself refers to communication with the spirits of the dead, not demon-worshipping, the enslavement

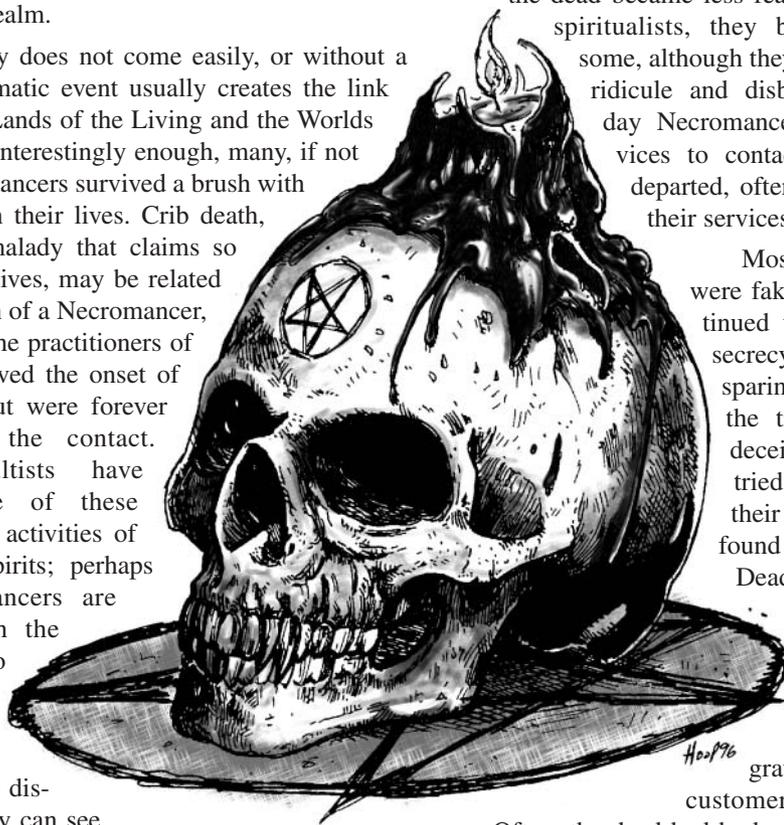
of the undead, or any of the myriad of other superstitions with which the term has been laden over time. In ancient times, Necromancy was used for divination purposes, to learn about the past or the future, to discover secrets from beyond the grave. Due to their dealings with ghosts and spirits, Necromancers were often shunned and feared, even in the cultures that accepted Magic and other Arts. During the Time of the Persecutions, trafficking with spirits was believed to be akin to dealing with demons, and those with the ability were hunted down as witches and devil-worshippers.

More recently, however, those who could contact the dead became less feared. As mediums and spiritualists, they became accepted by some, although they were still exposed to ridicule and disbelief. These modern day Necromancers offered their services to contact the spirits of the departed, often charging money for their services.

Most of these “mediums” were fakes; the real ones continued to operate in relative secrecy, or used their powers sparingly, relying the rest of the time on trickery and deceit. Necromancers who tried to give their clients their money’s worth often found that the World of the Dead is too terrifying for most mundanes.

Even worse, some of the messages they brought back from beyond the grave were not what the customers wanted to hear.

Often, the dead had harbored secret resentments and even hatred for their friends and relatives, and some were only too happy to make them known. Only the charlatans who contrived to tell their clients what they wanted to hear prospered. The rest had to go back into obscurity.



He had his burden to bear, and he bore it gladly. It was, after all, God's Burden.

The wind-swept dust blocked all vision beyond a hundred feet. Paul could barely make out the rest stop and gas station — two buildings on the side of a road that almost nobody used. These buildings offered shelter to the poor unfortunates who found themselves lost in the dust storms that would unexpectedly sweep the highway from time to time.

Paul parked his battered car in front of the two buildings. A sign said *Food and Gas — Last Chance*. Sand-laden winds whipped at his face as he walked towards the diner. The wind was surprisingly cold, making the black trench coat he wore a more appropriate piece of clothing than he had thought.

A bell rang as he entered. There were three people in the diner, all employees — surprising, given how unlikely the place was to attract enough customers to justify so many workers.

A large man, his belly bulging against a dirty apron, was mopping the floor by one of the tables. He strained the mop into a bucket full of reddish water; his eyes were fixed on Paul. Behind a counter, a middle-aged, skinny woman in a faded uniform looked hungrily at the newcomer. Her smile, meant to be welcoming, struck Paul as being nothing but predatory. Standing by the same counter was a girl, perhaps sixteen, attractive in an unkempt way, also in a uniform. She turned toward the kitchen. "Pa!" she shouted. "We got more customers!"

The curt chopping sounds that had been coming from the kitchen stopped for a second. "So take care of 'em, then," said a man in a gruff voice.

Paul's gaze surveyed the diner. He saw the two tables where there was still food, the wet red spots by the tables and the surrounding chairs. It fit; he had noticed two parked cars outside.

The young girl approached him, a menu in one hand, the other holding something behind her back. "Table or bar?" she asked.

"Neither," Paul replied evenly. Something in his voice stopped all three of them. The girl stopped ten feet away, her eyes coldly appraising him. The fat man let the mop drop and stood up, wiping his hands on his apron, leaving bloody trails on the dirty cloth. Paul took a deep breath. There was no doubt in his mind or heart. He was ready.

The woman behind the counter spoke first. "Who the hell are you?"

"I am Retribution," Paul said, reaching into his trench coat.

Things happened very quickly after that.

The girl howled like a wolf and leaped at him, the butcher knife she had been hiding looking incongruously large in her hand. Paul's first shotgun blast caught her in mid-air; he sidestepped the flailing body and fired once more into the back of the girl's head.

Growling incoherently, the fat man slammed into Paul. They fell to the ground in a tangle of arms and legs. The man's mouth opened, much wider than a human face could accommodate. A lolling tongue dangled between huge canines. He tried to bite down on Paul's face.

Paul heaved, feeling the strength of the righteous coursing through his sinews. The fat man sailed through the air, landing with a bone-crushing thud on the bar. His body bowled over the older woman, and the gun she had taken from beneath the counter flew from her hands. Paul picked up the shotgun, brought it to bear.

"Stop, stranger."

The door to the kitchen was open. A man stood on the threshold. His aura glowed darkly, intensely.

"Guns will do you no good," the man said, his voice icy. His eyes were solid red orbs. He gestured behind Paul, where the girl's corpse was beginning to flop about and move, despite the two mortal wounds. "You are nothing, mortal. We will feast on you like we do on all other travelers, and we will laugh over your bones."

Paul let the gun drop. He extended his hands to his sides, palms spread in supplication. "God, give me strength," he whispered.

The monster and his family advanced towards him. The girl was almost at his back; her laugh was distorted and wheezing as she shuffled closer. "Where is your God now, mortal?" the leader of the clan said triumphantly.

The girl who was a corpse grabbed Paul with a blood-drenched hand – and let go, hissing in

agony, her fingers ablaze. The flames spread and consumed her. Paul never turned around, but could tell what was happening by the heat behind him and the horror-stricken look on her family's faces.

"In the Name of the One Who Is Our Father, I cast you out!" Paul shouted. The fat man in the bloody apron exploded in flames. "Get thee behind me!" The older woman tried to run away; she fell after taking two steps, her hair on fire.

The leader did not run or plead. Howling in desperate rage, he attempted to summon flames of his own. Paul countered the evil magicks with the strength of his faith, and the hellfire was extinguished. A torrent of divine flames cascaded upon the murdering monster. As the human-like body writhed under the cleansing fire, Paul felt an immense sense of fulfillment. This must have been what Gabriel felt, as he cast Lucifer down from Heaven in the Lord's name. This must be what Michael shall feel at the end of the last battle.

Paul looked at his handiwork; weariness was beginning to replace the divine exaltation. He still had work to do, finding the remains of the



many victims of these predators, and then hiding his participation from the earthly authorities.

It was a burden, but it was God's burden.

Divine Inspiration

They are the servants of a Higher Power, and in Its name they can work miracles. The Inspired are people whose belief and Faith in an all-powerful divinity somehow allows them to transcend the limits of the flesh. Some argue that it is their belief, and not the existence of an omnipotent God, that fuels their miracles. The fact remains that only people with unshakable beliefs become the Inspired, and their powers last only as long as they know themselves to be fulfilling the purposes of the force they serve.

In the past, the Divinely Inspired have been healers, prophets, teachers and saints. They have been the founders of many religions, and have led exemplary lives. All too often, however, their words and deeds have been twisted after they were gone by others who sought to gain power and wealth. Also, it is easy to fall from grace, and many Inspired have been seduced by pride and greed. The results of that fall are never less than the loss of the connection with the Divine that had given them their amazing abilities.

Sadly enough, most of the Divinely Inspired appearing in the world of *WitchCraft* are not prophets, but war-

Religion in WitchCraft

In the setting of *WitchCraft*, all religions are considered to have an element of truth in their teachings, often distorted by centuries of dogma and misinterpretation. The beliefs of Christians, Pagans, Muslims and others all have a degree of validity, and none should claim supremacy over the rest (although many do). In the old times, different religions accepted the existence of others with tolerance and even a degree of shared belief -- yes, one's gods were considered to be superior, but believers accepted the existence of other gods, and might on occasion adopt a new deity into their pantheon. The rise of monotheism (the belief in One True God) put an end to such tolerance, and all other beliefs were persecuted or eliminated altogether. Some Gifted believe that monotheism and its dominance over the Western world was the result of the actions of the Seraphim (angels) who felt the Creator was not receiving His (or Her) due.

Although most students of Reality agree that there was a single Creative Force, they also affirm that a number of god-like entities of great age and wisdom also exist, and in some cases are more accessible than the omnipotent deity that is apparently far removed from the affairs of humankind. In that way, then, both Pagans and Christians are right -- not that they will ever agree with each other. All the concepts in *WitchCraft* are, of course, fictional, and they do not presume to represent any real "truth." Whether in defining aspects of Christian belief or Pagan dogma, the game is not intending to accurately represent real world doctrines. It is just a game, with a cosmology designed solely to fit the game's needs.

riors. They come forth to do battle with the supernatural forces that are growing in numbers. The time for a Final Battle is fast approaching.





Chapter Three

Roles



HOOP%

"As I will it, so mote it be."

"So mote it be," Garth repeated.

"So mote it be," said Jennifer.

Three was a strong number, but Bonnie did not know if it would be enough. Her two companions looked pale and grim in the candlelight. Less than a block away, the sound of gunfire intensified. The creature that had once been Henry Slaughter continued its rampage. A flurry of shots ended with a scream of pure horror and agony, a scream that was quickly cut off. In her mind's eye, Bonnie could picture the scene: a policeman, perhaps, emptying his gun at the advancing, grinning corpse until it finally reached him and tore him apart with its bare hands. Shaking her head, she continued the chant. They needed to take advantage of the time the cops and other innocents had unwittingly purchased with their lives.

The screams and the gunfire ceased. Did that mean the people in the streets had finally all fled the area, or had Henry killed the last of them? The three witches had managed to escape him in the middle of a crowded street, bustling with nightlife. Frustrated, the creature had attacked the passersby. How many dead, because Bonnie had decided they could not stand up to the monster without a lengthy ritual? Time enough for mourning later, she told herself. She turned her fear into anger, and then subsumed it into a cold determination. The chant intensified its tempo.

A crash, nearby; the three witches had taken refuge in a store whose clerks had fled after hearing the commotion outside. Bonnie knew that the plate glass doors would not withstand Henry's fury. The sound of shattering glass confirmed it. Essence flowed through her, reinforced by the ritual and the circle. Garth and Jennifer jumped to their feet.

"He's coming!" Garth shouted.

Jennifer grabbed the nearest weapon at hand, a broom handle. Silly-looking, but Jennifer was an experienced kendo and bo fighter. She whirled the stick expertly as the walking corpse burst in.

In life, Henry Slaughter had been a medium-sized man, prematurely balding at twenty-six, with a gentle, ordinary face. Nobody had suspected he was responsible for the ritual killing of over a dozen young children. In the end, however, he had gotten cocky and his depredations had been noticed. When the angry mob cornered him, Henry had been mutilated with knives and red-hot irons. His corpse had been buried in a shallow grave by the local sheriff, who had participated in the lynching. Three days later, in a grotesque mockery of the Resurrection, the murderer had risen again.

The creature had not changed much since it clawed its way to the surface of its grave. The animated corpse was still a burned, slashed, decomposed horror. Only now, the blood of its victims covered its arms to the elbow. It grimaced horribly and advanced.

Bonnie unleashed a torrent of Essence towards the monster, as Garth and Jennifer charged forward to confront it physically.

The store became a maelstrom of light and fury, blood and screams.

Introduction

Characters -- Cast Members -- are perhaps the most important building blocks of any story. Without well-defined, compelling characters, the best plot line will fail to attract the reader or viewer's interest. So it is with a roleplaying game. Each player controls a character in the game. In effect, the player is both playing a part and scripting it. Each player makes the decisions for her character, and the Chronicler and the other players come up with the consequences of those decisions. Through the give and take of this process, a Story is created.

This is one of the parts of roleplaying that works most like writing a short story or a script. The player gets to create a fictional persona, someone she would like to portray in a game. This character can be heroic, cowardly, sensitive or silly. The Cast Member's habits, personality and typical behavior are completely in the player's hands. The character can be a carbon copy of the player, or an utterly different person. There are limitations, however. A character must fit the story, or in this case, the game setting. Rambo would be out of place in a Noel Coward play, and he would look silly and unrealistic in a Tom Clancy novel, for example. The scheming, treacherous and complex Iago could not jump from the pages of Othello into a four-color superhero story -- at least not as a main character (he would make a great villain, though).

This is not to say that all characters need to be heroes, or even the white-hat-wearing "good guys." They can be flawed, selfish or misguided. Generally, however, they should be similar to fictional characters in a story: interesting, fun to observe (and play) and, most importantly, crucial in the shaping of the Story, the final goal of any roleplaying game.

The Chronicler will influence the character creation process. Ultimately, it is up to the Chronicler to decide whether or not a given character is appropriate for a campaign. In some cases, she might decide that a character does not fit into the current Story, or might be too powerful (or weak) for the tasks and troubles the Cast is likely to face.

Players should also try to keep in mind that roleplaying is a group activity. Creating a character for the exclusive purpose of dominating the game or hogging the spotlight may be fun for a particular player, but it will ruin everyone else's enjoyment -- and may lead to no games being played by anyone. If the Chronicler disallows a character idea or conception, she probably has a good reason. Respect her judgment.

How to Create a Character

Would-be *WitchCraft* players should be familiar with the setting of the game. *WitchCraft* is a game of occult discovery, mystery, and magic. What type of character appropriate to such a setting would be desirable to play?

The Chronicler should give the players an idea of the specific location and main themes of the game. For example, if the game is to start in a small Maine village dominated by the Wicce, playing an Inspired witch-hunter is probably not a good idea, unless the initial plot line makes it possible (say, a common enemy lurks nearby, forcing an alliance of convenience between the two groups). In some games, the Chronicler may drastically restrict the choices available to players. For example, the basic plot line of many possible games might require that all the characters are members of the same Covenant. Even so, players should not feel they are being forced to play characters with little or no variety. Even within a Covenant, there are many choices and possibilities for different characters.

Some players may feel overwhelmed by too many choices. Although the Unisystem used in *WitchCraft* allows players to create a character fairly quickly, deciding what kind of character to play can take a while. Sometimes it helps if the Chronicler takes the time to help each player with the creation of her character, before the first game is scheduled. If all else fails, the Archetypes (the ones in this book as well as those in future supplements) may help.

Archetypes

For those who wish to jump into the game right away, several Archetypes are available at the end of this chapter. These pre-created characters are almost ready to play. Once given a name, they can be played as is. Otherwise, they may be modified to suit the individual player's tastes. Finally, the templates may be used for inspiration to come up with a separate creation. For those ready to create their own personas from scratch, the remainder of the chapter provides the means to do so.

CHARACTER ELEMENTS

1. **Concept:** What are the character's goals and principles?
2. **Type:** Select from the Gifted, Lesser Gifted, Mundanes and the Bast.
3. **Association:** What group or organization (if any) does the character belong to?
4. **Attributes:** What are the character's natural abilities, both mental and physical?
5. **Qualities and Drawbacks:** What innate advantages or penalties affect the character?
6. **Skills:** What does your character know?
7. **Metaphysics:** What supernatural abilities does the character possess?
8. **Possessions:** What does the character own?

Character Elements

Characters in *WitchCraft* have eight basic elements. Some elements are conceptual (what kind of character is this?), while others are numerical attributes (what are the character's actual abilities?). As players make each selection, they narrow down the possibilities of the character, until they finally have a clearly defined fictional individual ready to play.

The different elements are listed in a sidebar placed nearby, and are discussed in detail in the remainder of the chapter.

Character Concept

First of all, the player should decide what type of character to play. The Character Concept is a brief summary of the character's goals and personality. It also helps to determine the most important parts of the character's story and background. Each Concept has a number of related questions, likely Qualities and Drawbacks, professions (which helps decide which skills the character should know) and Associations. These questions are among the most important steps. By answering them, players can start fleshing out the character before they even start choosing other elements. Players may answer the questions quickly, jotting down short notes on a piece of paper, or may spend more time working through them in detail. Some players may decide to answer them later, as the other character elements are picked.

Coming up with a Character Concept is not indispensable; if a player does not find it helpful, she can always move on to the other creation steps. Also, sometimes it is better to select a Type and Association before moving on to the Concept, or even save the Concept for last. Each player should determine what works best for her.

Common Character Concepts

Listed on the following pages are a few common Character Concepts. Chroniclers and players are encouraged to make up their own. Also, players can pick more than one Concept and mix their questions and suggestions into a unique whole.

Avenge

Someone has wronged you, and now you seek revenge. Your tormentors could have been individuals, or might belong to an organization. In the latter case, you might be seeking revenge against all members of that group. Whatever was done to you (or a loved one) was so horrible that now you are obsessed with the thought of paying your tormentors back.

Defining Questions: Who wronged you? Was it an individual, or a group? What did they do to you? Why did they do it (do you know why, or do you care)? How did the injury or insult affect your life? How are you going to get your revenge? How has your desire for revenge affected your life?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You tend to have an Obsession with the target of your revenge. You make enemies (acquiring the Adversary Drawback), including those you are trying to destroy, any friends or allies of your target, and the authorities, who rarely approve of vigilante justice.

Character Concept Example

Julie is creating a Witchcraft character, Litch. She decides she likes the idea of a grim Avenger type, and starts answering the defining questions.

Who wronged you? Was it an individual, or a group?

Julie decides that the offender in this case was a Vampire. She needs to decide if Litch's grudge is against that particular Vampire, or the entire species of undead. She chooses the individual Vampire as the sole object of her hatred.

What did they do? Why did they do it?

The monster seduced and then murdered the character's mother. Why? Just for the fun, she guesses -- Litch does not know and probably doesn't care!

How did the injury affect your life?

Litch was left with her father, who never recovered from her mother's loss and became cold and distant. At this point, Julie decides that this experience probably left Litch unable to express emotions to others.

How are you going to get your revenge?

Litch was recruited into the Rosicrucians in college; she learned the Art of Magic to be able to find and destroy the monster.

How has your desire for revenge affected your life?

Driven by revenge, Litch has had a disastrous personal life. She has never been good at making friends, and has never had a long-lasting or successful relationship. She spends most of her time honing her body and mind to become the perfect weapon. She is haunted by nightmares that replay her brief vision of the Vampire, leaning over the lifeless body of her mother, blood staining his lips red.

Professions: You may come from any walk of life. Stereotypically, you are a former soldier, police officer, or someone with combat training of some kind. An interesting Avenger type is a previously mild person with a mundane occupation (accountant or teacher, perhaps), who was totally transformed by the crime(s) to be avenged.

Association: You can belong to any Association. Those of you who join the Wicce and Rosicrucians are constrained by the fact that your anger and hatred may work against you (see *Intent and Magic*, p. 199). The Sentinels among you are often guided by anger. In that case, you may be seeking revenge not for yourself, but for your beliefs.

Daredevil

You love to take chances; to you, life without adventure and risks is not worth living. That is why you insist on getting involved in dangerous capers, legal or not, whether you need the money or not. Maybe you crave the rush of adrenaline you feel after surviving yet another mad stunt. Or you may just love the challenge of pitting yourself against dangerous foes or situations.

For you, danger is the spice of life. You may become jaded by previous shocks or experiences, or you may be convinced that you are immortal and can get away with anything. In any case, you can often be as dangerous to others as you are to yourself. One day, you will take one chance too many and pay the ultimate price.

Defining Questions: What turned you into a daredevil? What do you do for thrills (and is it legal)? Would you risk someone you love as well as yourself? Do you always take chances, no matter what the stakes, or do you at least consider the consequences of failure before you jump into danger? Have your stunts gained you any rivals or enemies?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Many of you have a Delusion (“Nothing can happen to me/I am invincible”) worth 2- to 3-points, depending on how far you are willing to test that notion. Note that in the dangerous world of *WitchCraft*, the 3-point Delusion is quite deadly. Most of you gain a reputation that may reflect in positive or negative status, either as a hero or a dangerous lunatic.

Professions: Your typical professions include stunt man, acrobat, cat burglar (for the challenge more than the money), and test pilot (except the brass doesn’t like it when you risk multimillion dollar planes as well as yourself).

Association: Any, but you are usually a Solitaire; most Covenants do not take kindly to risk-takers, especially the Magic Covenants.

Fanatic

You are a True Believer. This may be a religion, or a Cause, or some political ideal, but whatever it is you think it is the most important thing in the world, and you are willing to lay down your life (and, in some cases, the lives of others) to serve your beliefs. Depending on what those beliefs are (and who you ask), you could be considered a dedicated hero or a dangerous madman. Patriots, religious leaders, and visionaries can all be Fanatics. Delusional paranoids also fit the bill. Which one are you?

Defining Questions: What do you believe in? How did you become a follower of this belief or principle? What made you a fanatic (as opposed to a normal follower of this belief)? What do you do to follow this belief in your everyday life?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Zealot is the universal Drawback for you, of course. You often make many enemies (see the Adversary Drawback, p. 73), and fellow fanatics can provide contacts and allies (as per the Contacts Quality, p. 75).

Professions: Some of you are priests of a religion or cult; some have normal professions and occupations and worship or serve your beliefs in private. If you happen to be patriotic, you often serve in the military of the nation you love.

Association: Many of you are Sentinels, although fanatical members of other Covenants are not unknown. Wicce Fanatics include radical environmentalists, while the Rosicrucians occasionally produce ultra-conservatives. The other Covenants do not espouse strong political views, but you could easily be an exception to the general rule.

Forsaken

You have lost everything and nobody cares about you -- or at least you think so. Maybe you ran away from home or are an orphan. Perhaps you committed a crime so heinous that all your friends and loved ones turned away from you, or perhaps you were falsely accused of such a crime. You could belong to a group or society that is despised by the mainstream, or could be afflicted by a severe problem or disease that makes you undesirable or contemptible in the eyes of others. This might not be your fault, yet the effect is the same: you are alone, an outcast.

You usually have few friends but you are very loyal to those who would befriend you. You might be bitter toward the world that has rejected you, or you might blame yourself and be consumed by self-loathing. Among you are runaways, prostitutes, the homeless, and people with unconventional lifestyles (punk, gay, gothic, and similar fringe or underground groups).

Unlike the Weird Ones, your behavior or history make most people react negatively to you. While a typical Weird One inspires puzzlement and maybe a little fear, you attract repugnance and contempt. Whether or not you have earned such feelings is up to each individual character story and is left to the player and Chronicler, of course.

Defining Questions: What made you an outcast? Was it something you did (or people think you did), or just who you are or what group or minority you belong to? Why isn't your family on your side? Do you even have a family, and, if not, what happened to them? How do you feel about being Forsaken? Do you return society's contempt with your own, or do you wish you could change?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You usually have very low Social Levels and Resources. Many of you are Addicts or suffer from such mental Drawbacks as Delusions, Emotional Problems or Paranoia. Some have Contacts among other people who find themselves on the fringes of society.

Professions: You generally work in marginal jobs, either low paying (like busboy at a low-rent diner) or illegal (panhandling, prostitution, petty theft).

Association: Forsaken characters are not common in most of the Covenants depicted in this book, except for the Solitaires. Some Wicce in intolerant regions are likely to find themselves ostracized from their communities, however.

Fugitive

They are after you. "They" could be anybody -- the authorities, the Mafia, the Combine, or the reanimated body of someone you did wrong, come back for some beyond-the-grave payback. Whoever They are, you know you don't want Them to catch you. To avoid getting caught, you may be on the run, wandering from place to place, never staying anywhere for too long, or you could be in hiding, maybe under a false identity -- one you might have used for years, living a lie while still looking over your shoulder. You could be guilty of whatever you are wanted for, and are avoiding your just punishment, or you are innocent and are trying to prove your innocence while staying one step ahead of your pursuers.

Defining Questions: Who is pursuing you, and why? Did you do something to deserve the pursuit, or were you falsely accused? What are you doing to escape pursuit (running, hiding or both)? Do the people around you (friends and companions) know of your plight? Did they take you in or accompany you anyway? If you were framed, who framed you (if you know)? What are you doing to prove your innocence (if anything)?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Your pursuers are, or will become, Adversaries. Generally on the run, you probably have very low Resources and Social Status. Those of you who are pretending to be someone else have a Secret instead of an Adversary. Most of you end up developing the Paranoia Drawback.

Professions: Any.

Association: You are most likely a Solitaire -- membership in a Covenant almost guarantees some measure of protection from the outside world. Exceptions are not unknown, however: you might have made enemies that the Covenant cannot easily handle, like the FBI or the Combine. Another, more ominous possibility could be that you are being persecuted by your (former) Covenant, for some reason or another.

Reluctant Hero

All you wanted was a normal life, but Fate had other things in store for you. Time and time again, you were faced with danger. Somehow, you actually came through and did a good job at it, but now people are expecting similar acts of heroism from you. And you have the feeling that, instead of running away like a sensible person, you will do something really stupid like getting involved once again.

You are someone who finds yourself doing the right thing despite what common sense and your sense of self-preservation tell you. Many of you are Gifted. You do not seek danger, but trouble seems to follow you wherever you go. Although you often hate doing it, you end up doing the right and heroic thing -- and then complain about it afterwards.

Defining Questions: If you hadn't been dragged into unusual adventures, what would you do with your life? What turned your life around and forced you to become a hero? How did the incident affect your life?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Some of you have the Clown Drawback, and jokingly demean your actions and the dangers of the situation. Many of you have an Honorable Quality that forces you to help others.

Professions: Any, although most of you have fairly safe and boring occupations. Circumstances, not your jobs, force you into dangerous situations.

Association: Any. Your types are fairly common among the Cabal of Psyche and the Rosicrucians, groups who do not encourage their members to get involved in other people's affairs but whose members often end up taking action anyway. You are rare but not unknown among the Sentinels and the Wicce, who are more committed to action.

Scoundrel

You are always looking out for number one, always ready to lie, cheat or steal. Even when you do the right thing, you often try to squeeze out some profit or benefit for yourself. You may or may not exploit your friends, but strangers are almost always fair

game. This doesn't mean that you are wholly evil -- sometimes you act with perfectly good intentions, but your path always seems to lead to trouble. You can be humorously incompetent, or coldly efficient. Many of you are con men, gifted with charm and a good eye for human weakness. Even when fighting for a good cause, your methods are often questionable.

Keep in mind that using this Character Concept does not necessarily excuse acting against the interests of other Cast Members. You do have friends and allies that you would not betray. Furthermore, even a villainous or weasel-like character like you will not foolishly endanger your position (or your life) by incurring the wrath of powerful companions. If you needlessly provoke others, you will not be protected from the consequences of your actions.

Defining Questions: What made you into a scoundrel? Were you deprived as a child, making you desperate to accumulate wealth and fortune? What do you want to acquire -- money, power or knowledge -- and how far will you go to acquire it? Do you seek to exploit everyone around you, or do you have some limits? Would you betray a friend for a large enough reward, or do you save your dirty tricks for strangers or your enemies?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Most commonly, you are Covetous. Those among you who are successful may have high Resource levels, but you are usually relatively poor and hungry (which motivates you to do anything to get ahead).

Professions: You often belong to illegal or quasi-legal professions, such as confidence man or thief. Sometimes, you belong to mainstream professions, but tend to stick to the seedier aspects, such as ambulance-chaser lawyer or used car salesman. You often exaggerate your knowledge and power to impress and exploit the gullible.

Association: You are rarely found among the Wicce and Sentinels, as their moral code precludes your type of behavior. Most of you are Solitaires. On rare occasions, you might be a Rosicrucians (if you are power-hungry).



Seeker of Knowledge

You want to know the Truth. You hate to be kept in the dark about anything, and your goal in life is to accumulate as much knowledge about as many things as you can. In the course of your activities, you have discovered that there are many groups or individuals who wish to hide what you are trying to uncover, and that these people will go to great lengths to protect their secrets. You do not care, and continue searching for answers despite the risks.

You typically are students of the occult, magicians, and investigators. You want to discover the secrets of magic and the supernatural. You may be trying to explain the supernatural in scientific terms, or may be accumulating occult lore for its own sake. Insatiably curious, you will risk almost anything in order to make yet another discovery.

Defining Questions: What knowledge do you seek? How did you become interested in the search? What do you hope to achieve? How are you trying to gain more knowledge? Is anybody interfering with your research or investigations? What have you discovered so far, and how much further do you wish to go? How does your search for knowledge affect your everyday life?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Many of you are obsessed with your quest for the truth. Some of you may be suffering from Delusions or Emotional Problems caused by your constant search. Those of you who threaten the secrets of powerful, hidden organizations may end up gaining powerful Adversaries.

Professions: You often find yourself living as a scholar, occultist, private investigator, journalist, or conspiracy theorist.

Association: You and your kind are most commonly found among the Twilight Order and the Rosicrucian Covenants, due to the simple fact that they attract students and would-be sages. All the other Covenants also hold secret knowledge that would certainly attract your interest, however.

Student

You have embarked on a quest for knowledge. Unlike the Seeker of Knowledge, you have begun only recently and are just now being initiated in the ways you have chosen to follow. Whether you are a budding martial artist advancing in rank, or a graduate student of archeology being introduced to forbidden knowledge, you are eager to learn and perhaps a little too impatient. Sometimes you think you are more powerful and learned than you really are, which may lead to serious trouble.

You must always have a teacher. You may be a new member of a Covenant, being introduced to the mysteries of the Gifted, or you may have been taken under the wing of a Solitaire practitioner. The teacher can be helping you out of sheer altruism, or may demand a heavy price (typically in services rather than money) for her knowledge.

Defining Questions: What made you interested in learning the secret arts? Does curiosity or ambition motivate you? Who are your teachers? How did you come to be their student?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Depending on your motivations and previous histories, you may have a wide variety of Qualities and Drawbacks. Some of you are Covetous, being motivated by the desire for power. You might also be Obsessed with the desire for knowledge. You generally have low or average Resource levels, but your school or teacher counts as a Contact.

Professions: Since you must spend most of your time pursuing your vocation, you largely work at part-time jobs, and can be anything from a librarian to a waiter to a bouncer. Sometimes your school employs you in any number of capacities.

Association: Any Association is possible, although you work best with the Rosicrucians and the Twilight Order, which have more formalized teacher-student traditions. The Wicce train young Gifted like you to master your abilities, but they place less focus on hierarchy and advancement. Some Covens even prefer that you develop your own styles of magic on your own. This usually does not suit your type.

Survivor

You have lived through horror and tragedy. Whether you endured life with an abusive family, were victimized by a crime or accident, or underwent some devastating trauma, you were able to endure and carry on. Your experiences have affected your life; in some ways, you are a far stronger person, but you still carry the scars (physical or psychological) of your ordeal.

In *WitchCraft*, many of you have been affected by a supernatural event or experience. You might have been raised by a dark cult and tormented in your youth, or you might be the lone survivor of a massacre at a summer camp. As a result of the event, you are now aware that there are many horrors lurking beneath our everyday “reality.” Your motivations should be strongly linked to the event or situation that marked your life. You may be trying to make sure the situation does not happen to anybody else, or might be seeking revenge (in which case this concept could be combined with the Avenger one).

Defining Questions: What was the experience you survived? How long ago did it happen? How did you escape or endure the situation? Who else (if anybody) was affected by the experience? How has the experience affected the rest of your life? Are you a stronger person as a result? What do you want to do about it (if anything)? Is there any chance a similar (or worse) experience will happen to you in the near future?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You might have almost any Mental Drawback, from Recurring Nightmares to Emotional Problems and Delusions.

Professions: Any.

Association: Your type can be found in any Covenant. As a Wicce character, you may have undergone your ordeal in the course of their Covenant activities. As a Sentinel, you might have been recruited because you were victimized by the supernatural. As a Twilight Order survivor, you might have undergone a near-death experience. These are just some of any number of examples.

Wanderer

You are a modern day nomad, never staying in one place for too long, never settling down. You eventually find an excuse to move on. Maybe you are afraid of the responsibility of committing to one place and the people in it, or perhaps you feel there is something better waiting for you in the next city. You might just be driven by the desire to see new things. Unlike the Fugitive, you are motivated by your own inner demons or yearnings. Like many nomads, you may have a “circuit” of places you visit periodically so that anybody who knows you will have an idea of where you’ll be at a given time of the year. Alternatively, you may wander at random, rarely returning to the places you previously visited.

You tend to travel through countries or continents. You may wander around in a vehicle, on foot, or by relying on the kindness of strangers. The remote roads of *WitchCraft*’s America are dangerous places, and you have to be quite adept at a number of mystical and mundane skills if you hope to survive. Nomads like you, especially those that choose the roads less traveled, often find signs of the Reckoning in small towns and on lonely trails, haunting the wilderness or hiding in the underbelly of the cities.

Your type works best for short Stories where you arrive in a locale, deal with whatever conflict exists there (working with local Cast Members), and then move on. You could also participate in Stories where all the characters are also on the move for their own reasons (the other Cast Members could also be Wanderers, Fugitives, or Seekers). On the other hand, you might decide to stay in one place for an indefinite period of time if there is a compelling reason for it (i.e., for the duration of a Story).

Defining Questions: What made you choose your nomadic lifestyle? Do you have a destination (real or imagined) in mind? What is your preferred mode of transportation? How do you make a living as you travel? Do you stick to a regular route, going back and forth between a string of destinations, or do you wander aimlessly, always going to a different place? Do you make friends in your travels, and do you ever return and visit them? What are your favorite places to visit whenever you arrive at a new destination?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You are sometimes motivated by a negative mental trait such as an Obsession or Emotional Problem. You usually do not have much in the way of Resources. At best, you might own a vehicle and whatever you can carry in it. If you follow a specific path back and forth, you often have Contacts (and Adversaries) at some of your customary stopping points.

Professions: Most “ordinary” jobs are difficult to perform if you do not have a permanent address, so you tend to stick to temporary work. You usually stay in one place only long enough to earn enough money to move on. You might play guitar at a club in one town, and pick fruit at the next.

Association: You are generally, by your very nature, Solitaires, and owe no allegiance to any one Covenant. Among the Wicce, however, a growing number of young Gifted members have become like you and decided to explore the world, looking for signs of the Reckoning. As a wandering Wicce, you travel alone or in small groups searching for supernatural outbreaks and putting a stop to them.

Warrior

Your life revolves around strife and conflict, and you plan to win every time. You may hate yourself for it, but you never feel more alive than when you are in combat, doing what you do best, meeting a worthy foe and coming out on top. You may care about the cost of war, about the butcher's bill that must be paid, but that does not prevent you from doing what needs to be done. You might be a nice person most of the time, but if you are put into a situation where it's kill or be killed, you become a lethal, remorseless fighter.

You can be a veteran of a war (or, in the world of *WitchCraft*, the reincarnation of a veteran from many wars throughout history!) who has acquired a taste for battle in addition to the skills to fight in one. You may be reluctant to get into a fight, but once you are in one, you plan to see it through.

Defining Questions: Where did you first see combat? Where and how were you trained? When did you discover that you enjoyed fighting? What do you do now? Do you go out of your way to seek fights, or do you prefer to avoid violence except when necessary?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Most of you have Situational Awareness, Fast Reaction Time, Hard to Kill and other physical and combat-oriented Qualities. Some of you may have Mental Drawbacks as a result of your exposure to the horrors of war.

Professions: Many of you serve as soldiers, bodyguards, and martial artists.

Association: Many if not most Sentinels are Warriors (or Warrior-Fanatics), and all Covenants have need for those who are willing and able to fight. You will rarely hold high ranks among the Rosicrucians, the Twilight Order and the Cabal of Psyche, however, and among the Wicce your kind are tolerated but rarely loved.

Weird One

You do not belong in normal society. Maybe it's just how you look -- maybe you dress funny, or are overly fond of tattoos and body piercing, or deliberately flaunt fashion. More likely, it's how you act. Maybe you have beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that strike others as odd or disturbing. They may think you are crazy -- and they may be right.

In the world of *WitchCraft*, many of you are Gifted. Being raised by a Wicce family, believing that magic and spirits exist would certainly qualify you for the scorn and disbelief of society as a whole. The fact that in the world of *WitchCraft* all those things do exist does nothing to disqualify you from being "weird." You may no longer care about conforming to social rules of behavior, or may have been so deeply traumatized, you are not able to follow those rules.

Defining Questions: What makes you different from the rest of the world? Did you choose to be different, or is the way you were raised by your parents (or adoptive parents, or wolves in the jungle) what makes you unusual? Do you want to be accepted and cannot help being weird, or do you revel in your strangeness and rub it in other people's faces? How do "normal" people react to you?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Mental and Social Drawbacks may be common among your type.

Professions: You generally work as something unusual, like undertaker, or something artistic, like freeform poet or tattoo artist.

Association: Many of you are Solitaires, but the Rosicrucians have their share of eccentrics. Any public worshipper of the Old Religions (like the beliefs of the Wicce and the Twilight Order) is likely to be regarded as "odd" -- although, for that matter, so might a strict Christian in many areas of the world.

Character Type

The Character Type determines the general combination of physical and/or mystical abilities of a character. In the Unisystem, the Attributes and traits of a character are established by allocating a number of points. In essence, the player “buys” the levels in Attributes, Qualities and skills she wants. Since the player only has a limited number of points to “buy” things with, she has to make choices. For example, if the player makes a character too strong, there may not be enough points left to buy a high Intelligence.

The Character Type defines how many points may be spent on each character component. The various components for which points are allocated are Attributes, Qualities (and Drawbacks), Skills and Metaphysics. These components are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Four Character Types are presented in this book. Most characters are Gifted (with full-fledged supernatural powers) or Lesser Gifted (with better skills and Attributes but lower special abilities). Mundane characters are given a number of points to spend on normal Attributes and skills, but have no supernatural abilities. Mundanes may be at a disadvantage in most games, but can make for interesting characters, supplementing mystical knowledge with extensive mundane know-how. The Bast are feline shapeshifters, and the most supernatural of the Character Types.

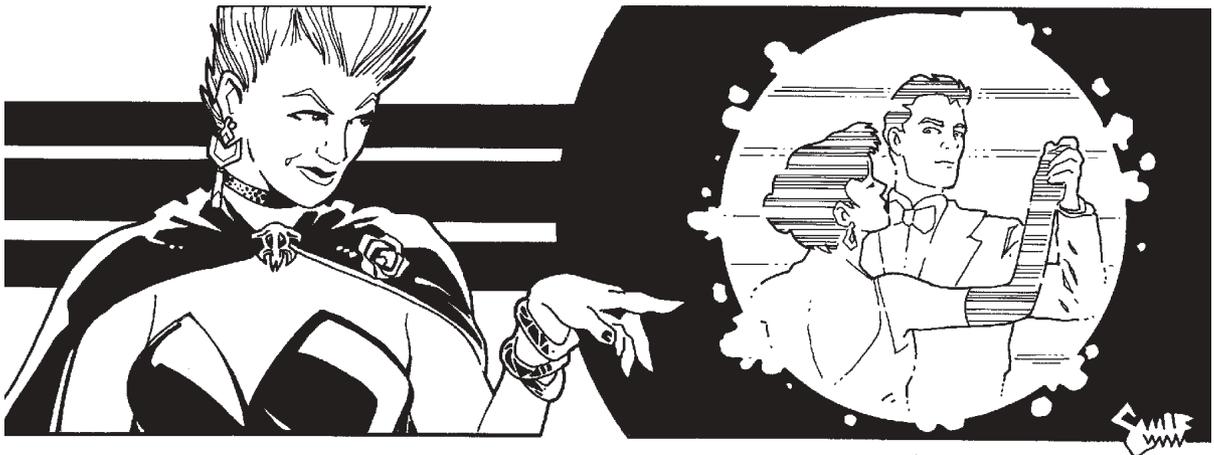
The Gifted

“We can see what others can’t, and perform impossible feats. But it is no blessing, I’m afraid, for what we see is often horrible to behold, and we must perform impossible feats just to stay alive!”

The Gifted have special powers and senses, and they spend much of their time and energy honing those special abilities. For this reason, they get the largest amount of points to purchase Metaphysics, special powers and abilities. Being the Gifted has advantages and disadvantages. They are the most powerful characters in supernatural terms, but their very powers make them easily noticed and targeted by supernatural predators, other Gifted, and mundane enemies.

Also, the Gifted are the most likely to be dragged along by the currents of Fate. Strange events seem to happen around them with disturbing frequency, and they often find themselves in dangerous and unusual situations, usually ruining any chance of leading a normal life.

Gifted characters get 15 points to distribute among Attributes, 10 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 25 points for Skills and 30 points for Metaphysics. For obvious reasons, the Gifted must purchase the Gift Quality (see p. 86). The Gift is what defines them, and is the basic prerequisite for their other metaphysical abilities.





Lesser Gifted

"I don't like to rely on all that mumbo-jumbo stuff. If I need to contact somebody, I use the telephone. Who needs spells? Sometimes, though, you need more than guns and phones and cars to survive, and I've got just a little edge I save for those occasions."

The Lesser Gifted are characters with only a touch of supernatural power. To make up for their lower occult abilities, Cast Members who select this Type are more accomplished in other areas. Although they are weaker in the area of Metaphysics, the Lesser Gifted have higher Attributes and skills than their more supernaturally-adept counterparts. This is for game balance only. The "run of the mill" Lesser Gifted character would have Attributes and skills no better than the human average.

These characters are less likely to attract the attention of supernatural beings except when they actually use their special abilities. They have a better chance of living a relatively peaceful existence, although their powers will often lead them into trouble.

The Lesser Gifted start out with 20 points for Attributes, 15 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 30 points for Skills and 15 points for Metaphysics. The Lesser Gifted must buy the Gift Quality (see p. 86).

Mundanes

"I don't know what is going on, and I don't care. I'm sure there is a logical explanation for this, but for now I'll humor you -- you seem to know how to avoid getting killed, even if what you say is crazy."

Mundanes have no supernatural skills whatsoever. They may find themselves disadvantaged in the world of *WitchCraft*, because they lack the ability to face (and in some cases even perceive) many of the dangers that hide beneath the shadows of reality. Mundane Cast Members should be extraordinary individuals (perhaps with a few Attributes near or at the human maximum), whose great physical or mental prowess allows them to be of assistance to their Gifted allies and friends.

Mundanes start out with 25 points for Attributes, 20 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks) and 35 points for Skills. They get no points to buy Metaphysics (and cannot buy any with extra points gained from Drawbacks), nor can they purchase many of the Supernatural Qualities.

The Bast -- Feline Shapeshifters

"We are neither human nor animal nor spirit. We were created by ancient Egyptian magic, and we only show ourselves to those humans who earn our trust. Like the cats who give us our shape, we like the companionship of humans -- but not their rule."

The Bast are an ancient species of intelligent felines, a mating of elemental spirits and the bodies of normal cats. After migrating to Europe, many Bast became friends and allies of the Wicce, and were persecuted as "demonic familiars" and murdered along with thousands of normal cats.

There are two types of Bast. Common Bast are bound in the shape of a cat, generally an unusually large feline, and can only communicate through telepathic means. The High Bast can assume a human form for short periods of time. These beings were once the rulers of the Bast, although now they have no special rank or status among their kind.

The Bast start out with 15 points in Attributes, 10 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 30 points in Skills, and 25 points in Metaphysics. All Bast must purchase the Gift Quality, and High Bast must also buy the Quality of that name (for 5 Quality or Metaphysics points). The Bast have a number of special abilities and powers.

Creating the Bast

The Bast have a number of special advantages and disadvantages related to their unique characteristics.

Attributes: Attributes should be purchased normally at first. After that, some modifiers (bonuses and penalties) are added to the Attributes purchased.

In cat form, the Bast have the following modifiers to their Attributes: Strength -2 (the maximum Strength allowed is 2), and Dexterity +3. For example, if a player spent 3 points to buy a Strength 3 for her Bast character, the cat form would only have a Strength of 1 (the level 3 purchased is reduced by 2 levels). Further, if the player spent 2 points to buy a Dexterity of 2, the cat form would have a Dexterity of 5 (the 2 bought initially, plus the +3 bonus).

The High Bast can become human for short periods. While in human shape, Bast have +1 to Strength and +2 to Dexterity. Apply this modifier to the Strength and Dexterity that were originally bought.



Extending the example, the originally purchased Strength 3 and Dexterity 2 would result in a total Strength of 4 and Dexterity of 4 in human form. The final two levels listed on the character sheet would read Strength 1 and Dexterity 5 (in cat form) and Strength 4 and Dexterity 4 (in human form).

Secondary Attributes: Life Points, Endurance Points and Speed are calculated normally, but each form has a different value, based on that form's Attributes. The Bast's Essence Pool is equal to the sum of her Attributes in the feline form. This number does not change for High Basts in human form.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Being a Common Bast costs nothing, but the Gift Quality must be purchased. The more powerful High Bast must additionally purchase the 5-point Quality of the same name. Due to their feline natures, some Bast are Cruel and Lazy. Since they can "live off the countryside," low Resource levels are meaningless to the Bast. Characters get no extra points from negative Resource levels.

Skills: Bast have a limited array of skills available. As a guideline, any skill that requires the use of hands and fingers (especially opposable thumbs) is off-limits to the Common Bast. Even the High Bast have a difficult time learning such skills as Driving and using weapons. Such skills are learned as Special Skills, at a higher point cost. The only exceptions are Brawl and Martial Arts. The Bast have their own system of fighting with their hands and natural weapons, and these skills are learned normally.

Association: The Bast can select any Association that a human character can. Most Bast are Wicce or Solitaires, but a few have joined other Covenants.

Sample Character

A BAST CHARACTER ARCHETYPE is among those depicted at the end of this chapter. The template may serve as a model for player characters, or as inspiration to create something different.

Bast Powers

Some of these Powers are common to all the Bast, while others must be purchased with Metaphysics points or are restricted to only the High Bast.

Human Form: A High Bast can change into a human being by spending 1 Essence Point for every ten minutes of transformation; this Essence is not regained until the character returns to her natural, feline form. Each Bast only has one human shape, which often reflects the breed of the cat. Some Calico Bast, for example, have hair with reddish, white and gray or black strands -- most people simply assume they had an unconventional dye job.

While in human form, High Basts have limited control over their body. When angered or scared, their eyes become vertically-oriented cat's eyes, and they can grow claws and fangs. The Bast's claws inflict D4(2) x Strength points of slashing damage.

Linked Items: High Bast have the power to imbue items with Essence, forging a mystic link that allows them to "carry over" those items during a transformation. Clothing is the most commonly linked item. When the High Bast assumes human form, the character appears with any such items on his person. The link requires an Essence expenditure of 1 point per pound of weight of the item; this Essence cannot be regained until the object is destroyed or the Bast severs the link. Only things that can be carried (including backpacks, holster, and so on) can be linked.

Mental Speech: All the Bast can communicate telepathically. This power has a range of 20 yards (meters) per Willpower level, and allows the Bast to "speak" with thoughts and to "hear" any response. This power does not allow the Bast to read minds.

Magical Abilities: Both the Bast and High Bast can acquire Essence Channeling and learn Invocations, simply by spending the requisite character points. Unlike normal Magicians, the Bast learn Invocations through a process of mystical revelation. They gain powers by consulting with the Collective Mind of the Bast (often referred to as the Goddess Bast). In game terms, the Bast can learn new Invocations simply by spending earned experience points. They do not need to find a teacher.



Other Metaphysics: The Bast can acquire any Gifted powers except Divine Inspiration by buying them during character creation. There are Bast Seers and Necromancers as well as Magicians.

Reincarnation: All Bast can survive the death of their bodies. If their feline body is killed, their Essence is freed and can survive in incorporeal form for a while. Although they lose an Essence point per day during that time, the Bast have all the powers of a normal animal spirit (see p. 258). The Bast's spirit homes in on the nearest female cat about to give birth, and reincarnates in the new body. The Chronicler may rule that reincarnation takes place too far away for the Bast character to rejoin the group for any given adventure.

Furthermore, while in kitten form, a Bast has no memories of her previous existence, and does not become self-aware until she is two months old. Since many kittens die before that time, a Bast may spend years jumping from body to body until one of her reincarnations finally matures. After that, she remembers everything she has experienced. In game terms, Bast cannot acquire the Old Soul Quality, but they can purchase levels of the Age Quality. Unlike humans, the Bast do not forget their previous existence; it is believed that some of the original Egyptian Bast still dwell on the Earth, thousands of years old and extremely wise and powerful. Beginning characters are assumed to have the same age range as humans, unless the Age Quality is purchased.

Roleplaying the Bast

The Bast are played best by cat lovers. A character can be based on a favorite pet. The Bast behave much like normal cats. Bast often project a sense of placid confidence about their place in the world. When they goof up, they act as if nothing had happened, or better yet, as if they had intended to goof up. When resting, many stretch out in silly poses. When they look at you affectionately, they do so through half-closed eyes. When happy, their tails are pointed upwards; when worried or scared, their ears flatten against their heads; when annoyed, their tails swish.

Optional Skill Point Generation System

The basic skill point generation system allocates Skill category points depending on the Character Type chosen. This optional method takes into account the character's age, intelligence and social background. This system tends to give characters more Skill points, but is a bit more elaborate and time-consuming. If the players and Chronicler decide to adopt the optional system, drop the Skill point allocations from all the Character Types discussed previously, and use the following formula.

Character Type: Gifted and Bast characters get 15 points.
Lesser Gifted get 20 and Mundanes 25 points.

Intelligence: 3 points per level of the character's Intelligence Attribute.
Characters with 0 Intelligence or less get only one point.

Age: Starting characters are assumed to be 18-30 years old (player's discretion). Younger characters subtract 5 points from their total Skill points. Every 10 years after 30, characters add 5 Skill points but subtract 2 levels from Attributes (these subtractions can be taken from any Attribute).

For example, Jory's character is a 50-year old Mundane detective with an Intelligence of 5. His base Skill points are 25, and with his high intelligence he gets an additional 15 points. Due to his age, the character has an extra 10 points to put into skills, but he loses 4 attribute levels. Although he originally had Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Constitution 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, and Willpower 5, Jory decides to reduce the character's Strength to 2, his Perception to 4 and his Willpower to 4. He has a total of 50 Skill points.

Characters with supernatural longevity (see the Age Quality) get a flat 5 Skill point bonus but no Attribute reductions, then add the bonuses of the Age Quality.

Social Level or Resources: Characters with a positive Social Level or Resources take the highest level in either of those qualities and add 1 Skill point per level.

Characters with Resources of 0 or below do not get a bonus or penalty.

Campaign Level: Pre-Heroic campaigns give 5 points to Mundane, 3 points to Lesser Gifted, and 2 points to Gifted. Heroic campaigns grant 10 points to Mundanes, 7 points to Lesser Gifted, and 5 points to Gifted/Bast. Legendary campaigns provide 15 points for Mundanes, 10 points for Lesser Gifted, and 7 points for Gifted/Bast (see Campaign Levels, p. 292).

For example, Grygori is a 23-year old Mundane with Intelligence 3, Resources 1, in a Heroic game. He gets 25 points for being a Mundane, 9 points for Intelligence, 0 points for age, 1 point for Status and 10 points for the campaign level, for a total of 45 Skill points. His Gifted ally, Fatima, is 40 years old, with an Intelligence of 4 and average Status and Resources. She would get 15 points for being Gifted, 12 points for her Intelligence, 5 points for her age, 0 points for Resources, and 5 points for the campaign level, for a total of 37 Skill points. Fatima also has to decrease 1 or more of her Attributes by 2 levels in total due to the depredations of age.

Character Associations

In the world of *WitchCraft*, the mystical organization (commonly known as a Covenant) that a character is associated with determines much of what that character knows. A Covenant is not mandatory; the Solitaires are a “Covenant” made up of independent Gifted and Mundane characters who have no real Association. Cast Members who do not want to belong to any Covenant are considered to be Solitaires automatically.

A character’s Association is useful in helping to determine background and education. It also gives some ideas as to appropriate Qualities and Drawbacks, skills, and professions. An Association is not meant to be restrictive, however. There is a great deal of variety within each Association, and there is no need to stick to the stereotypes described below. For example, not every Rosicrucian grew up in a pampered home, and not every Wicce was raised by a Wicce-oriented family. Some players may have fun twisting the stereotypes, like creating a Rosicrucian who was raised in the worst slums of a city and joined the Covenant due to her great power and skill (and who may be resented by other Rosicrucians because of it).

Described below are six Associations, including the “catch-all” Solitaires. The descriptions are brief and include only the most basic knowledge about the Association. Each Association is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five: Associations. Chroniclers who wish to have their players discover facts about their Associations as they learn about the world of *WitchCraft* should limit their players to the material presented here. Otherwise, players and Chroniclers alike may review this information and the slightly redundant, but more expansive, text of Chapter Five.

Wicce

“We know the secrets of the Old Religion. We were almost destroyed by the ignorance and fear of the Mundanes, but now we must protect our former tormentors from destruction. The Sacred Balance is being disrupted, and only we can set it right.”

-- Magda O’Brien, High Lady of the Northeast Territories

“A storm is coming, my friends. Our visions do not lie. Our duties to Diana and Cerunnos demand action. More and more of us are being born with the Gift. We who practice the Wise Craft have the power to change the world; let us not be lacking in courage or initiative to do so.”

-- Audrey Ferguson, Coven Leader

Description: The Wicce are the real “witches” of myth and legend. Among their number are Magicians, Seers and Mediums, and theirs is an ancient magical tradition that has endured for thousands of years. Rebels, questioners and healers, the Wicce are firm believers in balance: for every action there is a reaction or consequence, and no one should do anything if she is not prepared to face the consequences.



Wicce characters often belong to a family line of witches; the secrets of magic are traditionally passed from parent to sibling, usually at the age of maturity. The actual age of maturity varies widely, from fourteen to twenty-one, depending on the tradition of the particular family. While growing up, young Wicce children are taught the rudiments of Pagan beliefs, but are seldom instructed in any magical practices.

Typical Wicce characters grow up in unconventional settings. Even before learning of the power of magic, they are raised to venerate nature, to question things, and to be responsible and self-reliant. At the age of maturity, they are trained in the ways of magic if they have the potential to do so. Not everyone has the natural ability to channel Essence, even amongst ancient witch bloodlines. Most Wicce are Lesser Gifted who share the beliefs and philosophy of the Covenant, and who assist their Gifted brethren in any way they can. Most “Mundane” Wicce are also considered to be Lesser Gifted, because they know some Magical Rituals and Invocations. This knowledge allows even those without the ability to channel Essence to work Magic, although weakly and with unpredictable results. A few have no knowledge of Magic, and simply share the beliefs of the Wicce. These characters should be created as per the Mundane Character Type.

Attributes: Many Wicce live close to Nature, in farms or small towns or villages, so they tend to lead fairly healthy lives, with average or above average physical Attributes, and good mental Attributes. Any combination is likely.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Although they sometimes use their powers to help provide for their needs, the Wicce are cautioned against being too greedy. Wealth levels tend to be average or a little above average. Those who are known to practice strange rituals and magic may have a negative reputation. Unbelievers may persecute known Wicce, believing them to be Satanists and worse; also, the Wicce who become involved in investigating or preventing the Time of Reckoning will make enemies among supernatural creatures (see the Adversary Drawback, p. 73). Also, many Wicce are Honorable, with a code of honor that requires them to get involved when they believe they can help others (a 2-point Drawback, p.

79). Gifted Wicce will have a large amount of personal Essence; many are also Old Souls, the result of multiple reincarnations.

Skills: The skills of the Wicce vary with their background and profession. Occult Knowledge is common, as are outdoor-oriented skills. Many Wicce will have a knowledge of medicine, if only First Aid or herbal medicine. All members of the Covenant must purchase some level of the Rituals (Wicce) Skill. Thus, even Mundane Wicce can participate in magical ceremonies and add their Essence to them. Further, Wicce must purchase some level of the Humanities (Wicce Theology) Skill.

Metaphysics: To the Wicce, all the Arts are worth studying and mastering. A member of this Covenant is as likely to be learned in Magic as in Necromancy. Wicce with the Sight are also very common. Most Gifted Wicce have two to four beginning Invocations, including Blessing, Curse and Insight (at least two of the three will be taught to all beginning Wicce). Seer Powers and Necromancy are also not unknown among the Wicce. Most Wicce are Lesser Gifted; they may know a few rituals or Invocations, but they cannot work Magic without much effort and difficulty.

Special Abilities: The Wicce receive a bonus of +2 on all Invocation Tasks involving defensive powers and abilities. Furthermore, any Magical attack against a Wicce practitioner is more likely to backlash against the attacker. Dismissal rolls by the attacker are at a -2 penalty, and the backlash always affects the aggressor!

Common Professions: Some Wicce prefer quiet lives in farming and other pastoral occupations. Many are healers; they include conventional doctors, nurses and physical therapists, as well as non-conventional healers (herbalists, acupuncturists and so on). Like many Neo-Pagans, the Wicce enjoy getting involved in high-tech professions such as computer programming, engineering, and aeronautics. Their individualistic natures make them unlikely to work in corporations or for large companies, however; most Wicce prefer to work on a freelance basis or own small companies, making their own hours and being their own bosses. For the most part, the Wicce do not make a living by using their magical abilities, both to avoid

publicity and because the Craft is not meant to be used for selfish purposes. A small number do earn some money by writing books on the subject of the occult; most of these “public” witches are among the least knowledgeable of the Wicce, and many are frauds; their writings are sometimes misleading or inaccurate. Wandering Wicce prefer unorthodox professions; in cities, they can be found working as bouncers, exotic dancers, and private investigators, as well as social workers, journalists and paramedics. Whatever their actual professions, the Wicce are always alert to signs of trouble (both mundane and supernatural) and often get involved and try to deal with those situations.

Roleplaying the Wicce: You have been taught to turn a questioning eye towards most things, even the teachings of the Wicce themselves. You love Nature, but you are not one of those wild-eyed fools who see any death as wrong and immoral. Death is a part of the Order of Things, and killing for food is as natural for humans as it is for wolves. It is the indiscriminate acts of killing and destruction, the urge to gorge on the riches of Nature and spoil the rest for generations to come that you have been taught to oppose.

You see magic as a natural force, one that must be used with care, but used as you will. Do not use the Wise Craft lightly (why disturb the flow of Essence if your strong back or a telephone call can do the job?), but when you must, do not hesitate. After you are finished, remember to leave things as you found them (or a little better), to dismiss the forces you invoked, and to make sure no wrong (including your own) goes unpunished.

Believe in magic, and believe that there are stranger things out there. Train all your Gifts, be they magical, psychic or physical. Leaving your talents undeveloped is a sin and a waste.

When you meet a stranger with the Power, be she human or spirit, judge her for what she does, not who she is or what she says. If she uses her powers to bring harm, stop her if you can. Whether you can or not, try to undo the damage she does. If she is too powerful, do not hesitate to run and call for help; your needless death will not restore the Balance.



Rosicrucians

“Our Invisible College has uncovered the secrets of Creation and mastered the Science and Art of Magick. From among the best and brightest, we have chosen you. Make us proud of that choice; use what you’ve learned wisely, subtly, and you will do well.”

-- Patrick Nelson, Duke of the Order, addressing a group of newly-appointed Squires

“The Signs are clear. After six centuries, ancient evils are being awakened. We must send out our best and brightest to learn what we can.”

-- Howard Duchamps, at the funeral of Patrick Nelson, slain by a monstrous spirit

Description: The highly-organized Order of the Rose Cross came into being before the Middle Ages, and has existed in secret for centuries, despite the claims of dozens of self-styled “Rosicrucian” organizations who operate in public. The true Rosicrucians are magicians who are concerned with the well being of all their fellow Order members, and with the acquisition of more knowledge. They are wealthy magicians, although they spend too much time in scholarly researches to become prominent businessmen or

politicians. Of late, many Rosicrucians have become more concerned with the increase in supernatural activity in the world, and are trying to do something about it.

The typical Rosicrucian is a “mystic yuppie.” Like the Wicce, most Rosicrucians belong to a family line of magicians, but these families are much more structured. The average Rosicrucian grew up in an upper class background, attended an expensive private school, and went to college for at least four years, typically specializing in history, archaeology and exotic languages. Around her nineteenth or twentieth birthday, she was inducted into the Order after the Rosicrucians had determined that the candidate had the requisite thirst for knowledge, magical potential, and discretion.

Attributes: Rosicrucians favor scholastic skills over all others; the average Rosicrucian has high mental Attributes and low or average physical ones.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Most Rosicrucians have high Wealth levels. In their time attending prestigious schools and universities, they often gain Contacts in the world of business or politics (although Rosicrucians never seek to become visible in those areas).

Skills: Rosicrucians are all highly educated, and know a wide array of scholastic skills. Those who actively investigate the supernatural have learned a couple of combat skills for those times when spells are not enough. All Rosicrucians must purchase Rituals (Rosicrucian) at some level.

Metaphysics: The Rosicrucians consider Magic to be the most important Art; it is the source of their vaunted mastery over Nature. Most Rosicrucians are devoted Magicians. They rarely have any other Gifted powers, concentrating solely on the study of Magic. A few Rosicrucians with the Gift of Necromancy exist, as does the occasional Seer. No Rosicrucians are Divinely Inspired. All full members of the Order are Gifted or Lesser Gifted. Mundanes are retainers, servants or dupes, and most of them have no inkling about the true nature and purposes of the organization, believing they are agents or employees of an eccentric club.

Special Abilities: Rosicrucians have a +2 bonus on any Invocation meant to restrain, banish or imprison spirits and other supernatural beings. This is due to their emphasis on the controlling aspects of Magic. Rosicrucians almost never learn any other Art. A Rosicrucian character wishing to learn other Arts must buy a 2-point special Quality: Rosicrucian Scholar, before buying any levels in those abilities. Rosicrucians can learn Seer Powers and Necromancy; they never acquire Inspired miracles.

Common Professions: Most Rosicrucians are recruited from the ranks of the wealthy and the learned. Money alone is not sufficient; the preferred Rosicrucian is a “Renaissance Man,” one who knows a great deal about a variety of subjects, above and beyond any chosen profession. For the most part, Rosicrucians make a living in the business world, as stockbrokers and traders or corporate executives, or in such professional fields as law, medicine and engineering. Unlike the Wicce in similar professions, Rosicrucians often work for corporations and the government. A few of them are even involved in the military, although usually in technical specialties.

Roleplaying the Rosicrucians: You know things very few others even suspect. Your colleagues and drinking buddies would freak if they knew half the things you can do by the use of the Will and the Word. But they will never know, because some secrets are just too important to share with anybody.

The Invisible College has done a great deal for you -- your student loans got paid on time, and when you need to see a doctor, you can call upon one of the Brethren for aid. You are expected to do the same for any Brother who calls on you.

Sometimes, you think you should be doing great things with your power. The Brotherhood requires all members to keep such knowledge from the masses, however, and you have acquiesced -- for now.

The Sentinels

“Why were we chosen? What makes us different from the rest? Yes, many of us were believers long before the Society contacted us. We have priests of a dozen religions -- Catholics and Protestants, Jews and Muslims. But we also have former soldiers and policemen, file clerks and teachers; many were religious, but some -- like yours truly -- were agnostic, or even rabid atheists. For me, and for many others, what made us different was our encounter with an evil so intense and relentless, that suddenly disbelief became a luxury we could not afford. There are no atheists in foxholes. In my case, although I did not realize it at the time, I was Chosen when I saw a dead man rip open the throat of the woman I loved and greedily gulp down her blood.”

-- Domingo Florez, Sentinel

Description: The war against occult forces has been waged for centuries. The Sentinels have been involved in this war almost since the beginning. These holy warriors operate in secret throughout the world, identifying dangerous entities and creatures and doing their best to destroy them. Their efforts have kept millions of people safe from the depredations of the supernatural.

In many ways, however, the Sentinels are slaves to their beliefs and their visions. Many are fanatics who are blind to the consequences of their actions. Sometimes they bring harm to the innocent as well as the guilty. Also, they must never put themselves above their overriding goals. Inspired Sentinels are modern-day crusaders and saints, pious but completely self-righteous.

Membership in the Sentinels is either inherited or offered to worthy candidates. Some family lines have served the Society for generations. Most new members are people who were victimized by occult forces or creatures, and who have shown a willingness to carry on the struggle against such forces. Their common qualities are dedication and strength of will; many members also have useful combat or investigative skills.

Not all Sentinels are Inspired, although most share the same degree of fanaticism and dedication. There are a number of Seers and Mundanes among them. The Mundanes among them are trained as soldiers and investigators.

Attributes: Inspired characters tend to have low or average Attributes, except for Willpower, which tends to be very high; this represents their staunch faith. Mundane warriors tend to have high physical Attributes. Investigators concentrate on Intelligence and Perception.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Most Inspired are Zealots. Many take vows of poverty, donating most or all of their income to the organization they have dedicated their lives to, resulting in a low Wealth level. Most of them have a driving goal (Obsession).

Skills: Most Sentinels have a number of scholastic skills, including Occult Knowledge and Humanities (Theology). Mundane warriors have a wide array of combat skills.

Metaphysics: The Sentinels are evenly divided between Mundane and Gifted members. The only Gifted allowed among the Sentinels are Seers (whose psychic abilities are considered to be a gift of the One God) and the Inspired (for obvious reasons). The Sentinels generally consider Magic to be unnatural. At best, it is a natural power used by misguided people who do not pay proper homage to the True Source of all power. At worst, it is the result of a pact with the forces of darkness. Necromancy is almost always considered to be utterly evil, an attempt to manipulate death, which is a prerogative of God, not Man.

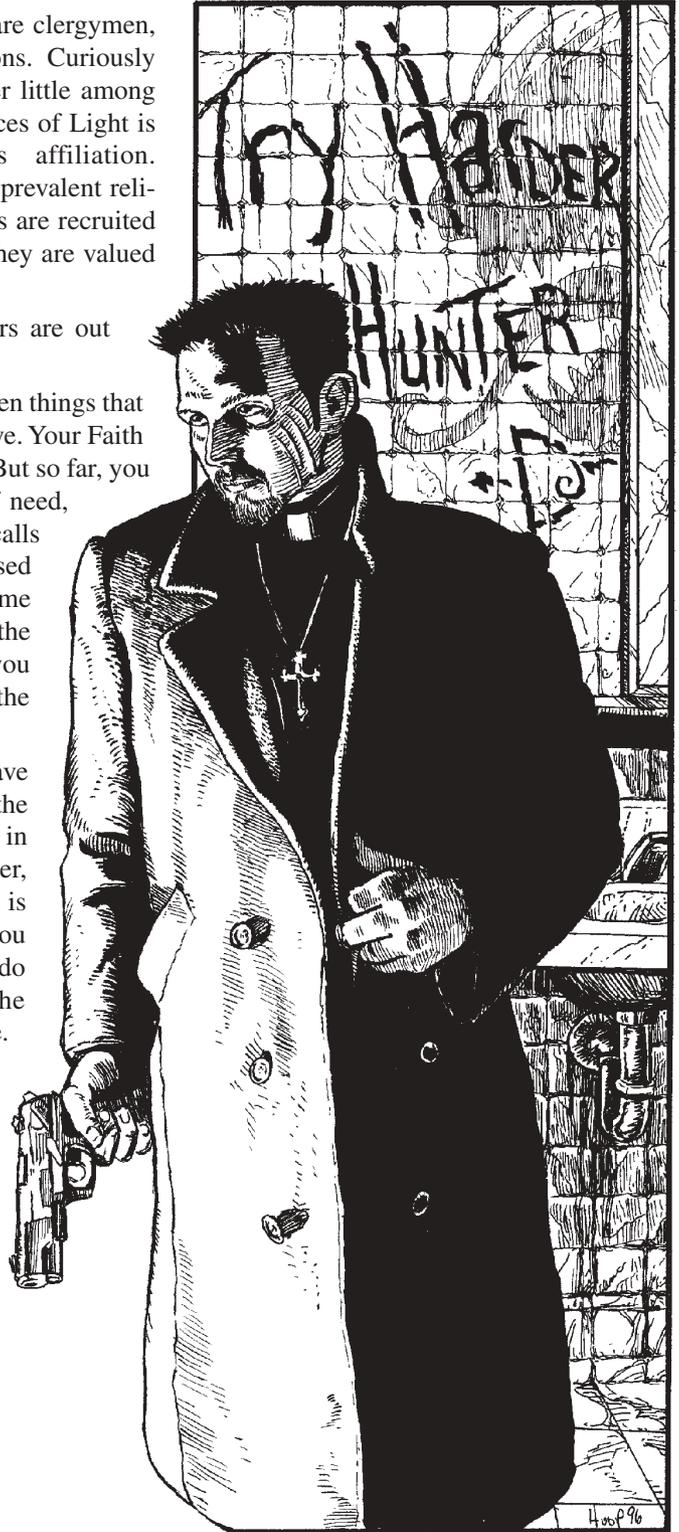
Special Abilities: Sentinels with Divine Inspiration get a +2 bonus to resist any Metaphysical attacks from the Gifted, supernatural beings or others that can be resisted. This does not apply to physical attacks. All members, even the Mundanes, have the power of Prayer (see p. 246).

Common Professions: Many Sentinels are clergymen, priests or pastors of a number of religions. Curiously enough, religious differences tend to matter little among the Sentinels; a dedication to serve the Forces of Light is more important than one's religious affiliation. Monotheism (the belief in One God) is the prevalent religion, however. Additionally, many Sentinels are recruited from the ranks of the military and police; they are valued for their investigative and combat skills.

Roleplaying the Sentinels: The monsters are out there, and you have to find and kill them.

Sometimes it is hard to go on. You have seen things that will haunt your dreams for as long as you live. Your Faith has been sorely tested time and time again. But so far, you have remained strong, and in your time of need, you have called on your God, and your calls have not gone unheeded. You have been used by your Deity as a vessel of His power. Some say you have healed the sick and destroyed the sinful with cleansing bolts from above, but you know it was not you, it was the will of the Creator working through you.

You believe -- you know -- that you have been chosen to fight an endless war against the forces of darkness. The Society is engaged in holy work, and you believe that every member, whatever their religion and nation of origin, is one of the select. Among the Sentinels you have found a new family, and you will do everything in your power to defend the Society as well as to carry out your purpose.



The Twilight Order

"Most people are terrified of Death, and yet they know so little to justify their fears. Death is a doorway, nothing more, and where it leads is determined by our own choices in life. Of course, this means that many do have good reason to be afraid."

-- Gregory Strauss, Medium

"Ghosts, phantasms and other spirits of the dead are rising in ever greater numbers. Some of them have been twisted and tormented until we can barely recognize them as the souls of humans. The Death Realms are stirring like never before. Something big is happening and I don't think any of us -- living or dead -- is going to like it."

-- Letter to the Twilight Order by Katrina Bund, Psychic Investigator

Description:

This society of Mediums and Necromancers helps protect the Lands of the Living from dangerous spirits, and the spirits of the dead from greedy or cruel humans who would exploit them. The Twilight Order is fascinated with life after death. They locate and appease restless spirits, banish or destroy hostile Ghosts, and study the Death Realms, the collections of shadowy dimensions where many spirits dwell as an alternative to going Beyond or returning to Earth.

Common members of the Order include scholars, who seek to increase their knowledge of death; Necromancers, who are inescapably drawn to the

spirit world; and psychics, who can also perceive the spirit world, and whose powers can be useful in dealing with dangerous spirits of the dead. Many members experienced strange visions during their childhoods, and might have lost their sanity (or been treated as if they had) without the timely intervention of the Order.

The Order has a large number of Gifted members, but Mundanes have a strong presence as well. Many investigators and researchers lack the ability to directly experience the presence of the dead, although they have seen enough manifestations of angry ghosts to make them believers.

Attributes: Most investigators have high mental Attributes, especially Perception and Intelligence.

Necromancers tend to have high Willpower and Perception scores.

Qualities and Drawbacks:

Some members are Obsessed with their pursuit of the supernatural, and a few suffer from Recurring Nightmares. The more experienced members have Nerves of Steel.

Skills: Most members of the Order have Occult Knowledge, with a Spirits of the Dead Specialization (Mundane characters automatically get the specialty at no cost; see below).

Metaphysics: Most Gifted members know the Art of Necromancy. Of the rest, the majority are Seers. Only a few have Magical abilities, and those must purchase a 2-point Quality: Medium with Magical Training, before acquiring any Invocations.



Special Abilities: Gifted characters have a +1 bonus to all Tasks involving any Necromantic Powers, due to their extensive training in the Worlds of the Dead. Mundane characters do not have that special ability; instead, they get an Occult Knowledge (Spirits of the Dead) specialization for free (the general Occult Knowledge Skill must still be purchased at regular cost).

Common Professions: The Twilight Order is made up mostly of occult investigators, with skills geared toward detecting true supernatural activities and spotting frauds.

Roleplaying the Mediums: You know what lies at the other side of death -- it's a nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to spend an eternity there.

The worlds of the dead are in some ways not much different from our own. The spirits have their problems and challenges, and they can enjoy success or suffer agonizing defeats. Ghosts can do a great deal of things, both here on Earth and in the strange Death Realms. But you, who straddle the twilight land between the living and the dead, can do everything the ghosts can, and enjoy life at the same time.

Life is no bed of roses, though. You cannot help but see the dead who haunt our world, and they often don't appreciate being noticed. A few will go out of their way to torment or destroy the likes of you. Even worse, one of your tasks in the Twilight Order is to seek out those angry spirits and appease or subdue them. It gets pretty dangerous sometimes.

The Cabal of the Psyche

"Once we were few; now we are many. Once our existence was never suspected; now they study our kind in laboratories. We must redouble our efforts to hide our true numbers and strength, lest a terrified humankind decides to strike us down."

-- Dr. Saul D'Antoine, Elder of the Cabal

"Look, I'm grateful to you -- we're all grateful to you. You took us in when we thought we were mad, you helped us learn to control our powers. But don't expect us to hide our heads in the sand. Things have changed too much for that, and there are too many others who need our help."

-- Jennifer Bragg, Seer, to the Council of Elders



Description: This Covenant was created to protect Seers from the ignorance and prejudice of the mundane world. For centuries, the Cabal of Psyche hid the existence of psychic abilities, especially after the Time of Persecutions in Europe and the Americas. The members of the Cabal prefer to spend their time learning to develop their abilities, and shy from using their powers to manipulate or control others. The organization also seeks out other Seers. Those who need help or learning are welcomed into the Cabal; psychics who use their powers to abuse others are stopped by any means necessary.

Most members of the Cabal of Psyche were contacted during their childhood or teenage years, when most Seer Powers start to manifest themselves. The Cabal typically enrolls the psychic in one of the many schools and institutes the organization secretly controls. The young Seers are given a formal education along with training in their unique abilities and powers. The typical Cabal “graduate” has the equivalent of four years of college and a good assortment of psychic abilities.

The Cabal is made up mostly of Gifted and Lesser Gifted characters, with the latter outnumbering the former ten to one; most Seers have only limited abilities and powers. Mundane members are for the most part researchers, bodyguards and troubleshooters, and hold few important positions in the organization.

Attributes: Most Seers have well-developed mental Attributes, especially Intelligence and Willpower.

Qualities and Drawbacks: None in particular. Most members are fairly ordinary people except for their psychic powers.

Skills: Due to their training, Cabal members have a good assortment of scholastic skills, including Occult Knowledge (Seer Abilities), although they often know little of other areas of the occult.

Metaphysics: The Cabal of Psyche is devoted to Seer Powers and abilities. Only a few members have any other type of power. Members of the Cabal who know Magic or Necromancy must have a special Contact (a Quality worth 5 character points) to explain where they got their training. Inspired miracles are almost unheard of.

Special Abilities: Members of the Cabal get one free level in one Seer Power Strength or Art of their choice (see P. 225). Mundane members (but not underlings) have learned meditation techniques that give them a +1 bonus to resist any mental or Metaphysical attack (like Mindrule) that can be resisted by Willpower.

Common Professions: The Cabal tries to steer members into joining a number of “safe” professions that allow for the subtle use of psychic abilities without tipping off the mundane masses. These professions are also ideal to detect and contact budding Seers. Common occupations include counselor, therapist or psychiatrist (where telepathic abilities can be hidden as simple insights into the patient’s mind), physical therapist or physician (allowing the subtle use of healing powers without arousing much suspicion), security specialist (useful both to market a number of psychic powers and to assist the Cabal in maintaining their secrecy), and college professor (a large percentage of Cabal members make their living teaching at one of the many institutes owned by the organization). A few of the less conventional members make a living as performers, stage magicians, and the like.

Roleplaying Cabal Members: At first you thought the problem was yours. You were hearing voices, seeing things nobody else perceived. You knew your fifth-grade teacher didn’t like you, just like you knew the janitor liked to hurt children. Nobody believed you . . . until you led the police to the bodies of the missing children and they took the janitor away. After that, people knew you were weird, and they shunned or tried to exploit you.

The Cabal changed all that. There, you met others like you for the first time -- people who were not afraid of you, whose minds you could touch without fear of seeing something horrible there. The Cabal announced publicly that the studies on your power were inconclusive, that your abilities were probably not real, and people finally left you alone. You now can learn about your powers, and even use them for the greater good, but nobody but your fellow Seers can know.

Solitaires

“Are we the only ones? No, my friend. There are many others, each with their own recipe for absolute power, and their own Way of doing things, and most of them will cheerfully slit your throat if you disagree with them. We do our thing alone because that means we have no hierarchy to bow and scrape to, and no rules beyond the common sense ones I’ve taught you. Believe you me, it’s much better this way. Now, let us review that incantation.”

-- Magician Angus Patrick, to his only student

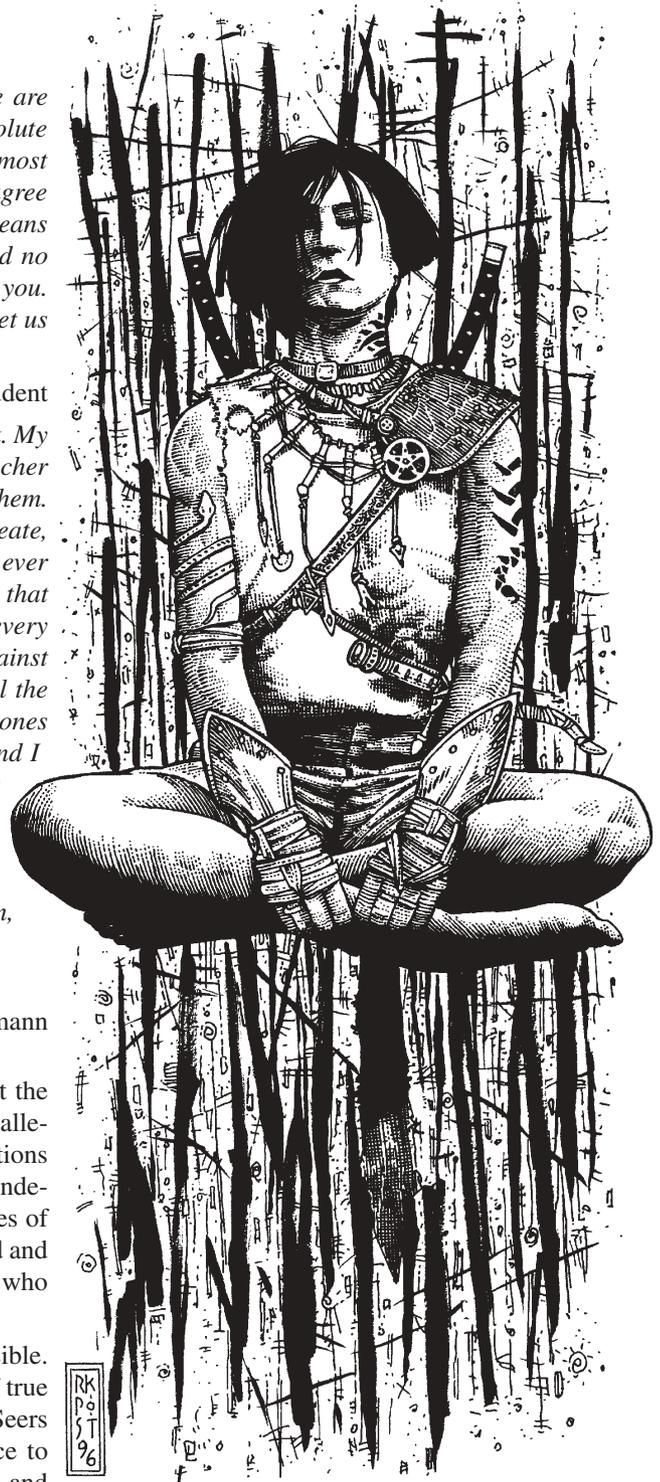
“June 11th. I’m writing this on a new notebook. My old journal, all my things, all my friends, my teacher -- they are gone. We thought we were ready for them. We made the best protective circle we could create, and spiked it with all the offensive magic we’ve ever learned. But it was not enough. I don’t know how that bastard Klaus was able to do it, but he raised every corpse in the local cemetery and sent them against us. We still won. I mean, I did, because when all the zombies were down Klaus and I were the only ones standing, and we were both drained of magic, and I had a deer rifle and he didn’t. But I still ran; it wasn’t just that I could not imagine trying to explain what happened to the authorities, but now I am alone, and if our enemies find out I’m the last one, they’ll come after me. I have to run, and I need to find allies.

“Wish my teacher had mentioned some.”

-- From the journal of James Wassermann

Description: This is truly not a Covenant, but the common term applied to the Gifted who owe no allegiance to any of the major societies and organizations of the occult world. Some are simply fiercely independent individuals who rebelled against the rules of their original Covenants, while others were found and trained by small groups of magicians or psychics who have formed their own mini-Covenant.

To generalize about Solitaires is nearly impossible. They range from charlatans with only a touch of true power to enormously accomplished Magicians, Seers or Necromancers who refuse to swear allegiance to any group. Some Covenants are very suspicious and contemptuous of Solitaires, while others (especially



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POST
96

the Wicce, who is the most loosely organized Covenant) accept them as equals in most respects.

Solitaires are exclusively Gifted or Lesser Gifted characters, although their friends and assistants often are Mundanes.

Attributes: Like most Gifted, Solitaires tend to have high Willpower.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Some Solitaires have Adversaries, either members of larger Covenants, or supernatural or mundane foes they have made in the course of their careers. Resource and Status levels vary widely, but they are rarely average; most Solitaires are either wealthy or poor.

Skills: Skills are mostly determined by the profession and background of the character. Solitaires often have Occult Knowledge of some type or another.

Metaphysics: Having no real affiliation, Solitaires learn any of the Arts their teacher or teachers know,

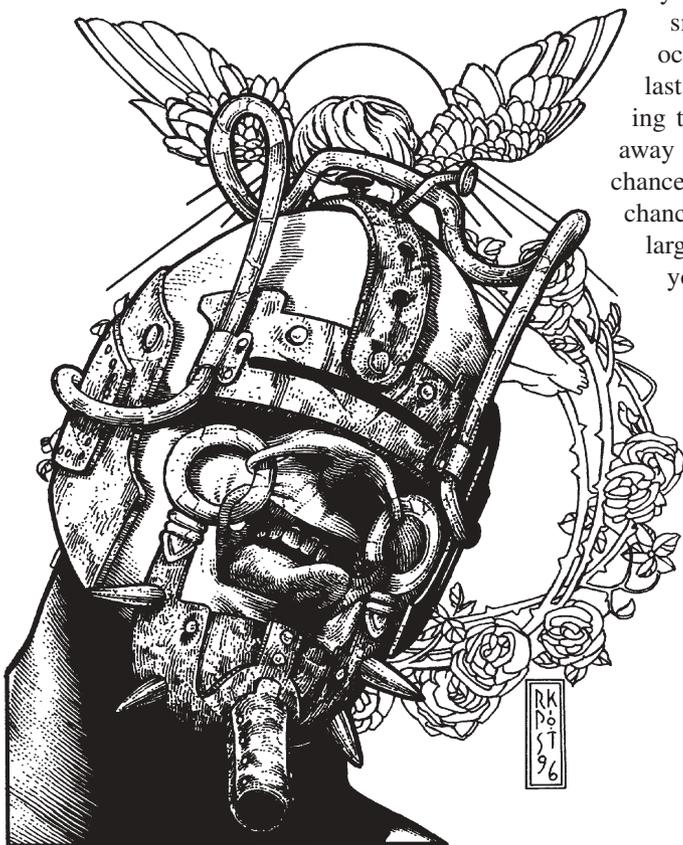
in addition to what they discover or learn on their own. Magic is the most common Art, followed by Necromancy. Solitary Seers will sometimes take others under their wing and help them sharpen their powers. Some Solitaires are Divinely Inspired.

Special Abilities: Solitaires can start out the game with any combination of Gifted powers, without any limitations except the one against combining Divine Miracles with either Magic or Necromancy. The character gains a +1 bonus on all Tasks involving one specific Gifted Art (Magic, the Sight or similar power) -- the character's "strong suit."

Common Professions: Almost any profession or occupation is applicable. Some Solitaires are criminals or outlaws, using their powers for personal gain, while others choose professions not unlike those held by the Wicce or Rosicrucians.

Roleplaying Solitaires: You follow an often lonely and difficult path. You are the member of a small, select group even by the standards of the occult underground; either your teachers are the last members of a dying tradition, or you are trying to create something new, or you have broken away from your Covenant. In all of those cases, chance or choice has set you apart. You may crave the chance to join a group and finally feel accepted by a larger community, or perhaps you prefer to rely on yourself. After all, to belong to a large group one must conform to the rules and restrictions of that group. You might rather be free and alone.

Being by yourself is not easy. If you are lucky, there are at least a few others like you, so that you can rely on a group, however small. At worst, you are by yourself, easy prey for more powerful enemies who need not fear retribution if they take you down. If you are good enough to take on all foes, you will be all right. Otherwise, making a few allies might not be a bad idea.



Attributes

Attributes are inborn characteristics of a character: her physical strength, intelligence, senses and so on. By selecting a set of Attributes, players define the limits of what the character can do. For example, if a player “buys” a very low Dexterity for her character, she should not be surprised if the character routinely fails to do anything that requires grace and manual coordination. As Attributes are bought, the player can start getting a sense of what the character is like. Is she strong but dumb, quick but weak, sharp and perceptive but weak-willed?

When determining a character’s Attributes (and in general, when creating the character), it is suggested that players use a pencil to write the numbers down. This enables players to make changes as they continue through the character creation process.

Two kinds of Attributes are used in *WitchCraft*: Primary Attributes and Secondary Attributes. The basic difference is that Primary Attributes are purchased using Attribute and other character points. Secondary Attributes are calculated based on the values of a character’s Primary Attributes.

Buying Attributes

During character creation, characters get an allotted number of points to distribute in their Primary Attributes. The exact number of points are determined by the Character Type chosen (see p. 50). Attributes can be “bought” at up to a level 5 on a one-

to-one basis (i.e., a Strength of 3 would cost 3 points, a Strength of 4 would cost a total of 4 points, and so on). Attributes after level 5 are much more expensive: 3 points per additional level. Humans cannot purchase an attribute past level 6, the absolute maximum (buying an attribute up to level 6 would cost 8 points).

The six Attributes that may be purchased using character points are Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Perception and Willpower. Each Primary Attribute is described in turn.

Strength

A measure of the physical power of the character, Strength determines how much damage the character inflicts with hand-to-hand weapons, how much weight she can carry, and how powerful she is. It also helps determine how much damage and exertion the character can withstand before collapsing.

Strength is useful to people who do a lot of heavy lifting or anybody likely to enter close combat. Characters apt to have a high Strength include athletes, manual workers, and soldiers. A low Strength indicates either small size and body weight, or just a lack of exercise.

A character may high jump (Strength x 10) inches (x 2.5 cm) and broad jump (Strength) yards (meters). Double these numbers with a good running start.

A chart detailing how much a character of any given Strength can lift is located nearby.

Strength Table

Strength	Lifting Capacity (U.S.)	Lifting Capacity (metric)
1-5	50 x Strength (lbs)	25 x Strength (kgs)
6-10	(200 x (Strength - 5)) + 250 (lbs)	(100 x (Strength - 5)) + 125 (kgs)
11-15	(500 x (Strength - 10)) + 1,250 (lbs)	(250 x (Strength - 10)) + 625 (kgs)
16-20	(Strength - 15) + 2 (tons)	(Strength - 15) + 2 (metric tons)

Reduce the maximum weight by one tenth when throwing something. Carrying capacity, the maximum amount of weight the character can carry without losing much speed or agility, is one half of the maximum lifting capacity.

A character can "push the limits" and try to lift more by passing a Simple Strength Test. Every Success Level achieved allows the character to lift an additional 10% of her maximum lifting weight. This effort costs the character D4 points of Endurance for every Success Level in the Test. A failure on the Strength Test causes D4 Life Points of damage -- the character strained herself and tore something up . . .

Dexterity

Dexterity is a measure of the character's coordination, agility, and gracefulness. It is used to determine how proficient a character is with any Task that requires motor control and precision. This ranges from performing card tricks to picking pockets to punching somebody in the face (Dexterity helps the punch land; Strength determines how much the punch hurt). Any Task where the character's speed and coordination matter is influenced by Dexterity. A high Dexterity is common among dancers, gymnasts, or pickpockets. People with low Dexterity are clumsy and ungraceful.

Constitution

This Attribute determines how physically hardy or healthy the character is. Constitution is important when it comes to resisting diseases, damage, and fatigue. This Attribute is used (along with Strength) to determine how much physical injury the character can survive and still remain functional. Constitution also comes into play with physical skills that involve endurance, like swimming, long-distance running and the like.

Intelligence

This Attribute determines the character's ability to learn, correlate and memorize information. The higher a character's Intelligence, the easier it is to improve scholastic skills. Also, this Attribute is used to understand and interpret information. Note that Intelligence and education are two separate things. A person can be brilliant but illiterate. Education is covered in the Skills section, which determines what a character has learned in her life.

Intelligence is very important to anybody pursuing higher education, or performing most technical jobs. Most computer-related skills (except arcade games) are dependent on the Intelligence of the character.

Perception

Perception governs the five senses of the character. It gives a general overview of the sharpness of the character's ability to sense things. This Attribute is used to find clues, notice things, and avoid getting

surprised. Also, Perception determines the character's intuition and alertness. A character with a low Perception would be nearly oblivious to what is going on around her.

Perception is an important Attribute for the Gifted. Many of their abilities are based on the intuition and detection powers of the character, and this is where Perception plays a role. This Attribute is also vital for detectives (to discover those important clues), poker players (to read the expressions of their opponents), and sports referees (to spot rules violations).

Willpower

This Attribute measures the mental strength and self-control of the character, and her ability to resist fear, intimidation, and temptation. Willpower is vital to Magicians; after all, Magic is "the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will." Most other Gifted abilities are also dependent upon Willpower. This Attribute is also important for Mundanes, for it can be used to resist magical coercion, psychic mind control, and the influence of panic, greed and lust, among other things.

The Meaning of Numbers

When creating a character, the player assigns a value to each of the six Primary Attributes, typically ranging from 1 to 5, with the maximum being a 6. This is done, as stated before, by "buying" an Attribute value with the available character points. This value represents the limits of the character with that Attribute. The higher the Attribute value, the more accomplished the character is in that area. The following paragraphs express some guidelines for Attribute levels 1 to 5.

Level 1: The character is below average in that Attribute. A Strength of 1 indicates a poor physique, either a petite or flabby, sedentary person. A Dexterity of 1 indicates clumsiness, a character who is likely to drop things, not to be trusted with delicate manual work unless the person has trained very hard to do so. An Intelligence of 1 is below average -- not mentally challenged, but certainly a bit slow on the uptake. A Perception of 1 is the trait of a character who is not very aware of her surroundings, and likely to miss what's going on around her. Characters

with a Constitution of 1 are delicate and often in poor health: they are the ones who get sick first, and their low physiques may be caused by abuse of drugs, tobacco or alcohol. A Willpower of 1 depicts a person who is easily influenced by others, a follower, and somebody who is likely to succumb to temptation.

Level 2: This is the average for human beings. Most people in any given group have Attributes in this range, typically with one or two Attributes at levels 1 or 3.

Level 3: This is above average but not extraordinary. A Strength and Constitution of 3 show some athletic aptitude, probably belonging to somebody who works out regularly and vigorously, or a natural athlete who has not taken time to develop her talent. Characters with a Dexterity of 3 are graceful individuals. Intelligence 3 indicates a bright person who can easily learn new skills, if she has the temperament to do so. With a Perception of 3, the character has good senses and intuition, and is not easily fooled or confused. A character with a Willpower of 3 is rarely convinced or bullied under normal circumstances.

Level 4: An Attribute at level 4 is well above average. Very few people -- perhaps one out of every ten in a random group -- has one or two Attributes at this level. Strength and Constitution 4 can be found only in athletes, including the best football players in a large high school or college campus, extensively trained Special Forces soldiers, and other people who spend a large amount of time and effort keeping in shape. A Dexterity of 4 would only be common among gymnasts, acrobats, dancers and other talented individuals. Mental Attributes at level 4 indicate near genius Intelligence, very acute senses and intuition (Perception), and an "iron will" (Willpower).

Level 5: This is the "practical" human limit. While people with Attributes at level 5 are not "record breakers," they are among the best and the brightest representatives of humanity. In a small or medium-sized community, only a handful of people will have one or two Attributes at this level, and they are likely to be well-known for their strength, wisdom or toughness. Cities, large college campuses, and groupings of the Gifted have more of these extraordinary individuals, but even there they will not be common.

Very Low or Very High Attributes

Most humans have Attributes in the 1-5 range. A 0 level represents very low Attributes, and a -1 indicates sub-human levels for humans above the age of five. A 6 in an Attribute is the peak of human achievement; even a medium-sized city rarely has more than a handful of people with such high Attributes.

Note that these limits apply only to humans. It would be dumb to expect that a horse or an elephant would have the same Attribute limitations as human beings. Most massive creatures have a Strength of 7-12 (including horses, bears, and apes). Very large creatures, like whales or elephants, have Strengths of 15-20 or higher. By the same token, graceful animals like cats, birds of prey and the like have an average Dexterity of 4-7.

Constitution is one of the few Attributes that does not exceed human levels very much. Some large animals like elephants are somewhat delicate. They have more Life Points than humans, but shock and disease are just as likely to bring them down.

Supernatural beings like Vampyres and the Relentless Dead are beyond human limits. Some of these creatures have superhuman physical Attributes, and long-lived entities may have extraordinary mental ones as well. Only the power of magic and faith, or the strength of numbers and weaponry, give humans any chance of standing up to such beings.

Secondary Attributes

Once the six Primary Attributes are determined, some quick calculations are used to figure out the Secondary Attributes. Secondary Attributes are not bought; they are determined by plugging the Primary Attributes into the formulas given below.

With the exception of Speed, which basically determines how fast a character can run at an all-out dash, the other Secondary Attributes determine a pool of points. Certain factors (injury, fatigue, or the use of magic) temporarily increase or decrease the amount of points in each pool. For example, the Life Points Pool determines a character's current health. If an injury is sustained, the health (the Life Points Pool) of the character is lowered; healing the damage will eventually raise the pool back to its original level. The more severe the damage, the more points are removed from the Life Points Pool.

The Secondary Attributes are Life Points, Endurance Points, Speed and the Essence Pool.

Life Points

This Attribute determines the physical health of the character. The Strength and Constitution of the character are the determining factors. A big, muscle-bound athlete can survive more punishment than a pencil-necked, cold-catching nerd. On the other hand, a bullet to the head or a solid whack with an ax will probably kill either character with the same ease. Life Points indicate the amount of physical damage the character can take before being unable to function. Other things that will drain Life Points include disease, extreme fatigue, and some supernatural attacks.

Formula: Add Constitution and Strength together, multiply by four, and add 10 to the result. The formula is best written as $((\text{Constitution} + \text{Strength}) \times 4) + 10$. The human range is 18 to 58.

Endurance Points

Endurance Points measure the character's ability to withstand fatigue and exertion before collapsing. Like Life Points, Endurance Points use Constitution and Strength, but they also use Willpower, taking into account that some people can push themselves past normal physical limits through the sheer force of will.

The more Endurance Points a character has, the longer she can run, lift things, swim, etc. As the character exerts herself, she starts losing Endurance Points. When Endurance Points are reduced to 0, the character sooner or later passes out from exhaustion (see Endurance Point Loss, p. 154). Additionally, in some cases light damage from non-lethal attacks is subtracted from Endurance Points instead of Life Points (see p. 150).

Formula: Add Constitution, Strength and Willpower together, multiply by three, and add 5 to the result. The formula is best written as $((\text{Constitution} + \text{Strength} + \text{Willpower}) \times 3) + 5$. The human range is 14 to 59.

Speed

This Attribute represents how fast a person can run at maximum speed. It only comes into play on the few occasions when running speed will be a consideration, such as when a character is chasing or being chased by somebody.

Formula: $(\text{Constitution} + \text{Dexterity}) \times 2$ is the speed in miles per hour (for kilometers per hour change the multiplier to 3). The human range is 4 to 24 mph (6 to 36 kph). Half that amount is the number of yards (meters) that the character runs in a second.

Essence Points

Essence is the amount of spiritual energy the character has within herself. It measures, basically, the strength of the character's soul and life force. Essence is also the binding force of reality. This means that inside each human being are the building blocks of Creation. Magic, Inspired Miracles and other abilities can channel Essence for a variety of powerful effects.

Although Essence is used primarily in the performance of Magic, it can also be temporarily drained by strong emotions (like fear and hatred), and by the attacks of some supernatural creatures. Totally draining a human being of Essence can lead to her death.

Formula: Add the character's Primary Attributes together. The Gifted often have extra Essence, due to their greater control over the flows of primal energy. This extra Essence is purchased during character creation (see the Increased Essence Pool Quality, p. 87).

Determining Secondary Attributes with Low Primary Attributes

SOME CHARACTERS HAVE ATTRIBUTES OF 0 OR EVEN IN THE NEGATIVE NUMBERS. THESE LEVELS REPRESENT ATTRIBUTES THAT ARE FAR BELOW AVERAGE. SPECIAL RULES FOR DETERMINING SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES ARE REQUIRED IN THIS CASE. WHEN DEALING WITH LOW PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES, TREAT THEM AS BEING EQUAL TO 1 FOR DETERMINATION PURPOSES. IF THE ATTRIBUTE IS NEGATIVE, THEN SUBTRACT IT FROM THE RESULTING SECONDARY ATTRIBUTE.

FOR EXAMPLE, OELL IS A FRAIL AND SICKLY BOY WITH A STRENGTH OF -1 AND A CONSTITUTION OF 0. TO DETERMINE OELL'S LIFE POINTS, TREAT THE -1 AND 0 AS "1s", RESULTING IN A BASE OF 18 LIFE POINTS (2 x 4 PLUS THE BASE 10). THEN REDUCE THIS TO 17 LIFE POINTS -- THE NEGATIVE VALUE IS SUBTRACTED FROM THE TOTAL.

Qualities and Drawbacks

Qualities are innate characteristics that give the character an advantage or positive trait. Drawbacks are characteristics that somehow limit or detract from the character. Both Qualities and Drawbacks help round out the character, and can be helpful both to roleplay and to "succeed" in the course of a game.

Qualities are desirable traits, and therefore they "cost" character points. Drawbacks, on the other hand, are limiting factors, and as a "reward" for acquiring them, the character gains extra points. Points acquired from Drawbacks can be used in any point category such as Attributes, Qualities, Skills and Metaphysics.

For point categories other than Attributes, Drawback points may be added on a one-for-one basis. Purchasing Attribute points using Drawbacks is much more expensive. The cost to raise an Attribute one level is equal to the value of that level. For example, raising an Attribute from 3 to 4 costs 4 Drawback points, from level 4 to 5 costs 5 Drawback points, and so on. Further, the costs are cumulative. Raising one Attribute from 3 to 5 costs 9 Drawback points.

Categories

Qualities and Drawbacks are labeled by category. For the most part, these categories are descriptive and do not affect play. In certain instances, however, the category does matter. The major example is Supernatural Qualities; generally only Gifted and Lesser Gifted characters can have Supernatural Qualities. Some Supernatural Drawbacks could be inflicted on Mundanes, at the Chronicler's discretion. The following categories are used in the sections that follow: Mental, Physical, Social and Supernatural. While the majority of the Qualities and Drawbacks are alphabetized by name, the Supernatural category has been separated from the rest and included at the end. Charts in the Appendix organize the Qualities and Drawbacks both by category and by name.

Numerical Qualities and Drawbacks

Some Qualities and Drawbacks are expressed in numerical ways: the most common examples include Attractiveness, Charisma and Resources. These are similar to Attributes, since these Qualities and Drawbacks change the character in positive or negative ways. As a result, they are represented as bonuses or penalties. For example, a Charisma Quality of +2 represents a bonus of 2 levels on any Task or Test that involves influencing or manipulating people through social skills, while a Resources Drawback of -2 indicates very low income and few possessions, well below the national average.

Bringing a trait below the average gives the character extra points to put into other character elements. These traits have an average value of 0; so if a player does not want to deal with any numerical Quality, simply assume that it has a base value of 0.

Qualities and Drawbacks During Play

Some Qualities and Drawbacks may be acquired or lost during the course of a game. In some cases, a Quality or Drawback might change. For example, a scarring wound could reduce the character's Attractiveness, or a change in fortune might increase or reduce the character's Resources or Social Level. When such a change is brought about during play, no experience points are needed to purchase them. If the player wants to purposefully change a Quality or Drawback, she must spend experience points and come up with a good reason for the change (improving a character through experience is covered in Chapter Four: Rules, Experience).

Creating New Qualities and Drawbacks

The list below is far from exhaustive, although it covers most of the basics. In many cases, a "new" Quality or Drawback can be an extension or variation of an existing one. The value of the characteristic should be balanced out by the benefits or penalties it grants the character. Most Qualities or Drawbacks should be worth between 1 and 3 points; only the most powerful or crippling of them should have a value of 4 or higher.

List of Qualities and Drawbacks

The following Qualities and Drawbacks may be taken by any *WitchCraft* character, as long as the Chronicler approves.

Acute/Impaired Senses

2-point Physical Quality or Drawback

This Quality/Drawback must be purchased separately for each sense: sight, hearing, touch, smell or taste. Normally, the five senses are represented by the Perception Attribute. Acute or Impaired senses indicate one or more senses that are higher or lower than normal for a person with that Perception Attribute.

When bought as a Quality, an Acute Sense gives the character a +3 bonus to any Perception-related Test or Task that relies on that sense. If acquired as a Drawback, Impaired Senses give a similar -3 penalty to Perception-based Tests or Tasks.

Some Impaired Senses (hearing and sight in particular) can be easily corrected in the modern age through the use of glasses, hearing aids and similar devices. If the impairment is eliminated by the use of such devices, the Chronicler should reduce the value of the Drawback to 1 character point. It is possible to have more than one type of Acute or Impaired Sense, or, for example, to have Acute Hearing and Impaired Eyesight, or similar combinations of senses. For obvious reasons, a character cannot select both the Impaired and Acute versions of the same sense.

Addiction

Variable Mental Drawback

An addict craves a substance and must have it, even against her better judgement. Most addictive substances eventually impact on her health. Many of them are also illegal, and using or purchasing them may land the character in jail should she be discovered. Those concerns matter little to the addict, however; when the craving hits, she can rarely resist it. She often does things she would normally never consider in order to satisfy her need, from cheating and stealing to committing serious crimes to selling her body or even betraying her friends.

When an addicted character hasn't gotten her usual "fix," she suffers from debilitating withdrawal symptoms. Most mental actions (e.g., any Tasks or Tests using Intelligence, Perception or Willpower) are at a penalty equal to the value of the Drawback (so, a character with a 2-point Addiction suffers a -2 penalty to most mental actions) until the addict can get what she needs. The most severe drugs (like heroin) also produce strong physical effects; such addicts have a penalty of -3 to all physical actions in addition to the above penalty on mental actions.

The value of this Drawback is determined by the severity of the addiction and the relative effects of the drug or substance. A detailed description of the effects of different addictive substances would fill an entire book or more. Chroniclers should adjudicate the game effects of a "high" on a character. This can range from a small action penalty for being slightly "buzzed," to the complete stupor of a heroin trip. In the game, as in real life, drugs are dangerous and unpredictable, and an addict character is often unable to control herself.

The nearby Addiction Point Value Table gives guidelines for the value of a given type of addiction. Chroniclers should modify these values as desired.

Addiction Point Value Table

Habitual drinking or smoking: 1 point.

Heavy drinking or smoking, light use of marijuana or LSD: 2 points

Heavy use of marijuana or LSD: 3 points

Alcoholism, habitual use of barbiturates or cocaine: 4 points

Habitual use of heroin, heavy use of barbiturates or cocaine: 5 points

Heavy use of heroin: 6 points

Unlike most Drawbacks, this problem cannot be easily overcome. Generally, the best a character can hope to do is to deny her craving, “one day at a time.” Getting rid of this Drawback should never be a matter of saving up enough points to “buy it off.” Resisting the craving requires a series of daily Willpower Tests. For each Willpower Test up to the level of the character’s Willpower, these Tests are Simple. For each one after that, the Tests are Difficult. All Tests suffer a penalty equal to the point value of the Drawback, plus an additional -1 to -4 depending on the strength of the drug and its availability (tobacco is so available and addictive that Willpower Tests are at a minimum penalty of -4 or even higher). Once the character accumulates 10 Success Levels in succession from successful Willpower Tests, one character point may be spent to reduce the strength of the addiction by one point. Another 10 Success Levels in succession are needed for the next point, and so on, until the Drawback is eliminated. If any Test is failed during the course of accumulating the 10 Success Levels, all Success Levels are lost, and the accumulation process must begin again.

For example, Joshua has a level 3 Willpower, and a 2-point Addiction to marijuana. He starts to kick the habit, and begins making daily, Simple Willpower Tests. These Tests have a -2 penalty for the level of the Addiction, and a further -1 for the drugs availability and potency (Chronicler’s judgment). For three days, Joshua rolls a 6, 8 and 15. Adding his Willpower doubled (6), and subtracting his penalties (-3), the results are 9 (one Success Level), 11 (two Success Levels) and 18 (five Success Levels). This amounts to eight success levels. Joshua only needs two Success Levels to bring the Addiction down to a 1-point Drawback. Unfortunately for Joshua, however, the going gets tougher, and Difficult Willpower Tests are now required. The next day, Joshua rolls a 4. Adding his Willpower (2 -- no doubling) and subtracting his penalties (still -3), the result is 3. This failure sends Joshua in desperate search of a “fix.” If he decides to try and kick the habit again, a new series of Willpower Tests must be begun with no successes accumulated.

This struggle should be a major part of the character’s roleplaying. A convincing depiction of the torments of the addict may be awarded with bonuses to the Willpower Tests, at the Chronicler’s discretion.

Adversary

Variable Social Drawback

At some time in the past, the character has made an enemy, or she belongs to a group, race or nation that automatically attracts the enmity of others. An Adversary is more than somebody who dislikes the character, however. He, she or they wish nothing less than the destruction of the target, either by killing or ruining her.

The more powerful the Adversary, the higher the value of this Drawback. Chroniclers should determine if an Adversary is appropriate to the game in question. If the Adversary is unlikely to appear frequently, the Chronicler can reduce the point value or disallow it altogether. Individuals are worth 1 to 3 points as Adversaries, depending on their resources and abilities. A normal person would be worth 1 point; a Magician, a Green Beret or a multimillionaire would be worth 3 points. An organization may be worth 2 to 5 points, depending on its power. A gang of thugs would be worth 2 points, the police depart-

ment of a city would be worth 3 to 4 points (depending on its size and competence), and a Covenant would be worth 5 points or more.

The player should have a good reason why her character has earned the enmity of the Adversary. The Chronicler can then weave this enemy into the plot of the Story in any way she sees fit.

Artistic Talent (Type)

3-point Mental Quality

Some people have a natural gift for producing astounding works of art, even if they lack formal training. Geniuses like Mozart and Picasso had the ability to create true art seemingly without effort. A character with this Quality has the talent to become a famous artist. Artistic Talent affects only one form of artistic expression, such as Painting/Drawing, Sculpture, Singing, etc. It is possible to buy this Quality multiple times; each additional purchase grants the bonuses to an additional type of Fine Arts. Further, Essence bonuses (see below) are cumulative.

Whenever a work of art is created, the character receives a +3 bonus to all related Task attempts. Additionally, even if the Task is failed, a minimum of one Success Level is always acquired -- even a failure by the truly talented still has artistic merit.

In the world of *WitchCraft*, true artists have very strong souls. A character with Artistic Talent adds 12 Essence Points to her pool, to represent the power of her spirit. This also makes artists more likely to be targeted by entities that feed on Essence, such as Ghosts and Vampyres, which may explain the often tortured existences of true artists.

Attractiveness

Variable Physical Quality or Drawback

This Quality or Drawback determines the character's looks (or lack thereof). The average person has an Attractiveness of 0, which means the person looks plain and undistinguished unless she takes steps to enhance her appearance (clothing, makeup and poise always make a difference). Positive values in Attractiveness indicate pleasing features, while negative values indicate ugliness, scars, or unpleasant characteristics. The character's Attractiveness value can be added to or subtracted from any Test or Task that involves making an impression on other people.

In some cases, negative Attractiveness values can be useful. When trying to intimidate or scare people, positive Attractiveness values have no effect, but negative ones count as bonuses! For example, a character with an Attractiveness of -3 would add +3 to any Task where intimidating people is a factor.

Note that the physical Attributes of a character determine exactly how her Attractiveness is expressed. For example, a character with Strength and Constitution of 3 or 4 will appear extremely athletic, likely tanned from outdoor exercise, with a well-muscled body. A character with a Constitution of 1 and an Attractiveness of +4 is probably a delicate-looking, pale person with doll-like features.

Purchasing Attractiveness costs 1 point per level if bought as a Quality, or adds 1 extra character point if acquired as a Drawback. After character creation, Attractiveness can change only by events that modify the character's entire appearance, either through scarring, plastic surgery, or powerful magic.

Attractiveness can range from -5 to +5 in humans. A +1 or +2 make the person stand out in a crowd and attract attention unless the character somehow hides her features. At +3 or +4, the character can easily make a living through her looks alone, as a model or entertainer. At +5, the character would be as comely as the top models, beauty pageant contestants and movie stars in the world. On the other hand, at -1 or -2, the person has homely features, or unsightly blemishes or scars. At -3 or -4, the character's features are downright repulsive. At -5, people will be taken aback by the character's appearance; looking at her will be a source of discomfort. Beings with inhuman features can have levels as low as -10.

Charisma

Variable Mental Quality or Drawback

This trait represents the personal magnetism and leadership qualities of the person, ranging from -5 to +5. A character with a Charisma in the negative range is instinctively disliked by most people she meets. People are naturally inclined to antagonize or avoid her. Charisma can be added to any Task where the character is trying to influence other people. Negative Charisma, of course, reduces the chance that any attempt to influence people will work.

Clown

1-point Mental Drawback

The Clown refuses to take things seriously, and is always coming up with jokes and wisecracks, even during the most inappropriate moments. Perhaps the character is deeply insecure and tries to gain other people's acceptance through humor, or she simply delights in keeping people off-balance with her comments. The biggest problem these characters have is that they cannot keep their mouths shut even when they know a joke will only work against them.

Clowns are generally accepted and liked during situations where their quirky humor is not out of place (parties and other social gatherings, or among friends). Their sense of humor gets them in trouble during tense and dangerous situations. Another problem the Clown faces is that people will often not take her seriously even when they should.

Contacts

Variable Social Quality

The character has friends or allies who can provide her with information, warnings and even help, should she require it. The more helpful the contact is, the higher the Quality's point value. For any and all Contacts, the Chronicler determines whether or not the Contact is available at any given time. Generally, the more time the character has to reach or get word to her Contact, the more likely the Contact is to come through.

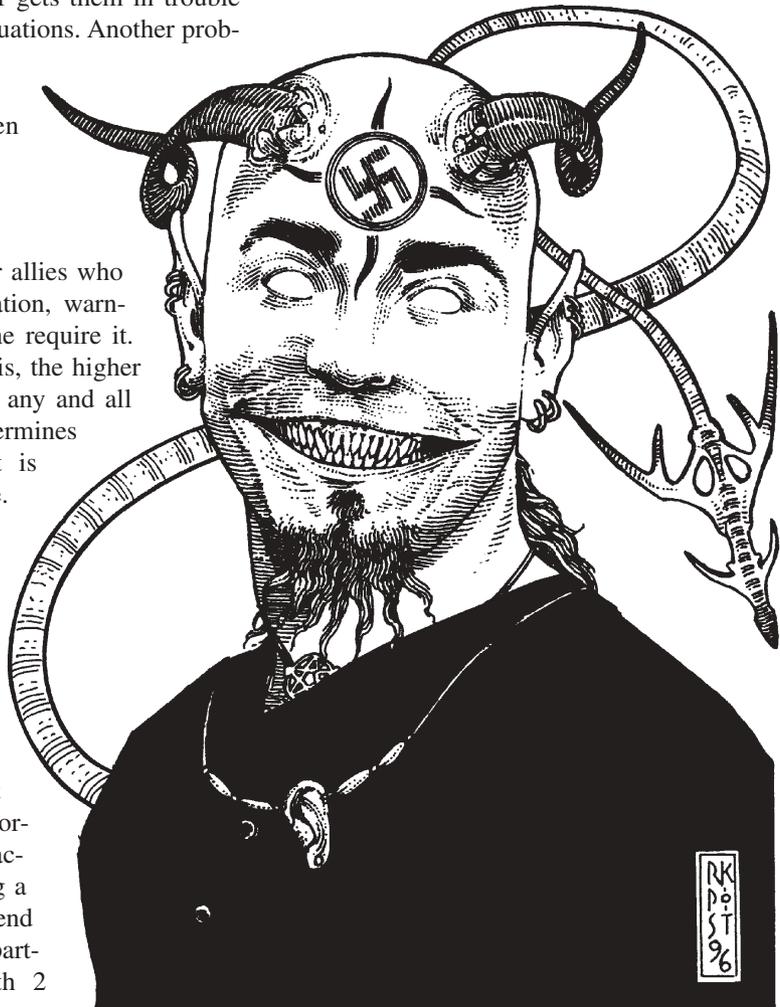
A Contact that only provides rumors and hearsay is worth 1 point. If the Contact usually provides reliable information and will help the character out in small ways (offering a ride, letting the character spend the night at the Contact's apartment), this Quality is worth 2

points. Actual allies who will help the character in any way they can are worth 3 to 5 points, depending on the Contact's resources.

Covetous

1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

A Covetous character wants certain things and is prepared to go to great lengths to acquire them. She may be motivated by love of money, lust for sensual satisfaction, hunger for power, or the search for glory. Whatever she desires, be it fame, fortune or influence, she will do almost anything to get it, limited only by any sense of caution or morality she may have -- and in some cases, not even by that. A Covetous character



usually refrains from breaking her own moral code or the laws of the land in the pursuit of her goals, but if a golden opportunity presents itself, the temptation may be just too great.

There are four types of covetousness, based on what the character wants: Greedy (money and wealth), Lecherous (sexually attractive people), Ambitious (power and influence), and Conspicuous (fame and renown). It is possible to covet two or more of those things, but each additional source of desire adds but a single point to the value of this Drawback.

The Covetous Drawback has three levels of severity, worth 1, 2 and 3 points respectively.

Level 1: The first level is relatively mild. The character knows what she wants, and she spends a great deal of time and effort to attain her goals, but she won't break her own rules or those of society to do so. Her desire otherwise dominates her life, however. Most of her actions should be directed towards achieving her objective, directly or indirectly. An Ambitious Rosicrucian, for example, will seek to advance her standing in the order in every way she can, from redoubling her studies to mastering new Arts to brown-nosing among the upper hierarchy.

Level 2: The second level is stronger -- presented with enough temptation, the character may act even if it goes against her better judgement or morality. She may resist if the action she contemplates is truly wrong and reprehensible -- stealing credit for a heroic deed performed by a friend, for example -- but resisting requires a Simple Willpower Test, at a penalty of -1 to -3 if the temptation and possible rewards are great.

Level 3: The third level is the strongest -- a desire so strong that it often overwhelms any scruples the character may have. When presented with temptation, she can only avoid acting by passing a Difficult Willpower Test, with penalties ranging from -1 to -5 depending on the size of the "prize." For a high enough reward, the character will turn on friends or loved ones, and even betray her cause or principles.

Cowardly

1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

A Cowardly character is easily scared and intimidated. Furthermore, she is very reluctant to take any risks; putting her neck on the line always strikes her as incredibly foolhardy. Note that this does not mean that a Cowardly character will not fight if necessary. Such a character usually tries to stack the odds in her favor, however, before resorting to violence. She would have no compunction (except as determined by other Drawbacks) against attacking others if circumstances minimized the danger. A coward can hide her Drawback from others very easily, as long as she is not involved in a situation that is clearly dangerous. Only then may her limitations become apparent.

This Drawback has three levels of intensity, worth 1, 2 and 3 points respectively. The level of the Drawback also acts as a modifier to any Willpower Test or Task to resist fear, intimidation or bullying. For example, a character with a 2-point Cowardly Drawback incurs a -2 penalty to any Fear Test (see p. 130) required by the Chronicler.

Level 1: At the first level, the character avoids taking unnecessary risks, but fights when cornered (or when she thinks she has the upper hand). Simple Willpower Tests are necessary to avoid fleeing or surrendering when confronted by what the character considers to be superior foes. The same goes for taking even small chances, like confronting her boss, asking for a raise, complaining about some problem, or the like.

Level 2: The second level of this drawback is stronger. The character needs to pass a Simple Willpower Test to fight back even when she thinks the odds are in her favor, and needs to pass a Difficult Willpower Test to avoid fleeing dangerous situations, or taking chances.

Level 3: The last level is the worst, requiring Difficult Willpower Tests to get involved in confrontations or risky situations even when the character has a good chance of succeeding. Truly dangerous or heroic acts are simply impossible; the character never knowingly or willingly endangers herself, and may actually even betray her friends if she thinks she will save herself in the process.

Cruel

1- or 3-point Mental Drawback

Cruel people enjoy making other people suffer. The truly evil derive satisfaction from anybody's pain. Some people are perfectly normal and nice most of the time, but when angered or given offense, make their enemies pay -- and love doing it.

This Drawback has two levels or degrees of intensity. The second level is best restricted to villains, as it indicates a serious mental problem that may make most characters unsuitable for the typical campaign. As always, the Chronicler has the final say.

Level 1: This character would never hurt a friend or a loved one. Enemies, especially those who have really angered her, are a different matter. She enjoys inflicting pain (mental or physical) on those she feels "deserve what they get."

Cats have this level of cruelty. While they can be friendly and loving, they have the capacity to be nasty to creatures they see as their rightful prey. Characters with this level of cruelty are capable of committing atrocities under the right circumstances, but will not go out of their way to find opportunities. This is a 1-point Drawback.

Level 2: This person is a true sadist, and never passes up the chance to inflict pain on others. Even friends and loved ones are not safe from her. When it comes to enemies or those who get in her way, she enjoys nothing so much as their utter destruction or humiliation. When no enemies are available, she uses her "talents" on those around her.

Note that a Cruel character need not be into "whips and chains." Malicious gossip, workplace conspiracies, and petty acts that bring harm and pain to people are just as effective as physical violence. This is a 3-point Drawback; people with this Drawback will rarely keep any friendships, and will quickly gain enemies. Many supernatural predators are Cruel, due to the combination of their habits and their nature.

Delusions

Variable Mental Drawback

Delusions are beliefs that have no basis in reality -- at least as reality is understood by society at large. The character refuses to abandon such beliefs even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, or

at best comes up with rationalizations to explain away any contradictions. The more impact a Delusion has on a person, the higher its value as a Drawback. Some examples are given below.

Prejudice: The belief that a group of people (racial, ethnic or national) has certain characteristics (positive or negative). While everyone has some prejudices in some way or another, a delusional person staunchly holds to these beliefs. In some cases, the person refuses to trust or befriend any member of such a group, regardless of the merits of the individual person. Such a Delusion is worth 1 to 3 points, depending on how intense the belief is, how large a group it applies to, and how it dominates the character's life. At the 1-point level, the character could be an "Archie Bunker" type bigot; at 3 points, she would be a rabid white supremacist, unable to communicate with people of the wrong color.

Delusions of Grandeur: This person thinks she is somebody far greater and more powerful than she really is. In extreme cases, the character thinks that she is a historical or mythological figure like Napoleon or Sherlock Holmes. The more common type has an exaggerated sense of overconfidence. Some examples: "I am a genius, but nobody understands me -- which is why the best job I've held is cashier at a 7-11" (1 point); "I am the Messiah; prepare for the Second Coming!" (3 points).

Weird Delusions: Any strange belief that flies in the face of reality. Some examples: "Aliens talk to me through my wristwatch," "I have to wear this tin foil cap so the laser satellites don't make me kill again," "Dogs are the Spawn of Satan, and must be destroyed." The value depends more on what the character does about the Delusion than about the Delusion itself. For example, if the character in the last example simply refuses to pet dogs, and avoids being next to a dog, a 1-point Delusion would be sufficient. If she tells people about her beliefs all the time, and keeps pestering any dog-owning friends and neighbors about the dangers of keeping such monsters around, a 2-point Delusion would be appropriate. If she carries her insanity to its "logical" conclusion and starts hurting or killing dogs, the Delusion is worth 3 points and she is likely to get in trouble with the law.

Emotional Problems

Variable Mental Drawback

Those with Emotional Problems react in unreasonable ways to some situations and problems. The reaction can be anger, pain or anguish, typically more extreme than normal. Maybe a traumatic event in this life (or even in a previous life) has made them this way. These emotional problems can be triggered by ordinary events in normal life, events that may bring distress to most people but which will prompt a very strong reaction from a disturbed character.

Some situations that can trigger emotional problems are discussed below.

Fear of Rejection: This person is afraid of rejection, and when she experiences rejection (or thinks she has been rejected), she feels hurt and angry. People with this problem may be afraid to make friends or approach people they are attracted to, and if their fears come true, will harbor a great deal of resentment and anger. This is a 1-point Drawback.

Depression: This character's emotional problems make the very act of living seem like a hard chore. Common symptoms of Depression include sleep problems (either oversleeping or bouts of insomnia), severe procrastination (to the point that the sufferer may lose her job), and a lack of interest in anything. A character with Depression is at -2 to most Tasks, and tends to avoid becoming involved in anything. This is a 2-point Drawback. A severe shock may snap someone out of this state for a while (a life-threatening crisis will do it), but the character will sink back into inactivity afterwards. Certain drugs and psychiatric treatment can reduce the effect of this problem (which will also reduce its value).

Emotional Dependency: These types tend to be "clingy" and overly dependent on others. Once they make a friend, they want to hang around her all the time. When involved in a relationship, they are excessively needy. This behavior tends to annoy people around them. This is a 1-point Drawback.

Fear of Commitment: Whenever this character starts feeling too close to somebody, she becomes afraid and starts pulling back. Maybe she is afraid that if she lets somebody get too close, they will hurt her, and it's not worth the pain. Or perhaps she fears

that if she reveals too much about herself, the other person will see the "real her" and will be appalled or disgusted. This makes it very difficult to have a healthy relationship with either friends or lovers. This is a 1-point Drawback.

Overcoming an Emotional Problem: A common theme in fiction involves characters who in the course of the plot manage to overcome their flaws. Emotional Problems can be overcome by characters during play. This should always be roleplayed. If the player was able to convey the inner struggle of her character over the course of several Stories, the Chronicler might allow her to eliminate the Drawback without having to "pay" any Experience Points to do so (see p. 158).

Fast Reaction Time

2-point Mental Quality

Unlike most people, who are easily surprised and blindsided, these quick individuals can often anticipate their enemy's moves and counteract them. They almost never "freeze" in a dangerous situation. In combat, contact sports or other physical confrontations, characters with this Quality can act first without needing to check for initiative, restricted by common sense (Fast Reaction Time will not help the target of a sniper half a mile away, for example). This Quality also provides a bonus of +1 on Willpower Tests to resist fear.

Hard to Kill

1- to 5-point Physical Quality

Characters with this Quality are extremely tough, and can withstand an amazing amount of damage before going down. Even after being severely wounded, medical attention has a good chance of reviving them, scarred but alive. This Quality is bought in levels. Level 5 is the highest possible for human beings. Each level of Hard to Kill adds 3 Life Points to the character's Pool. Additionally, each level adds a +1 bonus to Survival Tests (see p. 150).

Honorable

1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

The Honorable character follows a code of honor, and will not break it lightly, if at all. The more restrictive and rigid the code is, the higher its value. The character with the code of honor should almost never break its rules, no matter what the cause. In a life-or-death situation where honor must be ignored, the character might do so, but even then a Difficult Willpower Test is necessary to pass the psychological barriers reinforcing the code of honor. Players whose characters ignore honor for the sake of convenience should be penalized for poor roleplaying. The levels of the Honorable Drawback are discussed below.

Level 1: These characters do not lie or betray friends or loved ones, or people they respect. Anybody else, especially people from groups they dislike or are prejudiced against, are fair game. This is a 1-point Drawback.

Level 2: This code of honor is more complex, and applies to everyone, friend or foe. The character always keeps her word and does her best to fulfill any promises she makes. She does not betray the trust of others once she has accepted it. Note that the character may be reluctant to give her word except in a good cause, because once it has been given she abides by it. This is a 2-point Drawback.

Level 3: This person lives by a strict set of rules that control most of her actions towards others. In addition to all the other restrictions above, she refuses to participate in acts of betrayal such as ambushes, striking a helpless or unsuspecting foe, or cheating in any way. Lying is anathema, and she only lies in cases of extreme need. Even then, she feels guilty and does not do a very good job at deceiving; any tasks requiring lying have a -2 to -6 penalty, determined by the Chronicler given the circumstances.

Humorless

1-point Mental Drawback

The Humorless character lacks the ability to laugh at life, and takes everything with the utmost seriousness. Other people's attempts at humor leave her cold or annoy her. Most people find this facet of her personality to be unattractive or bothersome. Clowns and practical jokers most likely select the Humorless as their favorite target.

Lazy

2-point Mental Drawback

This character just does not like to work and is always looking for ways to avoid it. This limits how much she can learn or accomplish in life. A Lazy character must roleplay an unwillingness to work, except in situations where the work is extremely important, and even then she will try to shirk her duties or select the easiest task. More importantly, the character has a hard time learning skills, due to her inability to spend the required time and effort.

When determining and improving skills for a Lazy character, the character point cost becomes higher after reaching a certain level. This level is determined by the character's Attributes. A Lazy but intelligent or dexterous person can learn a great deal with little effort -- at least at first. Skills are purchased normally until their level is equal to the Attribute most commonly associated with them. Combat and physical skills would be linked to Dexterity, technical and scholastic skills would be associated with Intelligence, and so on. After reaching that level, any further improvement costs double the normal cost. Lazy people are unlikely to ever excel at anything.

For example, Gert is a near genius-level woman (Intelligence 4) who has never had to work very hard to be successful. She could have been a great computer programmer, but has instead settled for being a very good one. Gert's Computer Programming Skill can be bought up to level 4 in a normal manner. After level 4, however, the cost to raise the skill is doubled. It takes 10 points to raise the skill to level 5, and 12 points to raise to level 6. Indeed, Gert never goes beyond level 4, too lazy to transcend this limit.

Minority

1-point Social Drawback

A Minority character is considered a second-class citizen because of race, ethnic group or religion. She is a member of a small or disadvantaged group, disliked by the mainstream. People of the dominant group tend to act in negative ways towards her; many will be automatically suspicious, fearful or annoyed at her for no reason other than what she is. This Drawback has a 1-point value to reflect the relatively enlightened contemporary America, where people cannot be denied service in a restaurant because of the color of their skin (in most places, at least). In other historical periods or regions of the world, where prejudice has the full weight of the law and tradition behind it, this Drawback might be worth 2 to 3 points.

Multiple Identities

2 points/Identity Social Quality

Some characters have more than one identity. This false person comes complete with such records as a birth certificate, a social security number, and a credit rating. Only characters with criminal, espionage or law enforcement connections are likely to have this Quality, because convincing papers require access to good forgeries and computer records. Each fake identity costs 2 character points. Note that characters traveling under aliases or who have purchased a fake driver's license do not need to purchase this Quality. Each Multiple Identity grants a set of papers and records that pass all but the closest scrutiny. Most police organizations will be fooled by the fake identity; an all-out investigation by such agencies as the FBI or NSA would reveal the truth, but such investigations are not likely.

Nerves of Steel

3-point Mental Quality

A character with this Quality is almost impossible to scare. Whether she is too dumb or too tough to be frightened is open to question, but she can keep her cool even in the face of unspeakable horror. Only the most bizarre and terrifying situations make an impression on a fearless character, and even then she has a good chance of not succumbing to panic. The character must make Fear Tests (see p. 130) only when confronted with the strangest supernatural manifestations, and gains a +4 bonus to her roll even then.

Obsession

2-point Mental Drawback

A particular person or task dominates the character's life, to the exclusion of most other things. To pursue her Obsession, she will go to almost any lengths (as limited by her morality). She may neglect other duties, both personal and professional, to pursue that which fascinates her. The obsession may be a person (who may or may not be aware of the character's feelings, but who almost certainly is upset about their intensity) or a task (like getting revenge on somebody, or performing some important or notorious feat).

Paranoid

2-point Mental Drawback

"They" are out to get you. Trust no one. Everything is a conspiracy, everyone is keeping secrets. This character never knows when somebody is going to turn against her. A paranoid character expects treachery at every turn, and rarely trusts even her friends and relatives. Note that in the world of *WitchCraft*, where secret organizations like the Combine have run centuries-old conspiracies, being paranoid is somewhat healthy. However, a character with this Drawback sees conspiracies and danger everywhere, including places where there are none. This makes her stories and beliefs less likely to be believed, even when they are true. Paranoid characters often suffer from Delusions and Emotional Problems (their point values are determined separately).

Photographic Memory

2-point Mental Quality

Those with photographic memories have an uncanny ability to remember things. After reading a book, they can quote passages without missing a word, and they almost never forget anything. The Chronicler will provide information that the character would remember whenever it is necessary. Also, characters with this Quality receive a +1 bonus on any skill where memorizing facts is useful; most scholastic skills fall under this category. Furthermore, any Tasks where memory can play a role will have a +1 to +3 bonus, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Physical Disability

Variable Physical Drawback

This Drawback covers any physical problems affecting the limbs of the character. A disabled character may suffer from limb loss, spinal column damage, and any number of tragic impairments. The possibilities are discussed below.

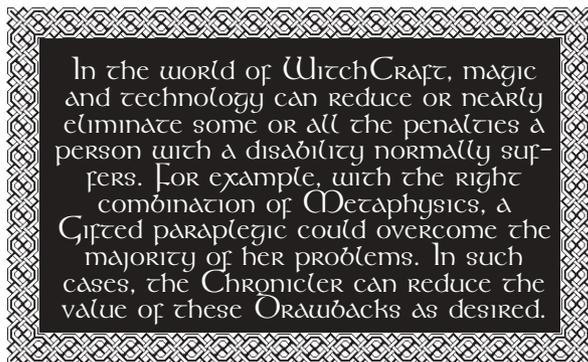
Missing or Crippled Arm/Hand: The hand in question cannot be used to grab or hold objects. Any Test or Task requiring two hands is at a disadvantage (-3 or worse) or simply impossible. This is a 2-point Drawback. A character with a prosthetic hand can overcome some of these problems, reducing the Drawback to 1 point in value.

Missing or Crippled Leg/Foot: The character is unable to walk or run normally. With the help of crutches or a cane, she can move at up to one-third the normal Speed value of the character. Hand-to-hand combat Tasks are at -2. This is a 3-point Drawback. Prosthetics can reduce the penalties, increasing speed to up to half-normal, and reducing combat penalties to -1. This reduces the Drawback value to 2 points.

Missing or Crippled Arms: Both arms are missing or crippled. The character cannot use any tools normally. Some people with this handicap have learned to use their feet with great skill to compensate for their loss. This is a 4-point Drawback.

Missing or Crippled Legs: The character is unable to walk. Without the help of a wheelchair, the best she can do is crawl or roll on the ground. This is a 4-point Drawback.

Paraplegic: Both arms and legs are crippled or missing, or the character is paralyzed from the neck down. Almost all physical activities are impossible. A special wheelchair, operated with the neck or mouth, can help the character move around (if the unfortunate has access to such instruments). Someone needs to take care of all the basic needs of the character, from feeding to changing her. This highly debilitating trait is an 8-point Drawback.



Reckless

2-point Mental Drawback

A Reckless character is supremely overconfident and impulsive, willing to take incredible risks, often without thinking of the consequences. Most of the time, she never looks before she leaps -- and gets into all kinds of trouble as a result. A Reckless character prefers to act first and think about it later. She says what's on her mind with no consideration for diplomacy or courtesy, rushes into dangerous situations, and rarely wastes time on second thoughts. Reckless does not necessarily mean suicidal, however. Acting on impulse no doubt puts the character in jeopardy, but doing something that is clearly lethal is not role-playing, it's just stupid.

Recurring Nightmares

1-point Mental Drawback

This character is plagued by terrifying dreams that relive some traumatic experience or which are just frightening and disturbing. Every night, the Chronicler may check to see if the character suffers from the nightmare. This may be done at the Chronicler's discretion, or may be rolled randomly (a roll of 1 on a D10 means the character experiences a nightmare that night). On any night when the character is afflicted by the nightmare, she loses D4(2) Endurance Points as the result of her inability to go back to sleep.

Resources

Variable Social Quality or Drawback (2 points /level, positive or negative)

The character's level of Resources determines how much material wealth they have access to. This trait varies widely. Some levels are described below.

Destitute (-5): Has no money, the clothes on her back, maybe ten dollars' worth of stuff and maybe a shopping cart. Lucky to scrounge a few dollars a month.

Miserable (-4): Owns about \$100 worth of property (including the clothes on her back). May live in public housing, or might be homeless. Lucky to scrounge \$100 a month.

Poor (-3): Owns some \$500 in property and lives in low-income housing. Has an income of \$500 a month or what she gets from welfare.

Hurting (-2): Owns about \$1,000 in property, and lives in a small apartment in a bad part of town. Has an income of about \$1,000 a month before taxes.

Below Average (-1): Owns \$5,000 in property (including an old vehicle, perhaps), and lives in an apartment. Has a pre-tax income of \$1,500 a month.

Average (0): Owns \$15,000 in property. Has an income of \$2,500 a month before taxes.

Middle Class (+1): Owns \$50,000 in property (will usually include a house or condominium, not to mention vehicles). Has an income of \$5,000 a month before taxes.

Well-off (+2): Owns \$300,000 in property. Has an income of \$10,000 a month before taxes.

Wealthy (+3): Owns \$700,000 in property. Has an income of \$40,000 a month.

Rich (+4): Owns \$2,000,000 in property. Has an income of \$50,000 a month

Multimillionaire (+5): Owns \$5 million in property. Has an income of \$200,000 a month

Each additional level adds an additional \$5 million in property and \$200,000 to monthly income.

Secret

Variable Social Drawback

There is a hidden fact about the character that would hurt her should it ever come out. The more damaging the secret would be if it became known, the higher the value of the Drawback. For example, damage to one's reputation and livelihood would be worth 1 point; a threat to the person's well being (she might be arrested or deported if the truth were known) is worth 2 points; if the secret could cost the character her life, it is worth 3 points.

Showoff

2-point Mental Drawback

The whole world is the Showoff's audience, and she loves to perform for it. She never misses a chance to cast the spotlight on herself or her accomplishments, while quickly excusing or covering up her mistakes. A Showoff loves to get public acclaim, or at least the respect of her peers. Most of the time, she simply makes sure people notice her, but on occasion she might try a bit too hard to attract attention to herself and her deeds. This Drawback is slightly more complex than the Covetous: Conspicuous Drawback, and the Showoff is less likely to betray her principles in order to hog the spotlight.

Situational Awareness

2-point Mental Quality

The observant almost always know what is going on around them, and can react with uncanny quickness to the unexpected. These characters gain a +2 bonus to any Perception-based rolls to sense trouble or danger in the immediate surroundings. It is very hard to sneak up on them; the same bonus applies to resist any Stealth Tasks to approach them.

Status

Variable Social Quality or Drawback (1 point /level, positive or negative)

This trait represents the standing of the character in the eyes of the people around her. It includes any fame, glory or notoriety the character might have. Note that wealth and Status are often linked; a character gets a bonus to her Status equal to one-half her Resources level (if positive). 0 is middle-class American; -5 is a homeless person, +10 is a member of an ancient noble house, a movie mega-star, or the hero of millions.

Talentless

2-point Mental Drawback

The Talentless individual is totally lacking in creativity and artistic talent. Maybe she is too stolid and practical, or maybe she just doesn't have the imagination to do anything artistic. This Drawback does not just affect her ability in the arts, but also in many social skills where flair and creativity are necessary. A Talentless character has a -3 penalty when trying to do anything artistic. This penalty does not affect Tasks where other people's art is judged; many expert critics are Talentless. When she does try to do something herself, however, the best she can hope for is a mediocre result. In addition to the penalty, the character can never get more than one Success Level in artistic pursuits, regardless of how high her skill, roll or draw are. People with this Drawback also make poor liars, charmers or social butterflies. The same penalty applies to such skills as Intimidation, Seduction and Smooth Talking -- a lack of creativity affects the ability to influence others.

Zealot

3-point Mental Drawback

A zealot is a person whose beliefs (political, religious or personal) are so strong that they dominate her life and behavior. Zealots are willing to sacrifice anything, including their lives (or the lives of others) in service to the ideals they hold dear. These characters are dangerous to themselves and others, and will show a total disregard for the law whenever the law conflicts with their beliefs.



Supernatural Qualities and Drawbacks

In general, these Qualities and Drawbacks are only available to the Gifted, Lesser Gifted and Bast Character Types. Exceptions to this rule are noted in the descriptive text of each Quality or Drawback.

Accursed

Variable Supernatural Drawback

The character has been afflicted by a powerful curse, one that may haunt her until the end of her days. The actual elements of the curse, and how difficult it is to remove it, determine the point value of this Drawback. This Drawback is not meant to be removed by a simple application of Magic or other Gifted powers. For the most part, it is the result of a misdeed the character committed in the past, and atonement for the misdeed is a major step (but may not be the only one) needed to remove the curse.

A curse of this magnitude is only possible for the worst crimes and injuries. It might have been something a character committed in a past life -- perhaps the vengeful Ghost of a victim is hounding the character through the ages. The Chronicler and the player may work together in deciding the origins of the curse, or the Chronicler may craft it herself. In the latter case, the origin of and the solution to the curse should remain a mystery to the character.

Depending on its severity, a curse can be worth anywhere between 1 and 10 points. A 10-point curse would be a terrible thing, something that would utterly ruin any chance of the character leading a normal or happy life, or which might kill the victim at any moment. Some rules of thumb to determine the power of the curse are given below. As usual, the Chronicler is the final judge as to what is and is not appropriate to a campaign.

A major inconvenience or annoyance is worth 1 point. For example, the character seems to attract flies, fleas and vermin; milk sours quickly in the presence of the victim; little accidents plague the accursed one.

Something more dramatic and harmful would be worth 2 to 3 points. For example, people tend to be distrustful and angry at the character for no apparent reason (-2 to -3 on all attempts to influence people), or the character can never accumulate a lot of money without losing it (this would preclude any Resource level above 0). Alternatively, people around the character are plagued by small accidents and annoying incidents. In this case, personal involvement is as important as that of physical proximity. A close friend of the victim suffers from the effects of the curse regardless of how far away she is. By the same token, all the people sharing a subway car with the accursed person also suffer from it.

Severe or life-threatening curses will be worth 4 to 5 points. For example, every day, an accident, mishap or random occurrence will endanger the character's life -- a car skips a red light when the character is crossing the street, a gang shootout breaks out in front of her, or a similar dangerous chance event occurs. If the character is alert, she might survive the mishap without injury, but every day, she has to live with the knowledge that sometime, somewhere, something dangerous and terrible is going to happen.

The difficulty in getting rid of a curse may add 1 to 5 points to its value. If undoing or atoning for a past misdeed is the only requisite, no additional points are awarded. If the misdeed is not known, add 1 point, as the character must spend time finding out why she was cursed. If the undoing process is extremely complex, or involves illegal activities (in some cases, killing the one who cursed the character is necessary), add 2 to 3 points. If a long quest culminating in a difficult magical ceremony, divine intervention, or a similar extraordinary factor is necessary to remove the curse, add 4 to 5 points. And some curses cannot be removed by any means. This adds 6 points to the value of the curse, but no measure will be effective in eliminating it.

Age

5 points/level Supernatural Quality

Some beings have been alive and active for several life spans; they could be powerful Gifted humans, spirits, Sidhe or other supernatural beings. Ancient characters are very powerful, having refined their

powers with centuries of practice. This Quality assumes that the character has powers or natural abilities that have allowed her to survive this long (such powers must be purchased separately). Gifted characters with the appropriate Essence Pool can purchase this Quality (see Essence and Immortality, p. 208), as can long-lived beings like Vampyres or the Sidhe (see *Mystery Codex* and other *WitchCraft* publications).

Each level of Age adds one century to the character's life span. Truly ancient beings (nearly a millennium old) have ten or so levels of Age, and are extremely powerful. As such, they are not appropriate as Cast Members in Pre-Heroic and Heroic games, or even in most Legendary ones. Beings over 1,000 years old are too powerful for even Legendary games, and work only in Mythical campaigns (see Campaign Levels, p. 292).

Note that the Age Quality refers to periods during which the character was *active*. Many supernatural beings, like Vampyres and Phantasms, often have long periods of "down time:" times when they were in slumber, or otherwise dormant. A player who wants to create a character from a truly ancient period can do so, adding as many levels of Age as she can afford (up to the allowable maximum), and should consider the rest of the time to be "down time." The bonuses the character gets are restricted to those levels of Age she bought, however. It was during these times that the character is considered active.

In game terms, Age gives the character more points to put into the Skills and Metaphysics categories, and raises the character's Essence Pool. Each level of Age gives the character one point per level of Intelligence to put into Skills, one point per level of the character's highest mental Attribute (Intelligence, Willpower or Perception) to put into Metaphysics, and one extra point to their Essence Pool per Willpower level. If using the Optional Skill Point Generation System (see p. 55), a character with one or more levels of Age also get a bonus of five Skill points per level and no modifiers to their Attributes. This addition is cumulative with the Skill points based on Intelligence normally gained with each level of the Age quality.

The maximum level of Age allowed to a character is 3, or her highest Mental Attribute, whichever is lower. Further, Age is not without its drawbacks. Over time, enemies and secrets are accumulated, and these always seem to outlast friendships and renown. For each level of Age, the character must take one level of either Adversary (see p. 73) or Secret (see p. 82) and gains no additional character points as a result of these Drawbacks.

For example, Kathy is creating (with her Chronicler's permission) a 130-year old Rosicrucian. Her character learned the Art at an early age during the Victorian Era, and she proved to be extremely proficient at it. She has 130 Essence Points, and the Chronicler decides that she accumulated the first 100 points early in her life, slowing down her aging process to 1/5 the normal rate (see Essence and Immortality, p. 208). Kathy's character appears to be in her late thirties or early forties. This level of Age gives the character 4 extra points for Skills (her Intelligence is 4), 5 points for Metaphysics (based on her Willpower), and 5 extra Essence Points. If the Chronicler decides to use the Optional Skill Point Generation System (see p. 55), Kathy's character gets an additional 5 Skill category points. Finally, Kathy decides that her character has gained a 1 point Adversary over her extended lifetime.

Divine Inspiration

5-point Supernatural Quality; Prerequisite: Gift

The Divinely Inspired can transcend the limits of the flesh, and become a tool of a Greater Power. They are Inspired to fight the forces of darkness, and dedicate their lives to this purpose.

The Inspired may use their own inner strength under the delusion that their power comes from without, or they may truly be the instruments of an omnipotent being. The important thing is that they must hold dearly to the tenets of their faith, and must never go against them.

If an Inspired character breaks a commandment or hesitates in her faith, she temporarily (or even permanently) loses the capability to perform miracles. Furthermore, the powers of the Inspired can only be used in ways that serve the Higher Power the character worships. Characters with Divine Inspiration are

able to channel Essence using their link to a Higher Power. Most Inspired consider this Higher Power to be the “True God.” Characters with Divine Inspiration cannot use Magic or Necromancy, but may have Seer Powers. An extended discussion of Divine Inspiration Powers can be found in Chapter Six: Metaphysics (see p. 242).

Essence Channeling

Variable Supernatural Quality

Essence is the Force of Creation. It exists in “solid” form in all facets of reality -- in all matter and energy. It is also present in “pure” form, but it is invisible to Mundanes. Pure Essence is present in our minds and souls, in invisible currents in the physical world, and in apparently solid shapes in the Otherworlds, levels of reality that most humans only access through dreams or visions. Some among the Gifted have the power to channel Essence, to manipulate it and project the very strength of their souls into the world, changing Nature in accordance to their Will. These are the Metaphysical Arts.

This power is useful mostly to practitioners of Magic, who use the flows of Essence to manipulate reality. The level of one’s Essence Channeling determines how much power can be brought to bear and how quickly. This Essence can be used in a number of ways: offensively in combination with various Arts, or defensively to protect the channeler from harm. Characters without Essence Channeling can use Magic, but such practices require rituals and take a great deal of time and energy (see Rituals -- Tapping Ambient Essence, p. 201).

Essence Channeling is bought in levels. These levels determine how many points of Essence can be used in a single Turn. They also determine how many Essence Points are recovered every minute. The cost of each level of Essence Channeling is found in the nearby table.

Essence Channeling Cost Table

Level	Character Point Cost
1-5	2 points per level
6+	5 points per level

Gift

5-point Supernatural Quality

This Quality is the prerequisite to acquire most Supernatural Qualities and to purchase Metaphysical powers and abilities. It is the defining characteristic of the supernaturally-adept characters in *WitchCraft*.

The Gift denotes a connection with the Otherworlds, a connection that allows the character to sense things that are hidden from the Mundanes. All the Gifted have the ability to perceive the presence of supernatural energies or creatures. By succeeding at a Simple Perception Test, a Gifted character can sense if a supernatural being is near, and can detect strong flows of Essence in an area or object. This sensing is not precise. It does not tell the character exactly what or who is emanating an excess of magical energies, although the Success Level of the Test gives the Gifted character more information.

All Gifted and Lesser Gifted characters must purchase the Gift Quality, using their Quality or Metaphysics points.

Good/Bad Luck

3 points/level Supernatural Quality or Drawback

If a character enjoys Good Luck, Fortune smiles on her far more often than most people. Sometimes, she pulls off amazing stunts that by rights she should find impossible to perform. Whenever she needs a break, there is a good chance that circumstances will conspire to give her one. If the character suffers from Bad Luck, on the other hand, Murphy’s Law (“if anything can go wrong, it will”) always applies to everything she does. This Quality/Drawback is available to Mundane characters.

In game terms, each level of Luck counts as a +1 bonus (or -1 penalty) that can be applied to a Task or Test, once per game session. Multiple levels can be added together for a big bonus on one Task/Test, or spread around several different actions. For example, if a character has 3 levels of Good Luck, she can get a +3 bonus on one action, a +1 bonus to three actions, or a +2 bonus for one and a +1 bonus for another.

With Good Luck, the player decides when it comes into play. Bad Luck, however, is in the hands of the Chronicler, who chooses when it affects a given Task

or Test. Chroniclers should exercise caution and good judgement when applying Bad Luck. If they use Bad Luck for meaningless rolls, then the Drawback becomes little more than a minor inconvenience. On the other hand, applying Bad Luck to Survival Tests or other critical rolls generates resentment among players. Make the Bad Luck count, but don't abuse the characters. For example, Jenna has a 2-point Bad Luck Drawback. At one point in the Story, Jenna takes aim with her gun as a potential source attempts to flee the area. The character's mission will be much harder if the source escapes, but Jenna is in no immediate danger, so the Chronicler tells Jenna that a startled bird flies in front of her, spoiling her aim. A -2 penalty is applied to Jenna's shot.

High Bast

5-point Supernatural Quality

The Bast are an ancient species of intelligent felines, a mating of elemental spirits and the bodies of normal cats. Common Bast are bound in the shape of a cat, generally an unusually large feline, and can only communicate through telepathic means. The High Bast can assume a human form for short periods of time. These beings were the rulers of the Bast, although now they have no special rank or status among their kind. Players who wish to play High Bast must choose the Bast Character Type, and purchase this Quality. The High Bast Quality conveys certain powers and vulnerabilities that are included in the cost of the Quality, and grants access to certain others that must be purchased separately. Further discussion of the Bast appears earlier in this chapter (p. 52), and in Chapter Seven: Supernatural (p. 276).

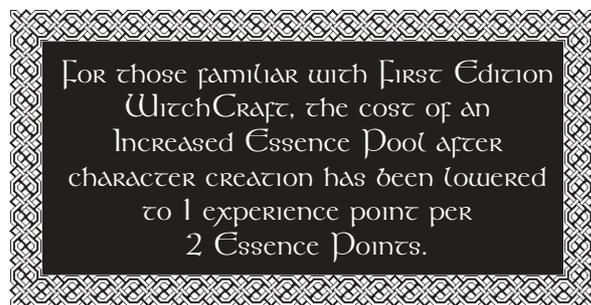
Increased Essence Pool

1/5-point Supernatural Quality (1/2 point after character creation)

While all human beings have Essence, the Gifted generally have a greater amount. Their connection to the Otherworlds has strengthened their souls, making them living beacons of energy. Having a large Essence Pool is both a blessing and a curse. While Essence can be used to affect the world in many ways, it also attracts the attention of evil Gifted and supernatural beings who feed on other's Essence.

Spending 1 point during character creation adds 5 points to the character's Essence Pool. This can be done multiple times. After character creation, every 2 Essence Points costs 1 experience point. This makes it more cost effective to build up Essence when creating the character, representing the relatively slow improvement of the Gifted's powers during the course of their lives. Essence can be purchased after any game session where magic or Essence were used, to indicate a strengthening of the character's spirit.

Any character with the Gift can increase her Essence Pool, although it is most useful to practitioners of Magic and to the Divinely Inspired.



Medium with Magical Training

2-point Supernatural Quality

Most Necromancers in the Twilight Order know little of the Magic Arts. In order to have access to Invocations during character generation, the Medium must purchase this Quality. This represents the difficulty of finding teachers and perfecting the training in the Magic Arts.

Old Soul

4 points/level Supernatural Quality

The character has been reborn many times. As a result, her soul has become stronger. Characters with Old Souls tend to be very mature and precocious for their age. It would be nice to believe that age invariably provides wisdom, but Old Souls are equally likely to be depraved or insightful, cruel or kind. Whatever their orientation, it will usually be more extreme, having been refined over several lifetimes.

This Quality can be acquired multiple times during character creation (but it cannot be acquired afterwards). Each "level" represents some 3-5 previous lives lived before the character's current incarnation. The player can determine who these former selves

were, where they lived, and what they know, or she can leave such information in the hands of the Chronicler. From a roleplaying point of view, creating a “past lives tree” can be interesting. One of the tenets in the *WitchCraft* game is that one’s previous existence has an impact on a person’s current personality and outlook.

Each level adds 6 points to the character’s Essence Pool, even if the character is not Gifted. This makes Old Souls very attractive to evil mages, Vampyres and other predators. Additionally, each level also adds 1 character point to the Attribute Point Pool; these character points can only be used to increase mental Attributes (Intelligence, Perception and Willpower). Successive lives tend to increase the character’s overall insights and understanding -- for good or ill. For example, Mandy the Sorceress has 3 levels of the Old Soul Quality. This gives her 3 more points to put into her mental Attributes, and 18 more Essence Points. Mandy’s player raises the character’s Intelligence from 5 to 6 by spending the 3 points.

Old Souls are sometimes able to tap into the knowledge of their previous lives. These attempts require the character to pass a Willpower and Intelligence Test, and each attempt will drain the character of 1 Essence Point, which is regained normally. When attempting to perform an unskilled Task, the character may receive a flash of knowledge from one of her previous lives. If the player took the time to decide what her character’s previous lives knew, then the character gains, for that one Task, a skill level equivalent to the character’s Old Soul level, but only the skills that the character knew in her previous lives are available. If the previous lives are not known, then the character uses only one half of the Old Soul level (rounded down), but virtually any skill might be known. The only exception would be high-tech Skills that a previous life would be unlikely to know. Asking one’s ancestral memories how to hack into a computer system is not likely to work very well . . .

For example, Mandy, with 3 levels of Old Soul has about 10 past incarnations. The player decided to take the time to figure out who those people were. They include five peasants from different time periods (the Chronicler insisted on at least that many characters being peasants, since most people in pre-modern

times tilled the soil for a living), a Confederate soldier, a Mongol raider, a Medieval Italian Princess, and a Wicce from the Victorian Era. In the course of an adventure, Mandy needs to ride a horse, and she does not know how, but her Mongol past life was an expert. If she passes the Willpower and Intelligence Test, she can ride the horse with an effective skill of 3, at the cost of 1 Essence point. The skill will be in effect for as long as the ride lasts; if later in the day she needs to ride a horse again, a new Task and another expenditure of Essence are required. If the player had not fleshed out the past incarnations, Mandy would have been able to ride the horse, but with a skill of only 1.

Most Mundanes have not reincarnated that often, and they remember little, if anything, about their former lives. Still, no reason exists to forbid the Old Soul Quality to Mundanes, if the player and Chronicler feel it is appropriate to the Story.

Rosicrucian Scholar **2-point Supernatural Quality**

Rosicrucians specialize in the study of Magic and Invocations. Few have any abilities in other Arts (including Sight and Necromancy); none are Inspired. In order to purchase Sight, Necromancy or other allowable Arts, a Rosicrucian character must first buy this Quality. This represents the difficulty of finding teachers and perfecting the training in these rarer Arts.



Skills

Skills are learned abilities, the result of training, study or experience. In general, anything that can be taught is considered a skill. The character's background, education and life experiences will determine what skills she would be likely to have.

Buying Skills

To acquire skills, use the character points allocated to the Skills category (as determined by the Character Type). Most skills are deemed Regular Skills, and cost 1 point per level from levels 1 to 5. After level 5, each additional level costs 3 points. For example, Lorna wants her character to have the Driving Skill. She decides that the character is an excellent driver -- in fact, she could race cars for a living! Such expertise would require a skill of 5 or higher. Lorna decides to go for broke and give the character a Driving Skill of 7. This would cost her 5 points for the first 5 levels, and 6 points for the other two levels, for a total of 11 character points. Lorna's character will be an ace driver, but she will not have very many skills in other categories.

Special Skills

Certain skills are more difficult to learn, requiring more time and greater dedication. They are called Special Skills, and include Martial Arts, Medicine and others. Special Skills cost 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter, unless otherwise specified in the skill description.

The Meaning of Numbers

Like most numbers in the Unisystem, high is good and low is bad. The higher a skill level is, the more proficient the character is at using that skill. In general, a level 1 indicates a beginner or amateur, somebody who has just learned the rudiments of the skill.

A level 2 or 3 represents general competency -- the ability to perform average tasks with ease. A level 4 or 5 indicates extreme competence in the subject, the result of a lot of study or practice. Higher levels indicate true mastery of the skill or craft, and the ability to perform the most difficult tasks with relative ease.

Skill Types

Skill Types are required for some skills and represent broad areas of knowledge within the more generic skill category. For example, within the Guns Skill are the Handgun, Rifle, and Shotgun Types. Types most often come into play with broad scholastic skills, such as Humanities, Science and Language. Types must be chosen each time the more generic skill is taken, and cost no character points.

Skill Specialties

Both fiction and real life display many examples of people who specialize in a specific aspect or field of study within a skill. A history student may specialize in the early medieval period, for example, or an occultist may know a great deal more about Vampyres than anything else.

In game terms, Specialties costs 1 character point, and result in a +2 bonus to Tasks involving that field of expertise. This is written as a separate skill. For example, a character could purchase Occult Knowledge 3 for 3 Skill category character points. By specializing with 1 Skill category point, the character could gain Occult Knowledge (Symbology) 5.

Specialties are raised by improving the base skill. As the base skill improves, so does the Specialty. For example, if the character's Occult Knowledge Skill rises from 3 to 4, her Occult Knowledge (Symbology) Skill goes up to 6. Specialties may not be raised without increasing the base skill level. Purchasing a new Specialty after character creation costs 6 experience points.

Specialties should be distinguished from Types, which cost no character points. For example, a character might take Humanities (History) at level 3 during character creation. This costs the usual 3 Skill points. If she chooses to specialize, she might learn Humanities (Pre-Columbian History). This costs 1 point and piggybacks on her History Skill; the Specialty skill level is 5.

Learning New Skills

A character can learn new skills after character creation, during the course of play. This can be done in two ways: through formal study or training, or by hands-on experience. The first option is more time-consuming, but is the sure way to do it.

Learning new skills from scratch is usually more difficult than improving pre-existing skills. This is why it is generally better to have a character with a wide variety of skills at relatively low levels than an overspecialized character with only a few skills. The latter character will have trouble learning new things. The costs of learning new skills and improving old ones are detailed in Chapter Four: Rules, Experience.

Creating New Skills

It is impossible to account for every possible skill in this book. Chroniclers and players who do not find a skill here should feel free to come up with their own. When creating a new skill, a few questions must be answered.

Is the skill very difficult to learn (i.e., any discipline requiring several years of training)? If so, then it should be a

Special Skill, with a higher point cost. Does the skill require a person to specialize (which means the skill will be broken into several separate types) or is specialization optional or additional (in which the Specialty rules apply)? And finally, what Attributes are commonly used with the skill in question, and under what circumstances? Normally, physical activities rely on Dexterity and in some cases Perception, scholastic disciplines rely mainly on Intelligence, and so on.

Using Common Sense

The guidelines provided in the list of skills below, like all the rules in this book, should always take a second seat to plain common sense. If a player is trying to twist the letter of the rules to wring some unreasonable advantage, Chroniclers should let common sense prevail.

Skill List

The following sections discuss a number of skills that may be purchased by *WitchCraft* characters. These skills are grouped together two ways in the Appendix. One chart lists them alphabetically, as they are listed here. The other groups them by certain categories to help players focus on those skills most important to their characters' Concept and profession.

Acrobatics (Special)

The ability to perform tumbles, somersaults and other complex maneuvers. This skill teaches balance, flexibility and speed. Use Acrobatics and Dexterity for most Tasks. This skill is commonly known by circus performers, dancers, martial artists, gymnasts, and athletes. Also, Acrobatics can be used instead of the Dodge Skill to avoid attacks.

Acting

The ability to play a role and successfully counterfeith behaviors, emotions and other character traits. A talented actor can weep on demand, or convincingly display an array of emotions. This skill is useful to both legitimate artists and criminals and con men. Use Intelligence and Acting to give a good performance, and Perception and Acting to spot or judge someone else's act.

Beautician

This is the ability to use make-up, hair dressing, and cosmetics to enhance a person's appearance. Use Intelligence and Beautician for the Task; each Success Level adds a +1 to a person's Attractiveness by hiding blemishes and enhancing a person's good points. Modifiers to these Tasks include the materials available (a +2 in a fully stocked beauty salon, -2 or worse with improvised materials), and the subject's basic Attractiveness level.

Beautician Skills can also be used to help change a person's appearance (Beautician and Intelligence). A skilled character can use hair dyes, contacts and make-up to change a person's appearance greatly. This skill can be used to replace the Disguise Skill, or can add a +1 bonus to Disguise Tasks for each level of success in the Beautician and Intelligence Task.

Using Beautician and Perception allows the character to see how extensively a person is made up, and may be used to identify a disguise (this Task is resisted by the disguiser's own Intelligence and Beautician or Disguise Skills).

Brawling

Brawling covers basic street fighting, karate-parlor "martial arts" training, and similar combat skills. In hand-to-hand combat, Dexterity and Brawling are used for kicks, punches, and similar maneuvers. Strength and Brawling are used for take-downs, wrestling and slamming people around.

Bureaucracy

This skill provides familiarity with the organization of, and procedures used by, bureaucratic institutions. With this skill, the character can find ways to improve an organization's service and performance, or otherwise obtain their services or products more efficiently. Use Intelligence and Bureaucracy to devise ways to make a large group or organization more (or less) efficient; use Willpower and Bureaucracy to "cut through red tape."

Cheating

The skill of breaking the rules and tricking an opponent. Mostly used in games of chance and other forms of gambling. Use Cheating and Intelligence to perform the trick, or Cheating and Perception to spot such a trick.

Climbing

A character with the Climbing Skill knows how to best use any surface to get to the top. Climbing Tasks use Dexterity and Strength or Constitution, depending on the type of climb attempted.

Computer Hacking

This is the skill to penetrate computer systems through a modem, overcome protection and password programs, and steal information or inflict damage on the system. Most tasks use Intelligence and Computer Hacking, although spotting a specific type of defense or password system may use Perception and Computer Hacking instead.

Computer Programming

The skill to write a set of commands in one of the many computer languages. Writing a program uses Intelligence and Computer Programming; Perception and Computer Programming is used to recognize elements of another program.

Computers

This is the basic skill to use computers, including how to use a keyboard and mouse, basic commands, and so on. As computers become more "user-friendly," Chroniclers can assume that most Computer Tasks are Routine or Easy, except where they involve unfamiliar programs and operating systems.

Craft (Type)

The Craft Skill covers numerous types of skills such as those employed by carpenters, seamstresses, weavers, weaponsmiths, woodworkers, etc. When the Craft Skill is purchased, a particular Skill Type must be specified. Characters may further want to specialize. For example, a Gunsmith is the Specialty of the Craft (Weaponsmith) Skill focusing on guns. Bowyer would likewise relate to bows.

Intelligence and Craft is used to conceive and plan an item. Dexterity and Craft is tested to create the item, or repair a damaged item. Perception and Craft serves to appraise an item. The Fine Arts, Electronics, Engineering, Mechanic and other Skills may be used to supplement the Craft Skill. Note that devising and creating a particular item may be a time consuming and difficult task. Often, it is far easier to simply buy a mass produced item.

Dancing (Type)

This skill is not necessary to gyrate to a catchy tune. Dancing represents training in a form of dance, and includes anything from ballet to tribal rituals to high accomplishment on the disco floor. The character must indicate the specific Type of Dancing she is familiar with. Other Types have a default level equal to the Dancing level -2. Dancing and Dexterity are used to actually dance; Dancing and Perception are used to recognize a type of dance and to judge the quality of another's performance.

Demolitions

The ability to set and disarm explosives. Use Intelligence and Demolitions to set up an explosive charge, Perception and Demolitions to understand the setup of an unfamiliar bomb, and Intelligence and Demolitions (resisted by the bomber's own Intelligence and Demolitions) to disarm an enemy bomb. Chroniclers may restrict this skill to those with access to military or espionage training.

Disguise

The ability to change one's appearance using wigs, make-up and clothing. High-tech spies can also use rubber masks, implants and other gadgets to completely alter their face and even body (such high-tech aids may give bonuses of +2 to +6, at the Chronicler's discretion). Use Intelligence and Disguise to apply a disguise, and Perception and Disguise to spot somebody else's disguise.

Dodge

This is a basic combat skill, representing the ability to move out of the way of attacks. Dodges include sidestepping a blow, "hitting the dirt" to avoid gunfire, ducking behind cover, etc. As a skill, Dodge is learned by people with some practice in diving for cover. Dodge is used with Dexterity for most Tasks.

Driving (Type)

The skill to control any land vehicle of the specific type. Each type of vehicle (Car, Truck, Tracked Vehicle, and Motorcycle, among others) requires a separate Driving Skill Type. Most driving Tasks use Dexterity and Driving.

Electronic Surveillance

The skill to set up, use and detect electronic "bugs" -- sophisticated microphones and even cameras hidden in a location to spy on or detect people. Use Intelligence and Electronic Surveillance to set up and use a "bug," and Perception and Electronic Surveillance to detect one (resisted by the operator's original Intelligence Task and Electronic Surveillance result). Chroniclers may wish to restrict this skill to those with military or espionage backgrounds.

Electronics

This skill allows a character to build and repair all manner of electronic devices and tools, and grants the character knowledge about electronic systems and the like. The difficulty of repairing an electronic device depends on how intricate the device is, and how damaged it is. Constructing an electronic item is also more difficult the more advanced and complex the device. Chroniclers should apply a penalty or bonus depending on these factors. Finally, an electronic tool kit must be available for all but the most rudimentary repairs. A lab or workshop may also be required. All repair or construction attempts take time, ranging from a couple of hours to days. This too should be determined by the Chronicler.

Understanding an existing electronic device calls for a Perception and Electronics Task; repairing or constructing a device requires an Intelligence and Electronics Task. It should be noted that this skill and the Mechanic Skill complement one another, and are often used together.

Engineer (Type)

This skill reflects the general knowledge of structural design, material strengths, and construction techniques in a variety of fields and applications. Examples of the Types of Engineering Skill include Architecture, Civil, Construction, Mechanical, Electrical, and Biological. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Engineering Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline. Planning or devising an object, structure or device within the character's Engineering Type demands an Intelligence and Engineering Task.

Escapism

This is the ability to escape from ropes, handcuffs and other restraints. Most of these Tasks use Dexterity and Escapism, with each attempt taking between 1 and 5 minutes, depending on the complexity of the bonds. A simple rope tie would have no modifier, but complex knots might have penalties of -1 to -5, police handcuffs involve a penalty of -4, and straitjacket/strap/chain combos might have penalties of -5 to -8. Expert escape artists also use visualization techniques -- they carefully think about their method of escape before attempting it. This is an Intelligence and Escapism Task that takes two minutes; each Success Level adds a +1 to an immediately subsequent Dexterity and Escapism Task.

Fine Arts (Type)

There are many Types of Fine Arts Skill, such as Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Computer Graphics, etc. In some games, the Chronicler may lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Fine Arts Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline.

Rolls to conceptualize a work of art, or to produce it from memory, improvisation or imagination require Intelligence and Fine Arts. Rendering a concept that is recorded, such as using models or plans, requires Dexterity and Fine Arts. Appreciating another's work uses Perception and Fine Arts.

The Success Levels of a Fine Arts Task indicate how good the artistic expression is. Regardless of the final Task result, the Success Levels cannot exceed the skill level of the artist. For example, a character with Fine Arts (Drawing) 2 cannot accumulate more than 2 Success Levels on a drawing.

First Aid

This skill allows a character to treat basic injuries, and use such techniques as CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver. A successful Intelligence and First Aid Task heals some damage to an injured person (see Medical Healing, p. 153). Typical Tasks include identifying the problem (use Perception and First Aid), performing First Aid (Intelligence and First Aid), and using CPR or applying the Heimlich Maneuver (Dexterity and First Aid).

Gambling

This is the knowledge of most common games of chance, their rules and techniques, and the best strategies to win the game. A character needs both Gambling and Cheating to effectively break the rules.

Guns (Type)

This skill allows the character to use any one type of firearm. The most common Types include Handgun (pistols and revolvers), Rifle, Shotgun, Submachine Gun, and Assault Rifle. If the skill is taken for one Type, the character can use other types of gun, but at a -2 penalty to all Tasks.

Guns and Dexterity are used to fire the weapon. Aiming rolls use Guns and Perception; each Success Level adds +1 to the effective Gun Skill on the next shot fired at the aimed target.

Haggling

The skill provides the character with the ability to deal for goods and services, or otherwise bring two or more parties to some common ground. It may be applied when buying, selling or bartering goods or services. Often used in a Resisted Task, each level of success modifies the price of the subject by 10%. It may also be used for less tangible exchanges, such a political dealmaking. In such circumstances, the Chronicler should adjudicate the result given the goal and the levels of success. Haggling can also be used to determine whether the character is being misled or conned. Use Willpower and Haggling to get the best deal; use Perception and Haggling to spot a con.

Hand Weapon (Type)

Each basic type of weapon is a separate skill. Hand Weapon Skill Types include Axe, Club, Foil/Rapier, Knife, Spear, Staff and Sword. Pre-modern missile weapons like Bow and Crossbow are also Types. They must be learned separately. When using an unfamiliar weapon, use the most closely related Hand Weapon Skill at -2 to -4 (depending on how dissimilar the weapons are).

Humanities (Type)

Each of the various Humanities disciplines (archeology, anthropology, economics, history, law, political science, sociology, theology, etc.) counts as a separate Humanities Skill Type. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Humanities Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline, and a variety of penalties may be applied when trying to use a specific Type outside its range. In any event, most Humanities Tasks use Intelligence or Perception and Humanities.

Humanities Skill Types can include many Specialties. For example, Humanities (Law) includes a number of different subjects, any one of which may be a Specialty (i.e., corporate law, environmental law, criminal law, etc.). Other than giving a character the normal +2 Task bonus for Specialties, Chroniclers may wish to penalize Tasks attempted outside the specialization. For example, a character with Humanities (Ancient History) gains a +2 bonus for Tasks involving the Spartan wars, but may incur a -1 penalty for a question concerning the Renaissance, or a -3 penalty for a question about World War I.

Instruction

Teaching is a skill and an art. The subject matter is important but conveying that information in an interesting, stimulating and comprehensive manner is the heart of the Instruction Skill.

The first step in using the Instruction Skill is to pick a subject matter to teach. This may be any skill known by the teacher, but it must be at least two levels higher than the student's level.

If the required skill level is possessed, the teacher and student must spend a certain period of time on lessons. Every week of game time that the two spend at least 10 hours studying the skill, the teacher can attempt an Intelligence and Instruction Task. The Success Levels of this Task are cumulative; for example, if the teacher and student spend three weeks working on the skill, the Success Levels of all three rolls are added together. When the teacher accumulates five Success Levels in the Task, the student gets 1 Experience Point toward improving that skill.

Chroniclers should determine what is a Humanities Skill Type and what is a Specialty. Further, the penalties applied to Tasks may vary across Types. As a general rule, Types are separate skills. Economics and Law are clearly different Types. Penalties for using one of these Types to answer a question in the other area would be high, if allowed at all. Art History and History are best viewed as different Types as well, but the penalties for crossing over would be somewhat lower (still in the -6 to -8 range). Finally, Theologies specific to different religions such as Wicce Theology and Christian Theology are also best treated as different Types, but the penalties might be only slightly higher than those applied when crossing Specialties (say -3 to -5). Specialties are grounded in larger, more basic skills. American History is clearly a Specialty of History, and would use the lowest level of penalties outside of the Specialty (-1 to -3 for example). The same considerations apply to the Science Skill Types, and others at the Chroniclers' discretion.

For example, Rolando is an accomplished singer (level 5), and a decent teacher (level 3). Maria wants to learn to sing better; she has Singing 1. Rolando's Singing Skill is more than two levels higher than Maria's, so he may teach her. After they spend a good deal of time working together during one week, Rolando tests his Instruction Skill. He rolls a 6, adds 3 for the skill level, and 2 for his Intelligence for a total of 11. That is 2 Success Levels. The next week, they study together again, and Rolando rolls particularly well -- gaining 3 Success Levels. Maria gains 1 experience point dedicated to the Singing Skill.

Language Skill Level Table

Skill Level	Fluency
1	Very thick accent and frequent grammatical mistakes; the character will be immediately identified as a foreigner, and may be misunderstood.
2	Thick accent but largely fluent; the character should have no problems being understood.
3	Slight accent; native speakers will realize this is not the character's first language.
4	Full fluency, only a Resisted Test (listener's Simple Perception versus speaker's Simple Intelligence) will spot the character's accent.
5	Complete mastery; the character can pass for a native without problems.
6+	Dialects: character can perfectly imitate regional accents and dialects in addition to the main version of the language.

Intimidation

The skill to make people afraid, used by bullies or in most confrontational situations. A good Intimidation Task result may stop a fight before it starts by convincing the opponent that she doesn't want to mess with the character. Use Intimidation and Willpower for "real" Intimidation attempts, or Intelligence and Intimidation to bluff an opponent.

Language (Type)

Every character is assumed to have level 5 in their native or primary language. Each additional language must be purchased as a separate Skill Type. The skill level in a language determines not only basic fluency, but the "thickness" of the character's accent (see the Language Skill Level Table nearby). Most of the time, the character need not pass a Task to see if she communicates; as long as the character knows the language, assume that she can talk in it without needing to roll. A Task roll would be necessary in situations involving highly technical or scholarly speech (which may use a lot of words the character doesn't know) or when dealing with extreme regional accents or slang.

Lock Picking (Type)

This skill covers all the basics in breaking and entering. There are two Types: Mechanical and Electronic. Most Tasks use Lock Picking and Dexterity, modified by the difficulty of the lock. Lock Picking (Electronic) uses Perception and

Intelligence, for the most part, to spot and neutralize electronic locks and security systems.

Magic Theory

Students of the occult arts often learn this skill, which covers the elements and techniques of Magic. Ceremonial Covenants like the Rosicrucians study Magic like a science, and are more likely to have this skill, although some among the Wicce also have this systematic knowledge. Magic Theory is used with either Intelligence or Perception to identify and recognize styles of Magic. Gifted characters with this skill can judge the strengths and weaknesses of any Magical matrix (such as that of an ongoing or maintained Invocation). This allows practitioners to best plan a way to counteract or dispel the Magic abilities of an enemy. Use Perception and Magic Theory for this purpose; every level of success adds a +1 bonus on any task involving resisting or counteracting a Magical effect.

Martial Arts (Special)

This is the skill of using an advanced system of hand-to-hand combat. Characters with Martial Arts can do more damage with their hands and feet. Kicks and punches performed with the Martial Arts Skill have a damage bonus equal to the character's skill level. So, a character with Martial Arts level 3 does an additional 3 points of damage with a kick or punch. Advanced Martial Arts rules may be found in the *Mystery Codex* supplement.

Mechanic

This skill allows a character to build and repair all manner of mechanical devices and tools, and grants her knowledge about mechanical systems and the like. The difficulty of repairing a mechanism depends on how intricate the device is, and how damaged it is. Chroniclers should apply a penalty or bonus depending on these factors. Constructing a mechanical item is also more difficult the more advanced and complex the device. Again, modifiers should be imposed by the Chronicler. Finally, a mechanical tool kit must be available for all but the most rudimentary repairs. A lab or workshop may also be required. All repair or construction attempts take time, ranging from a couple of hours to days. This too should be determined by the Chronicler.

Understanding an existing mechanical device calls for a Perception and Mechanic Task; repairing or constructing a mechanism requires an Intelligence and Mechanic Task. It should be noted that this skill and the Electronics Skill complement one another, and often are used together to make repairs to an item or to construct an item.

Medicine (Special)

This skill covers medical knowledge, including basic surgery skills, diagnosis and general medicine. Most doctors also specialize in one type of medicine, such as cardiovascular, surgery, or neurosurgery. These are treated as Specialty Skills.

Diagnosis Tasks use Perception and Medicine, while general treatment tasks use Intelligence and Medicine, and surgery uses Dexterity and Medicine.

Myth and Legend (Type)

This is the knowledge of the mythology and folklore of a specific culture or nation. This skill can be used to identify supernatural creatures, but the information gleaned from myth and legend is as likely as not to be completely wrong or at least very inaccurate. Each culture or nation is a separate Skill Type.

Notice

The streetwise version of Situational Awareness, Notice represents the degree of alertness a person has about her. A character with this skill can use it with Perception to see what is happening around her, or

with Intelligence to remember something she noticed some time ago. A character with Notice can use it with Perception to spot or hear another character using Stealth.

Occult Knowledge (Special)

This is the skill of true arcane knowledge. It covers most of the basic facts of the *WitchCraft* world, including a working knowledge of Essence and its use in Magic, the various other Metaphysical Arts, and the nature of the Otherworlds and spirits. The character may also know some information about a number of cults, Covenants and supernatural creatures, although some of that information may be flawed or incomplete.

Pick Pocket

The skill of taking another person's hard-earned money or things without her noticing it. Most rolls use Dexterity and Pick Pocket, resisted by the victim's Perception and the highest of her Notice, Streetwise or Pick Pocket Skills (if any, or Perception alone -- not doubled -- otherwise).

Piloting (Type)

The skill to control any aircraft or water vehicle of the specific type. Each type of vehicle (propeller plane, jet plane, sailboat, ocean liner) requires a separate Piloting Skill Type. Most Piloting Tasks use Dexterity and Piloting, or Intelligence and Piloting for very large vessels.

Play Instrument (Type)

The character is able to play a musical instrument of one type, chosen when the skill is taken. The character may choose more than one type of instrument to play, but each instrument is counted as a separate Skill Type. At the higher levels of the skill, the character is more proficient in tonal quality, rhythm, and improvisation. In order to play for pleasure, the character would use Dexterity and Play Instrument. If performing a complex piece of music, the attempt would use Intelligence and Play Instrument. If the character is performing a long piece of music, use Constitution and Play Instrument. In all circumstances the quality of the performance is reflected in the levels of success. No matter what the ultimate roll, no musician may enjoy more Success Levels than she has skill levels.

Questioning

This is the ability to interrogate, spot lies, and otherwise extract the truth from people. This skill is quickly learned by police officers, private investigators, and investigative reporters. Most interrogations should be roleplayed. If a Task or Test is needed, how well the player roleplayed the interview should give her bonuses or penalties of +5 to -5, at the Chronicler's discretion. Tricking somebody into revealing something uses the questioner's Intelligence and Questioning, resisted by a Simple Intelligence Test. Spotting a lie uses Perception and Questioning, also resisted by a Simple Intelligence Test. Breaking a victim's will to resist uses Willpower and Questioning, resisted by a Simple Willpower Test. The use of torture and drugs may give bonuses of +1 to +6 to the questioner's Task.

Research/Investigation

This skill allows a character to search out information or follow a series of clues and leads to a reasonable conclusion through deduction, source checking, going to libraries, searching on the Internet, and the like. Alternatively, this skill can be used by the character to do legwork -- running down leads on a story, or questioning contacts and sources of information (the latter would incur some penalties; this aspect would best be left to the Questioning Skill).

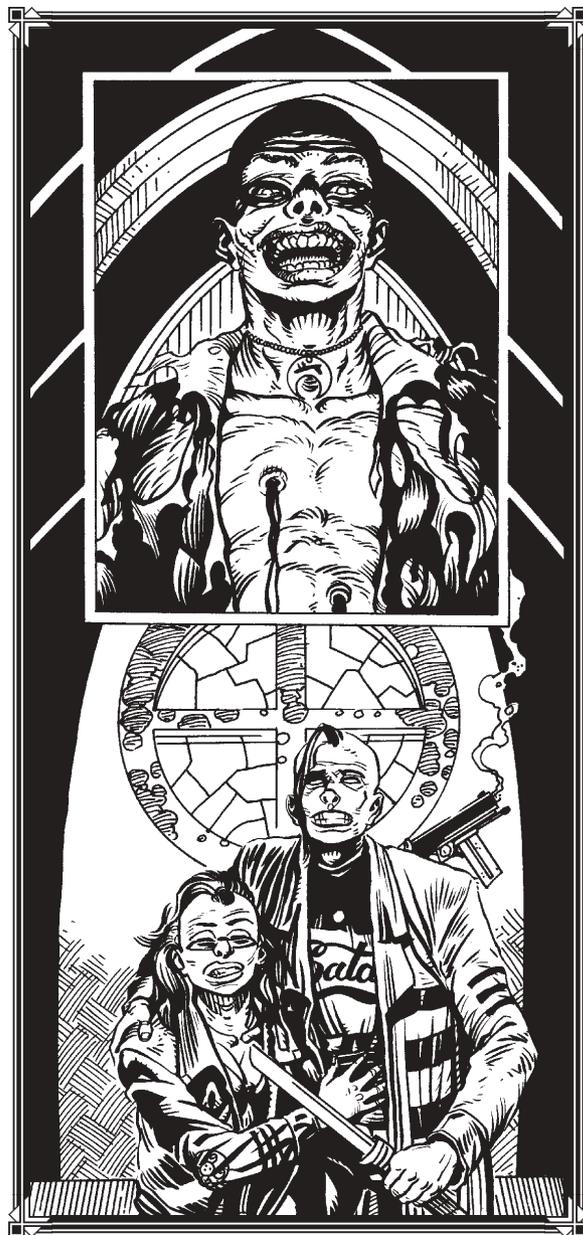
In all cases, the use of this skill takes time. The amount of time is determined by the Chronicler, based on the nature of the search being undertaken by the character. Most uses of this skill involve Intelligence and Research Tasks. In other cases, it is possible that Constitution and Research (in the case of searching through dusty old tomes for long periods of time or of walking the length and breadth of a library for the better part of a day), or Perception and Research (in the case of researching obscure facts in voluminous materials, such as finding a certain name in a room full of documents) can be used.

Riding (Type)

The skill to ride horses, carts, chariots and other animals or animal-driven vehicles. Each type of animal or vehicle requires a separate Riding Skill Type.

Rituals (Type)

The skill to perform rituals and ceremonies of a particular culture or Covenant (each Covenant counts as a separate Skill Type). Rituals that require dancing or other complex physical activity use Rituals and Dexterity; most others use Rituals and Intelligence to remember all the appropriate steps involved.



Running (Type)

There are two Types of Running. The first one is Running (Marathon). This skill covers running for endurance and distance. A good marathoner can cover ten or more miles (15 or more kilometers) without stopping. An official marathon usually covers 25 miles (40 kilometers). The best runners can cover that distance in about two hours. A character with Running (Marathon) can use this skill and her Constitution Attribute to resist the effects of fatigue after a long period of extensive physical activity. Also, add 1 Endurance Point to the character's Pool for every level in Running (Marathon).

Running (Dash) trains the character to increase speed for short distances. On a dead run, use Constitution and Running (Dash) to increase maximum running speed. Each Success Level acquired adds +1 to the character's Speed Secondary Attribute.

Sciences (Type)

Each science (biology, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, physics, etc.) counts as a separate Science Skill Type. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills would play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Science Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline, and a variety of penalties may be applied when trying to use a specific Type outside its range. See the description of the Humanities Skill (p. 94) to determine how to play Science Skill Types. Most Sciences Tasks use Intelligence or Perception.

Seduction

The ability to make oneself sexually attractive to other people by saying the right things and putting on the right act. Intelligence is used, modified by any Charisma or Attractiveness bonuses or penalties the character might have. Other skills may give bonuses to Seduction attempts. For example, previous Tasks using Beautician and Smooth Talking add their Success Levels to the Seduction attempt.

Singing

While everybody can try to sing, this skill is necessary to do it right. This skill reflects the training of the character's voice. Use Constitution and Singing for the quality of the song, Intelligence and Singing to remember every verse of a long or complex song, and Perception and Singing to recognize and measure the quality of someone else's singing.

Sleight of Hand

This is the ability to perform sleight of hand and legerdemain, and is known mainly by stage magicians. With this skill, a character can fool the audience into looking at one thing while she does something else. Most Sleight of Hand Tasks use Dexterity, and are resisted by a Perception Test (Simple or Difficult depending on the circumstances) or a Perception and Notice Task. To plan a complex magical trick (e.g., sawing a woman in half, diverse death traps) requires an Intelligence and Sleight of Hand Task, often supplemented by assorted Craft Skills to actually build the contraptions or gadgets needed.

Smooth Talking

This skill allows the character to lie convincingly or to confuse and deceive others. This skill is commonly known by con men, salesmen and politicians. Use Intelligence and Smooth Talking for most Tasks.

Snares

The ability to set traps for animals, from simple baited snares to well-hidden bear traps. This skill can be used against humans, but with a -2 penalty. Use Snares and Intelligence to set the trap. Chroniclers and Cast Members should discuss the effects of the trap, including any damage imposed.

Sport (Type)

This skill covers all types of competitive sports, from football to ping pong. Each Sport must be learned as a separate Type. Depending on the Task, use Strength or Dexterity and Sport. For example, a football pass would use Dexterity and Sport (Football); a tackle would use Strength and Sport (Football). To come up with a good strategy or game plan, use Intelligence and Sport (Type); to spot a rules violation, use Perception and Sport (Type).

Stealth

The ability to move quietly and to take advantage of cover and concealment. Most Task rolls use Dexterity and Stealth; Perception is used to find good hiding places.

Storytelling

This skill allows a character to sway or influence an audience, be it one individual or a group of people, from one emotion to the next by means of a tale. It can be used for the purpose of educating an individual or a group of people, as well as merely for entertainment. In some cultures, storytelling is the means by which knowledge and lore are passed down, and so the skill has uses for some primitive societies, but is also quite useful under certain circumstances when dealing with Myth and Legend and Occult Knowledge and the like. The character may tell a tale that is true or fictional, although the audience will generally not know the difference. The character must constantly be aware of how the listeners are reacting to the tale and thus may alter her pacing, volume, or even change the course of the story to elicit a better or greater response.

Storytellers use Willpower and Storytelling Tasks. The Success Level dictates the effectiveness or entertainment value of the story. If the people listening to the story are familiar with the tale, they may resist the attempt of the storytelling character to influence them with a Difficult Willpower Test; use a Simple Willpower Test in the case of Gifted characters.

Streetwise

The general knowledge of the lore and rules of the streets. A character with this skill knows how to behave in a given situation, knows the names and most of the faces of the more notorious local members of the underworld, and can identify most illegal transactions and operations. Use Intelligence and Streetwise to recognize a local street name, gang color or criminal, and Perception and Streetwise to spot trouble or detect criminal activities nearby.

Surveillance

This is the ability to follow and keep people under observation. A character with Surveillance can attempt to keep sight of a target while following her through a crowded street, while trying to remain unobserved. By the same token, this skill allows a person to know if she is being followed or observed. Use Surveillance and Perception for either activity.

Survival (Type)

This is the skill of living off the land. Each kind of terrain requires a separate Skill Type. Attempts to use a Survival Skill in the wrong place or type of terrain are at a -3 penalty. Common Types include Forest, Mountain, Jungle, Desert and Arctic.

Swimming

Swimming is the skill that allows a character to stay afloat and to move in the water without drowning. Floating is an Average difficulty Constitution and Swimming Task when fully clothed; it becomes Easy with little or no clothing (see Modifiers to Tasks and Tests, p. 128). Each pound/kilogram of equipment or weight effectively reduces a character's Swimming Skill level by one.

If the Task is failed, the character sinks and drowns in a number of Turns equal to her Constitution. Shedding clothing or equipment (which requires one Turn) allows a character to attempt the Task anew.

If the character succeeds, she stays afloat and may swim at a speed equal to her Swimming Skill in yards (meters) per Turn. Swimming is an exhausting activity. Floating with little clothing uses 1 Endurance Point per 10 minutes. Floating while fully clothed uses 1 Endurance Point per minute. Swimming unclothed takes 1 Endurance Point per minute at half-speed and 5 Endurance Points per minute at full speed. Those who swim clothed, or who carry equipment when they swim, use double the Endurance cost and move at half speed. Towing another person while Swimming imposes a -1 modifier, doubles the Endurance cost, and halves the swimmer's speed.

Tracking

This is the skill used to follow the trail of an animal or person, usually in wilderness terrain, but also in an urban setting if snow or dust are present in enough quantity to leave a trail. Most Tracking Tasks use Tracking and Perception; attempts to hide one's tracks use Tracking and Intelligence.

Trance (Special)

Trance is often used by shamans and mystics. It enables the character to enter a meditative state that transcends physical limitations. Among other things, someone in a trance can withstand pain, hunger and thirst better than the average human being. A trance is also helpful when communicating with spirits or sensing the influence of the supernatural.

To enter into a trance, use Willpower and Trance. If successful, the character becomes extremely focused on the task at hand, which gives her a -2 penalty on all non-related Perception Tests. On the other hand, the character is not affected by pain and shock penalties, and she gains a +2 bonus on all Tasks and Tests she is concentrating on, including Metaphysical abilities like Magic or Necromancy. A character in Trance also regains Essence more rapidly; characters without Essence Channeling gain double the normal Essence amount per hour of meditation. Characters with Essence Channeling get an additional point of Essence per minute, as long as the character remains motionless and in a meditative state.

Traps

This is the knowledge to detect, disarm and set traps, commonly known by Special Forces soldiers, guerrillas and the like. Use Traps and Intelligence to devise a trap, Traps and Perception to detect a trap, and Traps and Dexterity to disarm such a device.

Unconventional Medicine (Type/Special)

This skill covers all methods of healing not widely accepted by Western Science, including herbal medicine, acupuncture, etc., each of which is considered a different Skill Type. The effectiveness of each type of unconventional medicine is determined by the Chronicler. If the skill is effective in treating disease and injury, use the same skills and effects as the conventional Medicine Skill (see p. 96).

Veterinary Medicine

Just like the Medicine Skill, but applies to animals. A Veterinarian can treat humans, but is at a -3 penalty to all Task rolls, and despite the results of rolls, cannot gain more than two Success Levels.

Weight Lifting

When trying to exceed Strength limits (see p. 67), Weight Lifting is very helpful. Use Strength and Weight Lifting instead of Strength times two, or, if the Strength Attribute is higher than the Weight Lifting Skill, add one-third of the Weight Lifting Skill level (rounded up) to the base number.

Writing (Type)

This skill allows the character to construct and write entertaining and/or meaningful written accounts and narratives. The character is able to write text in a convincing manner to suit whatever goal or presentation is required. Types of skills would include Academic (learned expositions of the arts, humanities or sciences), Advocacy (legal arguments, ad copy or promotional materials), Creative (such as novels, poems or plays), Journalist (informative discussions of newsworthy topics), and Technical (precise descriptions using nomenclature specific to a certain technology).

Using an Intelligence and Writing Task, the character is able to write documents, items, notes, or whatever the type of specialization implies. The quality of the writing depends on the Success Levels obtained. The Success Level of such a work cannot exceed the writer's skill, however. Using a Perception and Writing Task, the character can critique writing of the style with which she is familiar.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics (also known as Crafts or Arts) are the special Powers that the Gifted and certain supernatural beings (like the Bast) can wield. They and their point costs are fully described in Chapter Six: Metaphysics. The Crafts are briefly described here.

Magical Invocations

Magicians manipulate the world through the power of their will, the expenditure of Essence, and the performance of rituals that help focus that will and give shape to the Essence used. These rituals, or Invocations, must be learned by the Magician.

The Sight

The Sight, or Second Sight, is the term used by occultists to describe the powers of the mind, also known as psychic, psionic or esper powers. The Sight includes the power to see into the past and future, to read thoughts and to move objects through sheer force of will. Each power is acquired separately, and it has an Art (the skill used to activate the power) and a Strength (the raw power of the psychic ability).

Necromancy

The ability to interact with the dead, this Craft is similar in some ways to both Magic and the Sight, but is a separate ability, one few people (commonly known as Mediums) ever learn, let alone master. Necromantic powers are activated through the Necromancy Skill. There are four basic Powers, each controlling a particular aspect of the Afterworld: Death Speech, Death Vessel, Death Lordship and Death Mastery.

Divine Inspiration

This is the power of pure unbridled faith -- the belief in a Greater Power and the will to perform great works in the name of that Power. Its wielders claim to serve the Creator directly. Detractors claim the Powers are within the faithful themselves, and have no external source. Whatever the truth is, the Inspired can perform incredible feats, called Miracles. These Miracles are special abilities gained through mystical revelation.

Possessions

This is everything the character owns. In most *WitchCraft* games, a detailed inventory of a character's possessions is not necessary. A character with average Resources owns a TV set, a phone, and a number of items of clothing. She lives in a rental apartment or room. Most characters also own a vehicle of some sort. The Resources Quality/Drawback helps determine what a character is likely to own. A multimillionaire may own boats, airplanes and helicopters, while a destitute character will have to make do with a purloined shopping cart.

For the most part, characters cannot spend all their cash on weapons and other adventuring equipment. Most people spend the bulk of their money on everyday items like lamps, books, television sets, and so on. Depending on the character's background and Resources, only one-third to one-tenth of the character's wealth can be directly used to buy special pieces of equipment.

Typical possessions found among adventurers are discussed in the remainder of this section.

Computers

These prices include the basics, such as a monitor, printer, and modem. For \$800-1,000, you can get a computer that will handle most older programs, but may be lacking in speed and memory; perfectly fine for those who only need it for word processing and such. For \$1,500-2,000, you have something that will not be obsolete for maybe six months to a year. For \$3,000-4,000 you will get a system that will be able to run most applications and games without problems for a year or two. For \$6,000+ you can get a cutting-edge high-end system, useful for powerful applications. For the latest prices, feel free to check an up-to-date computer manufacturer's catalog.

With a modem, a character can get on the Internet and the World Wide Web. Through them, she can find information on just about every topic.

Vehicles

A new car ranges in value from \$15,000 to hundreds of thousands, depending on the make and model. Used cars can be had for a fraction of those values. The best way to find the price of a car is to check its listing in a real catalog or Blue Book.

Weapons

A knife, baseball bat or similar improvised weapon costs between \$5 and \$20. A cheap gun runs about \$100, and a character can get a semi-automatic pistol or a shotgun for \$200 to \$600. Rifles range from a few hundred to thousands of dollars.

Military weapons are not available to the average character. As usual, the Chronicler has the final say regarding appropriate Cast Member items.

Finishing Touches

After the player has determined all the basic elements, she is pretty much finished with creating the character. All that is left is a few final touches that make the character come alive and seem like more than just a collection of numbers on a piece of paper. Note that these “finishing touches” can be done just as easily at the beginning as at the end of the character creation process. Sometimes, the last touches can wait until the player starts roleplaying the character. Some players need to start playing before they get a “feel” for the role. As always, each player should do whatever works best for her.

Name

First, of course, is the character’s name. This simple touch can add a number of roleplaying elements. The character’s first and last name can indicate ethnic background (an Italian name conjures images of growing up in an ethnic neighborhood in New York, for example) and the kind of family that raised the character (a Biblical name might indicate a strict Christian background, while a name like “Moonlight” might indicate the character’s parents were Hippies). Some characters may adopt nicknames or “street names” in addition to their given

names. Maybe they hate the name their parents gave them. It is easy to come up with any old name, but having it mean something can add to the fun.

Appearance

The character’s appearance and demeanor are also important elements. Whether or not a character is attractive and charismatic is determined by any Qualities or Drawbacks purchased during character creation, but the description makes the numbers come to life. Beyond obvious things like hair and eye color and general physique, there are subtler elements that can help the Chronicler and the other players get a better “handle” on the character.

Does the character walk in a timid, stooped position, or does she swagger around like she owns the world? Does she have any nervous ticks or other habitual behaviors? Does she smile a lot, or does she have a grim demeanor? The character’s appearance should take into account her Attributes, Qualities and Drawbacks -- a character who is Paranoid may have a tendency to look behind her every once in a while, or maybe she always insists on being the last one to enter any room.

Age

Beginning *WitchCraft* characters are assumed to be between 18 and 30 years old. Within this range, the exact age is entirely up to the player and Chronicler. For those wishing to play younger or older characters, the Optional Skill Point Generation System sidebar gives some ideas how to modify characteristics.

Speech Pattern

Not everybody is an actor, but it can be fun to have the character use a different speech pattern than the player’s own. Maybe the character uses slang more heavily, or she affects a cultured vocabulary. Even something as simple as a word the character uses a lot will make her stand out and be remembered by the rest of the Cast. Always keep in mind that making an interesting character does not mean trying to steal the spotlight all the time, however.

Archetypes

The sample characters provided in the remainder of this chapter are called Archetypes. They were designed using the creation rules described in this chapter.

These characters can be used for beginning players in a *WitchCraft* game. Just copy their statistics, or alter them to fit your needs, as long as the total points spent remain the same. These Archetypes can also be used as models and as inspiration to create characters from scratch. Their stories, genders, Attributes, skills, or any other elements can be tweaked to produce different characters.

If the Chronicler ever needs to start a game quickly (as often happens at conventions), and there is not enough time to create characters, the Archetypes can be assigned to players on the spot. The Archetypes below include Gifted, Bast, Lesser Gifted and Mundane characters.

Each Archetype includes a description, as well as sections on the character's Origins, Allies and Enemies, and Roleplaying notes. The Origins section details how the character became who she is. This section can be modified to fit the needs of the player or the campaign. The Allies and Enemies sections give a number of possible friends and antagonists for the character. These are possibilities to be picked or rejected by the player or Chronicler; like the origins, they can be altered as needed. The Roleplaying section gives some ideas and possibilities on how to use the character in a *WitchCraft* game.



Wicce Healer of Nature

The world is dying -- or rather, it is being murdered by the Mundanes. It is up to you to save it from the all-consuming greed of others. To stand by and do nothing will bring harm to all.

You are a magical activist. For the most part, you prefer to work within the law, uncovering and denouncing the worst polluters and despoilers. Sometimes, however, the damage is too extreme, and the power of the perpetrators is too great, for normal measures to work. Other Wicce have called you an eco-terrorist, although you are always careful only to strike against the guilty. As far as you are concerned, however, you are defending the world and attempting to restore the balance.

When phone calls and picket lines are not enough, your Magic and Second Sight allow you to uncover illegal deeds, scare CEOs into changing their plans, and, when absolutely necessary, destroy the property of the despoilers. Sometimes, your enemies have tried to use force against you and you fought back with lethal determination. On other occasions, you have discovered that your Mundane antagonists were the puppets of a supernatural being or one of the Gifted. Even worse, you have uncovered proof of a world-wide conspiracy that carelessly destroys Nature in favor of short-term gain. These encounters have taught you to trust no one.

Origins

You were raised in a Wicce household in the countryside; even now, you find cities to be noisy, dirty, alien places. You grew up in close contact with Nature, and your initiation into the secrets of Magic and the Second Sight only strengthened that bond. When you saw what the Mundanes were doing in their ignorance and greed, you had to act. Your Magic toppled corporations and terrorized heartless executives. But in doing so, you discovered the true masters of the Mundane world -- and they discovered you. You had heard of the Combine, and dismissed it as the paranoid babbling of your more imaginative friends. Now you know it is all too real, and only your Magic and good luck have saved you from obliteration. You had to fake your own death, abandoning your identity on a lonely country road, by a burning car.

Now, you carry on your work, with a new name, new looks, and new friends. This time, however, it is you who carry on about secret conspiracies and hidden dangers.

Allies and Enemies

You belong to a coven of like-minded Wicce (the members could be Cast Members or Supporting Cast). The coven will help you in every way it can, but it expects the same from you. Although the coven is not large, its members are powerful Gifted or Lesser Gifted magicians, capable of significant feats.

As a result of your activities, you have made many dangerous enemies. The most important one is the Combine, the shadowy organization that secretly controls and manipulates the Mundane world. You have stumbled onto a number of Combine plots and now you are a wanted woman. You had to fake your death and change your identity. As a result, the Combine has not been able to find you. The point value of the Combine as an Adversary is usually very high, but since you are relatively safe from the organization, it is worth less than usual. You do have a Secret -- your previous identity, which if it is revealed, will mean the Combine will come after you with a vengeance.

Roleplaying the Character

You can be overly preachy when talking about the environment and the damage being inflicted on it by the human race. On other subjects, you are less passionate, even uncaring at times. After you had to change your identity, you had to forsake all ties to your friends and loved ones. The emotional trauma has made you reluctant to get close to anybody ever again; you are somewhat cold and distant even toward your fellow Wicce.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS	<input type="text"/>	SPENT	<input type="text"/>	UNSPENT	<input type="text"/>
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CHANNELING LEVEL	<input type="text" value="4"/>
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Primary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text" value="2"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text" value="3"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text" value="3"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text" value="3"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text" value="2"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text" value="4"/>

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text" value="26"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text" value="29"/>
SPEED	<input type="text" value="10"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text" value="41"/>

Gifted

Qualities

Point

Gift	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Charisma	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Contact (Coven)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Essence Channeling (4 levels)	<input type="text" value="8"/>
Increased Essence	<input type="text" value="4"/>

Drawbacks

Point

Adversary: Combine	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Emotional Problems	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Fear of Commitment	<input type="text"/>
Paranoid	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Secret (Identity)	<input type="text" value="2"/>

Skill

Level

Brawling	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Disguise	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Driving (Car)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
First Aid	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Humanities (Wicca Theology)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Occult Knowledge	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Science (Environmental)	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Rituals (Wicca)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Smooth Talking	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Stealth	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Survival (Forest)	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Power

Level

Elemental Air	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Elemental Fire	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Healing	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Mindsight Strength	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Mindsight Art	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Wicce Private Eye

They only come to you when there is nowhere else to go. Nobody else will believe their stories, their terrifying tales of vengeful spirits and murderous creatures hiding under human shapes. Then, apparently at random or by accident (but you know better), they find themselves in front of your office, hesitating for a few seconds before coming in and asking you for help. Your rates are reasonable, and you always get to the bottom of things -- no matter how deep or dark that bottom is.

You are one of the Wicce, but even among them you are an outsider. You prefer the company of people who live on the edge of society, both Gifted and Mundane. Some belong to other Covenants, including a few that the Wicce do not approve of. Some are not even human. You do not belong to a Coven, although you have contacts with several Covens in and around the city. You like to work alone or with others like you, who prefer to frequent the dark urban underbelly.

Origins

You are the survivor of a terrible tragedy. When you were nine years old, your Wicce parents were attacked by a supernatural predator when they got lost driving through the city. You crawled away from the wreck covered in blood, your parents' dying screams echoing in your ears. You wandered through the streets for several days before you were found and sent back to your relatives. For some reason, you came away from the experience with a strange, even morbid fascination with cities and urban decay. You couldn't stay away from the dirty and crowded streets.

After reaching adulthood and being introduced to the secrets of Magic, you returned to the city, first as a police officer (which lasted only for the short time you could stomach the corruption and incompetence there), and then as a private investigator. Maybe you are looking for the thing that killed your parents, although you've never made a major effort in that direction. You have come to, if not love, at least develop some sort of affection for the city and its denizens.

Allies and Enemies

You have gained the enmity of a Dark Coven in the city. The group is small and is mostly made up of mundanes, so it counts as a 2-point Adversary. As a Wicce initiate, you have contacts with many of the local Covens. Your relationship with the Covens varies from group to group, however. Also, you are in contact with other Gifted and supernatural beings in the city. You have so many contacts that not all of them have been settled. Some possibilities include:

A Coven within the city itself, made up of street-wise Gifted members. Should you run into more than you can handle, you can count on the Coven to help you out. By the same token, any Coven member need only ask to get your assistance.

A Coven outside the city that does not approve of your business. The Coven will only provide help as a last resort, and its members will avoid you most of the time.

A Vampyre vigilante who preys on muggers and drug runners. The Vampyre keeps a low profile and rarely kills his victims. You often exchange rumors and information, and may come to each other's assistance in case of need.

The Bast Alley-Cat (see p. 112).

Roleplaying the Character

As a stereotypical private eye, you borrow your language and demeanor from film noir novels and movies. You can be a magically-endowed Sam Spade or Mike Hammer. You are cynical and hard-bitten, masking an idealistic nature. Although you often wallow in the corruption of the world, both mundane and supernatural, you always try to stay true to your own principles and code of honor, which is based on the Wicce Golden Rule ("if it harm none, do what you will"). You are always true to your friends, you will always get to the truth, no matter how unpleasant, and you will do your best to make sure that justice is done.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS **SPENT** **UNSPENT**

CHANNELING LEVEL

Lesser Gifted

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text" value="3"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text" value="3"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text" value="4"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text" value="3"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text" value="3"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text" value="4"/>

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text" value="34"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text" value="35"/>
SPEED	<input type="text" value="14"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text" value="20"/>

Qualities

Point

<input type="text" value="Gift"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<input type="text" value="Acute Hearing"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Contacts"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<input type="text" value="Situational Awareness"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Essence Channeling (3 levels)"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>

Drawbacks

Point

<input type="text" value="Adversary"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Honorable"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Obsession (Protect the City)"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Recurring Nightmares (death of innocent; you could not protect)"/>	<input type="text"/>

Skill

Level

<input type="text" value="Brawling"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Climbing"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Intimidation"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Guns (Handgun)"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Humanities (Law)"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Humanities (Criminal Law Speciality)"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>
<input type="text" value="Humanities (Wicce Theology)"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="text" value="Lock Picking"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Notice"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>
<input type="text" value="Occult Knowledge"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Ritual (Wicce)"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Stealth"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Streetwise"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>

Skill

Level

<input type="text" value="Surveillance"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Power

Level

<input type="text" value="Affect Psyche"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Insight"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="text" value="Soulfire"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Rosicrucian Stage Magician

Sometimes the best hiding place is to remain in plain sight. What better cover for a sorcerer than being a stage magician? In your case, it was a combination of aptitude, vocation, and circumstances. You actually prefer to impress the audience with tricks rather than with the real thing. Real magic has always come easy to you, and you prefer the challenge of using mirrors and false bottoms to make the audience believe the impossible.

Your job allows you to travel across the world, which makes you an ideal courier, messenger and agent for the Brotherhood. When you are needed to deal with troublesome situations, you like to combine your supernatural abilities with your highly developed reflexes and your ever-present bag of tricks. When using real magic, you like to mix in elements of prestidigitation and theatrics, often making small incantations seem more powerful and devastating than they really are. Not even your fellow Rosicrucians are sure of how much of your magic is real and how much is pure showmanship.

Origins

You have always been a lover of sleight-of-hand. Your wealthy parents humored you and let you spend a great deal of time and money on your hobby. You read many books on the subject and learned the obvious tricks. You were slipping out of handcuffs and making small objects disappear as early as your teens. Your interest in the world of illusions and magic eventually led you to dabble in the occult. While you were in college, dutifully going through pre-law to satisfy your parents' wishes, you were contacted by the Rosicrucians. The opportunity to learn real Magic was irresistible, and you joined them. You proved to be as talented in the realm of Invocations and Essence as you were in matters of smoke and mirrors.

You divided up your time among both types of magic -- after dropping out of college, you went to study under masters of legerdemain for months at a time, later returning to the Rosicrucians to continue your studies of true sorcery. You have become a successful entertainer, with regular shows in Las Vegas and major cities in North America, Europe, and Asia. You are on your way to becoming a star, both in show business and among the Rosicrucians.

Allies and Enemies

You have the full support of the Rosicrucians, and often work with local shrines to deal with any supernatural or mundane troubles. You are part of a troupe of performers, including two assistants and a number of stagehands and workers. The assistants are also members of the Rosicrucians and potent sorcerers themselves. In your travels and adventures, you have made one powerful enemy. This Adversary could be any of the following, or perhaps someone entirely different.

Another sorcerer masquerading as a stage magician -- except this one has made pacts with loathsome creatures (demons or Mad Gods) to become nearly immortal and extremely powerful. You have developed a strong rivalry, and have faced off in a number of duels of wit and magic.

During one of your early tours, you were stalked by a demented fan, a young man who was obsessively attracted to you. The fan attacked you one night after a show, and you were forced to use magic to defend yourself. In the ensuing struggle, the fan was killed. That was not the end of it, however. The fan's madness has kept him alive after death, and his undead body continues to pursue you, now seeking only revenge.

Roleplaying the Character

You are almost always putting on a show for the world, on and off the stage. You almost never reveal your true feelings to others, especially strangers or casual acquaintances. Your smile and banter are almost always artificial, although you are a good enough actress to fool most people.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS **SPENT** **UNSPENT**

CHANNELING LEVEL
3

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH **INTELLIGENCE**

DEXTERITY **PERCEPTION**

CONSTITUTION **WILLPOWER**

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS

ENDURANCE POINTS

SPEED

ESSENCE POOL

G i f t e d

Qualities

Point

Drawbacks

Point

<input type="text" value="Gift"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="Adversary"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Attractiveness"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="Delusion (Invincible)"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Fast Reaction Time"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="Emot. Problems (Fear of Rejection)"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="text" value="Increased Essence"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>	<input type="text" value="Paranoid"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Resources"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="Showoff"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>

Skill

Level

Power

Level

<input type="text" value="Acrobatics"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="Affect Psyche"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Acting"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="Elemental Air"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Brawling"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="Lesser Illusion"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Climbing"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="Shielding"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Dodge"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="Essence Channeling (3 levels)"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>
<input type="text" value="Escapism"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Lock Picking"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Occult Knowledge"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Rituals (Rosicrucian)"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Seduction"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Sleight of Hand"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Stealth"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Rosicrucian Troubleshooter

Sometimes, the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross needs more than arcane knowledge to deal with a problem. That's when they call you. You know all the secret handshakes and some Magic, but it's your skills that make you so valuable. You get to handle the dirty jobs -- a little breaking and entering to remove a compromising piece of evidence, doing background checks on candidates to the Brotherhood, or helping protect an important member of the Covenant. On a few occasions, you have had to use violence -- twice on human cultists who were trying to harm you or your charges, once on something that was not human at all.

You are a dedicated Rosicrucian, but you think that most of your brethren spend too much time involved in esoteric matters and too little in the "real world." Most Rosicrucians would deal with a nosy reporter by using spells to scare off or confuse the interloper. You would rather feed the reporter false information, or give him an even better story to pursue. Like most Rosicrucians, you strongly believe in preserving the secrecy of the Brotherhood. In fact, you prefer to use magic as seldom as possible, to minimize the chances of discovery and the disastrous publicity that might follow.

Your favorite tools are electronic bugs, computers, and cameras, although you are also an excellent marksman with a variety of firearms. Magic is yet another tool for you; your coldly analytical mind does not like the unpredictable, emotional nature of magic, but you make the most out of it when you have to use it. In combat, you would rather scare or subdue an attacker with the right Invocation instead of shooting him. You believe that violence is something to be done in the last resort, and prefer to use subtler methods.

Origins

Like most other Rosicrucians, you were approached during your college years. Unlike the average candidate, you were not a student of the occult or a would-be lawyer or MBA; your interest was criminology and investigation techniques. Your sport of choice was target shooting, and you became a crack pistol shot during your sophomore year. If the Brotherhood had not approached you, you would have probably ended up working for the FBI or some other security agency. As it was, your talents, both mundane and magical, proved to be extremely valuable, and you have saved many Rosicrucians from discovery, embarrassment or danger. Of late, your missions have become increasingly more unnerving and dangerous, but you are still determined to do the best job you can, Reckoning or not.

Allies and Enemies

You are usually sent out on missions as part of a team: usually one or two Gifted sorcerers, a Lesser Gifted fellow investigator, and one to four Mundanes with good investigative or combat skills, depending on the assignment. You have made a few contacts with members of other Covenants. In your last mission, which involved discovering and dealing with a vengeful ghost trying to harm a member of the Brotherhood, you found yourself working side by side with members of the Twilight Order. You came out of the mission with newfound respect for the organization and a couple of phone numbers you can use in case of need. So far, you have not made any lasting enemies of note.

Roleplaying the Character

You are quietly capable and extremely cool and composed. To outsiders, you often come across as cold and almost heartless, with a "just the facts" attitude that many find unsettling. You love the intellectual challenge of solving any new problem that comes your way, and you can be ruthless when you have to. Although you abhor violence except as a last resort, you have no compunction about framing, blackmailing or exposing enemies of the Brotherhood. Beneath the facade of professionalism is a compassionate and emotional person, however, and you will always be extremely careful not to harm innocents by your actions.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS	<input type="text"/>	SPENT	<input type="text"/>	UNSPENT
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CHANNELING LEVEL	<input type="text" value="2"/>
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Lesser Gifted

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text" value="4"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text" value="3"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text" value="4"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text" value="2"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text" value="3"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text" value="4"/>

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text" value="38"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text" value="38"/>
SPEED	<input type="text" value="14"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text" value="30"/>

Qualities

Point

Gift	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Contacts	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Fast Reaction Time	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Increased Essence	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Resources (Middle Class)	<input type="text" value="2"/>

Drawbacks

Point

Attractiveness	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Honorable	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Humorless	<input type="text" value="1"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

Skill

Level

Driving (Car)	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Electronic Surveillance	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Guns (Handguns)	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Guns (Shotgun)	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Hand Weapon (Knife)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Martial Arts	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Notice	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Occult Knowledge	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Rituals (Rosicrucian)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Surveillance	<input type="text" value="3"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

Skill

Level

	<input type="text"/>

Power

Level

Insight	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Shielding	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Soulfire	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Essence Channeling (4 points)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

Bast “Alley Cat”

The children of the slums know you, and call you by a dozen names. Some adults remember you, and sometimes joke about the “haunted cat” or the “devil cat” -- but the joke falls flat when they see you stalk around a corner, or watch the world impassively while perched over a garbage can. Some people tell stories about a strange woman who seems to appear whenever you are around, although nobody has seen the two of you together. Only a few close friends know the truth behind the stories.

You are a Hight Bast, a spirit cat, intelligent and able to assume human form for short periods of time. Inside your furry black and white shape lies a hundred-year old spirit that has lived and reincarnated over dozens of feline generations.

In your current life, you are the self-appointed watcher of a dismal neighborhood. You care very little about what adults do to each other; they have the freedom of choice, and your feline instincts see killing and despoiling as parts of the natural order. Children are another matter altogether. Those who abuse or threaten the young are fair prey for you. Most of the time, you content yourself with visiting the abusers in their dreams and frightening them off. When their crimes are too great, however, you dispense justice swiftly and without mercy. You know the truth about a dozen unexplained deaths, strange cases where the victim died of fright, or was slashed with an unusual claw-like weapon . . .

Sometimes, you also prey on those who prey on women, although more for fun than out of any moral sense. Sometimes, you come across other supernatural beings, creatures that not even your Magic and Necromantic powers can handle alone. If they do not hunt children, you leave them alone; if they break that commandment, you fight them in any way you can.

You have human friends you can contact when you need help. In return for their help, you assist them on other undertakings, both magical and mundane. A few centuries ago, you would have been some magician’s familiar. Now you are an occasional partner and fellow traveler, fiercely independent in most things.

Origins

You were born in the late 19th century, the result of the mating of two Basts. Your parents taught you the ways of the Children of the Cat Goddess, and then moved on. You have lived a multitude of short feline lives, often befriending Gifted magicians and psychics, sometimes accepting the role as the pet of a mundane. Your last incarnation has brought you to a large, decaying city, full of dangers to both humans and felines. So far, you have yet to find a worthy partner, and you miss the companionship that only the Gifted or fellow Bast can provide. For now, you have become a fixture of the community, adored, maybe even worshipped by young children and respected by adults. The few times an angry or concerned adult has tried to harm you or drive you away, the careful use of your powers has been enough to confuse or scare them.

Allies and Enemies

You are effectively a Solitaire, with no Covenant to call on for help. That does not mean you are friendless, however. Many of the Gifted in the city know of your existence, and owe you favors (and vice versa). Although you do not like any of them well enough to become their partner or full-time ally, you can count on them to come to your assistance, just as you will feel obligated to respond to their call for help. Among your possible contacts is the Wicce Private Eye (see earlier in this section).

Your current nemesis is a gang of drug dealers. The group has quietly taken over many areas of the city, using threats and violence to force other dealers to surrender their territory. You have discovered that the gang uses supernatural means to deal with their most powerful adversaries and the police. Most of the members are mundane, but the leaders have magical abilities, and you fear that their leader is some sort of supernatural being. Normally, you wouldn’t care, but the dealers are concentrating on children as potential customers, and you won’t let that happen.

Roleplaying the Character

Although you can assume the shape of a young woman, much of your outlook and personality is strictly feline. You love to play games, both with your friends and your enemies, and sometimes you cannot resist prolonging the agonies of a deserving victim, especially one who has killed or tormented a child. You can be loving and cruel, lazy and relentless. In short, you can act like any common cat, but you are far from common.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS	<input type="text"/>	SPENT	<input type="text"/>	UNSPENT	<input type="text"/>
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CHANNELING LEVEL	<input type="text" value="2"/>
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BAST

Primary Attributes (Cat/Human)

Secondary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text" value="1/4"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text" value="3/3"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text" value="4/3"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text" value="3/3"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text" value="2/2"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text" value="3/3"/>

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text" value="22/34"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text" value="23/32"/>
SPEED	<input type="text" value="12/10"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text" value="46"/>

Qualities

Point

Drawbacks

Point

<input type="text" value="Gift"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="Adversary"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Attractiveness"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="Honorable"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Essence Channeling (2 levels)"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="Cruel"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="text" value="High Bast"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="Paranoia"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Increased Essence"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Skill

Level

Power

Level

<input type="text" value="Intimidation"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="Lesser Illusion"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Martial Arts"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="Shielding"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Occult Knowledge"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Seduction"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="Necromancy Skill"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Stealth"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="Death Speech"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Streetwise"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="Glimpse the Dead"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="See the Dead"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Sentinel Warrior Scholar

You come from a long family line of monster slayers, and you carry on this tradition with pride. In an age where most people find it impossible to swear allegiance to anything, you have found a cause to dedicate your life to serve.

As a Sentinel, you seek any supernatural beings that prey on humankind, and destroy or banish them from this world. At the same time, however, your calling is to study and learn, and sometimes it's hard to reconcile the need to destroy with your desire to understand. You think that some members of the Society are too intolerant of anything they cannot understand, and on a couple of occasions you have disagreed with the methods of your fellow Sentinels.

Despite your inner doubts and your tendency to err on the side of mercy, you remain a staunch and well-respected Sentinel. A decade of arduous training has made you an intellectual and physical prodigy, educated in the best Catholic schools, trained to kill in a hundred different ways. You are equally comfortable translating an ancient Vulgar Latin document or stalking a feral shapeshifter through a night-shrouded forest. Although you are Mundane, your skills are equal to most tasks, and sometimes your faith protects you when your skills are not enough.

Origins

Your family was old and had a long, uninterrupted lineage. As a child, you were shown a family tree that reached into the Late Middle Ages. Although your family was neither rich nor of noble blood, its tradition always made you feel special. You knew you were different from your peers, most of whom knew little of their families past their grandparents. Perhaps because of your long family history, you became an avid scholar from the moment you learned how to read, and lived to learn the origins and secrets of ancient cultures and peoples.

You did not realize exactly how special your family was until your sixteenth birthday. An uncle came to visit, a man you had only seen on a few occasions in your life, but one who was spoken of with respect -- or awe -- by the rest of your family. After your birthday, you went with your uncle to Europe, to the Old Country. There, in a dungeon deep beneath an ancient castle, he showed you your first monster, an evil embodied spirit kept trapped in the ancient building for centuries by the Society of Sentinels. The shocking sight of an inhuman being struggling against chains both physical and mystical changed your life forever. You chose to follow in your uncle's footsteps and joined the Society. You trained for almost ten years before you became a full member, and are just beginning to understand the burdens of being a holy warrior.

Allies and Enemies

As a Sentinel, you are discouraged from seeking allies outside the Society itself, but you have made some unofficial contacts with other like-minded occult researchers, mostly through the Internet, and usually through false names and identities. These contacts are primarily with members of the Cabal of Psyche and a couple of Wicce and Solitaires who do research and share information on the net. This information exchange is very informal, but has been very useful on occasion. Besides that, of course, you can always expect the full support of the Society.

You have also made a powerful enemy. On one of your first missions, you encountered an ancient Vampyre. You slew his companion and lover, but failed to kill him. The Vampyre has sworn revenge, and time and time again, a seemingly unconnected mission has turned out to be a finely crafted ambush devised by the undead, who prefers to work in the shadows, through proxy agents. So far, you have escaped unscathed, but you know he is still out there, plotting against you.

Roleplaying the Character

Although seemingly a fanatic warrior, you are a scholar at heart, and you wish to learn and understand rather than destroy. Unlike many, if not most, Sentinels, you do not strike unless you are absolutely sure that the supernatural forces involved are truly evil. When you are certain, however, you are as merciless and savage as the most zealous Sentinel. In your personal life, you tend to be introverted and shy. Your years of constant training and study left very little time for a social life, and your dealings with others, especially members of the opposite sex, are awkward.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS SPENT UNSPENT

CHANNELING LEVEL

Primary Attributes

Secondary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text" value="5"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text" value="4"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text" value="4"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text" value="3"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text" value="5"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text" value="4"/>

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text" value="65"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text" value="47"/>
SPEED	<input type="text" value="18"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text" value="25"/>

o o u n d a n e

Qualities

Point

Drawbacks

Point

Acute Vision	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Contacts	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Fast Reaction Time	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Hard to Kill	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Resources	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Nerves of Steel	<input type="text" value="3"/>

Adversary	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Honorable	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Emotional Problems	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Fear of Rejection	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

Skill

Level

Skill

Level

Guns (Handgun)	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Guns (Rifle)	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Hand Weapon (Knife)	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Hand Weapon (Staff)	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Language (Latin)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Language (German)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Language (French)	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Martial Arts	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Occult Knowledge	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Research	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Stealth	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Dodge	<input type="text" value="3"/>

	<input type="text"/>

Ghost Hunter

The Twilight Order seeks to study and explore the Realms of the Dead, the parts of the Otherworlds where the Spirits of the departed dwell. Sometimes, however, the Order encounters restless Spirits who return to Earth to bring evil and misery unto the living. That is when they call you and others like you, ghost hunters, Necromancers whose powers have been shaped into weapons to use against hostile Spirits. Although your official title is “psychic investigator,” your job is to remove or, if necessary, destroy any Spirit who attacks the living and cannot be bargained with.

You are often sent out to help cleanse haunted houses, to find and stop poltergeists, and occasionally to deal with such abominations as Vampyres and the Living Dead. In your line of work, you have been exposed to dozens of hoaxes, false alarms, publicity seekers, deluded fools, or outright insane people. In a number of incidents, you have come face-to-face with the real thing. Those experiences are terrifying and exhilarating enough to make everything else worthwhile. You love the thrill of the hunt; even the inevitable fear that accompanies any confrontation with the Dead acts like an aphrodisiac on you. You love your job, dangers and all.

Origins

Even as a youngster, you were always reckless, a firm believer in your immortality. On a dare, you tried to perform an impossible maneuver on a bicycle, and got hit by a van. The accident took one of your eyes -- but gave you an insight about life after death that almost no living person shares. You started seeing strange things, people only you could perceive, voices only you could hear. You might have been institutionalized if members of the Twilight Order had not found you and offered you help and understanding.

Under the Order, you learned how to control your powers, but not your love for taking chances. Fighting strange and dangerous entities became your new vice. Your steady nerves and apparent fearlessness secured you a position in one of the Order’s “fronts,” a private institute that specializes in dealing with haunted houses and similar paranormal activities.

Allies and Enemies

You work only with other members of the Twilight Order. So far, you have not made any outside allies, and most of your enemies are no longer a problem. Of course, given your ways, any friend who spends a great deal of time with you will risk life and limb. Such friends are not easy to keep.

Roleplaying the Character

Life is a game for you. Even your near-death experience has not cured you of your love for dangerous thrills. In some ways, knowing that there is life after death has only redoubled your determination to take chances. You actually plan to come back as a phantasm after you die. Then, you can continue to take risks and face danger on Earth and elsewhere.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS **SPENT** **UNSPENT**

CHANNELING LEVEL

p a g e 1 5

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text" value="2"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text" value="3"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text" value="2"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text" value="2"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text" value="3"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text" value="3"/>

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text" value="30"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text" value="29"/>
SPEED	<input type="text" value="10"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text" value="40"/>

Qualities

Point

Drawbacks

Point

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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Impaired Vision"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Reckless"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>

Skill

Level

Power

Level

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<input type="text" value="Climbing"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="Death Speech"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Driving (Car)"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="Glimpse the Dead"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Questioning"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="See the Dead"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Intimidation"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="Death Lordship"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>
<input type="text" value="Investigation"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="Expel Spirit"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Occult Knowledge"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="Enforced Obedience"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text" value="Smooth Talking"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="Rule the Dead"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Dominion"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Death Mastery"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Delay/Accelerate Parting"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Death Sight"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Seer Fugitive

They are after you. When your special powers first surfaced, “They” had tried to recruit you into their ranks. You managed to escape their clutches, but They don’t let go so easily. You used to think They were the government, trying to use you in the fight for Democracy, but now you know better. You don’t know what to call Them, although some of your new friends have spoken about some group called the Combine, and it sounds a lot like Them. You know that if They find you, the best you can hope for is a quick death -- more likely, They have a lifetime of slavery and torment planned out for you.

You have to hide or run. There is no way for you to lead a normal life; They will find you. Instead, you live in the largest cities, buried under the teeming masses, making a living in the underground economy of criminals, the homeless, and the thousands of other runaways. You are luckier than most, however. Your special powers allow you to defend yourself, to do things you thought only happened in comic books and bad movies. You have yet to find many others like you, but you are desperately seeking them out.

Origins

First you thought you were crazy. After all, nobody else could see the things you did, or understand them if they could see them. The doctors at the Institute explained to you that you were not crazy after all. They convinced your parents to sign a release waiver, and they took you to a remote facility deep in the woods. Things were not too bad at first. You met others like you, and the scientists were only too happy to help you learn more about your powers. They told you that you were special, better than the rest of the people. Then they tried to teach you to kill.

You decided you were nobody’s trained attack dog. Using your powers, you escaped. For the first few days, you were barely able to elude pursuit. One day, you saw your picture in a newspaper. They had framed you, called you a “wanted murderer.” You have been on the run or in hiding ever since. You know that the people pursuing you are an organization larger than the government, and much more sinister, but you have very little information beyond that. You wish to learn more, however, if only so you can fight back.

Allies and Enemies

So far, you have not encountered anybody who will accept your story and your powers. If you could find them, hooking up with a group of others like you would be wonderful. Despite your paranoia, you are desperately lonely and afraid. You would join almost any band of people, good or evil, as long as you could feel you belong somewhere. Your enemies are your pursuers -- a branch of the deadly Combine.

Roleplaying the Character

You were a normal teenager until your powers surfaced. Your time at the Institute and your life on the run have forced you to do a lot of growing up in a hurry. You are almost unable to relax, and you keep glancing around nervously even in seemingly harmless situations. You find it very hard to trust anybody, but you are also terribly lonely, and you want to find somebody to trust. You routinely read the minds of everyone you come in contact with, and as a result you have experienced more than your share of the bad thoughts, forbidden lusts and dark side of humankind. If you do not get some help soon, you may soon lose your sanity.



Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS SPENT UNSPENT

CHANNELING LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text" value="1"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text" value="2"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text" value="2"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text" value="2"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text" value="4"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text" value="4"/>

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text" value="30"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text" value="32"/>
SPEED	<input type="text" value="12"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text" value="43"/>

5
2
2
1
5

Qualities

Point

Drawbacks

Point

<input type="text" value="Gift"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
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<input type="text" value="Artistic Talent (Music)"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

<input type="text" value="Adversary"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>
<input type="text" value="Resources"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Skill

Level

Power

Level

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<input type="text" value="Dodge"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Driving (Car)"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="text" value="Play Instrument (Guitar)"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="First Aid"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Notice"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<input type="text" value="Running (Dash)"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Sport (Baseball)"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Smooth Talking"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="text" value="Stealth"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Streetwise"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

<input type="text" value="Mindhands Strength"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>
<input type="text" value="Mindhands Art"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="Mindsight Strength"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Mindsight Art"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Mindview Strength"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="Mindview Art"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



P

Chapter Four Rules

Introduction

Like all games, the Unisystem has rules. They help the Chronicler determine what happens at certain points of the Story. The Unisystem is also designed to offer several options to *WitchCraft* players.

The main rule is that *WitchCraft* players should do what works best for them. If a rule does not satisfy, is too complicated, requires too much detail, or is just plain unpopular, change it. Be sure that the entire gaming group knows of any changes beforehand, however. This minimizes complaints and arguments that detract from everyone's enjoyment of the game.

Running A Game

Usually, roleplaying games unfold in this way: the Chronicler describes the situation, and then asks the players what their characters are doing. Dialogue is conducted normally. A typical descriptive set-up might go as follows.

Chronicler: *You are driving your car down a lonely country road. It's dark outside, and your car's headlights are barely enough to break the darkness in front of you. It almost feels like you are the only people on Earth. As you go around a bend in the road, you notice a pickup truck stopped by the roadside, a couple of hundred feet away. A person -- it's too dark to see if it is a man or a woman -- is by the vehicle. He or she notices your vehicle and starts waving to you. What do you do?*

In this example, three characters are in a car, each controlled by a separate player. Each character has a chance to do something, although the driver has the most choices -- he could stop the car by the pickup truck, slow down and see what is happening, speed up and avoid the accident entirely, or anything else. The other characters could talk to the driver, or look around for anything suspicious, for example.

In this case, and throughout most games, the Chronicler presents a situation. When he asks "What do you do?" it is the Cast Members' turn to start contributing to the story. Sometimes the players take the initiative, informing the Chronicler of their plans or intentions; in that case the Chronicler describes the consequences of those actions. Through this interaction, the Story that is the game's end result is crafted.

Using the Rules

In most *WitchCraft* games, a great deal of the characters' actions do not require rules, rolling dice, consulting charts or determining Success Levels. Common examples of such "ruleless" actions are discussed below.

Talking: Unless the character is gagged, mute or trying to speak in a foreign language he does not know very well, speech is always possible. A player need only recite the character's "lines."

Routine Actions: These include anything that any person can do, such as picking up objects, walking from one place to another, opening and closing unlocked doors. Any action that a normal person can perform with little or no effort requires only that the player announce that his character is going to do it.

Traveling: Getting there is not always half the fun. Just like in movies and books, the Chronicler can "cut" any long, tedious sections of the actions. For example, if the characters are traveling to Europe by plane, and the real action awaits them there, the Chronicler can sum up their trip in a few sentences:

You bought tickets for the first available flight; subtract the cost from your funds. The plane was half-empty, and it took off late at night, so most of the passengers were asleep for most of the trip. You enjoyed a few hours of rest, and now you are at the airport, going through Customs.

In general, if the rules are not required, don't use them. The feeling that the players are telling a Story should be disrupted as little as possible.

Only when the outcome of an action is in doubt, and the results of that action are important, should the rules come into play. The rules answer the question "What happened?" If the answer is not in doubt, the Chronicler simply announces what happened. If it is, then dice or playing cards come into effect (unless the group is playing without any random element, see Story-Driven Roleplaying, p. 156).

Generally, the outcome of an action depends on the Attributes or skills of the characters (all those numbers on the character sheet), the circumstances (which may impose bonuses and penalties), and good old luck (determined by the result of a dice roll or card draw, unless the Story-Driven Method is used).

Dice

Dice are the most commonly used tools in gaming and, in this author's opinion, still the best method to determine random outcomes. Regardless of which resolution method a Chronicler chooses, the dice system is considered the default method in these rules. If the card method is used, for example, simply replace the words "roll" or "dice" with "draw" or "card."

When employed with dice, the Unisystem relies on four different kinds: ten-sided, eight-sided, six-sided and four-sided. Such dice can be found in any good hobby or gaming store, and in many comic books stores. Of these, all but the ten-sided dice can be discarded by using some of the optional subsystems. Dice are denoted by placing a "D" in front of their numerical value. So, a D4 indicates a four-sided die.

Ten-sided dice (D10s): Used for Task/Test determination and to determine the damage that weapons do, D10s are the most commonly used dice. Entire game sessions can come and go without using any dice other than the D10s. They can be replaced in a pinch by using two six-sided dice and subtracting two from the roll (treat a result of '0' as a '1').

Eight- and four-sided dice (D8s and D4s): In the Unisystem, these dice are only used to determine damage. Different damage types represent different weapon types. It stands to reason, for example, that a bigger weapon (like an axe) will do more damage than a smaller weapon (like a switchblade) when wielded by someone with the same strength. So, the smaller weapon uses a smaller damage die.

For example, a switchblade would do D4 times the Strength Attribute of the wielder in damage, while an axe inflicts D10 times the attacker's Strength. Dice rolls can be reduced or eliminated by using an average damage value (equal to half the value of the die used). This means that a weapon always does the same amount of damage in the hands of any particular warrior. For example, a switchblade always does 2 points of damage times the Strength of the wielder. This saves the trouble of rolling dice, but removes the random element of very low or very high damage.

Six-sided dice (D6s): These are the most common dice available, easily "borrowed" from any number of easily obtained board games. If D10s are not readily available, D6s can be used as a replacement.

Using the Random Element

It is often easy to get caught up in the mechanics of the game and lose track of the Story. This may lead to players eventually getting bored of the game altogether. To make sure that this does not affect their games, Chroniclers should take into account the following considerations.

When to Roll

Sometimes Chroniclers and players fall into "roll-playing" mode -- rolling dice for all kinds of actions, even those that really don't matter. When a player wants to roll to see how nicely his character can park a car (unless there is some storyline reason why this is important), roll-playing has crept in. Rolls should be made when the outcome of an action has an impact on the Story, especially if success is doubtful. Rolls can add to the excitement and tension of the game, because nobody, including the Chronicler, knows what the final outcome will be. Will the Wicce finish his Invocation before the Phantasm can hurt him? This is the type of situation where a roll may help heighten the mood.

Rolls Don't Rule

There is another type of situation to consider: it was supposed to be a minor encounter -- a mugger surprised two Cast Members and demanded their money. A fight ensued, and the Chronicler got lucky, rolling several 10s in a row for the mugger's attacks. All of a sudden, enough damage has been inflicted on a Cast Member to kill him or incapacitate him for several weeks -- thus ruining the main storyline.

Chroniclers should sometimes consider "altering" roll results if those results are both highly unlikely and disruptive to the basic plot. In the example above, perhaps the outcome rolls could be "adjusted" to represent minor wounds or just a scary near miss. It helps if the Chronicler makes his rolls out of sight of the players.

However, if it becomes common knowledge that the Chronicler ignores roll results to keep the Story going, a great deal of the uncertainty and the thrill of the roleplaying game is lost. The Chronicler should keep this practice to a minimum -- so that when he needs to use it his players do not catch on.

The Basic Rule

Unless the Story-Driven Method is employed (see p. 156), all actions are resolved in one basic manner. Roll a ten-sided die (D10). Then add the Attribute and/or skill numbers the Chronicler deems applicable. Tell the result to the Chronicler, who adds or subtracts any circumstance modifiers (for example, noticing something is more difficult in darkness than in broad daylight). If the final result is a 9 or higher, the action was successful. If the result is less than 9, the attempt failed. The higher the total value, the more successful the action is (in some cases, just being successful is enough; in others, the degree of success may have some significance). This is the central feature of the Unisystem. Most other rules revolve around this basic element. This basic rule applies when using skills, engaging in combat, working magic, and so forth.

Tasks --

Using Skills and Attributes

Most actions, from sneaking around in the dark to writing the Great American Novel, are considered to be Tasks. A Task always uses one Attribute and one skill. The Chronicler decides which Attribute and skill are appropriate to the action at hand. As before, the die is rolled, and the applicable Attribute, skill and modifiers are added to the result. The higher the traits used are, the greater the chance the action will be successful.

For example, Peter is playing the indomitable Rosicrucian sorcerer Marcus. He wants his character to identify the foul-smelling, furry humanoid creature he just spotted prowling in his Shrine's courtyard. The Chronicler tells Peter to use Marcus' Perception (to see how good a look Marcus got of the creature) and Occult Knowledge Skill (the character's knowledge of the supernatural). Marcus' Perception is 3; his Occult Knowledge is a whopping 6. Peter rolls a D10, getting a result of 6. This result, added to his skill and Attribute levels produces a total of 15. Since it is dark outside, the Chronicler applies a penalty of -3 to the Task, reducing the total to 12. That is still greater than 9, and thus enough to be successful. The

Chronicler says, "Marcus realizes that the ugly creature is a Wildling, a minor but malevolent spirit that has possessed and mutated a small animal. You remember that Wildlings are often created by black magic practitioners to use as spies or gophers. What do you do now?"

Tests --

Using Attributes Alone

Some actions use only a character's Attributes; no skills are applicable. Some examples include lifting things (which uses Strength), remembering something (which uses Intelligence), and so on. These situations are known as Attribute Tests, or just Tests.

There are two types of Tests: Simple and Difficult. Simple Tests are relatively easy things -- lifting an object using your entire body, for example. To resolve a Simple Attribute Test, roll and add the Attribute involved, doubled. For example, a character with a Strength of 2 adds 4 to the roll.

Difficult Tests are more challenging; lifting something with only one hand, for example, makes for a Difficult Strength Test. In those cases, only the value of the Attribute involved (do not double it) is added. This, of course, reduces the chances of success.

For example, Kathy, playing the Wicce magician Lilith, is wandering through a forest at night, alone. What Kathy/Lilith does not know is that the reanimated corpse of a serial killer is prowling these self-same woods, and is closing in on the unsuspecting witch. The Chronicler tells Kathy to roll a D10 and add Lilith's Perception Attribute, doubled. The woods are pretty quiet, and the Relentless Dead are not known for their subtlety. The creature is not even trying to be quiet, making this a Simple Attribute Test. Lilith's Perception is 4, which doubled adds a total of 8 to the die roll. Kathy rolls the die and comes up with a 7, for a total of 15. The Chronicler says "Lilith, you hear a guttural growling noise behind you. Something is rushing through the forest towards you. It should reach you in less than a minute. It's so loud you heard it some distance away. What do you do?"

Determining What Attributes to Use

The Chronicler often has to quickly decide what Attribute to use on a given Task or Test. For most situations, the relevant Attribute is described in the skill description, the Story write-up, or somewhere else in a *WitchCraft* book. For tense, dramatic situations, however, the Chronicler should avoid slowing the game down by thumbing through all that material, and let common sense guide the choice. The following rules of thumb should be enough to judge what Attribute should be used in a given Task or Test.

Strength: Strength works when something requiring brute force is involved. Physical skills like Sports, Climbing or Swimming sometimes require Strength.

Dexterity: This is one of the most commonly used Attributes. Dexterity applies to any Task or Test requiring accuracy, physical balance, quickness, and hand-eye coordination.

Constitution: Constitution is mostly used in physical Tasks involving long-term endurance and vitality, or in Tests against diseases and toxins.

Intelligence: Anything that primarily involves memory and reasoning uses Intelligence. Remembering a name, understanding a difficult concept or idea, solving a mathematics problem or a puzzle -- all use Intelligence.

Perception: There is some overlap between Intelligence and Perception. When in doubt, the Chronicler can have the player use the higher of the two (or the lower for a difficult Task or Test). Generally, Perception is used to spot, recognize or identify things. The overlap with Intelligence comes from the fact that memory is used to recognize and identify things. In general, if the Task or Test involves any of the five senses, use Perception.

Willpower: This Attribute is most commonly used defensively -- to resist other skills, powers or abilities. It is also used on Tasks or Tests where a character is trying to intimidate another. Willpower helps a person maintain eye contact during a staring contest, for example.

Unskilled Attempts

Sometimes, a character must try to do something he is not trained to do. Unskilled attempts always have a hefty penalty, but very gifted or talented people may be able to succeed even on the first attempt. Use the appropriate Attribute (do not double it), with a minimum -2 penalty (in addition to any other modifiers). Furthermore, the level of success of the Task (see the Outcome Table, p. 128) can never be too high. No matter how high the total outcome roll is, only a Decent outcome (second Success Level) will result from the attempt.

Some skills require so much training and preparation that untrained people have no chance of performing them. A penalty of -6 to -10 can be applied if the character is trying to perform very complex skills. For example, trying to perform surgery with no help other than a few medical manuals incurs a -10 penalty. Alternatively, the Chronicler may rule that the attempt automatically fails (or, to keep the players in suspense, he may let them make rolls -- who knows, they might get lucky).

For example, James is playing the part of Josh, a 12-year old with psychic powers. Josh is riding with his father in a car. Suddenly, his father slumps over the steering wheel, unconscious (unknown to James/Josh, his family has been targeted by a malevolent sorcerer, and his father has just suffered a near-fatal stroke). The terrified 12-year old tries to stop the car before it crashes into the oncoming traffic. This Task would normally be resolved by using the Driving Skill and the Dexterity Attribute, but Josh has no Driving Skill! A penalty of -2 is assigned for the lack of a skill. Josh has a Dexterity of 4, so he only adds 2 (his 4 Attribute, minus 2) to the roll of a D10. If the total is 9 or higher (which would require the die roll to be a 7 or higher), Josh manages to hit the brakes and stop the car without causing an accident. Otherwise, his panicked attempts may cause the car to swerve, go into a spin, or worse.

Resisted Tasks/Tests

Sometimes, a character tries to do something that is opposed by another character (either a Cast Member or one of the Supporting Cast). When this happens, a Resisted Task or Test must be resolved.

Resisted Tasks or Tests use the basic rule (p. 124), with the following addition. Both sides in the contest get to roll and add the appropriate Attribute or skill. The higher total result, after adding and subtracting all modifiers, is the winner of the contest. Some examples of Resisted Tasks and Tests appear below.

Arm Wrestling: This requires both sides to make Simple Strength Tests; the higher result wins the contest. For dramatic purposes, the contest might be spread over more than one roll and no winner declared until a certain number of “wins” were logged (two out of three, for example).

Pursuit on Foot: Both sides use Dexterity and Constitution. If one person started running first, he gets to add a +2 to the roll. Also, the side with the higher Speed gets to add the difference between the two Speeds. Just subtract the lower Speed from the higher one, and add the result to the faster character’s roll. The winner manages to either catch up with or lose the pursuer, depending on his intention.

Sneaking: The person doing the sneaking uses Dexterity and Stealth. The target uses either a Simple Perception Test, or his Perception and Notice Skill.

Combat: Combat is described in more detail later in this chapter (p. 132). Most combat actions consist of Resisted Tasks or Tests.

The Role of Luck

Alternative Luck Rule

FOR THOSE DESIRING something a bit simpler, the second roll should be O6-1. If the first roll was 10, add the result. If the first roll was 1, subtract the result. If the second roll is a 6, add or subtract 5, and roll again. This option requires the use of a different die, and increases the chance of a higher or lower final result, but the change is not so significant that it is unbalancing.

Sometimes, under the right circumstances, people perform feats they should normally not be able to accomplish. That is why people often bet on the underdog in sporting events: the less skilled or talented person or animal just might get lucky this time.

By the same token, even the most accomplished person occasionally fumbles or screws up even relatively simple Tasks. Good and bad luck often add to the drama of the game. The Chronicler should always try to make such events interesting by describing the circumstances of the miraculous success or the tragic error. To simulate the effect of extraordinary luck in the game, the Unisystem uses the Rule of 10 (for good luck) and the Rule of 1 (for bad fortune).

The Rule of 10

On a roll of 10, roll again, subtract 5, and add the result (if higher than 0) to 10. So, if the second roll is 6, 7, 8 or 9, the final result is 11, 12, 13 or 14, respectively. If the second roll is 5 or less, nothing is added and the final roll remains 10. If another 10 is rolled, add 5 to the roll (for a total of 15), and roll again. If a player rolls a string of 10s, she keeps adding 5 to the result and rolling again.

For example, Harriet the Seer, played by Roy, is trying to leap between two buildings, using her meager Strength of 1 and Dexterity of 2. The Chronicler imposes a -5 penalty because the two buildings are fairly far apart. Knowing his character is almost certainly doomed, Roy rolls the bones. He gets a 10. “Roll again,” the Chronicler says. Roy rolls a second time, getting a 10 again! His total roll is a 15 so far, but he gets to roll a third time. This time the roll is a 3. Since this is less than 5, he adds nothing to the roll total. The 15, plus Harriet’s Dexterity and Strength, gives Harriet an 18, and is then reduced to 13 by the -5 penalty -- enough to be successful. “You leap further than you could have imagined,” the Chronicler explains. “For a few moments, you actually feel like you are flying as you see the streets below flash past, and then you land well past the building’s edge. You feel shaky and weak-kneed, and you know deep in your heart that you may not duplicate this feat in a hundred years.”

The Rule of 1

On a roll of 1, roll again, subtract 5, and if the result

is negative, a negative roll replaces the first roll. If the result is positive, the roll remains 1. If the second roll is between 5 and 10, the final result remains 1. If the second roll is 2, 3, or 4, the final result is -3, -2 or -1, respectively. If the second roll is 1, the prior roll is replaced with -5, and the player must roll again (applying the same rule).

For example, Robin the Sentinel, played by Jennifer, is literally wrestling with the devil -- a devil, anyway. Robin's normal Strength of 4 has been augmented by the Strength of Ten Miracle, to a total of 9. The fiend he is grappling with is a relatively weak creature, with a total Strength of 5. Robin is trying to overpower the creature. Both sides use their Strength, doubled, in the Resisted Test. Confident of her character's advantage (an 18 against a 10 before the dice hit the table), Jennifer rolls her D10 -- and rolls a 1. Her second roll is a 2, resulting in a total penalty of -3, which gives her a total of 15 (her base 18, minus 3). The Chronicler rolls for the fiend. The die roll is a 7, which produces a total of 17. "Your grip slips: the fiend breaks free and tosses you across the room," the Chronicler describes. "Laughing maniacally, the monster lunges at you. What do you do?"

The Role of Luck

Result After Second Roll

Second Roll	Rule of 10	Rule of 1
1	10	-5, roll again
2	10	-3
3	10	-2
4	10	-1
5	10	1
6	11	1
7	12	1
8	13	1
9	14	1
10	15, roll again	1

Chronicler's Discretion



The Chronicler is the final arbiter of what a roll means. Some Chroniclers will apply the rules to the letter, and always consult the Outcome Table. Others will simply decide on the spot what a roll means. Most will use some combination of the two. Remember, maintaining the flow of the game is always more important than the rules. Slowing down the game to look up rules for a relatively minor action is not worth it. Wing it, and keep the game alive and interesting.

Modifiers to Tasks and Tests

Most of the time, Tasks and Tests only account for the appropriate skills and Attributes. Sometimes, however, circumstances make some Tasks or Tests easier or more difficult. A ladder is a lot easier to climb than a greased pole. Shooting at a target in the dark is a lot harder than at high noon. If the Chronicler feels that a Task or Test is made easier or more difficult because of circumstances, he can add modifiers, positive or negative, to any result. Assigning modifiers is something that should be done only when absolutely necessary, as it may slow down the game. The Chronicler determines what circumstances are important enough to create modifiers, and decides how they affect an outcome.

Sometimes, just being successful at a Test or Task is not enough. The degree of success may have an impact on the game or on future actions. This is particularly true in social interaction rolls, where a high level of success may impact future interactions with people previously impressed. It also applies to artistic endeavors, where the Success Levels determine how good a work is produced. Furthermore, in combat, a particularly good or lucky blow or shot may end a fight right then and there.

When the degree or level of success of a Task is important, the Chronicler may consult the Outcome Table nearby. This table serves as a guideline of how good a total roll is, and how impressive the character's actions were. An imaginative Chronicler can use the results to add to the drama of the Story. For example, a highly successful display of combat skill may cause enemies to surrender or flee, too intimidated to continue fighting. A particularly successful performance may gain a character new friends and admirers. As usual, the Outcome Table is meant as a playing aid, not a restrictive law. The Table can be used as often or seldom as the Chronicler desires.

The Outcome Table

Getting Scared

Base Modifiers Table

Routine: No roll needed unless it is an unusual circumstance (treat as Easy).

Easy: +5 or more to the roll.

Moderate: +3 to +4 to the roll.

Average: +1 to +2 to the roll.

Challenging (includes most combat rolls): No modifier.

Difficult: -1 to -2 to the roll.

Very Difficult: -3 to -5 to the roll.

Heroic: -6 to -9 to the roll

Near-Impossible: -10 or worse.

Outcome Table

A result of 9 generally means the attempt was accomplished (that's good enough in most cases). When the degree of the success needs to be measured, however, Success Levels depend on the final result (a roll including all positive and negative modifiers).

9-10: First Level (Adequate): The Task or Test got done. If an artistic endeavor, it is just adequate, and critics/audiences are likely to give it "ho-hum" responses. A complex and involved Task takes the maximum required time to complete. An attempted maneuver was barely accomplished, and might appear to be the result of luck rather than skill. Social skills produce minimal benefits for the character.

Combat: Attack does normal damage.

11-12: Second Level (Decent): The Task or Test was accomplished with relative ease and even some flair. Artistic results are above average, resulting in a warm reaction from many, but not most. Complex and involved Tasks take 10% less than the maximum required time. Attempted maneuvers are skillfully accomplished. Social skills manage to gain some benefits for the character (including a +1 to further attempts on the same people under similar situations).

Combat: Attack does normal damage.

13-14: Third Level (Good): The Task or Test was completed with ease. Artistic results are largely appreciated by connoisseurs and well-liked by the public (although some critics will be able to find something wrong). Complex and involved Tasks take 25% less time than normally required. Attempted maneuvers are done with seeming effortlessness, apparently the result of great skill. Social skills are not only successful, the character will be at +2 on future attempts on the same people (this is not cumulative with subsequent high rolls -- use the highest bonus only).

Combat: This is the roll needed to target a specific body part, or to hit a vital area.

15-16: Fourth Level (Very Good): The Task or Test was very successful. Artistic endeavors are rewarded with a great deal of appreciation from the intended audience. Complex and involved Tasks can be finished in half the time. Social skills produce a lasting impression on the people involved, resulting in a bonus of +3 on all future attempts in that skill involving the same people.

Combat: Increase the damage rolled by 1 before applying the Multiplier.

17-20: Fifth Level (Excellent): The Task or Test produced excellent results. Any artistic endeavor impresses the audience greatly, leading to a great deal of recognition and fame. Social skills have a future bonus of +4, as above.

Combat: Increase the damage rolled by 2 before applying the Multiplier.

21-23: Sixth Level (Extraordinary): The Task or Test produced amazing results, accomplishing far more than was intended. Artists gain fame after one such roll, but all their future accomplishments will be measured against this one, which may lead to the "one-shot wonder" label. Social skills gain a future bonus of +5, as above.

Combat: Increase the damage rolled by 3 before applying the Multiplier.

24+: Further Levels (Mind-boggling): For every +3 to the total above 23, increase the Success Level by 1, and the Social skills future bonus by 1.

Combat: Add +1 to the damage rolled for every additional Success Level.

Damage Modification Example: Luigi punches an opponent and his attack roll is a 17 (fifth level of success: +2 damage bonus). Luigi's normal punch damage is 1D4 x 3. Given his Success Levels, the damage is modified to (1D4+2) x 3, or 9 to 18 points. Even on a bad damage roll, the attack inflicts a decent amount of damage.

In the mysterious and mystical world of *WitchCraft*, characters often experience frightful events. Indeed, all supernatural beings share one trait: they scare people. Some do it on purpose; others just can't help it -- their appearance, size or habits are terrifying to normal people. In this dangerous world, even the Gifted will get scared once in a while.

Fear Tests

When facing a fearsome creature or otherwise experiencing fright first-hand, Mundanes need to pass a Difficult Willpower Test, also known as a Fear Test. The Gifted, under similar circumstances, must pass a Simple Willpower Test; because of their powers and experience with the strange, they are better prepared to handle the supernatural. If the Fear Test is failed, the victim succumbs to panic. Most of the time, the character will "freeze up" for at least a Turn. Alternatively, he may run away. Chroniclers who want to add more detail to the effects of fear can consult the Fear Table (see p. 131) for random results of a horrifying experience.

Fear Modifiers

Certain circumstances make it easier for the character to feel afraid. Very gory and gruesome events add penalties of -1 to -4, depending on how graphic the violence is. Hideous creatures may bring penalties of -1 to -5. Some beings have alien or thoroughly evil auras that inspire a deep, instinctual fear in people: such creatures may bring penalties of -2 to -8 to all Tests to resist fear! Some of the supernatural creature descriptions include specific modifiers to Fear Tests.

Essence Loss Because of Fear

Losing one's nerve often results in a temporary Essence loss. If Essence is reduced below 0 because of a terrifying experience, the character will be mentally scarred by the ordeal. Maybe seeing the same creature again will drive the character into screaming hysterics -- or maybe he will be obsessed with finding it and killing it and all its kind. See the rules for Essence loss later in this chapter (p. 154) for more information, or consult the Fear Table (p. 130-131).

Using the Fear Table

The nearby Fear Table can be used when a character fails on a Fear Test. Roll a D10, subtract the Willpower of the character, and apply any Fear Test penalties as bonuses. So, a -4 penalty to a Fear Test would count as +4 bonus to the Fear Table roll.

If the total is equal to a 9 or higher, consult the Fear Table. The table uses the Success Levels of the Fear roll to determine how badly the character suffered as the result of the terrible shock. If the result is a 9 or less, the victim was simply scared for a few seconds but was able to recover.

The Chronicler can use the Fear Table for guidance and inspiration, but he should not let dice rolls rule the game. If a result seems inappropriate at the moment or to the character (no matter how bad the rolls were, having an experienced and tough-as-nails Sentinel void his bowels at the sight of a Vampyre is neither dignified nor "realistic"), the Chronicler should devise his own outcome or result of the fear.

Time

Like any other story, a roleplaying game is a narrative that occurs over a specific length of time. Some games have detailed breakdowns of game turns, rounds or phases. The Unisystem uses everyday measures of time (seconds, minutes, hours and days), saving the more arbitrary Turn measure (1-5 seconds) for combat and similar tense situations.

Additionally, a distinction must be made between Game Time and Real Time. "Game Time" is the "fictional time" of the story. "Real Time" is what the players and Chronicle spend playing the game. Game Time is as fluid as the Chronicler decides it to be. A decisive event taking only a few minutes of Game Time may require the players to spend several hours of Real Time to resolve. For example, a combat with multiple participants may take seconds in Game Time, but many minutes in Real Time because character's lives are at stake. By the same token, a period of hours, days or even years can be made to "flash by" in Real Time if the story demands it. "Well, after four days of continual rituals, you are ready for the final ceremony." Most of the Unisystem rules use Game Time, and are designed to take as little Real Time as possible.



Fear Table

Success Level	Effect
1	Shakes: All the character's actions suffer a -2 penalty for 2 Turns. Lose 1 Essence point.
2	Flight: Victim runs away screaming for 1 Turn. If cornered, the victim may fight or react in a more rational way. Lose 2 Essence points.
3	Physical reaction: Fear causes a messy physical reaction (often involving bodily functions best left to the imagination). Not only is this embarrassing, but it imposes a -1 penalty to all actions for D4(2) turns. Lose D4(2) Essence points.
4	Paralyzed: Character cannot move for D4(2) Turns. Only intervention by other characters (who may shake him, slap him or otherwise force him to act) will allow him to take any action. Lose D6(3) Essence points.
5	Faint: The shock and fear are so severe that the character collapses, unconscious. A Difficult Constitution Test is required to recover consciousness; this can be attempted every minute, or whenever somebody tries to stir the character. Lose D10 x 4 (20) Endurance points and D8(4) Essence points.
6	Total Hysterics: The character becomes a screaming, babbling, totally useless maniac for D8(4) Turns. Lose D10(5) Essence points.
7+	It Gets Worse: Higher results are left to the Chronicler's imagination. They may include life-threatening effects like heart attacks or comas, or a bout of temporary insanity lasting hours, or worse. . .

Combat

As *WitchCraft* is an adventure game, there is always a chance that confrontations will become physical. However, *WitchCraft* is not a war game. There are no detailed movement rules and strict damage systems. Combat is handled just like any other Task. A character attempts to do what he wants (in combat, this usually entails inflicting bodily harm on the other fellow). Whether he is successful depends on his skill, what the target is doing to stop him (if anything), and the luck of the dice (or the determination of the Chronicler in the Story-Driven Method).

Turns

Combat in the Unisystem can be as formal or as informal as the Chronicler desires. To simplify things, action is broken down into Turns. A Turn is a short length of time, about 1 to 5 seconds of Game Time in length. Basically, this is enough time for a normal person to perform one combat Task, like slashing at an enemy, firing a handgun, diving for cover, etc. The main reason for using Turns is to keep things organized; in a Turn, every character gets a chance to do something, and may have something happen to him in return.

The Chronicler determines what action or actions are possible in a Turn. While people can theoretically do a lot of things in just a couple of seconds, combat situations are highly stressful times. Something as simple as reloading a pistol can be delayed by adrenaline-induced trembling. It is easy to swing a baseball bat around, but actually delivering an aimed blow at a target requires concentration and deliberation. Remember, this applies both to the Cast Members, the player characters, and the Supporting Cast, the characters controlled by the Chronicler. While some monsters and creatures are exempt from such emotions, human opponents should also suffer from fear, “buck fever” and other combat impairments. Common sense is the most important thing. Always remember that an extended action (emptying a gun at a target, for example) may prevent the character from doing anything else (like diving for cover if somebody shoots back) during a given combat Turn.

Running Combats

Each Turn gives enough time for all characters involved to perform or attempt to perform a desired action (within limits; some actions may take several Turns). The Turn may be broken down into six steps (see the nearby Turn Steps sidebar).

Ideally, an entire combat Turn should take no more than a couple of minutes of Real Time (very large groups entering combat will, of course, stretch that length of time). The Chronicler should eliminate any step he feels will needlessly slow down a combat situation. Determining initiative is often a matter of common sense. Intentions can be summed up in a sentence or two, unless the Chronicler and the players enjoy a detailed description of action scenes. The actual dice-rolling is meant to be fairly quick; an attack-defense sequence can be solved in two rolls.

Turn Steps

1. Intentions: The Chronicler asks each player what his character intends to do during the next Turn.

2. Initiative: The Chronicler determines who gets to attack first, or allows it to be determined randomly.

3. Performance: Attack, defense and non-combat Tasks or Tests are performed, starting with the character with the highest Initiative.

4. Damage: Any damage inflicted by the results of the Performance step is applied to the target or targets (this can end the fight right then and there).

5. Repeat: Further Tasks are resolved and damage inflicted until each character has had a chance to act in the Turn.

6. End: The Turn ends and the process starts again back at step 1.

It is the Chronicler's job to describe the action. Rather than just say "You hit, and inflicted ten points of damage," descriptions should be more like "You slashed the guy in the arm. From the way the blood spurts out, you cut him deeply -- the man yelps in pain and backpedals away." Keep the imagery lively; make the players feel that their characters are in a dangerous situation, and, just as importantly, that they are hurting people, not tallying off numbers. If the players start feeling squeamish about hurting their victims, the Chronicler is doing his job right.

Intentions:

What Will Be Attempted

At the beginning of each Turn, the Chronicler asks the players whose characters are involved in the action their intentions. Each player gets to state his intended actions. This could be something as simple as "I duck for cover" or "I hit him with my baseball bat" or as complex as "I take aim at the guy's head, yelling 'Freeze or die!' and if he does not freeze I pump two shots at him" or "I cartwheel behind a crate, toss a grenade, and mutter a prayer."

The Chronicler decides if the intention is possible, if it will take one Turn or less, and what skills are necessary. The Chronicler can point out to the player any risks or problems the action may bring about -- if the player's character would know or understand those risks. Some Chroniclers let a player's intentions stand even if they are stupid or suicidal; others try to "coach" their players through every action. Both extremes are bad. There is nothing wrong with reminding a player of something he may have forgotten in the "heat of battle" (again, if it is something that his character would have noticed). On the other hand, some players may resent being told what to do all the time.

Initiative: Who Goes First

Most of the time, this should be a matter of common sense; the party or person who initiates the violence usually goes first at the beginning of a fight. After the first Turn of the fight, Initiative depends on what happened in the previous Turn. Typically, the

combatant who actually managed to land a blow or hurt his target gets to go first. The Chronicler can always decide who attacks first based on the particular circumstances at the time.

Initiative can also determine this randomly. To do so, each player who has a character in the situation rolls a ten-sided die and adds the character's Dexterity. The highest result wins the Initiative for that Turn, and makes the first move. The remaining characters act in descending order of Initiative.

Note that certain Qualities and powers can affect a character's Initiative.

As noted, some circumstances may also determine Initiative. Characters with ranged weapons usually get to attack before those holding hand weapons or no weapons at all. A magical or psychic attack, which requires only a thought to activate, will go before hand-to-hand or ranged attacks under most circumstances. Also, a guy who sucker punches somebody gets to go first. A sniper firing on an unaware target half a mile away automatically gets Initiative. As always, the Chronicler has the last word.

Group Initiative

To speed up play, the Chronicler may decide to allow each discrete side of a combat or tense situation to roll for Initiative instead of each character. Generally, this means only two rolls are made (one for the players' characters and one for the Supporting Cast). The character on each side with the highest Dexterity provides the roll bonus.

This method, while faster, is less realistic. Furthermore, it allows all members of one side to attack or act before anyone on the other side attacks or acts. If the "bad guys" outnumber the players and gain Initiative, it could prove to be very deadly.

Performance: Who Does What

The Performance step lumps together any Tasks or Tests that are required when attempting the actions declared during the Intentions step. As such, a great many things can happen during this step. Several are discussed below. For all others, Chroniclers should determine which Task or Test must be performed (if any), and then interpret the results of those attempts.

Multiple Actions

In general, each character may take one action without penalty in a Turn. More than one action may be performed, however. The main limitation is skill; dividing concentration is difficult. Each additional action taken in a Turn has a cumulative -2 penalty. In other words, taking one extra action will be done at a -2 penalty, a third action will be at -4, and so on.

In close combat, things work slightly differently. In that circumstance, characters may perform one attack and one defense Task or Test each Turn at no penalty. Any actions beyond that attack and defense will be at a cumulative -2.

For example, Jimmy the Kung Fu expert, played by George, is facing three Wildlings. The ugly little monsters all attack him at almost the same time. Jimmy punches one of them, and tries to evade their attacks. His attack and one defensive move are free. The second defensive move is at -2, and the last one is at -4. Not surprisingly, the last attack strikes home, and the Wildling inflicts a nasty wound.

Close Combat

Close combat is any fight conducted at arm's length by people using fists, feet, or hand weapons (such as knives, swords and sticks). In close combat, the character with Initiative gets the chance to strike first. The target may attempt a defensive maneuver, like blocking the attack with a hand weapon of his own, dodging or jumping out of the way, or the like.

Striking at an enemy is a Task: use the character's appropriate skill (Brawling, Martial Arts, Hand Weapon) and Dexterity. If the enemy has a hand weapon of his own, he can try to parry the attack, using his own Weapon Skill and Dexterity. Characters with Martial Arts can parry hand weapons with their bare hands; those with Brawling or no close combat skills cannot. Instead of parrying, the defender may dodge out of the way. This uses Dexterity and the Dodge Skill (if the character has it), or must be resolved as a Difficult Dexterity Test (if not). So, even an unarmed, unskilled person may try to get out of the way of an attack by passing a Difficult Dexterity Test.

An attack and defense set is resolved as a Resisted Task. If the attacker gets a higher result than the defender, his blow lands and inflicts damage. If the defender ties or gets a higher result, he manages to deflect or dodge the attack. Some modifiers may be applied for light (see the Ranged Combat Modifiers Table, p. 136) and other circumstances at the Chronicler's discretion. Otherwise, that's all there is to it.



Detailed Close Combat Rules

Some players may want more detail to their fights than simple attack and defense rolls. These optional rules are meant to accommodate this element. Chroniclers should reward good intention descriptions with a few bonuses in the appropriate Task rolls or draws. Some possible maneuvers and complications are discussed below.

Defensive Posture: The character remains on the defensive, forsaking any chance to attack in favor of protection. A character using this tactic gets a +3 bonus on all defensive Tasks or Tests he performs in that Turn. This is a good tactic for trying to keep a superior enemy busy while waiting for reinforcements to arrive, or to gauge an opponent's skill before making a move (judging the opponent's skill may require a Task involving Perception and the appropriate Weapon Skill -- although if the attacker manages to hit you despite your defensive posture, no Task roll is necessary).

Aggressive Posture: The character goes all-out in his attack, abandoning any hope of defense to smash the enemy. This gives a +2 bonus on all attack Tasks performed that Turn, but no defensive Task may be made. This is a good tactic if the enemy is unarmed or if the character thinks he can take any damage inflicted by his opponent. Most of the time, though, it is too risky.

Feinting: A feint is a false attack meant to distract the enemy and lower his defenses against the real strike. The feint is resolved as a Resisted Task -- the attacker's Intelligence and close combat skill against the opponent's Perception and close combat skill. The attacker's and defender's close combat skill need not be the same. The attacker might attempt the feint using Brawling Skill, while the defender attempts to read the feint using a Martial Arts Skill, for example. If the attacker wins the contest, he gets a +1 bonus on his next attack Task for each Success Level in the feint Task.

Improvised Weapons

Sometimes, a weapon is not at hand during a dangerous situation, and one must improvise. Tools, pieces of furniture and dining implements can all be fairly lethal when used "properly." They will, however, be less effective than a real, balanced weapon.

When using an improvised weapon (a broken bottle, a table leg, chair, etc.), the character uses the closest Weapon Skill he has. Anything that involves thrusting sharp objects (broken bottles, forks, icepicks, etc.) uses the Hand Weapon (Knife) skill (or Sword skill, but at a -2 penalty due to the shorter reach). A longer, swung object could use Hand Weapon (Club or Sword or similar weapon) skill. If no related Hand Weapon skill is available, use a Difficult Dexterity Test to strike or defend. Used defensively, a chair or similar large object actually acts like a shield, giving the character a +1 to +2 bonus to his parry roll. The Chronicler should assign penalties for large, heavy and clumsy improvised weapons (-1 to -3 in most cases).

Ranged Combat

Ranged combat involves any sort of missile weapon, from a thrown stone to a machine-gun. The attacker with Initiative gets to fire at the target; this Task involves the attacker's appropriate ranged combat skill and Dexterity. Range, lighting and other modifiers affect the Task.

In ranged combat, the target has precious few choices. He can stand his ground and fire back, hoping the attacker will miss, or he can duck for cover. Ducking for cover uses Dodge and Dexterity. If the result is greater than or equal to the attacker's Task result, the target was able to hit the ground or jump behind cover in time to avoid the shot. The only problem with that tactic is that it is the only action the target can take in that Turn. That is why most firefights are dominated by the group that fires first; the targets are pinned down and cannot fight back.

A character who wishes to shoot can also take some time to aim his weapon. This delays his attack to the end of the Turn (giving the target a chance to fire first, move behind cover, or perform other actions), but it makes the attack more likely to hit. Aiming is a Task involving the character's Perception and Weapon Skill; each Success Level adds a +1 bonus to his attempt to strike.

Modifiers to ranged weapon attacks are listed on the table nearby. Note that range affects the Task. Ranges for various weapons are listed in the Weapons Table (see pp. 144-146). If looking for modifiers takes too long, the Chronicler should feel free to dispense with them, or determine them on the spot.

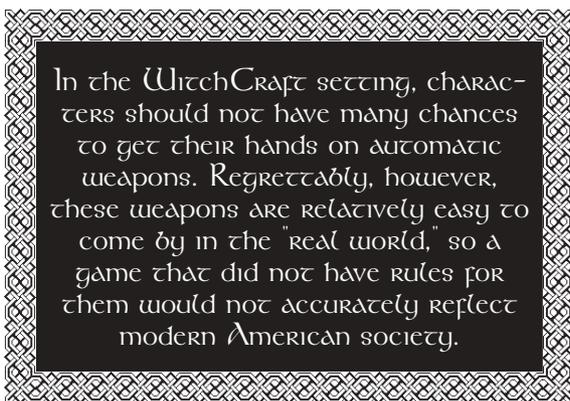
Firing Multiple Shots

One to five seconds is a lot of time for modern automatic and semi-automatic firearms. An average submachine gun has a cyclic rate (the number of bullets fired if the trigger is kept pressed) of over 600 rounds per minute -- meaning up to 10 shots are fired in one second! Even a semi-automatic pistol or double-action revolver (which fire as fast as the trigger is pulled) can be emptied in under five seconds. The main drawback of firing multiple shots is that most of those rounds will miss the target. While rapid-firing, most automatic weapons experience "muzzle climb" as the gun bucks and starts firing higher and higher

up. Semi-automatics also experience recoil, often ruining the character's aim. The rules below take those factors into account.

Semi-Automatic Multiple Shots: Any weapon that fires a shot every time the trigger is pulled can fire multiple times in a Turn. Each successive shot gains a cumulative -1 penalty (i.e., the second shot is at -1 to hit, the third shot is at -2, and so on). If the gun has a heavy recoil (a .44 magnum, for example), the penalty is a cumulative -2.

Automatic Fire -- Bursts: The most efficient way to fire an automatic weapon is to shoot short bursts of three to five shots. This allows the shooter to keep control of his weapon. A burst fires at no penalty. Each Success Level in the Task means the attacker



In the WitchCraft setting, characters should not have many chances to get their hands on automatic weapons. Regrettably, however, these weapons are relatively easy to come by in the "real world," so a game that did not have rules for them would not accurately reflect modern American society.

Ranged Combat Modifiers Table

Point-Blank Range: +1 to Strike Tasks, and add 1 to the Damage Multiplier.

Short Range: No modifier.

Medium Range: -1 to Strike Tasks.

Long Range: -3 to Strike Tasks, and reduce Damage Multiplier by 1.

Extreme Range: -6 to Strike Tasks, and reduce Damage Multiplier by 2.

Poor Lighting Conditions (A dark alley, candlelight, moonlight): -1 to Strike Tasks.*

Bad Lighting Conditions (Moonless night): -4 to Strike Tasks.*

Total Darkness: Use a D10 roll with no other modifiers; only a natural roll of 9 or higher strikes the target. If a character makes a Difficult Perception Test, he can add each Success Level to the D10 roll, accounting for the use of senses other than sight to spot the target.*

Multiple Shots: -1 for each additional shot, or -2 if the weapon has a heavy recoil.

Gun Scopes: A telescopic scope will add +2 to +5 to any Aiming Tasks.

* Lighting modifiers also apply to close combat attacks.

scores a hit, up to the total number of bullets in the burst. For example, a shooter firing a three-shot burst who scores two Success Levels will hit with two bullets, each doing damage separately. If he racks up three Success Levels or more, he would have struck the target with all three rounds.

If firing multiple bursts, each successive burst suffers a cumulative -3 penalty.

Automatic Fire -- Rock 'n Roll: A favorite in the movies, this is when the shooter keeps the trigger depressed and “hoses” the target with a stream of bullets. In reality, most of the bullets fired are going to go high as the gun’s muzzle is forced up by the constant recoil. Each group of ten shots counts as a “group;” make a strike Task for each group. Each Success Level means one bullet hits. Each group of shots after the first is at a cumulative -4 penalty.

Automatic Fire -- Suppressive Fire: Automatic fire can be used to “sweep” an area, suppressing any targets there (i.e., making them kiss the ground and pray for deliverance) and hitting anybody stupid enough to stick their head into the “beaten zone” (the area the shots are spraying). No roll is made, just the intention to spray an area with gunfire. Rather than have to look at cones of fire and complicated formulas to determine the area covered, assume that most automatic small arms sweep an area the size of a doorway or two. Anybody straying into the area will be struck by D4(2) shots.

Shotguns

For the most part, shotguns use two types of missiles: shot (small pellets contained in a cartridge), and slugs (solid shot). Shot scatters, creating a “cone” of bullets that spreads over distance. It is thus easier to hit a target with shot than with a normal bullet. Characters using a shotgun loaded with birdshot (the smallest pellets) gain a +2 bonus to strike targets at any range; with buckshot (larger pellets) apply a +1 bonus. Slugs are treated like normal bullets.

Keeping Your Cool

A factor rarely taken into account in most games is the ability (or lack thereof) of people to remain controlled and calm while under fire. Most people who are shot at tend to freeze or panic. Only the very

brave, the very stupid, and combat veterans are likely to keep their cool and do the right thing when every instinct in their bodies is telling them to start running, NOW! Chroniclers wishing to run a heroic game are free to dispense with this factor, although its use may discourage hot-headed players from getting their characters into firefights at the drop of a hat.

When being shot at, a character must pass a Simple Willpower Test to continue carrying out his original intention. A failed result means the character freezes or hesitates, and loses any chance to act in that Turn. This rule also applies to Supporting Cast characters, so sometimes it is a good idea to fire blindly in the general direction of one’s enemies, if only to make them “keep their heads down.”

Damage: How Much Does It Hurt

Once a character hits a target (or the enemy hits the Cast Member), the damage inflicted must be determined. Damage works differently than Task resolution. Damage is measured in points, which are marked off the character’s Life Points. If Life Points are reduced to 0 or below, the character is critically injured and is at risk of dying. The effects of damage are explained later in this chapter (see Injury, p. 149).

Most forms of damage in the Unisystem are determined by rolling a die; the result is then multiplied by a set number (called, for obvious reasons, the Multiplier). For example, a .22 pistol does D4 x 2 points of damage. In this case, the 2 is the Multiplier, and to determine damage a four-sided die is rolled and the result is multiplied by 2.

Why express damage in this manner? First, the Multiplier can get modified in a number of situations. In the case of the pistol, a bullet hitting at point-blank range does more damage than one fired from a hundred yards away. At point-blank, the Multiplier is increased; at longer ranges, it drops. Also, some weapons have a variable Multiplier. Most hand weapons, for example, do damage based on the Strength of the wielder. A baseball bat wielded by a ten-year-old does not do as much damage as the same bat in the hands of a champion weightlifter. To figure the bat damage, the base damage (D8) uses the Strength of the wielder as a Multiplier.

Finally, although multiple dice could be rolled and the results added together, using a Multiplier increases the chances that maximum and minimum damage will be inflicted. When rolling several dice, low rolls tend to “cancel out” high rolls, usually resulting in an average damage roll.

Damage values are listed in the Weapons Tables later in this chapter (see pp. 144-147).

Reducing Dice Rolling

The “default” Unisystem relies on two types of dice rolls: Outcome Rolls, which use a O10 and add modifiers, skills and Attributes, and damage and armor rolls, which usually require rolling a die and multiplying it by a set value. The second type of roll is used only in combat situations. Some gamers may prefer to reduce the randomness of combat, or simply reduce the number of dice rolled. The quickest way of eliminating damage and armor rolls is to use the average value of a die roll (actually, a little below average). This value is listed in parentheses next to each damage roll in the Weapons Tables. Instead of rolling damage or armor dice, simply apply the set number each time a hit is scored.

Oh, God -- I've Been Shot!

When people are injured (and they realize it -- some people may be unaware of even mortal wounds for some time), their first reaction is usually shock and fear. Even if the wound is not lethal, the typical person will collapse, scream and do a number of useless things. Only people driven by rage, drugs or pure determination (or too stupid to know better) will carry on with a fight despite their wounds. To simulate this, the Chronicler may require characters who have been injured in combat to pass a Simple Willpower Test before continuing their fight. A penalty equal to the damage taken by the character may be applied to the Test. This penalty is left to the discretion of the Chronicler -- a dramatic fight should not be slowed down because the protagonist was wounded. In such cases, the Chronicler can rule that the character is so determined (and pumped full of adrenaline) that he shrugs off any wound that does not kill him.

Targeting Specific Body Parts Chart

These rules can be used for dramatic purposes, but add more complexity to combat. The following chart determines the penalty to the attack, and the modifier to the damage inflicted. Damage bonuses occur after penetration (if the target is not wearing armor, all damage is modified accordingly).

Head: -4 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing and bullet damage is tripled. Bullet damage is modified by two levels (i.e., armor-piercing bullets inflict triple damage, normal bullets inflict four times damage, etc.). Endurance Point damage (in non-lethal combat) is quadrupled.

Neck/Throat: -5 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing damage is quadrupled. A slashing attack on this area that does enough damage to kill the victim results in decapitation. Bullet damage is modified by one level (armor-piercing bullets inflict double damage, and so on).

Arms/Legs: -2 to hit. Damage in excess of Life Points/3 cripples the limb; extra damage is lost.

Hand/Wrist/Foot/Ankle: -3 to hit. Damage in excess of Life Points/4 cripples the area. Extra damage is lost.

Vital Points (heart in front, kidneys in back): -2 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing damage is tripled. Bullet damage is modified by one level (see Neck/Throat bullet damage).

Special Weapon Types and Damages

Not all weapons are created equal. Some inflict bodily harm differently than others.

Two-Handed Weapons: Close combat weapons used two-handed raise the effective Strength of the wielder by 1. For example, a Strength 3 character wielding a two-handed axe has an effective Strength of 4 for purposes of damage.

Slashing/Stabbing Weapons: Edged or pointed weapons have a better chance of inflicting permanent damage on their victims. An edge can slice muscle tissue and even chop through bone. A point can reach deep in a target's vital organs. To simulate this, any stabbing or slashing damage that is applied to a target (after taking into account any armor reductions) is doubled. Blunt weapons (from fists to dropping safes) do not enjoy this benefit, although they often do more general damage.

Normal Bullets: A normal jacketed bullet tends to corkscrew and ricochet inside the human body, shattering bone, piercing vital organs and doing assorted forms of mayhem. Thus, normal bullet damage is doubled after penetrating armor.

Hollow-Point Bullets: Expanding bullets create a greater wound cavity and tend to spend more of their energy inside the victim's body as the bullet flattens and mushrooms inside flesh. On the other hand, armor can easily stop these bullets. Double any Armor and Barrier Value between the target and the bullet, but any damage that gets through is tripled.

Armor-Piercing Bullets: These high-velocity, solid rounds punch through armor and obstacles, but they also tend to punch through the target in a relatively flat trajectory, doing reduced damage. Armor-piercing rounds halve any Armor or Barrier Value in their path, but the damage inflicted is not modified.

Shotguns: Shotguns typically fire two types of missiles, shot (small metal pellets) and slugs (a solid large caliber round). Slugs are treated like normal bullets, with damage doubling when hitting flesh (there are also hollow-point slugs, which do triple damage, as above). Shot damage does not double, and any armor worn is doubly effective against it (even heavy clothing may afford some protection against the lighter birdshot used in hunting shotguns).

On the other hand, shot spreads over a wider area, making it easier to hit the target (see the shotgun attack rules, p. 137).

Explosives: Explosions inflict damage in two ways. First is the shockwave, which is nothing more than gas or air traveling at tremendous speeds. More dangerous are the fragments the shockwave throws around at bullet speed. Fragments come from either debris created by anything the shockwave encounters (bricks, earth, rocks), or from specially designed metal casings or shrapnel (the metal case of most bombs is designed to break into jagged metal fragments to inflict maximum damage; some pipe bombs are filled with nails or ball bearings for the same reason). The shockwave damage is rapidly reduced by distance; fragment damage is not.

To make matters simpler, explosive damage in *WitchCraft* is expressed as one value, which takes into consideration both fragmentation and shockwave damage. Simple concussive devices do less damage than fragmentary ones. There are three areas of effect: Ground Zero (very close to the explosion), General Effect (the area of most widespread damage after Ground Zero), and the Maximum Range (the area after which the explosion ceases to inflict significant damage). The ranges of most common explosives are listed later in this chapter (p. 145). These measures are not strictly scientific and accurate, but any more detail will bog most games down needlessly; some Chroniclers may wish to simplify matters by only using the General Effect Damage. Body armor is largely ineffective against concussion (Ground Zero damage); only fully sealed armor (like that used by Ordinance Disposal teams) protects with its full Armor Value at any range; normal body armor protects with half its Armor Value at Ground Zero, and normal AV at other ranges.

Another form of explosive damage is that used in rockets and anti-tank weapons. These weapons use the Shaped-Charge Effect to better penetrate armor (of vehicles and other hard targets). Generally, those missiles divide the Armor or Barrier Values of a target by a number, usually 3 to 5, depending on the effectiveness of the weapon. Anti-tank weapons are not described in this book, but will appear in future *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* sourcebooks.

Poison

Poisons are foreign substances that, when introduced into a person's body, cause harm, injury or death. They include manufactured chemicals and substances secreted or injected by animals or supernatural creatures. In the real world, some poisons can kill a person instantly, while others have varying degrees of lethality. As a weapon, poison is often unreliable and can be as dangerous to the wielder as to the intended victim.

In game terms, poisons all have a Strength Rating. This rating determines how much damage the poison inflicts, or how difficult it is to resist its effects. The Strength Rating of a poison depends on the type of toxin. There are three basic kinds of poisons: corrosive, irritant and narcotic (also known as nerve poisons). Each kind has its own characteristics.

Corrosive poisons include a number of acids, and several common cleaning fluids. They can burn the skin directly, inflicting a number of points of damage (see the nearby Corrosive Damage Table) every turn the person is exposed (being splashed with the liquid means the victim is exposed until the corrosive is washed off with water). If ingested, they do the same damage until the poison is neutralized with an antidote, or ejected by vomiting.

Irritants include such poisons as arsenic; they are more slow-acting, and require multiple doses. Instead of direct damage, the poison slowly drains Life Points, typically one point per every two Strength levels of the poison, for every dose ingested. For example, if the poison has a Strength Rating of 1, damage occurs after two doses. This Life Point dam-

age can only be healed if the poison is purged from the system. When the victim's Life Points are reduced to 0, the victim may die (a Survival Test postpones death).

Narcotic, or nerve poisons include curare, chloroform and strychnine. They directly depress the victim's nervous system and such functions as breathing. They can induce unconsciousness, paralysis, or death. These poisons do not inflict damage directly. Instead, they use a Simple Strength Test against a Simple Constitution Test by of the victim. If the poison's Strength wins the contest, the victim suffers the poison's specific effects. Typically they include drowsiness or unconsciousness (for weak narcotics) to heart or respiratory arrest (resulting in death by suffocation unless first aid or medical care are immediately provided).

Some sample poisons are discussed below. Chroniclers can devise game mechanics for other poisons based on these examples.

Cobra Venom: This powerful corrosive neurotoxin has an average fatality rate, although some cobras have a deadlier bite than others. Depending on the species, this venom has a Strength of 3 to 6. Each bite injects one dose, and inflicts Corrosive damage based on its Strength for 5 turns. For example, the bite of a relatively weak cobra (Strength 4 venom) would inflict D8(4) points of damage for 5 turns. If the bite is drained, the venom does half damage. After administration, an antitoxin prevents further damage. A cobra can bite more than once in a 24-hour period, but the strength of the venom drops one level per subsequent bite, as the dosage is reduced. In the example above, the cobra's next bite would do D6(3) points of damage. On the other hand, if the cobra bit the same person twice or more, the damage is cumulative.

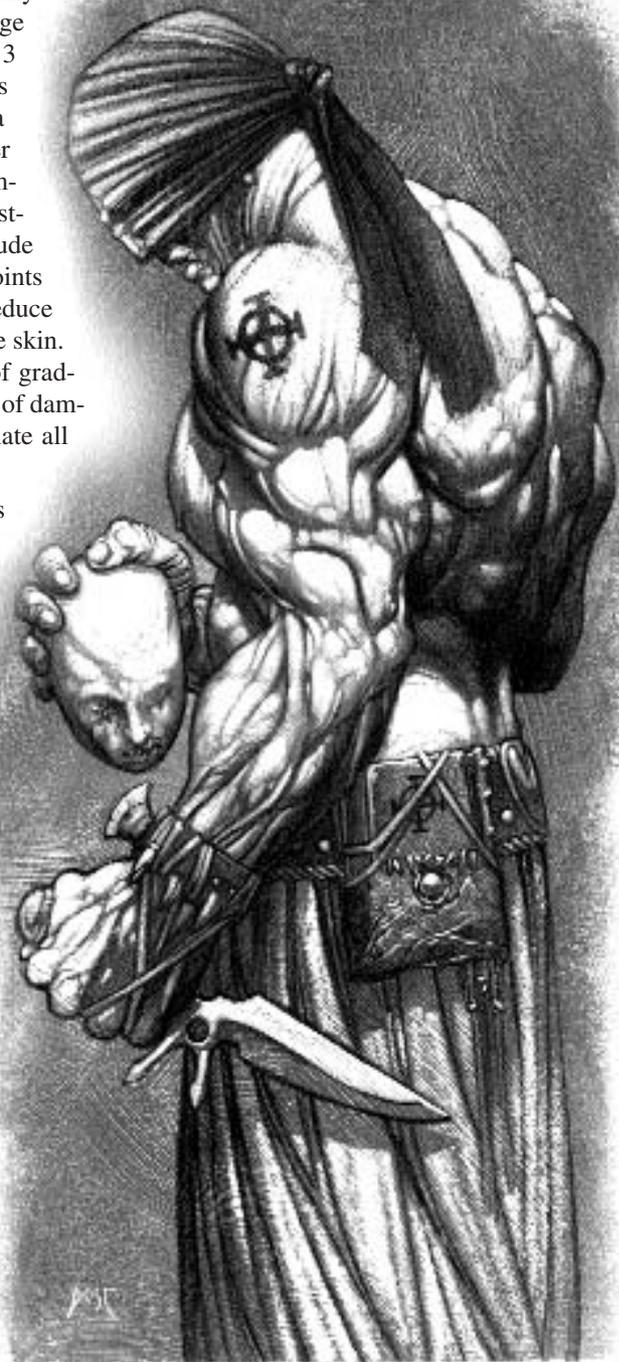
Some cobras can spit venom. It is treated as a Strength 1 Corrosive (1 point). If the venom hits a victim's eyes, he must pass a Difficult Constitution Test or be blinded for 1 hour. After that, a Simple Constitution Test at +4 must be passed, or the blindness becomes permanent.

Corrosive Damage Table

Poison Strength Rating	Damage
1	1 point
2	1D4(2)
3	1D6(3)
4	1D8(4)
5	1D10(5)
6	1D6 x 2(6)

Arsenic: This irritant poison can be found in some insecticides and weed killers. In the ancient world, arsenic oxide, which is colorless and flavorless, was a favored poison, although its effects take a long time and people can actually develop an immunity by ingesting small doses. A large dose of arsenic has a Strength of 6, and inflicts 3 points of damage per hour until the poison is removed (usually by inducing vomiting, although a full stomach pump in a hospital is preferred). Smaller doses have a Strength of 2, and inflict 1 point of damage per day. Symptoms of gradual poisoning (ingesting one small dose daily for 5 or more days) include weakness (reduce Strength by 1 and Endurance Points by 10), stomach problems, slight disorientation (reduce Intelligence by 1) and a greenish pigmentation of the skin. Each dose adds to the daily damage (after 5 days of gradual poisoning, the victim would suffer from 5 points of damage per day). Medical attention will quickly eliminate all traces of arsenic from a person's system, however.

Curare: Curare is a nerve poison that paralyzes and may kill. The natives of the Amazon use it to bring down large game, often dropping small deer in their tracks with one arrow or blowgun hit. Curare may be administered through poisoned darts or other injection, with each application having a Strength 4 dose. Additional darts or doses increase this Strength by 1 level (i.e., three hits with darts have a combined Strength of 6). If the victim fails a Resisted Simple Constitution Test against the poison's Simple Strength Test, the victim's Dexterity is reduced by 1 level per Success Level of the poison's Strength Test. If Dexterity is reduced to 0, the victim is totally paralyzed and unable to move. If the Success Levels of the poison are greater than the victim's Constitution +1 (three Success Levels for the average Constitution 2 person), the victim's heart stops, and he dies in 20 minutes unless medical or magical healing is applied. Even if the victim wins the Resisted Test, his Dexterity is reduced by 1 level per dose! The effects of curare (if the victim survives) last for 6 - Constitution hours (minimum 1 hour).



Supernatural Healing and Poisons

Any Gifted power that heals injuries can undo the damage inflicted by corrosive and irritant poisons. If the poison is still in the victim's system, it must be removed or the damage or effect continues even if the previous damage was cured.

Mindheal can cause the body of the victim to expel the poison; this requires a Resisted Task using Mindheal and the Willpower of the Seer against a Simple Strength Test using the poison's rating. The Touch of Healing Miracle undoes the effects of any poison and removes them from the body of the victim, at the cost of 10 Essence Points.

Disease

Illness is a fact of life (in fact, it killed more soldiers in wartime than actual weapons until the beginning of the 20th century). Since this is not Outbreak: The RPG, some quick-and-dirty rules are given here. Diseases have three major game characteristics: Vector (how the disease is transmitted), Contagion Strength (how easy it is to catch it) and Severity (how much damage it inflicts).

Vectors include airborne (the virus or bacteria can survive in the air for some time, infecting anyone who breathes it); vermin (an insect, like lice or mosquito, transmits the disease), body contact (the person must be in some form of casual contact, touching, for example, or sharing sleeping quarters), waste (drinking or eating things contaminated with the waste products of the diseased; this may also be caused by insects who contaminate food or drink), and bodily fluids (transmitted through intimate contact, blood transfusions, and so on).

If the character is exposed to the disease, Contagion Strength is used in a Resisted Test (Contagion Strength doubled versus the victim's Constitution doubled) to see if he catches the disease.

Prolonged exposure, weakness (from wounds or exhaustion) and so on may produce penalties of -1 to -6 to the Constitution Test.

The Severity (Mild, Moderate, Serious or Terminal) determines how much damage the disease inflicts. Many diseases simply produce weakness and are not fatal except under very bad circumstances, while others are invariably fatal. Severity effects include Task penalties (due to the debilitating effect of the disease), as well as Endurance and Life Point Loss. Mild Diseases inflict no permanent damage. Moderate Diseases incapacitate the character and may inflict damage, especially if not treated. Serious Diseases inflict damage and may have lethal effects. Terminal diseases kill. There are simply too many types of diseases with different symptoms and effects to cover them adequately here. Chroniclers wishing to introduce disease in their game may want to do some research and then use the guidelines here to put them in gaming terms.

Some sample diseases are discussed below.

The Common Cold: This disease is typically airborne, has a Contagion Strength of 6 (very easy to catch), and relatively mild Severity (-1 to -2 to all Tasks for a day or two). Reduce Endurance by one-third while the person is sick.

Ebola: Transmitted through body contact (although an airborne version might be concocted by some germ warfare lab some day), and has an incubation period of a few days. Contagion Strength is 4-6, and the Severity is Terminal. When the symptoms appear, the patient suffers a -1 penalty to all Attributes; a further -1 is imposed per day (cumulative). Symptoms include fever, pain and aches similar to the flu. In a day or two, internal bleeding begins (lose 6 Life Points on the first day, and an additional D10+6 points per day thereafter). Survival requires a Difficult Constitution Task at -4 (one roll allowed).

Other Sources of Injury

Close and ranged combat, poisons and illness are not the only ways that a character can get hurt. Some other sources of injury are described briefly below.

Drowning and Suffocation: Without preparation, a human being can hold his breath for 1.5 minutes plus $D10(5) \times \text{Constitution}$ seconds. After that, the person will pass out and die in a couple of minutes.

Falls: A falling character takes $D6(3)$ points of damage for every yard (meter) drop, to a maximum of $D6(3) \times 50$ (terminal velocity). Note that a few people have survived falls from great heights. This damage is usually bruises and broken bones.

Fire: Being exposed to fire inflicts $D4(2)$ points of damage per Turn. Being engulfed in fire does $D6(3)$ points of damage every Turn. A character who takes more than 5 points of fire damage has experienced severe second-degree burns or one third-degree burn. One who suffers 15 points of fire damage has second- and third-degree burns over a large area of his body; this may cause permanent or crippling injuries.

Metaphysics: A number of Metaphysical Powers can cause damage. Each is discussed separately in Chapter Six: Metaphysics.

Armor

Since the time the first caveman decided to wear an extra fur around him to ward his body from a saber-tooth's claws, people have been trying to use all kinds of materials to protect themselves against attack damage. Heavy cloth, leather, wood, metal, ceramics and plastic have all been used at one time or another to turn spear points or bullets, to cushion blows and, hopefully, to render the wearer immune to harm. In *WitchCraft*, armor plays a minor role at best. Most people in the modern era, with the exception of police officers and some criminals, rarely own or wear any sort of armor.

The protection of any suit has an Armor Value (listed in the Armor Value Table, p. 147). Armor Values are expressed much like Damage effects, with a variable number (typically a die roll) and Multiplier, and a flat value added to the roll. This represents the fact that no suit of armor offers the exact same protection

over every inch of the body. When a character is struck, roll the base die times the Multiplier, add the flat value, and subtract the result from the number of damage points inflicted. If the armor result is greater than or equal to the damage result, the character takes no damage.

Encumbrance

One of the problems with wearing armor is that it slows a character down and makes some things (like being quiet, or reacting quickly to danger) difficult. These problems are measured by the Encumbrance Value of armor. In general, armor with Light Encumbrance will bring about a penalty of -1 to Speed and any Tasks or Tests requiring silence (like Stealth) or fast reaction times (like most Initiative rolls). Medium Encumbrance gives a penalty of -2 to all those things. Heavy Encumbrance raises it to -3 and Extra Heavy Encumbrance gives a penalty of -5.

As an optional rule, characters with high Strength can reduce Encumbrance penalties (except penalties on Tasks requiring being silent). Every level of Strength beyond 3 reduces all penalties by 1. Thus, a character with a Strength of 5 would have no Speed or Initiative penalties while wearing Light or Medium Encumbrance armor.

Armor Types and Layering

Characters may wear different types of armor over different parts of the body (a helmet and a light Kevlar suit, for example). If the optional targeting rules (see Targeting Specific Body Parts Chart, p. 138) are used, then simply use the armor value that applies to that specific area. Some characters may want to wear two types of armor on top of one another; this is especially true in historical/fantasy scenarios where armor and padding types may be combined. Modern armor is not meant to be layered; wearing a Kevlar vest over another Kevlar vest will be extremely uncomfortable, and only possible when the lightest form of Kevlar is used. It is also not as effective as it would appear. In general, when layering armor, add the average value of the weakest armor, halved, to the Armor Value of the heavier layer, and increase the Encumbrance by 1 level.

Close Combat Weapons Table

Weapon Type	Damage
Punch	D4(2) x Strength*
Kick	D4(2) x (Strength + 1)*
Small Knife	D4(2) x (Strength - 1)**
Large Knife	D4(2) x Strength**
Short Sword/Huge Knife	D6(3) x Strength**
Fencing Foil	D6(3) x Strength**
Broadsword	D8(4) x Strength**&
Bastard Sword	D10(5) x Strength**&
Greatsword	D12(6) x (Strength + 1)**@
Rapier, Edge	D6(3) x Strength**&
Rapier, Point	D8(4) x Strength**&
Katana	D10(5) x Strength**&
Spear	D6(3) x Strength**&
Spear Charge	D8(4) x (Strength + 1)**&
Staff (Short Punch)	D6(3) x Strength
Staff (Swing)	D8(4) x (Strength + 1)@
Small Mace	D8(4) x Strength
Mace	D10(5) x Strength&
Large Mace	D12(6) x (Strength + 1)
Battle Axe	(D8 + 1)(5) x Strength**&
Greataxe	D12(6) x (Strength + 1)**@
Halberd	D12(6) x (Strength + 2)**@
Small Club/Stick	D6(3) x (Strength - 1)
Police Baton/Large Stick	D6(3) x Strength
Baseball Bat/Large Club/Pipe/Chair	D8(4) x Strength&
Wood Axe	D8(4) x Strength**&
Chainsaw	D10(5) x Strength**&
Broken Bottle	(D4 - 1)(1) x Strength**

* Does Life Points damage, unless Endurance damage rules are used.

** Indicates a stabbing/slashing weapon. After penetrating armor (if any), damage is doubled.

& Weapon may be used two-handed, raising the character's effective Strength by 1 when calculating damage. For example, the Battle Axe does (D8 + 1)(5) x Strength one-handed, and (D8 + 1)(5) x (Strength + 1) two-handed.

@ Weapon must be used two-handed.

Explosive Areas of Effect

These areas are expressed as a radius (the distance in from the center of the explosion to the edge of the circle-shaped area it affects) in yards (meters).

Explosive Type	Ground Zero	General Effect	Maximum Range
Offensive Grenade	1	3	5
Defensive Grenade	2	6	10
40mm Grenade	2	6	10
Mortar Shell	3	8	15

Explosive Damage Table

Each weapon has three damage numbers applying to each of the three ranges. If a bomb, shell or grenade explodes in direct contact with the target, Ground Zero damage is doubled against that target.

Weapon Type	Ground Zero	General Effect	Maximum Range
Offensive Grenade	D6 x 8(24)	D6 x 6(18)	D6 x 2(3)
Defensive Grenade	D6 x 10(30)	D6 x 8(24)	D6 x 3(9)
40mm Grenade	D6 x 12(36)	D6 x 10(30)	D6 x 4(12)
Mortar Shell	D8 x 10(40)	D8 x 8(32)	D8 x 4(16)

Offensive and Defensive Grenades

These two terms can be somewhat confusing to "civilians," since Offensive grenades actually pack less "punch" than Defensive ones. The reason is simple; Defensive grenades are meant to be used by troops in trenches or other fortifications; their blast radius is often greater than the distance that they can be thrown, so users have to toss them and then duck under cover. Offensive grenades are meant to be used by troops who are relatively in the open; they have smaller blast radii so that the attackers are not caught in the blast as they approach the objective.

Note that the Explosives numbers have been modified from the First Edition Armageddon RPG, and the damages have been raised across the board. Second Edition Armageddon will have these new damage values.

Defending Against Grenades

The Dodge Skill may be used against grenade attacks. If cover (trenches, walls, etc.) is available, success places the cover between the character and the explosion (see p. 149 for protection). If no cover is around (an open field, etc.), success reduces the damage Multiplier by 1 per Success Level of the Dodge Task.

Ranged Weapon Table

For all ranged weapons statistics, ballpark figures have been used. Weapons experts should feel free to pencil in any more accurate ranges, or plug in the latest Guns and Ammo statistics, depending on the specific weapon employed. Note that bullet type modifies damage.

Weapon	Range	Damage	Cap
Thrown Rock	3/7/10/13/20	1 x Strength	n/a
Thrown Knife	3/5/8/10/13	D4(2) x (Strength -1)	n/a
Short Bow	5/13/40/65/100	D6(3) x (Strength)	1
Long/Composite Bow	10/30/50/100/200	D8(4) x (Strength)	1
Crossbow	7/40/65/150/250	D10(5) x (Strength)	1
Handgun	3/10/20/60/120		
.22 caliber		D4 x 2(4)	8-10
.32 caliber		D6 x 2(6)	6-9
.38 caliber		D6 x 3(9)	6-8
9 mm		D6 x 4(12)	10-15
10 mm		D6 x 5(15)	10-15
.45 caliber		D8 x 4(16)	7-10
High-Velocity Handgun	4/15/30/90/180		
.357 magnum		D8 x 4(16)	6-10
.44 magnum		D6 x 6(18)	6-10
Submachine Guns	3/30/60/200/500		
9 mm		D6 x 4(12)	20-40
Civilian Rifles (Single Shot or Semi-Automatic)	10/50/150/600/2000		
.22 LR		D4 x 4(8)	1-10
5.56 mm		D8 x 4(16)	1-30
.30-06		D8 x 6(24)	1-10
7.62 mm		D8 x 5(20)	1-30
Shotguns (12 gauge)			
Birdshot	10/30/50/100/200	D6 x 5(15)	1-8
Buckshot	10/30/50/100/200	D8 x 6(24)	1-8
Slug	5/50/100/200/300	D8 x 5(20)	1-8
Assault Rifles (Fully Automatic)	10/50/150/600/2000		
5.56 mm		D8 x 4(16)	20-30
7.62 mm		D8 x 5(20)	20-30
Sniper Rifles			
7.62 mm	15/75/225/900/2000	D8 x 5(20)	20
.50 caliber	15/75/250/1200/5000	D10 x 6(30)	10

Range: These numbers are expressed in yards (meters) and reflect point-blank, short, medium, long and extreme range. The ranges listed are the limits: anything below the limit is considered to be in that range, anything beyond it goes to the next range level. Note that most bullets will continue traveling a fair distance after going past extreme range and may still be lethal, but the chance of hitting the designated target is basically nil.

Damage: The damage imposed by the most popular bullets for a given type of gun are given.

Cap: The magazine capacity indicates how many bullets are contained in a fully loaded gun. There is a lot of variation out there, however. At almost any given caliber, for example, a rifle can be a single-shot bolt action or break-open action, or a semi-automatic with a 30-bullet clip. Revolvers have 5-6 shots, while semi-automatics can have as many as 15 to 17 rounds (recent laws in the U.S. restricting magazine size to 10 rounds are in effect, but are easily avoided). A range is given, from the smaller magazines and revolvers to the biggest available in the market.

Body Armor Table

Armor Type	Armor Value	Encumbrance
Padded/Quilted Cloth Armor	D4 - 1(1)	None
Leather Jacket	D4(2)	None
Leather Armor	D6 + 1(4)	Light*
Chain Mail	D6 + 6(9)	Medium*
Plate and Mail	(D8 x 2) + 8(16)	Heavy*
Plate Armor	(D8 x 3) + 8(20)	Extra Heavy*
Class I Armor	D6 + 7(10)	None (Vest)**
Class IIa Armor	(D6 x 2) + 9(15)	None (Vest)**
Class II Armor	(D6 x 2) + 14(20)	Light (Vest)**
Class IIIa Armor	(D8 x 2) + 17(25)	Medium (Vest)**
Class III Armor	(D8 x 3) + 18(30)	Medium (Vest)**
Class IV Armor	(D8 x 5) + 20(40)	Medium (Vest)**
Helmet	Varies (Use Type I-IV Armor)**	

* Ancient armor (like chain mail and plate armor) is very rare outside events run by the Society of Creative Anachronisms. Also, ancient armor is not designed to stop high-velocity bullets. When using ancient armor, divide the AV by 2 when struck by bullets (by 3 when hit by actual armor-piercing bullets), and do not double the AV when struck by hollow-point bullets.

** Modern “bulletproof” vests are made of Kevlar and composite materials. Class III and IV armor include rigid Kevlar and steel plates for maximum protection (Class IV armor is theoretically able to stop .308 armor piercing rounds). The U.S. Army’s body armor is Class IV for combat units (torso), with a Class III helmet. SWAT and FBI (and the Combine’s Men In Black) assault teams have Class III or IV body armor, helmets and limb protection. Civilians will have a hard time getting anything heavier than a Class IIIa vest (anything beyond that level is hard to conceal, and the authorities will certainly investigate people purchasing heavy combat armor).

Note: Armor Values have been changed from the First Edition *WitchCraft*.

Breaking Things

It is said that the two things the human race (or, sometimes, just Western Civilization) excels at are killing people and breaking things. Outlined below are some basic rules to achieve the latter.

In game terms, all objects (doors, bottles, cars, tanks) have a Damage Capacity, Armor Value and a Barrier Value. The Damage Capacity is how many points of damage it takes to either destroy them or simply render them useless. Basically, the Damage Capacity of an object fulfills the same role as Life Points do for living beings. Armor Value is how much damage can be absorbed by the object without taking any damage. Barrier Value indicates how much protection they afford to someone hiding behind them. In effect, the Barrier Value acts as “armor” that an attack must punch through in order to hurt whatever is behind those objects.

The Damage Capacity and Barrier Value are two different things. It takes more damage to totally destroy a door than to fire a bullet through it (and injure whoever is behind it), for example. For the most part, the Damage Capacity measures how much it takes to make the object stop functioning, or to blast a large hole (a yard/meter radius opening in the case of a wall) in it.

Generally, the Chronicler should only worry about the Damage Capacity of objects when the Story absolutely demands it. If people want to smash a plate glass window, they should simply do it without rolling damage. On the other hand, if the characters are using an axe to break down a door before the fire

raging behind them consumes the house they are trapped in, a few rolls to see how long it takes them to escape can heighten the tension.

For example, Lucas is a cop with Strength 4, attempting to kick open a door, just like on TV. His Kick Damage is D4 x 5(10). He makes a Strike Task (with a +5 bonus, since the door is not exactly dodging away), and gets a +2 bonus to damage. Lucas' player rolls a 3, raised to 5 because of the bonus, for a total of 25 points. The door lock has an Armor Value of 6 and 15 damage points, so it is broken, and the door swings open. If he had been kicking a reinforced lock (AV 20; DC 30), not only would he not have broken the door, the Chronicler would have been well within his rights to have Lucas take the damage he inflicted -- promptly breaking every bone in his foot!

In another example, the perp inside sees Lucas through the peephole and decides to shoot him through the door! The perp fires a .45 pistol at point-blank range (only the door and some two yards of air stand between him and Lucas). Total damage rolled is 32 points. The door has a Barrier Value of 12, so 20 points get through and Lucas (who was not wearing body armor) takes a total of 40 points (bullet damage doubles); he drops to the ground, unconscious but still alive. If the door had not been in the way, he would have taken a total of 64 points (32 points doubled), and he'd probably be taking a dirt nap. Of course, if the thug had tried to shoot through one inch (2.5cm) of steel (Barrier Value of 80), his shot would have bounced off, with a decent chance of ricocheting right back at him!

Armor Value and Damage Capacity of Common Objects

Object	Armor Value	Damage Capacity	Barrier Value
Wine Glass	0	1	0
Glass Bottle	1	5	0
Window	1	3 - 5	1
Dresser	3	5-10	6
Desk	5	30	6
Personal Computer	4	10-20	5
Door	5	30	10-12
Door Lock	6-8	10-20	--
Reinforced Door	10-15	40-60	20-30
Reinforced Lock	20-25	30-50	--
Wood Wall	5 + 1 per inch	20 per inch	8 + 1 per inch
Brick Wall	9 + 1 per inch	30 per inch	12 + 2 per inch
Concrete Wall	18 + 2 per inch	50 per inch	20 + 5 per inch
Ferroconcrete Wall	20 +5 per inch	75 per inch	50 + 10 per inch
Steel Wall	30 +5 per inch	100 per inch	60 + 20 per inch

Note: Inches may be multiplied by 2.5 to get an equivalent measurement in centimeters.

Injury

Damage in the Unisystem is measured in Life Points, representing the character's vitality and toughness. As Life Points are depleted, the ability of the character to continue moving and performing actions is impaired. If they are reduced to below 0, the victim is incapacitated and in danger of dying.

When describing a person's injuries, the Chronicler is encouraged to go beyond the numbers and use creativity. As a rule of thumb, a wound inflicting less than 2 points is superficial -- a cut or a bruise. One doing 3 to 5 points is deep but not life-threatening, except against weak or sickly individuals. A wound doing 6 to 10 points is severe -- a stab in the stomach, a deep cut in an arm or leg causing massive hemorrhage, cracked or broken bones. Eleven- to fifteen-point wounds are life-threatening -- a chest wound, a head injury, damage to a major organ or a wound that cripples or crushes a limb.

The Effects of Injury

During combat or other tense situations, adrenaline keeps all but the most serious wounds from affecting the character's performance.

A character reduced to less than 5 Life Points is severely hurt. It will be difficult to do anything unless the character is driven by adrenaline into pushing himself. Most actions suffer a -1 to -5 penalty due to pain and shock.

At 0 points or below, the character will be knocked down, stunned and semi-conscious. A Willpower and Constitution Test is necessary for the character to get back on his feet. Such a Test is penalized by the amount by which he is reduced below zero. When reaching -10 points or worse, there is a chance the character will die (see Survival Tests, p. 150).

Knocking People Out

Hitting people over the head or punching them in the face to knock them out or stun them is never as easy as it appears in the movies. Hitting people on the head is as likely to kill them as knock them out -- loss of consciousness is often a sign of a severe, life-threatening injury. A punch on the jaw may knock somebody out, or may just break the person's jaw (and, incidentally, the knuckles of the person doing the punching).

However, some Chroniclers may allow "cinematic" rules to apply in their games, allowing characters to engage in non-lethal brawls and attempts to capture people without harming them (or, by the same token, allowing the Chronicler's minions to capture Cast Members without inflicting permanent damage). The following optional rules can be used for this purpose.

If the player announces his character is making a non-lethal attack, and is using a blunt instrument, any damage inflicted is applied to the Endurance Points of the victim, instead of his Life Points. This allows characters to get punched repeatedly, pass out and be fine in a few hours. If the Chronicler wants to make a minimal concession to reality, he may rule that every 4 points of Endurance Damage inflicted in this manner imposes 1 Life Point of actual injury. Thus, a character who gets knocked out will still nurse some bruises and cracked ribs after the fight.

Survival and Consciousness Tests

When a character has been reduced to negative 10 Life Points, he may be killed instantly. To see if this happens, the character makes a Survival Test. Survival Tests are a special form of Attribute Test, using Willpower and Constitution, at a penalty of -1 for every 10 Life Points below 0 (rounded down) the character currently suffers.

This Survival Test only determines whether or not the character drops dead right then and there. Passing the Test does not mean the character is out of the woods. Unless medical attention is available, the character may still die in a few minutes. Every minute that is spent without receiving medical help, a new Survival Test is required, at a cumulative -1 penalty.

Characters with First Aid or medical skills can stabilize the victim with a successful Task. Characters without First Aid or other medical skills can try to help by bandaging any visible wounds. Whether this works under the circumstances is left entirely up to the Chronicler.

If the character survives the Survival Test, he must still check to see if he remains conscious. A Consciousness Test is run exactly as a Survival Test is, except the modifier is equal to the amount of negative points imposed!

For example, Tiny Tim (46 Life Points) is hit by a burst of submachine gun fire. After all damage is accounted for, he is at -24 points. His Constitution is 5, and his Willpower is 3, for a base Survival Test score of 8. This is reduced by -2 because he is at over 20 points below 0, to a total of 6. Tim must roll a 3 or higher on a D10 for the required total of 9. He rolls a 6 (for a total result of 12), and survives.

To stay conscious, however, Tiny Tim needs to make a similar Test, but at a -24 penalty! Not surprisingly, he fails and collapses, unconscious.

Every minute, he needs to roll his Survival Test again, first at a -3 penalty (the original -2 plus an additional -1), then at -4, and so on, until he finally dies or he receives medical help.



Combat Example -- The Description

"Come out with your hands up!" Muldoon roared, steadying his gun with trembling fingers. Damn. Next to him, Ryan, Muldoon's newbie partner, was positively shaking. Most cops spend their careers and never get into a fire-fight. No amount of training could prepare you for the time when the danger was for real.

"It's all right, kid," Muldoon whispered to Ryan. "He won't come out; let's just wait for backup to arrive."

"I'm coming out!" the guy said. Muldoon muttered a curse to himself.

"Watch out," he hissed. "He's supposed to be armed."

Out loud, he yelled. "Let me see your hands! Do it!"

The man stepped out of the darkened building's entrance crab-wise, left side first, his left hand raised high, empty.

Then Muldoon saw the right hand was gripping an Uzi.

The world slowed down to a crawl.

Muldoon was squeezing the trigger as he tried to center the sights of his pistol on the man's chest. Ryan screamed "Shit!" and fired wildly, shattering a window. The perp fired the Uzi from the hip at about the same time.

Two of the four or five bullets hit Ryan; the newbie fell backwards, screaming. The rest of the burst went high and to the left. Muldoon's vision narrowed into a tunnel; all he could perceive now was the sight of his gun, and his target. The perp was re-aiming his gun when Muldoon finally fired. One shot, then another.

The autopsy report copy that Muldoon got had a hand-scribbled note on it: "Nice grouping!" The two bullets impacted less than two inches apart, dropping the perp on the spot. Unlike Ryan, who got away only with two cracked ribs and a bruised lung, the perp had not been wearing a Kevlar vest.

Muldoon spent a few weeks on a mandatory desk job, and to his surprise found himself plagued with nightmares about the dead perp, but with a little therapy he was okay. Ryan quit the force soon after. Last Muldoon heard of him, he was working as a janitor in some high school, and he had developed a drinking problem.

Combat Example -- The Rules

The "actors" in this little drama are the two officers (Muldoon and Ryan) and the Nameless Perp. The officers have Dexterity 2 (average joes both); Muldoon's Guns (Pistol) skill is a 3; Ryan's is a 2. The Nameless Perp has Dexterity 3 and Guns (Submachine gun) 2.

This short but deadly duel is fought in an alley at night. The cops are about sixty feet (twenty meters) away from the doorway where the perp is hiding. This is medium range for the pistols the cops are carrying (giving them a -1 penalty), and Short range for the Uzi submachine gun the perp is carrying (no penalty). A nearby streetlight provides enough light to reduce darkness penalties to -1.

When the perp steps out of the doorway, his intentions are clear -- he is going to hose the alleyway and wipe the two cops out. The cops are ready to shoot at the first sign of danger, but neither cop has Situational Awareness or Fast Reaction Time. Most people (even cops) will hesitate when they see somebody with a lethal weapon readying it for use.

Muldoon takes aim; in game terms, he waits to fire until the end of the Turn. Ryan, less experienced and more terrified, fires without aiming. The range and darkness penalties give a total modifier of -2. Ryan's player rolls a D10, subtracts 2 and adds the character's Dexterity and Pistol skill. The die roll is a 6, modified down to 4 by the penalties, and then raised to a total of 8 by the skill and Attribute -- a failure. The bullet buzzes past the perp and shatters a window somewhere behind him.

At about the same time, the perp fires a burst, one-handed, in the dark. There are no range penalties, but using a submachine gun one-handed has a -2 penalty (Chronicler's call), and the darkness adds another -1. The perp's total, adding all penalties and bonuses, is an 11 -- two Success Levels. Two bullets strike Ryan.

The damage from the Uzi is $D6 \times 4(12)$. The two damage rolls are 8 and 16. Ryan is wearing a Class IIa Vest (Armor Value of $D6 \times 2 + 9(15)$); the two armor rolls are 11 and 13, respectively. After subtracting the Armor Value from the damage, Ryan takes a total of 3 points of damage, which is doubled (the perp is using regular bullets) for a total of 6 points -- cracked ribs but no lethal damage.

Ryan has to succeed at a Simple Willpower Task to keep his cool after being shot. This has a penalty equal to the damage he took -- a -6 to the roll. Not surprisingly, he fails and collapses, screaming.

Muldoon has problems of his own. To resist the urge to run, or do anything other than stand there, he has to succeed at a Willpower Test; he manages to do so. He spent the beginning of the Turn aiming. His Aiming roll (Perception and Handgun) results in two Success Levels, enough to neutralize the penalties of range and darkness. He fires twice (the second shot is at -1). The totals are an 11 and a 14, more than good enough to put both rounds in the chest of the crazed target.

The perp was not ducking for cover (he spent the entire round firing his weapon), so he has no defense against the attack. Furthermore, he is wearing no armor. The damage rolls from the two shots are 12 and 16 points, respectively. They are doubled (normal bullet damage), for a total of 60 ($24 + 36$) points of damage. The perp only had 30 Life Points so he now is at -30 Life Points. He has to avoid instant death by rolling and adding his Constitution and Willpower (2 and 1, respectively), at a -3 penalty (every 10 points below 0 adds a -1 penalty to the Survival Test); $2+1-3$ adds up to 0. He would have survived only on a roll of 9 or higher.

Recuperation

Medical care and time are needed to recover from any injury. Unless seriously injured, however, time is the most important factor.

Resuscitation

Even if the character is dying, modern medicine and ancient magic can try to bring the victim back from the threshold of death. Once again, common sense is the rule. A multiple gunshot victim might survive if no major brain damage was inflicted, but somebody who was decapitated, or burned to a crisp in a gasoline explosion is not likely to benefit from any help in this world.

A character who fails a Survival Test can be brought back to life if extensive medical help (like that available in a modern Emergency Room) is made available within Constitution x 2 minutes. If paramedics are available, this length of time may be extended by an additional minute for each Success Level the paramedic gets on a First Aid Task.

The medical team in the hospital will try to revive the patient (anybody who's watched the TV show ER knows the drill). The doctor in charge performs a Medicine Task (typical doctors at an Emergency Room have a Medicine Skill of 4 and an Intelligence of 3). Each Success Level gives the patient a +1 bonus on a new Survival Test. The advanced life-saving techniques of the hospital add an additional +3 bonus. The recently dead character must now pass a new Survival Test, at a penalty of -1 for every 5 points he is below 0, plus all the bonuses described above. If he passes the Test, he lives. Otherwise, he Passes On.

Regaining Life Points

All right, so a character got injured but survived. What next? The human body can recover from an amazing amount of damage, but, movie and fiction claims to the contrary, people who get shot or stabbed cannot just get up and keep moving -- not without risking death. Also, a few bandages and blood transfusions cannot restore somebody to full health immediately. In the world of *WitchCraft*, only powerful magic or miracles can do that. The Chronicler can

modify the guidelines below to make his world as "Hollywood" or realistic as he likes, of course. The default rules, however, assume that getting injured is a "Bad Thing." Avoiding injury is much safer than betting a character's Life Points against the tender mercies of guns and knives.

Medical Healing

A First Aid and Intelligence Task restores 1 Life Point per Success Level obtained. Performing First Aid on oneself is possible, but with a -2 modifier. One Task is allowed for each wound inflicted. This requires players to keep track of how many wounds their characters suffered in addition to Life Point depletion. If the bookkeeping slows the game down, ditch it, and just allow one First Aid Task per combat.

A character recovers 1 Life Point per Constitution level per day of rest under medical care until he reaches 0 points or higher. After that point, he regains a fixed 2 Life Points per day. Following on the example discussed previously (46 Life Points normally; -24 after injury), Tiny Tim would recover 5 points per day in a hospital until reaching 0 Life Points (this would take 5 days of intensive care). Then he would have to spend another 23 days in bed to fully recover. In total, this is almost a month of bed rest (and that only because he has such a high Constitution; a normal person reduced to -24 points, provided he survived at all, would spend over a month in the hospital).

Without proper medical care, a character injured below 0 Life Points risks dying from complications such as infection and blood loss. While recovering without medical care, a character must pass a Survival Test every day. He recovers 1 Life Point per level of success (to a maximum of 1 Life Point per Constitution Level). If he fails the Test, he loses 1 Life Point instead!

Supernatural Healing

A number of Gifted abilities can regenerate tissue, reduce shock and even bring a character back from the threshold of death. Those powers are fully described in Chapter Six: Metaphysics.

Endurance Point Loss

Endurance Points measure the character's vitality and ability to resist fatigue after extended exertions. Typically, very hard labor (running at top speed while carrying a sack of rocks) drains a character at a rate of D4(2) Endurance Points per minute. Hard work (running a marathon) drains Endurance Points at the rate of 1 point every ten minutes. Bursts of frenzied activity, like very intensive close combat, drain Endurance at a higher rate, burning as much as D4(2) points in one Turn.

Some non-lethal attacks do Endurance "damage." This damage is typically inflicted in friendly tavern brawls, boxing matches, and similar situations. Only blunt weapons (including fists) can be used in this manner. Knives, bullets, energy attacks and similar attacks always do life-threatening damage. Some magical or psionic attacks also inflict Endurance Point damage rather than actual physical damage.

Characters must get at least seven hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. Anything less and they lose 1 Endurance Point per hour of missed sleep. For example, if the character regularly sleeps five hours a night he will lose 2 Endurance Point each day -- points that require some extra sleep to regain (see Regaining Endurance Points below). Further, for each hour past 24 that a character stays awake, 1 more Endurance Point is lost. So, a character who stays awake for 36 straight hours loses 19 Endurance Points.

Effects of Endurance Loss

At 5 Endurance Points or less, the character feels groggy and dizzy. All actions incur a -2 penalty. If a character's Endurance is reduced to 0 or below for any reason, he is in danger of falling unconscious. A Survival Test is necessary to remain on his feet, at a -1 penalty for every 5 points below 0 (round up). This Test is repeated every Turn -- eventually, the character will fall unconscious.

Regaining Endurance Points

Characters recover 1 Endurance Point per Constitution level per half hour of sleep, or the same amount for every hour of rest. Endurance Points lost due to lack of sleep can only be regained by sleeping.

Essence Pool Loss

Most of time, the only characters who need to worry about Essence losses are Magicians and other Gifted. Severe emotional stress and some supernatural attacks drain the Essence of Mundanes as well, however. Shock, terror and anger may also release Essence Points.

Effects of Essence Loss

When a character is overwhelmed by fear (see Fear Tests, p. 130), anger or some extreme emotion, the character may lose Essence. A character reduced to half of his Essence Pool feels numb, however, and it is hard to elicit any strong emotional reactions from him. Also, mental Tasks are performed at a -1 penalty until the Essence Pool is restored to half capacity.

When the Essence Pool is seriously depleted, however, things become more serious. At 1 or 0 Essence, the victim falls into a deep depression. All Tasks and Tests suffer a -3 penalty, and the person finds it difficult to concentrate or care about anything. If Essence is reduced to below 0, the victim must pass a Difficult Willpower Test, at -1 for every 5 Essence Points below 0. If he fails, he either temporarily loses one level in one mental Attribute (the Chronicler may let the player choose which one), or he temporarily gains a Mental Drawback worth at least 2 character points.

If Essence is reduced to -30 Essence or below, the character must also pass a Survival Test, with a -1 penalty for every 10 points below -30. Characters killed by Essence drain have no apparent cause of death. Medical science will be at a loss to diagnose anything more than "heart failure" (meaning in this case that the heart simply stopped).

Regaining Essence Points

Characters with Essence Channeling can regain lost Essence in a matter of minutes (equal to their Essence Channeling level per minute). Those without it are limited to regaining 1 Essence Point for each Willpower level, every hour. Some Invocations can speed up this recovery or can transfer Essence from one person to another.

Diceless Roleplaying

The base or “default” method of resolving actions in the Unisystem is through the use of dice. Not everyone likes dice -- indeed, a few people actively hate them. Some dislike the idea of letting pure chance determine the outcome of a Story; others would like a more elegant way to simulate randomness. To accommodate as many different playing styles as possible, the Unisystem has been designed to be usable in several different ways. In addition to the dice-based rules, the game can be played in two other ways: using regular playing cards instead of dice, and eliminating randomness altogether.

Using Cards instead of Dice

For gamers who want to keep randomness when determining results, cards can be used instead of dice. Each player should start the game with a standard deck of 54 playing cards. The cards should be shuffled at the beginning of each game. When determining an action, draw a card instead of rolling dice.

Aces are treated as 1s. Numbered cards use their value. If a face card is drawn, consider the result to be a “5” and draw again. If the next card is another face card, the final result is considered to be a “10”. Otherwise, the draw result is considered to be a 5. If an Ace is drawn, use the Rule of 1. If a natural 10 (but not two face cards) is drawn, use the Rule of 10.

Jokers are generally discarded. However, if the Chronicler wants to add an unexpected element, the following rule can be used. If a Joker is drawn, draw another card. If the new card is black, a mishap has occurred. The attempted Task or Test fails in some unexpected and spectacular way, which is left to the Chronicler’s imagination. If the second card is red, the action is automatically successful, usually owing to luck rather than skill (again, the Chronicler can use his imagination to give the result an interesting and creative meaning).

Those are the only differences in the basic game. All the other rules described above apply normally. Damage rolls are either replaced with the set damage numbers written in parentheses, or the dice are kept for that part of the game.

Player-Controlled Outcomes

With card-based gaming, the Chronicler can allow the players more control over their “luck” when performing Tasks or Tests. This is a special subsystem that can only be used with cards.

At the beginning of the game, each player draws a “hand” of six cards from the deck. The player then decides which card he will use on a given Task or Test. If the player thinks the attempt is important and he really wants to succeed at it, he plays the best card in his hand. The player, however, cannot draw new cards until his entire hand is “dealt.”

Unless the player’s hand is downright terrible, he will be able to choose which Tasks he will succeed at, simply by using his highest value cards on a specific Task or Test. Of course, if the player uses up his best cards too quickly, he may be stuck with a couple of aces at a critical point of the Story!

When face cards come into play, the Rule of 10 or the Rule of 1 is used; the card following the result of 10 or 1 is drawn from the deck, not the hand. Also, if the player initiates an action, the Chronicler may require him to draw from the deck. This eliminates instances of players using up low cards in meaningless actions.

This subsystem is particularly appropriate for dramatic moments. Nobody wants to “fumble” when trying to cast the Invocation that might decide the fate of an entire city, for example. It also encourages strategic thinking; the player must decide when to play his best cards, and when to accept failure with good grace. By taking into account the needs of the Story, the player may decide his character should fail at certain points, adding to the drama of the game.

This optional rule requires that the players spend some time deciding what cards to use in a given situation -- they still do not know how difficult the situation may be, or what the opposition may draw against them. It usually helps move the Story along in a dramatically appropriate way, as the player character tends to have “good luck” when the Story calls for it more often than not. On the other hand, this method cuts down on the uncertainty of the moment, and may end up having the players think more about strategy than the flow of the Story.

Story-Driven Roleplaying

For Chroniclers and players who want to avoid the complexity of random rolls or card drawing, the Unisystem can be used in the Story-Driven Method. Here, the Chronicler assigns outcomes dependent on the flow of the Story and the basic abilities of the player. The standard character creation system outlined in Chapter Three: Roles is still used, but the resolution system is a lot more straightforward and roleplaying-based. Instead of using dice or cards to determine success or failure, the Chronicler is the final judge as to how an action turned out.

When two characters (either two Cast Members or a Cast Member and a Supporting Cast character) are using skills against each other, the higher combination of Attribute and skill wins. Only if special circumstances were present would things hang in the balance. A weaker fighter who goes on the defensive and is extra careful may last for a while before being defeated by his stronger enemy. A player who comes up with a good “dirty trick” or tactic may prevail against superior odds. Again, it is description, narrative skills and the Chronicler’s judgment that are the final determinants of most outcomes.

In diceless roleplaying, the burden lies on the storytelling abilities of the Chronicler and the player. The Chronicler has to describe the actions and results, and determines the outcome of most actions by either assigning a Difficulty Number and then comparing it with the character’s traits, or simply deciding if the player’s roleplaying and imagination are convincing enough to deserve success.

Task Resolution

The Story-Driven Method games use a straight number comparison. If the character’s appropriate Attributes and skills are equal to or greater than the Difficulty Number (see the table nearby), the Task or Test is successful. The Chronicler determines what the Difficulty Number is. This determination is based on the Chronicler’s judgment, the needs of the Story, and how detailed and creative the player is in describing his character’s action. If the roleplaying part of the action is good enough, the numbers involved should not be a factor, and the action should be successful automatically.

Difficulty Numbers Table

Type of Task	Difficulty Number
Easy	1-2
Challenging	3-5
Difficult	6-8
Very Difficult	9-10
Heroic	11-12
Impossible	13-15

For example, Bertha the Witch, played by Holly, wants to talk (using her Smooth Talk Skill) a security guard into letting her sneak into a private party. Holly gives a great performance as Bertha, vamping it up and weaving a wild but believable tale. The Chronicler does not bother comparing numbers or results, but simply plays the guard, who, with a stunned smile on his face, lets her pass.

In another example, Boris, an ex-KGB agent now serving with the Sentinels, is played by Louise. He is trying to break into a safe to secure some important documents. The Chronicler decides that this is a Difficult Task, and asks Louise to tell him Boris’ combined Dexterity and Lock Picking Skill. Boris’ Dexterity is a 4; his Lock Picking is a 5. The total of 9 is better than what is required for a Difficult task (usually a 6 to 8), so Boris is successful.

Diceless Damage

For the most part, diceless games tend to have less combat, and put less emphasis on combat, than dice-based games. This is an area where the Chronicler’s judgment as to the needs of the Story is important, but where the players’ roleplaying also plays a part. If characters start taking needless chances because the players trust the Chronicler will keep them alive, some hard lessons may be necessary.

In the Story-Driven version of the Unisystem, damage can be applied using the fixed values (listed in parentheses in all weapon or damage descriptions). If math is not the gaming group’s cup of tea, use the following guidelines.

Damage can be adjusted to suit the dramatic needs of the game. If the characters are fleeing a gang of thugs and are being shot at, maybe one or two of them

could be grazed by a near miss, inflicting a painful scratch. A light wound is a cut on a limb, a nasty bruise, a cracked rib. It is not immediately incapacitating, but requires medical or supernatural help or it may worsen in time. Most weapons that inflict an average of less than 10 points of damage under the normal rules inflict light wounds.

A serious wound can do a number of things. It can drop the target immediately (the victim may or may not survive the ordeal) or it can kill the victim if no medical help is available (the victim may still continue to move and act for several minutes or even hours, however). Being shot or stabbed in the torso area is the most common serious wound. The Chronicler decides if the victim falls down, either as the result of physical shock, or just the psychological realization that he has been injured, or whether the victim carries on with his actions (people have been known to continue fighting or running even after sustaining mortal wounds). As a rule of thumb, any weapon whose average damage is 10-20 points inflicts serious wounds on a direct hit. Consider most handguns, regardless of their average damage, to inflict serious wounds if their fire hits somebody in the torso area. Even small caliber bullets can do a lot of damage by bouncing around inside the victim's body.

A critical wound instantly drops the victim, and in all probability kills him. Critical wounds include beheading, a large caliber bullet hit to the head, being cut in half by a train, and similar mass trauma.

Experience

People change with time. In the Unisystem, characters live and learn and become more experienced as they participate in the Stories created in the course of the game. After several such Stories, the character will be more skilled and powerful than he was when he began. This is also borne out in fiction: the Hobbits from the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy were much tougher, stronger and experienced at the end of their heroic quest.

Character improvement is represented in the Unisystem by experience points. Experience points are awarded to each player at the end of every gaming session. The better the game and the player's per-

formance were, the more points should be awarded. With these points, the players can improve their characters' Attributes, skills and other elements.

This experience point system is used for all Unisystem games, both dice-driven or diceless.

Awarding Experience

During or at the end of each roleplaying session, the Chronicler awards each player with experience points. Outlined nearby are some guidelines as to how many experience points should be awarded for a playing session: average awards range from 2 to 6 experience points, with the higher awards going to the best roleplayers.

Experience Point Awards

Being There: All characters who participated in the game session receive 1 point.

Good Roleplaying: 1 point per instance.

Advancing the Storyline While Remaining in Character: 1 to 3 points. This rewards players whose roleplaying, planning and character actions helped develop the Story.

Heroic Roleplaying: 1 to 3 points. Given to players whose characters remained true to themselves even when it meant they would suffer for it. The heroic type who risks his life for others, or even the coward who runs or surrenders when the wise course would be to fight are good examples of this.

Ingenuity Award: 1 to 3 points. Given to players who used impressive and unexpected tactics and problem-solving to deal with a plot device. This, however, only applies if the devious plan or tactics were true to the character (not the player). If the village idiot suddenly starts having spurts of Machiavellian brilliance for no good reason, then no award should be given.

Improving Characters With Experience

So what do players do with all these experience points? They work much like the character points used to create the character (see p. 50, 298). They can be used to raise Attribute and skill levels, to acquire new Qualities or reduce or eliminate Drawbacks, or to increase Metaphysical abilities. The cost of these improvements is different than the cost of acquiring them during character creation, however. After a character has been defined, it is a lot harder to advance in some areas. To determine how to improve characteristics, refer to the nearby Character Improvement Table.

Character Improvement Table

Improvement	Point Cost
Attribute	see text below
Existing Skill	The cost of the next level (e.g., to go from level 3 to 4 costs 4 points)
Existing Special Skill	The cost of the next level + 1 (e.g., to go from level 3 to 4 costs 5 points)
New Skill	6 points for level 1
New Specialty	6 points
New Special Skill	8 points for level 1
Quality	Same as per character creation
Essence Channeling	4 points per level until level 5; 7 points per level thereafter
Increased Essence Pool	1 point per 2 Essence Points
Remove Drawback	Pay off the original value of the Drawback
New Invocation	10 points for the first level
Known Invocations	5 points per level until level 5; 8 points per level thereafter
Seer Powers (Strength)	6 points per level until level 5; 10 points per level thereafter
Seer Powers (Art)	5 points per level until level 5; 8 points per level thereafter
New Seer Powers	11 points grants level 1 in both Strength and Art
Necromancy Skill	5 points per level until level 5; 8 points per level thereafter
New Necromantic Powers	10 points per new Power
Known Necromantic Powers	6 points per level until level 5; 10 points per level thereafter
New Inspired Miracles	10 points per new Miracle

Note: Metaphysical Powers are discussed in detail in Chapter Six: Metaphysics

Improving Attributes

Unlike skills and powers, Attributes represent relatively fixed qualities of a character. As a result, after character generation, Attributes may be improved no more than one level. If the Attribute was 5 or less before improvement, the one level increase costs 5 experience points. If the Attribute was 6 or greater before improvement, the one level increase costs 10 experience points.

Reasons For Improvement

Having enough experience points to raise a characteristic is usually not enough. There must also be an explanation as to why the character improved in that area, and usually those reasons are determined in the course of the game. If the character used a skill or Attribute repeatedly in the previous few game sessions, it would make sense for that skill or Attribute to get better through practice. To learn a brand-new skill, the character must have spent some time and effort working on that skill before being allowed to spend the points to acquire it. To acquire a Quality, eliminate a Drawback or gain new Metaphysical powers, there must have been a series of events or circumstances that make it sensible for the new characteristic to appear in the character.

Saving Experience Points

The player does not have to spend all earned experience points right away. He can elect to save them for a later date, perhaps waiting to have enough points to raise a specific characteristic.

Optional Experience Point Allotments

Some Chroniclers may dislike players over-specializing their characters in one skill or power, especially when getting experience in game sessions when they did not use that skill or power. The following rule curtails that tendency, at the cost of certain bookkeeping and complexity.

Under this optional rule, the Chronicler assigns experience to each of the following categories. Characters use those points only in the appropriate categories. The character point awards should be based on what the characters did and accomplished during the game session.

Combat Points: Awarded when the characters used any combat skills, such as weapon skills, Dodge, Martial Arts, and so on. These points can be used to raise combat skills, as well as Strength, Dexterity and Constitution.

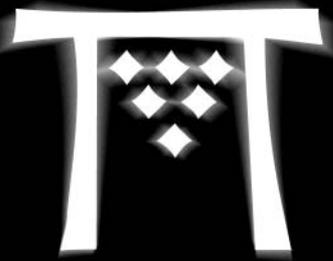
Non-Combat Points: Assigned when scholastic, investigative or non-violent activities, from Beautician to Smooth Talking, were employed. These points can be used to raise the appropriate non-combat skills, as well as any mental Attribute.

Metaphysics Points: Assigned whenever any supernatural or Gifted power was used, whether in combat or non-combat situations. These points can be used to advance any supernatural/Metaphysical power or to acquire new ones. They can also be used to increase mental Attributes.

Chroniclers may also grant characters "freebie" experience points that can be used for any purpose, especially when the characters have performed some great feat or reached the conclusion of a Story.

For example, during a game session, Lukas, a Rosicrucian troubleshooter, successfully followed an alleged cultist, broke into his house, and opened his safe. Lukas was surprised in the act and summoned a fire elemental to cover his escape by starting a minor conflagration in the cultist's home. The Chronicler awards Lukas two Non-Combat points and one Metaphysics point. Although there was some combat (Lukas was shot at during his escape), he only used Magic, not any actual combat skills, so he gets no points for that category.





Chapter Five Associations

Ferguson swore loudly. The operation was not going as planned. Quickness was vital, for you never knew when some government geek from the Forestry Service or, worse, some Commie eco-freak, would be around to blow the whistle.

The trees they were cutting were in a protected area, but the quotas needed to be fulfilled and Ferguson's supervisor had quietly hinted that extreme measures would be not only accepted but rewarded by the corporation. The Forestry Service had too few people to cover such a vast territory, especially since major cutbacks in the budget were enacted — cutbacks lobbyists working for Ferguson's employers had helped push under the guise of "cutting the pork" in government spending.

The Greeners were another matter altogether, but Ferguson had dealt with them before. A man needed to make a living, you know. Even more, once the eco-freaks had nearly killed two of his men by throwing spikes on the roads. A jeep had overturned, severely injuring Ferguson's brother-in-law.

That night, Ferguson and three other friends of his had come down on the Greener's camp. Nobody would find the five well-dug graves for a long time, if ever. For Ferguson, it had been a matter of survival. One of his buddies, a cross-eyed skinny bastard named Lenny, had taken things further, though. There had been two women among the eco-freaks, and Lenny had had his fun with them before sending them on their way. That part had bothered Ferguson — Lenny was married, and that bothered him the most — but he figured this was a war, and in war people did things they wouldn't do normally. The four had kept their mouths shut about the whole incident, and Ferguson's nightmares about the killings were long dormant.

Today's operation involved seven other men and some machinery. If they moved quickly and left no traces, the strip of land they were clearing could be blamed on any of three logging companies within striking distance. Things had slowed down to a crawl when one of the vehicles had inexplicably stalled, despite the best efforts of the crew. If things didn't get straightened up in a hurry, Ferguson would have to call things off and abandon a fortune in lumber. As he checked on the progress of the crew, he saw the girl.

She was a small little thing. Her long black hair made her pale face look even smaller, and the bulky gore-tex coat made her look like an overdressed child. But there was nothing child-like about the cold hatred in her eyes. Even before she said or did anything, Ferguson knew he was dealing with another eco-freak. He felt a sickening mixture of fear and guilt. She could destroy him and his career — and the three buddies who had helped him deal with the other bunch of Greeners were among his crew. He knew what they would propose, and Ferguson suddenly felt doubts about his ability to commit cold-blooded murder once again.

All this flashed through his mind in the few seconds it took the girl to step forward, revealing herself to the rest of the crew. She spoke in a surprisingly loud voice.

"What you are doing is forbidden! Leave now or suffer the consequences!"

Ferguson's killing buddies froze for an instant, but only an instant. Lenny started strolling casually in a wide circle that would put him behind the woman and, at the same

time, allow him to check for other eco-freaks. The other two peeled off in opposite directions. In a matter of less than a minute, she would be surrounded. The woman seemed unconcerned about this — dumb or crazy, Ferguson could not tell.

"We're just tryin' to make a living, woman," Ferguson snarled. He wanted to tell her to get the hell out of there, but it was too late for that. If she had access to a radio, she could get the Forestry Service to check on his crew even if they left right away. At best, Ferguson could be fired. At worst, he might spend years in jail, or be forced to pay a ruinous fine. He had a family to support. It all came down to survival once again.

"Why'd y'all have to come here?" he said with disgust.

"You have to stop this. You are murdering the forest," the woman said calmly.

"Hey, Ferg! The bitch's alone!" Lenny yelled. "She drove in by her lonesome."

Cold certainty gripped Ferguson. He looked at the other men. His buddies were ready. Of the other four, two looked full of fearful doubt. Ferguson called to them. "You two, take a walk. You never saw anything. Move!" The men jumped off their vehicles and walked off. They didn't look back.

"You really should have left well enough alone," Ferguson said bitterly. Lenny was closing in. Ferguson had a revolver, and there was a rifle and two shotguns in the rack of his jeep, but he didn't think they'd be necessary. Lenny had a big-ass survival knife he had bought shortly after the premiere of *Rambo*, and that's what he had used on the two other women. Ferguson shook his head, furious at the woman and at himself.

Lenny reached out for the woman. "Come here, pretty-face."

A tree limb lashed out and knocked him down.

Ferguson blinked. Lenny looked incredulously at the long tree branch that had somehow fallen just in time to smash him with the force of an axe handle. His right arm was bent at an unnatural angle.

The woman spared him a glance before turning back to Ferguson. "This is your last chance. Leave now or die where you stand," she said calmly, almost sympathetically.

"Go get the guns," Ferguson said to his men. When they hesitated, he yelled. "Do it!" He took his gun out of its holster and took careful aim at the woman.

He heard a loud swishing sound before something hard and impossibly strong smashed him in the back. Ferguson went flying through the air. The impact against the ground knocked the breath out of his body, but he retained the death grip on his gun.

Dazed by the impact, Ferguson vaguely heard the woman shout. "Tree spirits! Forgive me, but I must ask for your strength this day!"

There were shouts, gunshots and screams of horror. As he struggled to rise despite the agony in his back, Ferguson clearly heard Lenny, shrieking like a hysterical woman.

"Pleaseeeee!" Lenny screeched almost like that cartoon rabbit in that stupid movie. His yell was cut off by a grinding, meaty sound.

Ferguson struggled to his knees. His vision cleared.

The trees had come to life. In front of Ferguson's unbelieving eyes, a huge oak tree bent forward like a sapling, its branches stretching for Hugh, one of his killing buddies. The tree straightened up with the screaming man in its limbs. The branches rubbed together, and Hugh was pressed into a red and white pulp. The grotesque remains, still perversely clad in Hugh's jeans and plaid shirt, fell to the ground bonelessly.

Hugh's cousin Charlie backed off from another moving tree. Its branches could not reach him even after it bent nearly in half. Charlie had gotten ahold of the .30-06, and was firing into the tree as fast as he could work the rifle's bolt action. The bullets were having no effect. Without noticing it, Charlie backed into another tree. Suddenly, the wood became soft and yielding, and Charlie sunk into it. He howled and tried to pull away. There was a sucking sound, and Charlie's screaming head was pulled into the tree. The bark and wood hardened. Charlie's left forearm, right hand and legs, the only parts not absorbed into the tree, fell bloodily to the ground, neatly severed.

Ferguson looked at the witch. She was still standing in place, her arms extended towards the sky. A greenish light emanated from her. All Ferguson could see of Lenny was a bloody shoe and a wet mess. Off in the distance, another man screamed his final agony.

"Bitch. Witch." Ferguson gasped as he brought his gun to bear.

"Witch. Bitch." He squeezed the trigger.

The first bullet kicked the earth behind her and to the left. She looked in his direction. Ferguson yelled and snapped two more shots. One drew a red line on her upper thigh; the other scored a blossom of blood on her mid-section. With a grunt, she fell.

"Bitch. Die. Witch. Die." Near mindless, Ferguson walked towards her. He fired a fourth shot as he advanced. Missing the prone body, the round splashed into Lenny's grisly remains. He reached her. The woman was lying almost face down, bent double. Ferguson kicked her on her back. Her eyes opened.

"Die, bitch," he snarled.

"No." It wasn't a plea or a command, but it somehow stopped Ferguson for a fatal second. He heard powerful tearing sounds behind him. He had heard them hundreds of times before. It was the sound of a mighty tree being brought down by steel and greed. It was the sound that was oft preceded by an ancient warning call.

"Timber," the woman said with a harsh smile, and rolled sideways. A shadow fell over Ferguson, and he had a chance to look above and behind him to see the oncoming rush of greenery falling towards him, a huge tree giving its life to take its tormentor with it. The loud crash drowned his death cry.

The woman struggled to her feet. The wound was painful, but not immediately fatal, and the Goddess willing, she would live to fight on. The pain for the trees was more piercing. She could see broken bark and running sap everywhere, where the spirits had directed their charges to transcend their limits. A handful of the trees had perished; less than these men would have taken, but a grievous loss nonetheless.

"Forgive me, my sisters," the woman said, tears in her eyes. A gentle breeze among the branches provided a whispered answer. Nodding grimly, the woman limped to her jeep, holding the rapidly healing wound closed with one hand. She regretted the deaths, but this was a war, and in war people did things they wouldn't normally do.

Introduction

The Covenants are gatherings of the Gifted, societies created over the centuries for teaching, self-defense and, in some cases, the quest for power. There are dozens of different Covenants in the world, not counting the splinter groups, rebels, heretics, and other dissident factions within Covenants. Their sizes range from a few individuals to thousands. Five of the most influential Covenants in the United States and Western Europe are described in these pages; a sixth “Covenant,” the Solitaires, is nothing more than a label stuck on those among the Gifted who operate alone or in small groups. These five are not all the Covenants -- in some ways, they are not even the most powerful or influential of the Covenants in the world, although they are among the most numerous. More secret societies will be described in future *WitchCraft* sourcebooks.

Each Covenant has developed its own beliefs, cosmology, and customs. Some Covenants were designed as secret societies from their inception, keeping their very existence hidden from the people and authorities of their time. Others were forced into hiding during one of the Times of Persecution that routinely plague Europe and the Americas. To this day, most Covenants operate in strictest secrecy, both to protect their members from ridicule or outright persecution, and to hoard their precious secrets of powers from outsiders.

The level of organization and hierarchy in each Covenant varies widely. Some, like the Wicce, are little more than a collection of Gifted members with similar religious or magical beliefs, loosely banded to assist their fellows in times of need. Others (the Rosicrucians and the Sentinels foremost among them) are highly organized and have an established chain of command. At the other extreme are “Covenants” like the Solitaires, who are less an organization than a class of Gifted, lumped into one category by other Covenants.

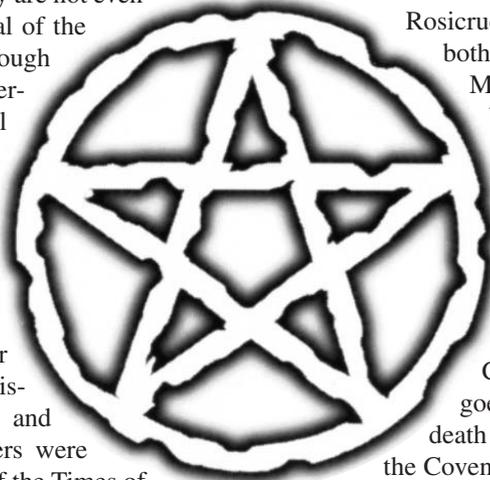
All these associations realize that the Time of Reckoning is drawing near. Their occult knowledge and abilities have been able to detect and understand the signs, and they have benefited from the rise in the numbers of the Gifted. What they plan to do (if anything) about the troubles ahead varies from one group to another. Many are ignoring the signs; only a few are taking action.

Joining a Covenant

Becoming part of a Covenant requires an Initiation process, a ceremony where the candidate renounces her past identity and becomes a new person, one owing loyalty to her Covenant. Interestingly enough, the initiation rituals of the Wicce and Rosicrucians are somewhat similar, and both follow the same pattern used by Masons and other secret societies, both in Western Europe and among the most primitive cultures of the world. The entire process occurs after a candidate has been deemed worthy of belonging to the group. The actual prerequisites and qualifications vary from Covenant to Covenant. The would-be initiate goes through a ritual symbolizing death and rebirth, pledging to defend the Covenant and protect its secrets.

Some Covenants use magical or psychic aids in the ceremony, often making the initiate experience visions about the society’s past and present, or passing on some important secret. The experience is meant to create a powerful emotional bond. Some animistic cultures often use pain, ritual scarring and tattooing. Western Covenants prefer to rely on shocking the initiate, who is often blindfolded and led through unknown parts (forcing her to trust her fellow members).

Any Gifted character who is member of a Covenant will have experienced an initiation ritual. Roleplaying that ceremony may help give the player some ideas about the nature and beliefs of their newly-pledged Covenant.



The Wicce

The Wicce (pronounced Wick, Witch or Wise; each Coven or sometimes each member pronounces it differently) are one of the oldest Covenants of Magic. The Wicce are the descendants of the witches who were vilified and persecuted by Church and State during the late Middle Ages and Reform periods. Although they are not truly organized and they have no leaders or established hierarchy, the Wicce are among the most powerful Covenants due to their mastery not only of Magic, but also of the Second Sight, which they see as two sides of the same coin. Individual Covens (gatherings of Wicce) tend to do as they please while remaining true to the tenets of their philosophy, which at its most basic can be summed up as: "If it harms none, do what you will." Many of the members of the Covenant are rebels and non-conformists who live by their personal code of honor rather than by any rules imposed by mainstream society. Their untraditional lifestyles often cause them to be shunned by intolerant mundanes even if their magical abilities remain secret.

The Wicce are heavily attuned to the currents of Essence (the basic force of Creation) in Nature, although less so than truly Shamanistic Covenants. Their magic is inherently protective and nurturing, less suited to destroying or controlling things than that of the Rosicrucians. While the Wicce will rarely attack somebody outright, attacking a Wicce can prove to be a fatal error.

History

Some students of the occult date the Wicce's origins as far back as prehistoric times, to the ancient practices of ancient shamans who conducted ceremonies in painted caves and worshiped the raw forces of Nature. The Wicce are believed to have been powerful and influential in Europe up until the time of the

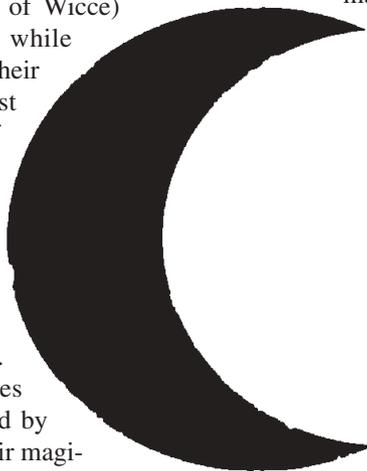
Roman conquests. They were sometimes allied to the Druid cults, but often were at odds with them. The Wicce were persecuted first by the Romans (although with limited zealotry), and later by the Christian Church, who labeled their gods "demons" and their practices "devil worship." The truth was that the Wicce, or "Wise Ones," belonged to a tradition older than Christianity. There was a magical religion that believed in the existence of spirits and in reincarnation. They did not worship the Devil, as their opponents claimed, but a dual deity, a Goddess and God who represented the two sides of Creation. Despite the best attempts of Church and State, the Wicce

managed to survive over the centuries, especially in small communities in remote areas of Europe. Many Wicce escaped to the New World, where they were able to continue their practices protected by the remoteness of their new homes.

To maintain their secrecy, many Covens developed their own code words, signs and handshakes, in some ways not dissimilar to the signs of secrecy used by Masonic lodges. Some of these signs are still in use today, allowing a Wicce to recognize and communicate with other members without giving themselves away.

Finally, although the Wicce have both male and female members, women hold most of the leadership positions. Some claim this is a cultural bias, from the original matriarchal cultures where witchcraft developed, while others see sound magical reasons for it.

As persecution culled the faint-hearted, the Wicce became a tradition of those who would not conform to the rules, who would not meekly accept what those in authority tried to force down their throats. The Wicce, in effect, became rebels. Women assumed positions of power and leadership during times when they were treated as little more than chattel. They examined all religions with a critical eye at a time when doubting the Church dogma could mean death. They dared to explore the worlds of mysticism and



magic when such practices were strictly forbidden. This tradition of rebelliousness and individuality survives to this day.

The Wicce are not mindless anarchists, however. They strongly believe that everything they do has consequences, and that they will be held accountable for those consequences, be it in this life or the next. Causing harm to others will be repaid in kind by Fate. Any action that brings harm to others, except in self-defense or to save the innocents from would-be predators, brings about its own punishment. Harmony and Balance are central concepts of witchcraft; when one pushes that balance in one direction, a reaction in the opposite direction will follow.

Beliefs

The Wicce have an eclectic set of beliefs that combine a number of pagan religions into a mixture that varies from region to region and even Coven to Coven. Many Wicce follow a magical religion that worships Nature, often personified in a Moon Goddess and God, each one side of a process of death and rebirth. Some Covens worship a single Goddess instead, representing Earth and fertility. Some consider these “gods” to be symbolic manifestations of the power of magic, and are used to focus their inner power. Sometimes, disagreements on such matters have made Covens sever all ties with other Covens. Under no circumstances, however, has a Coven tried to persecute or impose its beliefs on another Coven.

Most Wicce are also believers in reincarnation, that many humans go through a continual cycle of death and rebirth that is similar to the cycle of the seasons, or of day to night. Reincarnation is often controlled by the Wyrð, or Fate, which some Wicce believe is determined by one’s actions in past lives, much like the Eastern philosophical concept of karma.

Finally, the Wicce believe in the power of magic. Magic is seen as a natural force that can be trained and taught much like any other art or craft. It is the power of Thought, which when properly focused can tap into the very forces of Creation. The use of magic is believed to be deeply linked to the magician’s intent and goals, and its use can bring about its own reward and punishment. Another precept (also used as part of some defensive rituals) is “What you do to others, you get back three times.” Wicce believe that those who do evil will suffer an evil end.



To the Wicce, the Time of Reckoning is a moment of great dangers -- and equally great opportunities. As people are once again beginning to accept the existence of the spiritual and the mystic, some of the Wicce have, in the last few decades, begun to operate in the open for the first time in generations. Others think that the approaching struggle may destroy what is left of the Old Religion -- and perhaps all of humankind. In either case, the Wicce know they will not be passive spectators in the struggle; that would go against everything they stand for. The Wicce view the increasingly disquieting changes with a mixture of fear and hope: the Reckoning may be a time of Death, but such times are often followed by a magnificent Rebirth.

Organization

The Wicce have perhaps the loosest hierarchy among the Covenants (with the obvious exception of the Solitaires). The basic unit in the Wicce is the Coven, a group of witches who live in the same general area and who assist each other, both in magical and personal matters. The Coven should not have more than thirteen members (popular myths to the contrary, thirteen is not the requisite number for a Coven, but its upper limit); having more than thirteen members makes most rituals unmanageable. Some Covens have as few as three members (this is considered to be the smallest practical size). Covens are sometimes controlled by a High Priestess, who leads in ritual matters, although leadership in other matters is often shared with a male Priest, or is simply a matter of consensus within the group.

For most of the Wicce, the Coven is the only level of organization they have. A few areas have a Witch Queen who presides over two or more Covens. Witch Queens are fairly rare, however, and their role is mostly ceremonial. Other ranks exist, but vary from Coven to Coven. A few of the larger Covens will have a ranking system, but most Wicce ignore or scoff at such distinctions, respecting age, wisdom and experience on a case-by-case basis.

Allies and Enemies

For much of their history, any contact between the Wicce and other Covenants was limited or accidental. The approaching Reckoning is making such encounters more common, and most Wicce have learned of the existence and goals of other groups of Gifted. They have also made many enemies among the ranks of those who wish to enslave or destroy humankind.

The Rosicrucians: Many Wicce consider the Rosicrucians to be power-hungry exploiters and destroyers. The dislike between the two Covenants is greatest along gender lines; female Wicce and male Rosicrucians are the most likely not to get along, or to actually hate each other. During the Times of Persecution, it was not unknown for a Rosicrucian to throw off pursuit by leading his persecutors to a genuine "witch" -- and vice versa. On an individual basis, contacts, informal sharing of information, and even the occasional alliance, are not unknown.

The Sentinels: The monotheist monster-hunters are almost always avoided; their beliefs and militant actions remind the Wicce of Crusaders and Inquisitors, enemies who killed countless witches and unbelievers. Actual conflict is relatively uncommon nowadays, but the Wicce rarely go out of their way to reveal their existence to any nearby Sentinel group.

The Twilight Order: Some Wicce dabble in Necromancy, but most consider the spirits of the dead to be in a transitional state, one that should be terminated as soon as possible so the soul may reenter the cycle of life, death and reincarnation, which is the only real way for the soul to advance. The Twilight Order is considered to have a somewhat unhealthy concern for the dead, but their knowledge is respected, and generally the Wicce have little qualms about collaborating with them, especially the most mystically-oriented necromancers.

The Cabal of Psyche: Both the Wicce and the Cabal have an abiding interest in the powers of the mind. The Wicce finds that many Cabal members have too "scientific" a view of all things mystical, an attitude thought to be short-sighted, given that Magic and to a lesser extent the Sight are forces of emotion rather than reason. The two groups will work together only when their interests coincide.

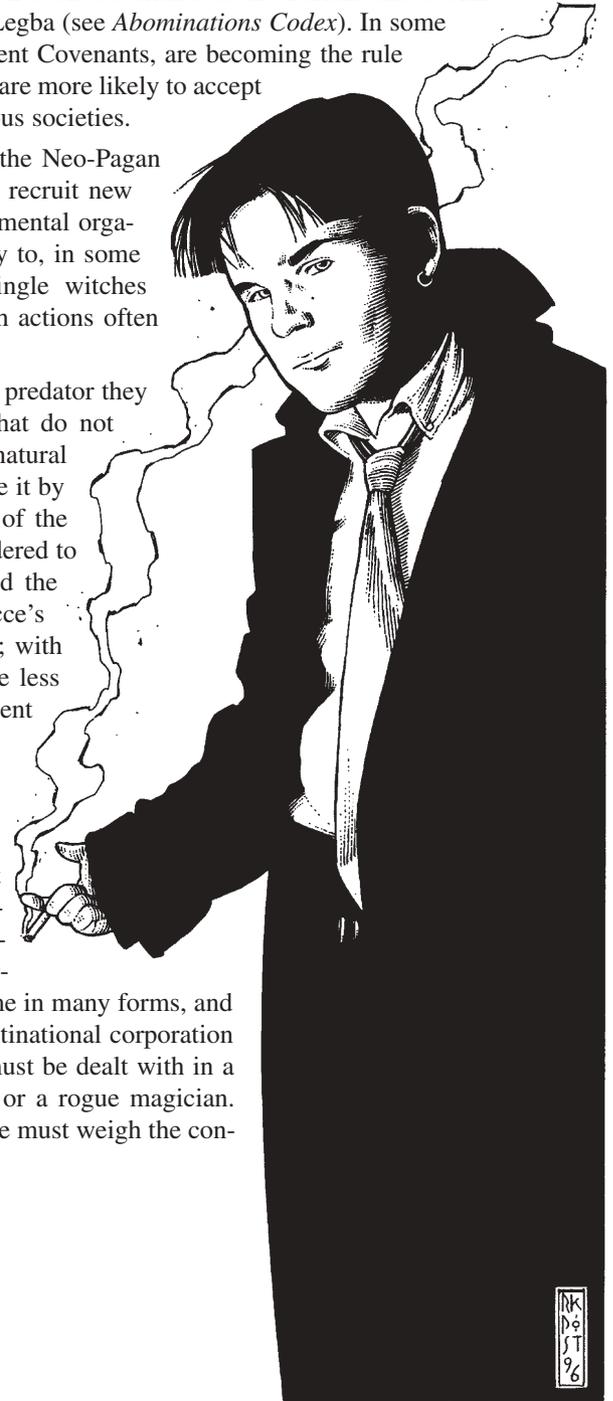
Other Covenants: The Solitaires are treated on a case by case basis. In fact, a freewheeling Wicce Coven and a pagan-oriented group of Solitaires are impossible to tell apart in some cases. Most Wicce deal with Solitaires and other Covenants based on their actions rather than their words or professed goals. In the last few decades, the Wicce have come into contact with such Covenants as the Pariahs and Storm Dragons (see *Mystery Codex*) and the Covenant of Legba (see *Abominations Codex*). In some areas, mixed Covens, groups of magicians of different Covenants, are becoming the rule rather than the exception. By their nature, the Wicce are more likely to accept other traditions and cultures than most other sorcerous societies.

Mundanes: The Wicce have very strong ties to the Neo-Pagan and New Age communities, from which they often recruit new members. They also have connections with environmental organizations, from the Sierra Club and the Green Party to, in some cases, radical eco-terrorists. Often, Covens or single witches secretly help those groups achieve their goals. Such actions often put them at odds with the Combine, however.

Enemies: The Wicce will attack any supernatural predator they encounter, considering them to be abominations that do not belong in this world. Groups -- mundane and supernatural -- who seek to upset the natural balance of things, be it by polluting the environment, restricting the freedom of the human spirit, or preying on the weak are also considered to be enemies. The Combine is a constant threat, and the Wicce are still unsure of how to deal with it. The Wicce's goals are often contradictory and hard to reconcile; with over-population remaining a threat, some Wicce are less worried about single human lives than the environment or other larger concerns.

Wicce Stories

Stories revolving around the Wicce should focus on their basic beliefs: the existence of a balance that must be maintained, the rebellious spirit that questions all forms of authority, the mystical advancement achieved through leading a good life and undergoing multiple reincarnations. Their adversaries come in many forms, and they are not always easy to confront directly. A multinational corporation seeking to turn miles of virgin forest into condos must be dealt with in a very different manner than an undead serial killer or a rogue magician. Throughout all such encounters, moreover, the Wicce must weigh the consequences of their actions.

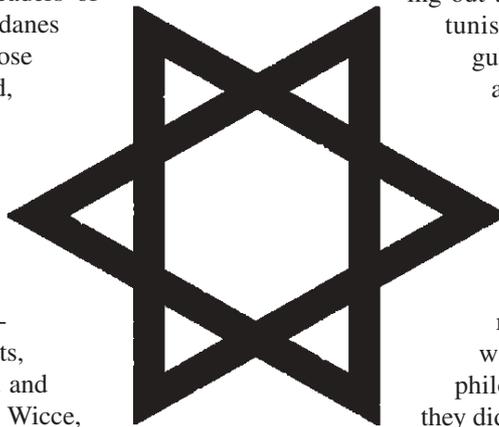


Brotherhood of the Rose Cross

-- The Rosicrucians

The Brotherhood of the Rose Cross is an ancient Covenant of magicians whose main interest is the pursuit of knowledge and, to a lesser degree, the accumulation of power. This society has operated for almost eight hundred years, steadily growing in numbers. These sorcerers number many wealthy and influential people among their members, but they rarely concern themselves with accumulating mundane power, focusing instead on the mastery of magic. The experience of the Times of Persecution have taught the leaders of the Rosicrucians that the mundanes are always ready to destroy those they fear or cannot understand, so they prefer to carry on their work in hiding, using magic to help themselves in small, subtle ways, while unlocking the secrets of the universe.

The Rosicrucians are among the most accomplished magicians in the world. Their arts, although somewhat more rigid and regimented than those of the Wicce, are extremely effective and powerful. They are dedicated to protecting their members from all threats, supernatural and mundane. To be a Rosicrucian means to enjoy the patronage of a worldwide network of sorcerers – but it also means a pledge of service to that network. People with an interest in the occult and a talent for working magic are the only suitable candidates. For most of its existence, the Rosicrucians were a men-dominated organization. This has changed in the last twenty years, although only a few female members have risen to positions of real authority so far. Members are given the chance to learn Invocations and develop their ability to channel Essence. In recent years, the Brotherhood has become active in suppressing outbreaks of supernatural activity, although not in a widespread or highly organized way.



History

In 1614, a pamphlet circulated around Europe. The tract described a mysterious organization of European mystics who sought to better the world with their ancient art and knowledge. According to the document, the Order of the Rose Cross was dedicated to healing all ills, and its members had tremendous occult powers. The pamphlet stirred up all manner of intellectuals, alchemists and charlatans. Thousands of would-be disciples wandered the continent, seeking to join this Order of the Rose Cross. Many self-styled “Rosicrucians” appeared all over, drawing converts and more often than not turning out to be nothing more than opportunists seeking to exploit the gullible. Years later, several scholars asserted that the pamphlet was little more than a work of fiction, and categorically denied the existence of such an organization. They were very wrong.

The pamphlet contained more than a grain of truth. There was an “invisible college” of philosophers and magicians, and they did have great power. Some “true”

Rosicrucians believe that the entire incident was a test of the Masters of the Order to see if the time was right to emerge from obscurity. The test failed, and the organization remained in hiding.

According to what members are told, the Order of the Rose Cross was founded in France during the thirteenth century. The group was an association of the Gifted who sought to share knowledge amongst its members. Practice and the combined experiences of the members allowed for the development of new and better forms of magic. As time went on, however, the “old ways” became stagnant and fixed, to the point that most Rosicrucians still use ceremonies and rituals invented during the Middle Ages.

Some Rosicrucians claim their Covenant is far older than that, however. They claim that the core of the Brotherhood harkens back to the ancient Egyptians and the Persian Magi, and that the reorga-

nization in the 13th century was simply a move to draw in “lost brethren,” mystics who had drifted away over the centuries after such disasters as the fall of Rome (considered to be another Time of Reckoning) and the Dark Ages that followed. Whether this is a statement of fact or merely an attempt to glorify the Brotherhood remains a hotly argued question.

The organization evolved from one of scholarly research to an institution devoted to mutual assistance and protection. Like the trading guilds of the same period, members pledged their allegiance to the Brotherhood (originally, women were not allowed in the society) and in return were protected by it. To attack a Rosicrucian meant to attack the entire organization: other Covenants, supernatural beings and several mundanes learned this fact the hard way.

The Time of Persecutions did not catch the Rosicrucians unprepared. They had long held on to vows of secrecy to avoid being mobbed by would-be students. These vows helped keep them largely safe from the horrors of the Inquisition, although several Brothers were branded witches and tortured or killed. The organization maintained its secrecy up to the present, and continues to maintain it today. It grew in size slowly, finding and recruiting likely candidates from around the world, and now it is well-represented in Europe, the Americas and even some parts of Asia, although there the Rosicrucians have had to compete with strong native Covenants.

Beliefs

The primary goal of the Rosicrucians is the advancement of the human spirit through the mastery of magic. The Rosicrucians believe that magic is an expression of the human will over Reality. All humans, being made in God’s image, have the divine spark within them, which allows them to perform the act of Creation, although on a far lesser scale. This is only possible through the learning of occult sciences and disciplines that give the sorcerer a greater understanding of the universe. With understanding comes control: the Rosicrucians are more concerned with mastery over the Otherworlds (their term for all things supernatural) than with maintaining some sort of cosmic balance (the main purpose of the Wicce). Through the use of magic, an adept can manipulate matter and energy, and can also see and control a



number of invisible entities, commonly called Elementals by the Rosicrucians, which include ghosts, nature spirits, and other beings. Some, like demons, are malevolent and should only be destroyed or, at best, enslaved. The others must be tightly controlled into doing the magician's bidding. Unlike the Wicce, who concentrate on Balance, the Rosicrucians favor control and mastery over Nature. They prefer to bind spirits into their service through elaborate magical snares and contracts rather than depend on their good faith. In many ways, the Rosicrucians follow an ancient dogma of Western culture: Nature and the world are meant to be subject to the will of humankind. There is another side to this coin, however, one the Rosicrucians acknowledge (but Western civilization often does not): with power comes responsibility, and if humankind is meant to rule Nature, then it must also be responsible for its care and well-being. The Rosicrucians understand that their actions have consequences, and care must be taken to account for them -- at least in theory. In practice, they are more likely to upset the balance of things than a Wicce practitioner.

The Brotherhood is mostly secular, with no religious doctrines or biases (in the old times, Jews and Muslims were discriminated against, but that ended centuries ago). Most members consider themselves Christians, with even a few Agnostics mixed in.

The Rosicrucians will step in and deal with any dangerous otherworldly incident that they become aware of, but they have yet to formulate a strategy to deal with the Time of Reckoning. More and more members realize that the moment they started dabbling with the occult, they became targets for the forces that are gathering power and momentum. The increase in the number of Gifted people being born has allowed the Rosicrucians to increase their membership, something many members see as a blessing, because they fear they will need all the help they can get. Most Shrines are spending a great deal of time trying to learn more about the upcoming crisis, although members hesitate to act upon that information unless the threat is immediate and urgent. A few of the more courageous (or hotheaded) members are becoming increasingly active in seeking out and confronting these forces.

Organization

This secret society can be joined by invitation only. Intelligence, dedication and culture are the main traits any would-be member must possess. Raw power in the magical arts is always desirable, of course, but it is not the only qualification. In fact, many prominent Rosicrucians only have basic levels of magical power. They more than make up for it through arcane skills.

People do not apply to the Rosicrucians. Instead, the organization itself finds and attempts to recruit likely candidates. Like corporations, the Rosicrucians do most of their recruiting on college campuses, concentrating on the most exclusive and prestigious centers of learning. They often work through campus fraternities, sororities and secret societies, where those with an interest in the occult and ancient mysteries are quietly contacted. If a candidate shows promise, she is led through a series of tests and minor ordeals, developed to confirm the dedication and loyalty of the would-be Rosicrucian. Those who pass are inducted into the Brotherhood (which, despite its name, accepts female members).

The Rosicrucians are organized into Shrines. Each Shrine controls a geographical area, ranging in size from a town or city to an entire nation, depending on the number of affiliated magicians living in the area. In the U.S., for example, there are Shrines in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New England (located in Andover, Massachusetts), the Mid-West (located in Toledo, Ohio), and the South (located in Nashville, Tennessee). The New York Shrine actually has more members than the entire Southern Shrine, although the latter is in charge of a much larger area.

Within the Shrines are smaller units called Cohorts, based on the old Roman military unit. Cohorts are small groups of less than ten individuals. Members are assigned to a Cohort based on their proximity to each other. So, for example, a new member who lived in Connecticut would be assigned to the Cohort whose members lived closest to her. For most members, the Cohort serves little purpose other than to know who to call in case of an emergency. Recently, a new version, more like a team of troubleshooters, has been organized. These Roving Cohorts consists

of small bands of young, dedicated Rosicrucians who work full time to help identify and eliminate dangers to the Brotherhood.

The Ranks of the Rosicrucians are based on the medieval system of nobility, combined with ancient Roman social systems. They are, from lesser to greater: Page (one who is being considered for membership, usually without her knowledge); Squire (a probationary member who gets to learn the rudiments of magic and some of the basic secrets of the Brotherhood); Equestrian (a full member; the leader of a Cohort must be of Equestrian Rank); Tribune (the leader of a Shrine); Duke (leader of a regional area, usually comprising two Shrines, or a very large Shrine); Master (overseer of an entire area, responsible for the behavior of the Dukes); and Grand Master (one of the thirteen members who rule the Brotherhood). It is rumored that there are hidden ranks among the Masters and Grand Masters, and small sects or factions known only to those who belong to them. Given the secrecy that separates one rank from another, anything is possible.

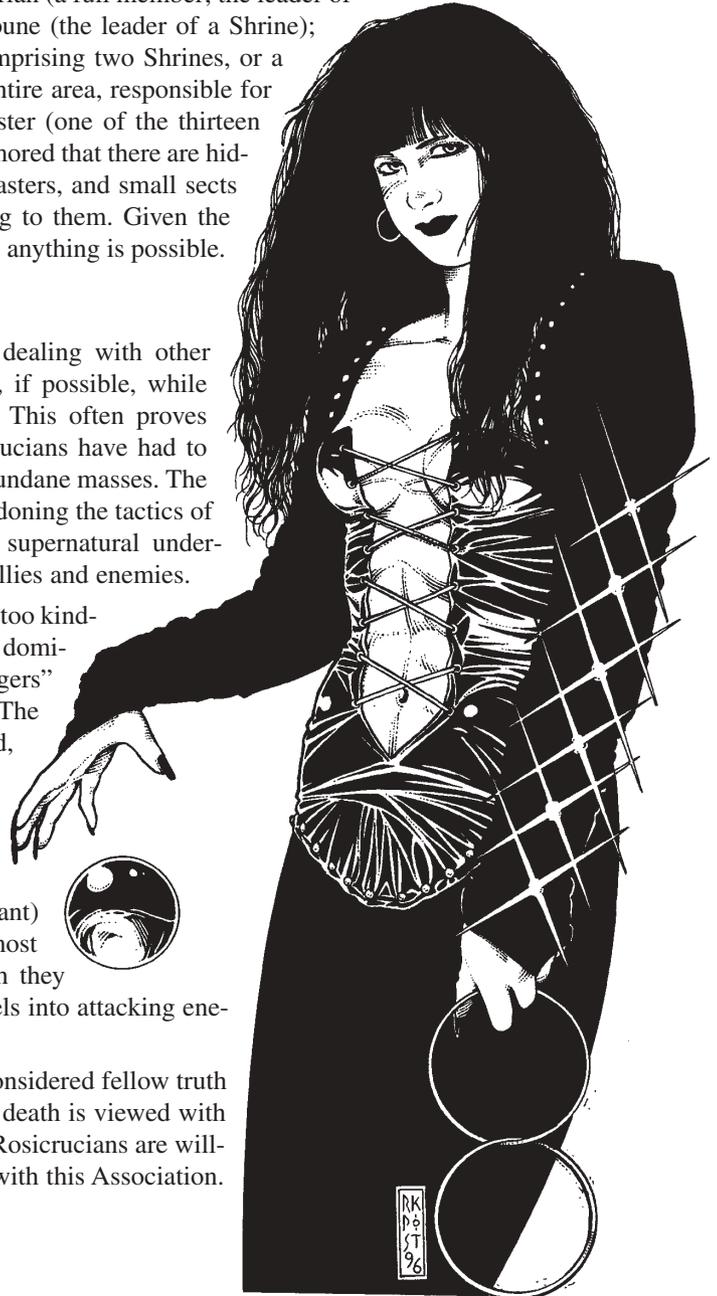
Allies and Enemies

The Brotherhood's preferred method of dealing with other groups is to observe them from a distance, if possible, while keeping the Covenant's existence a secret. This often proves impossible, however, and of late the Rosicrucians have had to admit that they remain a secret only to the mundane masses. The more action-oriented members are also abandoning the tactics of inaction and getting more involved in the supernatural underworld, earning the Covenant a new crop of allies and enemies.

The Wicce: The Witches, as they are none too kindly referred to, are generally believed to be dominated by militant feminists and "tree huggers" with far more idealism than common sense. The power of the Wicce is not underestimated, however, and on occasion Rosicrucians have come to their aid, or even requested their help when no one else was available.

The Sentinels: The "Hounds of God" (the Rosicrucian nickname for this Covenant) are handled with the utmost care. For the most part, the Rosicrucians avoid them, although they will sometimes try to manipulate the Sentinels into attacking enemies of the Brotherhood.

The Twilight Order: The Mediums are considered fellow truth seekers, and their knowledge of the ways of death is viewed with a mixture of admiration, fear and envy. The Rosicrucians are willing to exchange information and assistance with this Association.



The Cabal of Psyche: Most Rosicrucians have little use for psychic powers, which they think to be a manifestation of “wild magic.” The Cabal’s power concerns the Brotherhood, however, and some members think the Seer Covenant may be part of the dreaded Combine.

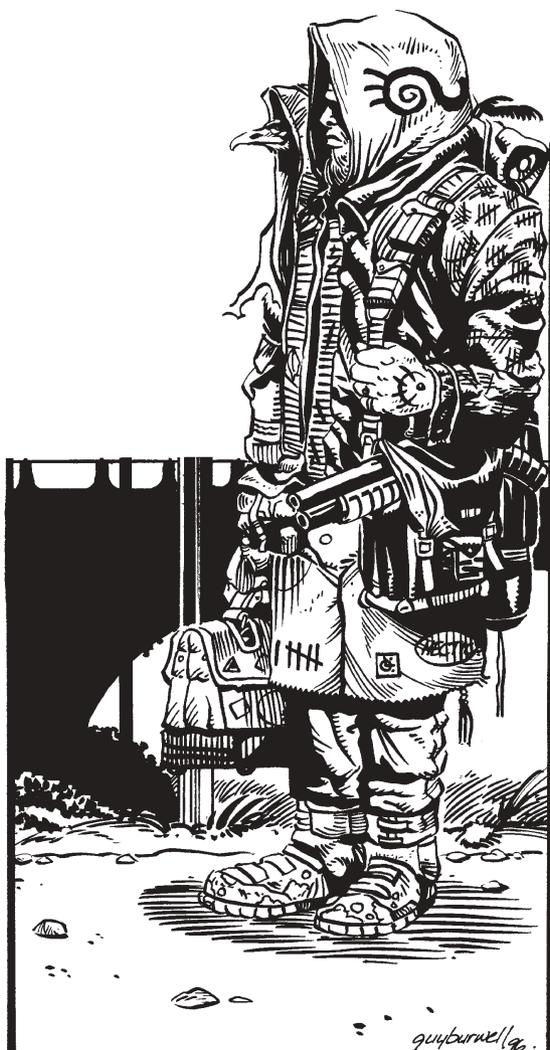
Other Covenants: In general, the Rosicrucians deal with other Covenants cautiously, and avoid direct contact whenever possible. Solitaires with the right mystical bent may be offered membership, provided they agree to subject themselves to the rules of the society, and that they bring with them some valuable skills or secrets. The Rosicrucians have an informal agreement with the Knights Templar (see *Abominations Codex*), and the two groups are starting to collaborate with increasing frequency.

Mundanes: The Brotherhood deals with the wealthy and powerful through its members, most of whom are at least well-to-do or highly respected professionals. Most mundanes are relegated to the role of servants, unwitting pawns, or dupes.

Enemies: The Rosicrucians will move against supernatural predators and Dark Covenants when they directly threaten their members (or their friends and relatives) or other interests of the Covenant, but they do not go out of their way to confront them. The Combine moves in many of the same circles as the Rosicrucians, and the Brotherhood cannot help seeing its secret influence over human affairs. For a long time, the Rosicrucians simply kept to themselves and never interfered, avoiding direct conflict with the group. To some degree, this makes the Brotherhood the equivalent of co-conspirators with the Combine, a charge many younger members are quick to make against the group. This neutral affair is becoming a thing of the past, as the Combine is slowly but steadily moving against Rosicrucian interests; corporate takeovers, lawsuits and the occasional assassination are the tools of the Combine, and the Rosicrucians’ magical abilities are of limited help against them.

Rosicrucian Stories

The Rosicrucians are the Covenant equivalent of the Reluctant Hero. They prefer to concentrate on the study of magic and the quiet advancement of their goals rather than launching crusades against enemies, real or imagined. The signs of the Reckoning are forcing them to take action, and more and more members are being dragged kicking and screaming into the conflict. In general, Rosicrucian Stories should deal with the quest for enlightenment (and power), politics within the order (as high-ranking members engage in power plays), and outside threats that demand action.



Society of Sentinels

The Society of Sentinels has been waging a quiet war against the supernatural for most of recorded history. Its warriors traveled with the Crusaders and assisted the Inquisitors during the Times of Persecution. Others worked undercover among the U.S. troops sent to conflicts across the planet. According to some tales, there were Sentinels working within the Roman Legions and among the armies of the Pharaohs, although most members dismiss those tales as exaggerations. For as long as it has existed, however, the Society has fulfilled one overriding mission: to discover those who use supernatural powers against humankind, and to eradicate them.

Much of the time of the Sentinels is spent in research and investigation rather than actual "monster hunting." There are as many (if not more) researchers and analysts in the organization as there are gunmen and miracle workers. Sentinels spend a great deal of time following news reports and investigating any strange or unusual incidents they discover. Murders are always investigated, if only to discard any possible supernatural connection. Sentinels often masquerade as reporters, private investigators and scientists; in some cases, the Sentinels are real members of these professions, carrying out the directives of their Society.

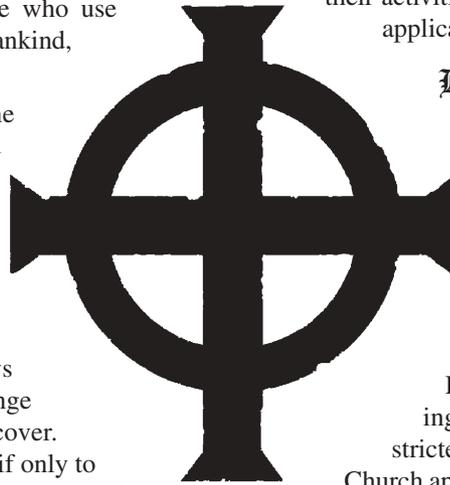
When an actual supernatural threat is discovered, as many Sentinels as can be safely and timely gathered together assemble and march out to confront it. The resources the Sentinels can bring to bear on any one threat vary widely from place to place. In some Third World nations, the Sentinels have enough influence to co-opt entire army units, while in some places in Europe, members do not even have access to firearms! In some cases, only a few devoted people are sent against dangerous creatures or cults, armed only with their faith and the power of prayer. Bitter experience has taught the Society to always send at least one member who knows how to handle mundane threats, however.

Many of the Sentinels are Mundanes, relying on their weapons and courage to do the job. The core of the Society is made up of men and women whose faith allows them to do the impossible. The Inspired, who can work miracles under the right circumstances, and a number of Seers, who use their God-given talents in the service of humankind, are the main weapons in the war against the supernatural. Along with their mystical power, the Sentinels have a network of contacts among the police, several religious organizations, and the military of almost every country in the Western world. Through these contacts, the Sentinels gather information and cover up their activities, which often call for the direct application of violence.

History

The official records of the Sentinels date back to the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries C.E. — the time of the First Crusade. As people both base-born and noble flocked to the call of the Cross and the war to recover the Holy Land, the Society started recruiting members. This was done in the strictest secrecy; it was hinted that the Church approved of the organization, but no official proof of this approval was ever offered. The recruits were given ample proof of the existence of the supernatural, and during those years of war and chaos, as Crusading armies marched (and looted and burned) through Europe and the Middle East, the Sentinels uncovered and destroyed many a monster, from blood-hungry Vampyres to malevolent Dragons.

Hints in old manuscripts and fragments of private letters indicate that the Society had been active far before the times of the Crusades, however. Some of the more daring Sentinel scholars place their origin before the birth of Christianity. One camp of occultists holds that the original Sentinels were followers of Mithraism, a monotheistic religion that flourished in the Roman Empire. There are rumors that the true masters of the Society are not human beings at all, but Seraphim -- angels who lead the struggle against the Adversary.



Whether or not the Society was active before the Crusades, its membership and influence was very strong during the Middle Ages. Although it remained a private organization with no direct links to any church or state, the Sentinels enjoyed the support of many members of the nobility and the clergy, including dukes, barons, bishops and cardinals. They fought in secrecy, partly to avoid vainglory and partly to be allowed to root out evil wherever it was found, be it in the meanest village or in the royal palaces of Europe, without any interference from outsiders. Membership eventually became hereditary, and entire family lines have served the Society for as many as twenty generations.

Even in modern times, the Society has continued to wage its war. Membership declined, but most Sentinels remained true to their cause. Occasionally some members became corrupt and tried to use the power of the Society to further their own ends. In the last thirty years, the Sentinels have grown in numbers and power, but so have their enemies.

Beliefs

The Sentinels believe in One God who created the world and who is the Lord of all things. They also believe that He has an Adversary, a lesser power capable of great evil. The struggle between these two forces has existed since the time of Creation, and the Adversary often sends Its minions to Earth to bring down terror and destruction upon helpless humans. The Sentinels see themselves as God's agents on Earth, protecting all humans, faithful or unbelievers, from the forces of evil.

In the past, the Sentinels were predominantly Catholics, and to this day they remain dominated by Christians from all denominations, with smaller but growing contingents of Muslims and Jews. Religious differences are largely ignored, and theological arguments are quietly discouraged. Many Sentinels believe that the discord between different religious groups has been the work of the Adversary to trick the faithful into fighting one another instead of devoting their energies towards facing the larger evil. The Sentinels still consider pagans and those who worship many gods to be at best dupes, and at worst servants, of the Adversary.

When facing the enemy, the Sentinels will resort to all means necessary to end its evil, including violence. In the past, the Sentinels were somewhat cavalier when dealing with what the military calls "collateral damage" -- innocents caught in the crossfire. The new leadership has been much more zealous in preventing the Sentinels from becoming as callous as the beings they fight. If a member harms an innocent, she will be turned over to the authorities for proper punishment. Sometimes, members who were surrendered to the police for their crimes have tried to betray the Sentinels to the authorities. Their fantastic stories of an ancient society dedicated to the hunting of monsters has earned most of them a competency hearing, but little more.

Of all the Covenants, the Sentinels are perhaps the best prepared for the Time of Reckoning. To most members, the signs do nothing but confirm all their beliefs. Most now think that all their previous efforts were nothing more than skirmishes prior to the approaching Armageddon. The Sentinels are steadily growing in numbers, but at the same time are suffering more casualties than ever before, as the forces of evil grow in power and savagery.

Organization

Members come from all parts of the world and all walks of life, rich or poor, educated or ignorant. Most Sentinels came into contact with the Society when they or their loved ones were victimized by the supernatural. Others were Called to the Order through visions and prophecies, much like the saints and prophets of old; the numbers of these Inspired members has been on the rise in the last four decades.

In the past, membership was handed down from generation to generation through the families of previous members, and this tradition is maintained by some of them, but, regrettably, many Sentinel family lines have died off without new progeny (in some cases, wiped out by enemies of the Society). In other cases, the would-be heirs to the tradition have reacted with disbelief and refused to participate in what they consider an exercise in insanity.

Becoming a Sentinel is not unlike joining a monastic order. Members are required to devote all their time and energies to the purposes of the Society. The Sentinels are paid stipends and grants to allow them to operate without needing a mundane job, and they are also offered free room and board in any of the dozens of Chapel Houses the Society owns throughout the world. Although they are not subject to vows of poverty, most Sentinels give up all their wealth and possessions to the Order, or have no compunction about using their money to help fellow members. Some members continue to hold down jobs, but only because they are in a position to pass on valuable information and services to the Society. They include many police officers, public servants, journalists, doctors and similar professionals. Some Sentinels also move around, seemingly at random, following hunches they consider to be divine guidance.

The Covenant is divided into Chapel Houses. There are Chapel Houses in most major cities of Western Europe, North and South America, and (more recently) Eastern Europe. Each Chapel House is centered around a large dwelling, similar to a monastery (and sometimes using actual refurbished monasteries) or a castle (if any are available). Many European Chapel Houses are built on old castles, while American ones content themselves with town houses or manors. Each Chapel House is under the control of a Deacon, who is in charge of managing all local affairs of the Society as well as overseeing the activities of the Society. Deacons are long-time members of the Society, usually Inspired or Seers, and they know most of the secrets and the inner workings of the Sentinels; they report directly to the Assembly (see below). Most Chapel Houses are made up of a half dozen or so members; the largest ones have nearly a hundred Sentinels each.

There are few ranks among members. Full-time members are simply known as Sentinels. People who assist the Society by providing information and other services are referred to as Laymen. The ruling body of the Sentinels is known as the Assembly. The Assembly consists of a small group of individuals (the exact number is a closely held secret) who change meeting places every time they gather together. Any Chapel House can be used as a meeting place for the Assembly, quickly and without warning; local members are not allowed to see or meet with their leaders.



Allies and Enemies

In previous times, the Sentinels searched for all practitioners of occult and “forbidden” arts, and struck them down whether they had committed a crime or not. Nowadays, the Sentinels concentrate on dealing with actual attacks against innocent people. To some degree, this means that those who do not prey on humans have little to fear from the Sentinels, although misunderstandings can and do arise. If members of another Covenant destroy a supernatural being masquerading as a normal human, the Sentinels may think that a heinous murder has been committed, and pursue the perpetrators.

The Wicce: There is little love lost between these two Covenants. The Sentinels have many documented cases of “witches” guilty of infanticide, cannibalism and other crimes. Most of these were the work of Dark Covenants, or even of deranged Mundanes, but many Sentinels still blame the Wicce for them. A small group of revisionists is trying to gain more acceptance for Pagans and their ilk, but there is a great deal of resistance, particularly among the older (and higher ranking) members.

The Rosicrucians: Given the low profile of this Covenant, the Sentinels rarely deal with it. On occasion, the trail of a supernatural threat may lead the Sentinels to the doorstep of a Rosicrucian Shrine, sometimes as the result of a summoning gone bad, and then violence is likely.

The Twilight Order: In their guise as ghost hunters, the Twilight Order has often worked side by side with the Sentinels, sometimes wittingly, sometimes with members from both sides having no idea of the affiliations of their “colleagues.” The Sentinels consider trafficking with the dead a sinful and dangerous practice, so the Necromancers in the Covenant are not welcome as allies, unless they hide their powers somehow.

The Cabal of Psyche: A secret organization of psychics is a potential danger to humankind, but the Sentinels no longer strike at targets because of their capabilities, but rather because of their intentions. On occasion, religious psychics belonging to the Cabal have chosen to “desert” to the Sentinels -- and disenchanting Seers in the Society have ended up under the

protection of the Cabal. The Sentinels watch all known areas of Cabal activity with a great deal of interest and concern.

Other Covenants: Typically, all practitioners of magic and other “forbidden arts” are viewed as potential enemies. Groups who seem primarily interested in fighting supernatural predators, like the Storm Dragons (see *Mystery Codex*) are given the benefit of the doubt.

Mundanes: Many Sentinels are Mundanes, and the Society has a large network of employees and volunteers who may not know the whole truth but will offer aid whenever they can. The Sentinels’ connections with law-enforcement agencies are informal and personal, but powerful enough to protect members from investigation and prosecution for all but the most overt operations.

Enemies: Dark Covenants and supernatural predators are the Sentinels’ preferred targets. On many an occasion, the “prey” has turned on their tormentors; Vampyres are notorious for their skill at luring Sentinels into ambushes. More often than not, however, the Sentinels have managed to deal with those would-be hunters. The Combine and the Sentinels rarely come into conflict, something that has prompted detractors to claim the Society is a pawn for that shadow conspiracy. Finally, angels and demons may try to use the Sentinels as pawns in their ancient and vicious struggle.

Sentinel Stories

The typical Sentinel Story involves the discovery and uprooting of some supernatural threat. There are other themes that can be woven into that basic idea, however. Inspired members must struggle to retain their Faith in an unbelieving and cynical world. Both Gifted and Mundane Sentinels risk becoming jaded to horror and human suffering to the point that they become as inhuman as the monsters they hunt. Finally, the Society may itself be targeted by predators seeking revenge or by people who believe the Society is a nest of dangerous vigilantes. The Reckoning weighs more heavily on members of this Covenant than on most others; to them, it feels as if centuries of struggle are reaching an end -- in defeat.

The Twilight Order

Contrary to popular belief, the dead can talk -- to those who can hear them. The Twilight Order has long been in communication with the Death Realms and the spirits who remain in our world. Most members spend much of their time in the "twilight worlds" between the lands of the living and the realms of the dead. Spirits of the dead are their subject of study, their occasional allies and friends, and their deadliest enemies. The members of the Order know that death is not an end but merely a new beginning. Strangely enough, this knowledge has not made them callous or morbid, but has given them a greater appreciation for their corporeal existence. In contemplating death, they have come to care for all life even more.

The Order seeks to help both the living and dead. Members see themselves as diplomats and guardians, trying to maintain harmony in the dealings between the living and the dead. They consider the Cycle of Life to be a sacred thing, and do their best to help ghosts and phantasms in their plight. Furthermore, they protect humans from the actions of evil or misguided ghosts -- and vice versa. They take a particularly dim view of magicians who try to imprison the spirits of the dead for their own dark purposes. Chief among their enemies are the Dark Necromancers, evil Gifted who do many of the things popular belief attributes to necromancy in general, including the binding of spirits into their rotting corpses, enslaving ghosts to do their bidding, and worse.

Their members are Seers or Necromancers, people gifted (or some would say cursed) with the ability to perceive, communicate and manipulate the spirits of ghosts and phantasms. Through these powers, members seek to appease angry or restless spirits, stop or, if necessary, destroy hostile or murderous ones, and prevent ghosts from being enslaved or exploited by other Necromancers. As a secondary goal, the Order also seeks other people with Necromantic power to help them control their abilities before their powers

cause them to lose their sanity. The last, and until recently, least heeded goal of the Order was to prevent the unspeakable entities known as the Mad Gods from perverting the cycle of death and rebirth. With the Time of Reckoning approaching, this threat has become a lot more imminent.

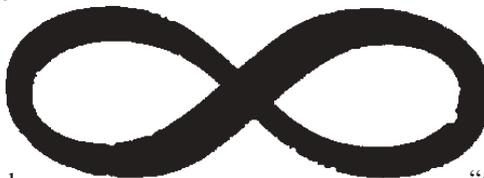
The Mediums (as the members call themselves) operate through a number of public organizations dedicated to psychic research or psychic counseling, and other organizations with more mundane goals.

The Order keeps its existence a secret, but it operates through several public fronts. These include several spiritualist organizations that help true believers contact dead loved ones and relatives. Some of these organizations even make money by charging people a

fee to contact the spirits of their departed friends and relatives; they are far less successful than similar, but fake, organizations that specialize in telling the gullible exactly what they want to hear. Most members are involved in psychic investigation agencies -- "ghost hunters" who help deal with such problems as haunted houses and poltergeist manifestations. The

Mediums try to find and appease the angry spirit or, failing that, attempt to forcefully remove or even destroy it. Other Mediums are able to project their consciousness beyond their bodies, in effect enjoying all the powers of ghosts while still linked to their physical selves. These spirit travelers have ventured into the Death Realms and learned a great deal about the fate and choices awaiting on the Other Side.

Beyond its direct dealings with the dead, the Order and some of the institutions it sponsors spend some of their time helping the living. The powers of Necromancy can be used in many ways, both positive and negative. Among other things, the Twilight Order has learned many secrets through its history -- secrets that the ghosts of former government officials, criminals and security agents no longer cared to keep after their demise. As a result, the secret files of the Order contain some startling revelations about the history of the world. Occasionally, the leaders of the Order send



some of their members out on missions related to this information. As a result, some Mediums have come into direct conflict with the Combine and other agencies and organizations.

History

The Twilight Order is the direct descendant of the ancient Etruscan cults of the dead. These cults flourished on the Italian peninsula in the centuries preceding the rise of Rome. The Etruscans held a great deal of respect for the dead, and had complex funerary rites and monuments. People with the Gift of Necromancy became priests and diviners in that culture. After the fall of the Etruscan civilization, the cult carried on its mission, although largely in secret.

As the leadership of the Order changed hands over time, its goals and practices were modified. The trappings of priesthood were eventually phased out, reserved only for the most formal rituals and ceremonies. When Christianity became the official religion of Europe, the Order hid from persecution, and some of its members were victimized alongside the Wicce and other “witches.”

During the 19th Century, interest in communicating with the spirits of the dead became widespread and fashionable in some parts of Europe and the Americas. This Spiritualist movement exists to this day. Some members of the Twilight Order went public during this period, but most people only wanted to hear nice, unthreatening things about life after death, and some of the knowledge the Necromancers tried to pass on disturbed or frightened many away.

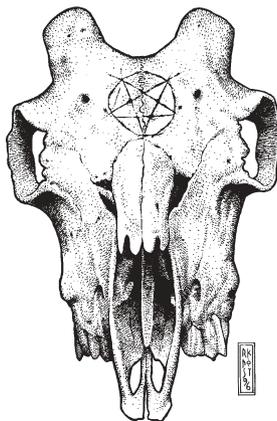
Beliefs

The Twilight Order has long studied the permutations of life and death. Death releases the soul from the body; what happens next seems to be determined by the person’s beliefs, choices and Karma, the consequences of one’s actions during the previous life. Some souls disappear into an exalted plane of existence from which nobody has ever returned. Others return to Earth and are reborn, for the most part forgetting most of their past existence, although retaining much of their personality, including the effect of past traumas. Some travel to one of the many Death

Realms, otherworldly dimensions where the dead can recreate their past, endure punishments for their sins, or deal with a variety of spiritual entities, some of which are quite inhuman. A few refuse to relinquish their hold on their bodies and come back to life, as the undead. Finally, there are utterly alien beings who can twist the spirits of the dead, transforming them into monstrous and dangerous entities. These beings are known as the Mad Gods (see p. 281).

Ghosts are pitied for the most part, and one of the purposes of the Order is to steer them into the Otherworlds or into the cycle of death and rebirth. Trafficking with the spirits of the dead is allowed, as long as they are treated fairly and not coerced. The undead are considered to be abominations and mockeries of the natural process of life and death; many Necromancers destroy those beings on sight.

The increasingly chaotic conditions presaging the Time of Reckoning have not been lost on the Mediums. Even the spirits of the dead are growing fearful of the strange events occurring both on Earth and in the Otherworlds. Stories of strange beings that demand homage or service from ghosts are becoming common, as are tales of actual manifestations of Death appearing in the spirit realms, forcing spirits to do their bidding or risk utter obliteration. Some ghosts are actually fleeing to Earth, seeking refuge in the material plane! The more adventurous Mediums are venturing into the Death Realms to find out more. Many -- if not most -- of them have failed to return.



Organization

New members are found among those who discover their Gift to see the invisible world around them. Many of them are recruited from insane asylums where they had been placed by uncomprehending mundanes. The more fortunate are discovered as children or teenagers by the Order's agents, friendly spirits who spend much of their time searching for those who can "see" them. When the time is right, the young Gifted and their families are approached by doctors of the Order, offering "counseling" and therapy to deal with their "over-active imaginations." The new Necromancers are trained to either suppress their powers (and lead a normal life) or to refine them and join the Order in its dealings with the dead.

The Order is controlled by the Pontifex, a council of seven to ten of the most accomplished Necromancers in the organization. The Pontifex approves the formation of new agencies and organizations and controls the sizable funds the Order has amassed over time. The average member works for one of the many agencies secretly controlled by the Order. Most agencies are small (three to ten people on the average); some are Order members with Gifted abilities, while others are mundane employees, many of whom have no idea for whom they are working. Among the agencies the Covenant owns are the following:

Psychic Investigation Agencies: These organizations discreetly advertise in occult publications. They concentrate on "ghost hunting," investigating alleged hauntings and poltergeist activity and, if the occurrences are genuine, dealing with them. This is one of the most dangerous jobs in the Covenant, because some spirits can be quite dangerous. Sometimes the supernatural event is being caused by beings far more malevolent than the spirits of the dead. Over a dozen such agencies exist in North America, with half again as many in the area of Western Europe.



Psychic Counseling and Spiritualist Centers: Most of these agencies are operated by Mundanes paid to pretend to be real psychics or mediums. People with truly serious problems, spiritual or mundane, are referred to Gifted members. This cynical exercise has been widely criticized by many members, but it brings in a lot of money into the Order; most customers are satisfied by the phony advice, and people who really need help are identified and assisted. Two large centers operate in the U.S.

Private Investigation Agencies: A few “normal” investigation agencies are owned and operated by the Order, and staffed by a mixture of Gifted and Mundane investigators. These agencies secure clients and use a mixture of normal and Necromantic abilities to get the job done. The Agencies are also used to investigate and locate possible members. Five small agencies operate in diverse cities of the U.S.

Allies and Enemies

On more than one occasion, the Order has encountered beings who were not of the dead -- inhuman spirits with alien abilities and desires, or even stranger beings. Necromancy was of limited use against them. If they find themselves unable to deal with such beings, the Mediums often call on their allies, which include phantasms who have pledged allegiance to the organization and other Gifted groups. The Order is one of the few Covenants whose members are not afraid of working with others, and who are willing to repay favor with favor.

The Wicce: The Twilight Order has many contacts with the Wicce on the local level. Typically, a Twilight Order covert agency makes it a point to contact any local Wicce and pagan groups in the area, and tries to establish a working relationship with them. The Mediums offer help and information in their area of expertise in return for assistance in dealing with any supernatural agency beyond a Necromancer's power.

The Rosicrucians: These magicians are well regarded, and informal exchanges of information and the occasional joint effort are not unknown, and have become more common in recent times.

The Sentinels: The Twilight Order has often assisted the Sentinels in bringing to bay dangerous spirits. This is done through one of the many “fronts” used by the Covenant, however; the Mediums know the Sentinels are likely to consider them the enemy.

The Cabal of Psyche: Given the high proportion of Seers in its ranks, the Twilight Order and its associated agencies have come under the Cabal's scrutiny on many occasions. The two groups have a fairly amicable relationship for the most part, but many Mediums dislike the Cabal's reluctance to take action under almost any circumstances.

Other Covenants: Whenever it can, the Order will attempt to work with other Covenants, including Solitaire groups. It has a more strained relationship with other Necromantic groups, however: the House of Thanatos (see *Mystery Codex*) is “infested” with undead, and thus suspect to the Mediums, and the Covenant of Legba (see *Abominations Codex*) deal not only with the dead but with a veritable pantheon of spirits and “gods” with dubious goals.

Mundanes: Normal humans are not barred from membership in this Covenant; many Mundane researchers of the supernatural work for the Order. The group has a lot of dealings with regular people through their associated agencies.

Enemies: The Twilight Order's main adversaries are angry spirits and the occasional undead. The Order has accumulated a great deal of knowledge through its dealings with the dead. It knows where many bodies are buried, both figuratively and literally; it is rumored that included among the Order's “confidants” are Lee Harvey Oswald, Jimmy Hoffa and several former U.S. Presidents. The Pontifex knows quite a bit about the Combine, and it has on occasion acted on that information, leading to conflict with this powerful organization.

Twilight Order Stories

Ghost-hunting, learning the secrets of the afterlife, and protecting the living and the dead from each other are the major concerns of the Twilight Order. Members are as likely to search for some ancient manuscript full of Necromantic lore as they are to run around with heat sensors trying to locate a poltergeist -- or performing a ritual to banish it from its haunt.

The Cabal of Psyche

Some cultures have made a distinction between magical powers, which require both the ability to work magic and a great deal of training and teaching to develop that potential, and innate powers that require no study to surface. The latter set of powers is commonly known as the Second Sight, and involves a number of abilities with which the mind can affect and perceive the world. In recent years, the Second Sight (known in the scientific community as Extrasensory Perception or Psionics) has become gradually accepted as real, or at least possible. Long before that, many other groups had reached the same conclusion. The Cabal of Psyche was one of them.

Any Seer contacted by the Cabal is offered membership into its ranks. The Cabal usually does not force people to join them, although there are stories that a few leaders of the Cabal have been more than a little forceful in trying to persuade Seers to join. For the most part, however, most people approached by the group agree to either become full-time members or at least remain in contact with the group. Many are tearfully thankful for the chance to be able to learn how to control their often erratic abilities. On the other hand, those who seek to abuse their powers are also found and dealt with.

Although the Cabal has access to the largest number of Seers in the world, it is far from being a sinister “mind control” organization. First, most of the Seers in the Cabal are relatively weak, barely able to move a small object for short distances, or pick up another person’s thought-images. More importantly, the founders of the Cabal (it is rumored a few of them remain in their position of leadership, having defeated the aging process through their powers) saw their organization as a place of learning, not a subversive band of would-be kings. In fact, the Cabal often sends its members after Seers who use their abilities to exploit or harm others. This is the right thing to do both in terms of morality and self-interest: a major public incident involving psychic abilities might trigger a period of persecution that would destroy everything the Cabal has been working to build.

This Covenant is very old, although it was extremely small for most of its history. In the last few decades, it has gathered into its fold hundreds of Seers of diverse power, teaching them to master their abilities. The Cabal tried to keep out of the approaching Reckoning, much as it has done during previous troubles, but this time many of its own members are considering rebelling rather than turning away from the upcoming conflict.

History

The Cabal was born in Classical Greece, side by side with the leading philosophical movements of the time. A small group of Athenian Seers, six or seven according to the few written records of the Covenant, banded together and tried to become the rulers of a small island in the Aegean Sea. The people of the island revolted against the Seers, however, and the small band decided to abandon any dreams of rule and concentrate on the study of their abilities. According to some stories, one of the members rebelled against that and left their midst; some rumors claim that this outcast formed his own Covenant, a highly secretive organization that has been manipulating world affairs for centuries. A few Cabal members believe that the Combine (see p. 288) is secretly ruled by this deeply hidden Covenant.

Throughout most of its history, the Cabal remained small, gathering new members slowly. Some of the original founders discovered that their powers could slow down or even stop the aging process, effectively rendering them immortal. These ancient psychics, some of them several centuries old, continue to rule the Covenant.

In recent times, the number of Seers has grown so large that trying to find and induct them has become nearly impossible, not to mention risky. Supernatural predators attracted by the large Essence pools of Seers have also become increasingly common, further endangering the Cabal and its secrecy. Not even the oldest leaders seem sure about what to do next. A number of younger members, tired of the inaction and hesitation of the Cabal, have started taking action on their own.



Beliefs

The Cabal believes that Seer powers are an extension of the human soul, although some of the most modern-thinking researchers in the Covenant scoff at the idea of the “soul.” All Seer powers are known to be related in some way; a psychic with one of these powers can, in theory, develop all other abilities. In practice, just like athletes specialize in one type of sport, so must Seers concentrate on a few powers if they hope to master any of them.

The founders of the Cabal believed that the Seers had a place in humankind’s affairs as advisors and guides, helping the “Blind” (the Cabal’s term for the mundanes) in a paternalistic, but not tyrannical, way. The Cabal’s goal is to build a utopian society where the Seers will assume responsibility over the security and happiness of the rest of the world. Early attempts to create this Utopia resulted in fearful and violent reactions on the part of the Blind, who had no desire to surrender their freedom to anybody. The Cabal’s leaders realized that unless they could force their rule on the Blind, their only recourse was to operate in hiding. The revised philosophy of the Cabal calls for waiting until the people of the world are ready to accept Seers as their saviors.

As a result of their early experience, the leaders of the Covenant have decided that any attempt to impose Seer rule on humankind is morally wrong, and the Cabal must stop any other Seers who seek to subvert or conquer the mundanes. This policy also serves the Cabal’s interests, for should a Seer conqueror be discovered, the backlash would affect all psychics. It is in the best interest of the Cabal that any Seers trying to abuse their powers be quietly disposed of.

Of all the Covenants, the Cabal of Psyche feels the most threatened by the Reckoning. Originally founded to understand Seer abilities and to protect Seers from persecution, the Cabal knows that it is only a matter of time before its existence is revealed to the public, and then the discovery of an organization of people who can read minds and kill with a stare will cause a renewal of persecution.

Organization

The Cabal works under the cover of a number of schools and research institutes. Over the centuries, the organization has amassed a huge fortune, much of which is spent in grants to universities and private schools. Members are enrolled in those schools, or become their employees after they complete their studies. Regrettably, many of these institutions are plagued by strange incidents, murders and accidents, often caused by psychics running amuck, or supernatural beings who were attracted by the greater concentration of Essence in such places. A side effect of the Cabal’s concentration of Seers in a relatively low number of places is that a number of entities, including ghosts, are drawn to them. In recent years, the number of strange incidents has greatly increased.

The Cabal is controlled by the Council of Elders, a large assembly of some thirty members who meet once every month to discuss new developments and formulate policy. These meetings are held in the strictest secrecy, and change locations every time. The rest of the members are divided into three ranks: Students are the youngest and most inexperienced members; Assistants are the average, rank-and-file members, who have learned to control their powers, and who are expected to help teach the Students and perform a number of missions for the Cabal; and, finally, Teachers are in charge of educating and organizing the Students and Assistants, and enforcing the rules imposed by the Council of Elders.

The rebels include members of all three ranks. Most rebels travel around in small groups, often linking up with Gifted from other Covenants, trying to find a way to stop or slow down the approaching Time of Reckoning.

Allies and Enemies

The Cabal has long kept itself removed from the affairs of the world, and as a result has avoided conflicts (and alliances) with most of the other Covenants. This is changing rapidly.

The Wicce: The Cabal most often comes into contact with the Wicce when both Covenants discover a person with the Gift, or when psychic Wicce display their powers in public or at least in an indiscreet man-

ner. The Cabal believes the Wicce (and, for that matter, the Rosicrucians) rely too much on mystic “mumbo-jumbo” that actually diminishes their true powers.

The Rosicrucians: The two Covenants do not have much contact with each other. The Seers don’t like the mystical bent of the Brotherhood, and for some reason the Rosicrucians avoid the Cabal like the plague.

The Sentinels: The Cabal respects this warrior Covenant, but also fears it. The Sentinels would certainly hunt down the Seers if their existence were viewed as a threat to humankind -- yet another reason to savor secrecy, and to resent the rebels who may attract the Sentinels’ wrath.

The Twilight Order: The Mediums are considered to be fellow psychics; communication with the spirits of the dead has long been considered part and parcel of the Second Sight. Often, the Order has been contacted to help the Cabal deal with ghosts and phantasms that seek to prey on the Seers.

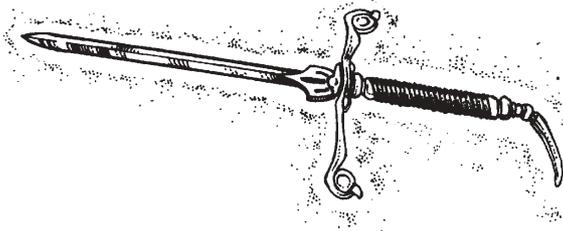
Other Covenants: Unless the group is dominated by Seers, the Cabal has little interest in other Covenants. Psychic Solitaires are watched carefully. If they abuse their powers, these individuals are labeled a threat and dealt with accordingly.

Mundanes: On the one hand, the Cabal feels a duty not to exploit normal humans. On the other, it fears the reaction of the mundane masses should their existence be revealed.

Enemies: The Cabal has few outright enemies. There are rumors that an evil psychic Covenant has long been waging a secret war against the Seers, but most Elders dismiss such stories out of hand. The rebels, on the other hand, have already made enemies out of several Dark Covenants and supernatural beings.

Cabal Stories

The Cabal of Psyche is on the verge of splitting up into two distinct groups. So far, the rebels have not fully forsaken their place in the Covenant, but that day is not far away. For the most part, the “regular” Cabal concentrates on psychic investigation, searching for, and when necessary, bringing to heel new Seers. The rebels, on the other hand, actively seek out those who would prey on humankind, acting somewhat like the Sentinels.



The Solitaires

Both the Wicce and Rosicrucians, and most of the other magically oriented Covenants, refer to those Gifted who learn and practice their Arts without help from others as the Solitaires. Beyond that characteristic, however, the Solitaires are as diverse as humankind itself. Some are fairly orthodox witches or ritual sorcerers who simply refuse to acknowledge any kinship with, or authority from, a Covenant. Others are individuals or small bands who have developed their own mishmash of occult arts. Some mix European sorcery with Native American or African shamanism for a unique combination; others develop magic and other Arts and use them simultaneously in strange hybrid forms. The Solitaires are not truly a Covenant; they do not have a common history or organization. This section describes them only in general terms.

For the most part, there are rarely more than a handful of Solitaires in any group, typically being the members of a family or clan. Many are single individuals, perhaps with one pupil who also doubles as servant or bodyguard. The largest and most successful Solitaire groups are in effect miniature Covenants, perhaps with two or three associated Covens or Houses spread over a limited area, but those are the rarest.

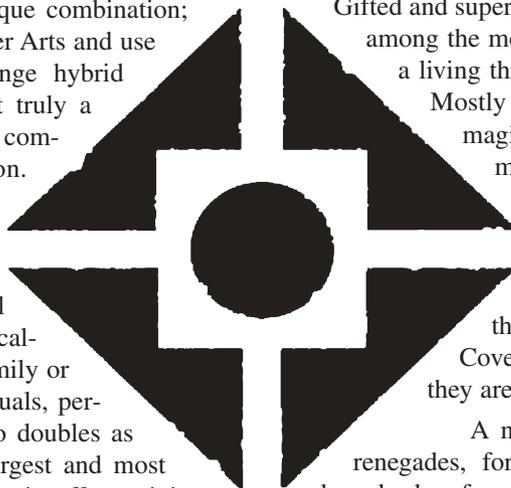
Most Solitaires favor remote areas. In North America, they can be found in the swamps of Louisiana, uninhabited expanses of the Mid-West, and the Appalachian Mountains, where ancient lores brought by European settlers, mixed with native customs, have developed into unique styles. They tend to avoid large concentrations of people, where their abilities might attract the attention of mundanes or, perhaps worse, the interest of other Gifted. In more recent times, however, Solitaires have been found in cities, usually in the lowest-income areas, where those who might witness displays of magic are unwilling or powerless to report them to the authorities, and even less likely to be believed.

The strength and knowledge of Solitaires range from the god-like to the nearly non-existent. A few are actually incredibly ancient, having used their Arts to slow down or stop the aging process. These “holy hermits” are often very reluctant to admit the level of their power. Much more common are phonies with only a smattering of power who will readily claim to be living storehouses of occult secrets.

Some Solitaires abuse their powers more readily than members of a Covenant, because there is no ruling body they have to answer to. However, Gifted powers usually regulate themselves, and overt displays of power attract the attention of both other Gifted and supernatural predators. Solitaires are among the most likely Gifted to try to make a living through the use of their abilities.

Mostly they do it subtly, using real magic to perform amazing “stage magic” stunts, or conning people out of their money through the careful combination of Gifted powers and mundane skills. Others are seduced by the offers of power made by Dark Covenants and other evil beings, but they are in the minority.

A number of Solitaires are actual renegades, former Covenant members who have broken free from their former allegiance or who have been expelled for some misdeed. Most Covenants will not pursue such renegades unless their crimes have been too extreme to be ignored. In most cases, however, they will be watched to make sure the former member does not attempt to betray the Covenant. A few renegades continue to practice the Arts, and may even take students under their wing, teaching them their own version of the Truth. More often than not, these renegades do not have a lot to teach, and their students are not likely to advance very far.

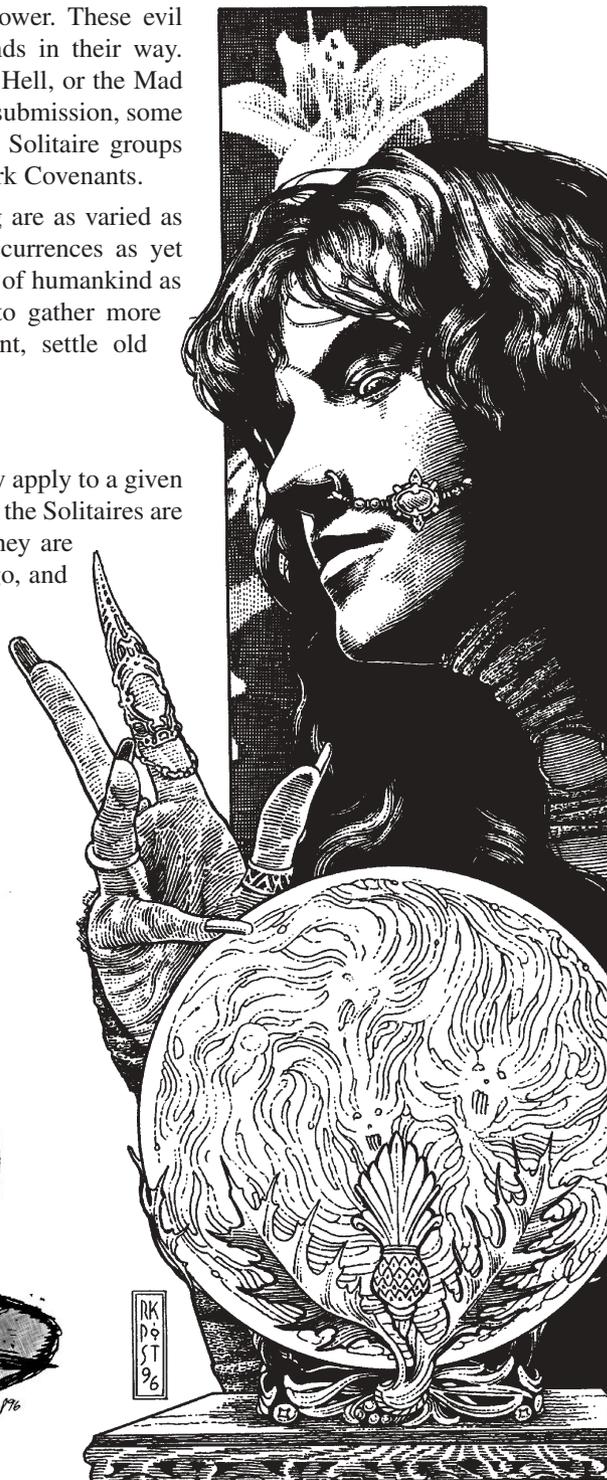


Some Solitaires have rejected the normal rules and have sold their services to inhuman, evil forces to increase their power. These evil Gifted use their abilities against anybody who stands in their way. Some of them have become servants of the forces of Hell, or the Mad Gods that dwell beyond our reality. In return for their submission, some of these rogues have been granted great power. The Solitaire groups who have followed this path are referred to as the Dark Covenants.

The Solitaires' reactions to the Time of Reckoning are as varied as they are to anything else. Some see the strange occurrences as yet another reason to stay as far removed from the affairs of humankind as possible, while others see them as an opportunity to gather more power, gain re-admittance to their former Covenant, settle old scores, or start new ones.

Solitaire Stories

Any of the themes from all the other Covenants may apply to a given Solitaire group. Intermingled with them is the fact that the Solitaires are outcasts even within the supernatural underworld. They are less likely to find any aid or comfort wherever they go, and may in fact find other Gifted groups turning their backs on them, or worse.



Sample Solitaire Group: The Aquarians

In 1969, a young hippie going by the name of Major Mojo attempted a half-assed reading of a grimoire he'd found in an abandoned house he had just broken into. He performed the ritual while under the influence of a number of hallucinogens. The combination of magic and an altered state of consciousness resulted in a freak lightning storm that demolished the house, injured dozens of people, and catapulted Major Mojo into a brave new world. His latent Gift awakened by the experience, Mojo became (in his own mind, at least), the first Aquarian, a new human for a New Age. The Major quickly set out to recruit his own personal cult. Three decades later, Major Mojo and about two dozen Aquarians travel through California, living in a semi-haze of drugs, magic and rock-and-roll.

Membership and Organization: The Aquarians range in age from fifteen to fifty. They are mostly outcasts, junkies and leftovers from the '60s and '70s. Candidates are initiated by Major Mojo himself; the Initiation ceremony involves drinking the Cocktail (a mixture of a number of drugs and alcohol) and undergoing the same ritual that awakened the Major's powers. Mundanes who undergo the initiation have a good chance of dying (and six people have perished over the years) during the process. Those with the Gift gain a random Seer power (one level each in Art and Strength) and two levels of Essence Channeling. Major Mojo's Grimoire has the following Invocations: Elemental Air, Elemental Flame, Elemental Water, Insight, Lesser Healing, and Soulfire, as well as half a dozen totally useless rituals, and the unique Aquarian Invocation (this Invocation releases the Gift of an individual in an extreme emotional state, such as being tortured, starved near death, or drugged into oblivion; the cost is 30 Essence). There are currently five Gifted members and some twenty-odd Mundanes, twelve of which survived the Aquarian ritual with no permanent damage. The rest are hanger-ons who are waiting for their turn; the ritual is only conducted once a year, during the night of Samhain (see Chapter Six: Metaphysics, Days of Power), and only on a maximum of two candidates at a time.

The Aquarians work in small groups of six or less individuals, striking out at targets that offend Major Mojo's sensibilities (megacorporations, the military-industrial complex -- a definition that seems to vary according to Mojo's mood at the moment -- and the wealthy). The attacks are against property, not people (Mojo is a firm believer in non-violence, or at least not killing, the failed Aquarian deaths notwithstanding), and they use a combination of mystical and mundane means. The group also steals from the rich and gives to themselves, using the same method. The favored mode of transportation is a VW van or some beat-up '60s or '70s vehicle or another.

Allies and Enemies: A West Coast Wicce coven has run into the Aquarians on a couple of occasions in the last few years. Nobody was hurt in the ensuing mystical "firefight," but the Wicce are looking for this group. The Aquarians also have a number of contacts (both friendly and hostile) with drug dealers and other criminals, and several members are wanted by the police. Major Mojo is a firm believer in the Combine, although his group has yet to encounter it directly.







Chapter Six Metaphysics

The killer wiped his sweaty forehead with the back of his hand. It was hot and crowded in the New York subway, and his skin crawled with disgust at the contact with the press of humanity. He contained his urges, however. The still-bloodied knife remained in his coat pocket, nestled next to the handkerchief that wrapped his latest gory trophy. She had been an easy one; she had listened to his lies, and opened the apartment door with a trusting smile. Her struggles at the end had only added spice to the kill. At the memory, a smile formed on the killer's face, and more than one person recoiled from it, rightly sensing that something had to be horribly wrong with someone with that expression.

The killer was headed home, where an alcohol-filled jar hidden in a hollow crevice in a wall awaited the newest addition to his collection. Even the crowd could not drown his contentment until he saw the woman.

Even if she hadn't been staring straight at him, he would have found her remarkable. She was perhaps in her late forties, but her savage beauty had survived the years intact. Her long black hair was tinged with strands of silver that only added an exotic touch. Pale skin made the hair and the fiery dark eyes flare up in contrast. She was dressed in a long lacy skirt, its pattern a rainbow of muted dark colors, and a black blouse. Under any other circumstances, the killer would have found her intriguing, would have followed her to her home and started planning a new hunt. But the woman was staring right at him, her eyes blazing with anger and accusation. The killer stopped in his tracks, his idiot smile gone, unmindful of the commuters that bumped into him as they tried to get past.

The woman extended her hand, decorated with a bracelet, a silver chain linking the bracelet to a ring shaped like a man with goat's horns. She pointed a finger at him. "Murderer," she mouthed, and in his mind the killer heard her cold voice despite the din of the crowded station. "Killer of the weak," she said, louder this time. The killer took a step back, earning the curses of a Puerto Rican couple.

The woman walked towards the killer. The crowd parted around her, seemingly without notice. The killer blinked, and suddenly the woman wore the face of his last victim, her eyes wild over the rag he had stuffed into her mouth. He took another step back, pushing past angry commuters. Another blink, and a new face: his first kill, the young girl he had dragged into an alley during his last year at high school. "You will pay for your crimes," the corpse mouthed as it came closer.

The killer kept pushing back. He shoved an old woman out of his way, sending her sprawling to the ground. He ignored her stream of obscenities and the curious but guarded looks the crowd gave him. Nobody tried to stop him as he edged closer to the end of the platform. All he wanted was to get away from the woman (women?).

The advancing woman became a kaleidoscope of images — a dozen dead victims, bearing the marks he had left on them, all screaming for vengeance, all reaching towards him with nailed hands. With a scream of terror, the killer turned and ran.

And ran straight off the platform, right into the path of the oncoming express. The old woman the killer had pushed down screamed in horror a split second after the sickening impact. For an instant, droplets of blood rained on the closest commuters, as

the subway train slowly ground to a halt, too late to do any good.

For a long moment, the woman in black watched the scene with grim satisfaction. The subway station and the stunned commuters faded away from her eyes as she vanished, unnoticed by most. The one exception was a skinny black teenager who felt a presence leaving the area, and who for reasons she could not understand, found herself nodding at the grisly scene. Something had happened here, and it felt right.

Jazmin Carpenter opened her eyes. The bilocation was over, and her consciousness had returned to her body in the small farmhouse in Connecticut. She felt the spirits of the killer's victims moving away, imparting their gratitude in waves of emotion that could not be described in words. A tear ran down her pale-skinned face. "It is over," she said.

At her feet, a large black cat purred contentedly. "He had it coming, didn't he?" the feline said. Although cruel by instinct, the cat had no sympathy for two-legged killers.

Jazmin nodded wearily at her companion. Her Essence had been nearly depleted by the complex ritual. "I shed no tears for him," she explained. "I was too late to save the last victim. If I hadn't had to fight the ghoulish spirits around him . . ."

The talking cat rolled on his side. "You did what you could. He won't kill again. Not in this lifetime. And he will not come back for a while, will he?"

Jazmin's expression grew grimmer. "No, he will not." She had seen the killer's soul being dragged away by the ghosts of his victims. The witch shuddered at the thought. "Hell hath no fury like a woman wronged," she paraphrased.



Introduction

The Gifted are capable of incredible feats, but have to pay a price. Using supernatural powers is risky, sometimes uncertain, and often as dangerous to the user as to his enemies. Each of the Arts, the different abilities that some Gifted have, has strengths and weaknesses. With these abilities, the Gifted can heal, protect or destroy.

Four Arts are depicted in this book. Magic is the ability of enforcing one's will on reality, and involves Invocations and the channeling of Essence (mystical energy). The Sight covers the powers of the mind; some call it psychic ability. Necromancy involves the spirits of the dead, and grants some access to the Power of Life and Death. Finally, Divine Inspiration uses faith to affect the world. Each Art is discussed in turn in the remainder of the chapter.

Magic

Magic involves the channeling of Essence to affect the real world. Essence, a primordial element of reality, is the unifying link between matter and energy, life and spirit. By manipulating Essence, the sorcerer can make and unmake things, can release energy and affect matter, can cause wounds with a touch or heal the injured. To work the Magic, the Gifted must use Invocations -- ritual actions and words that help focus the Magician's will and imagination to produce the desired effects.

The Essence used in Magic can come from a number of sources. It can come from the Magician himself. Additionally, it can be taken from the currents of Essence that flow invisibly through the world, although this takes a great deal of time and effort. It can be taken from other living things, but most forms of Magic that use the life force of others are tainted with evil, unless the Essence is freely given.

All Magic requires three steps in its performance. First, the Essence needed to create the effect is called forth -- the Summoning. The Essence is then woven into a matrix (provided by the Invocation) designed to produce the desired effect -- the Focus. After the effect is finished, the Forces summoned must be banished, or they may run rampant, turning on innocent people or even on the magician himself -- the Dismissal.

Essence

Essence is pure potentiality, a chaotic force that can spawn matter and energy in violation of all known physical laws. It is the stuff of our souls, and it is a force of emotion as much as it is of reason. To work Magic, one must be able to weave Essence into the right matrix. Invocations and rituals provide the basic mold into which Essence is poured; if enough Essence is summoned and used, and if no outside force is interfering with the Invocation, the desired effect will take place.

Successfully using an Invocation does not end the process, however. Essence does not disappear once it is used; unless it is released from the matrix, it will continue to repeat the effect -- but it will do so randomly, chaotically, out of the control of the caster. A successful Invocation automatically dismisses the Essence it uses; when a Magician stumbles or fails, however, Magic can run rampant. In some cases, failure may be only a minor annoyance; in others -- especially magicks that were geared to cause harm -- unbound Essence can kill. To be on the safe side, most Magicians are taught to Dismiss the Essence they gathered to power the magical effect. A successful Dismissal will "unweave" the Essence, letting it rejoin the natural flows.

Magical Signatures

Each person's Essence is as unique as his DNA code. Thus, any Metaphysical effect powered by that person's Essence (i.e., not cast wholly through ambient Essence) bears the person's "imprint" or "signature." A Gifted character or supernatural being would need to pass a Difficult Perception Test to detect this signature. If he has seen it before, a Simple Intelligence Test would bring the memory to mind.

Sources of Essence

Essence is the fuel of Magic; the more the available Essence, the more powerful and spectacular an effect will be. Unfortunately, tapping into the primal forces of Creation is not easy, and the sources are limited.

The Self: The closest source of Essence is the Magician himself. All living things have an Essence Pool. Most Magicians have large Essence Pools; as Essence is channeled in and out of the sorcerer's body, their total capacity increases, much like a muscle that grows in size as it is exercised. To be able to use his own Essence easily, however, the magician must be able to Channel (see below).

Ambient Essence: Essence in pure form flows freely in Nature, unimpeded by most physical barriers. To tap into ambient Essence, the Magician must use symbols, rituals and other activities that act as "magnets" for ambient Essence, trapping it and storing it for use in an Invocation. These rituals and symbols are usually lengthy (taking at least several minutes, with some taking days or months) and cumbersome, making them impossible to use on short notice.

Times and Places of Power: Although Essence flows everywhere, there are areas where its currents run deeper and stronger. These Places of Power naturally accumulate points of Essence, which can be more easily tapped than ambient Essence. These places have the obvious limitation of requiring one's presence there to get the power. Furthermore, the best known and most powerful ones are claimed by a Covenant or other mystical organization. Additionally, certain times of the day, month and year seem to increase the amount of available Essence.

Storage Devices: Some Invocations can "fix" some amount of Essence to a specially prepared object or place. The Essence can then be stored indefinitely for future use. After the stored Essence is used up, however, it must be replenished once again. Many Magicians take the time to create several of these storage devices, which are then carried on their persons for ready use.

Group Magic: Several Magicians can pool their resources to perform an Invocation. Furthermore, groups of a certain size seem to have more Essence available to them.

Each of these sources of power is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Essence Channeling

Some among the Gifted have the power to tap into Essence at will, without needing to rely on complex rituals and ceremony. People with that power are known as Channelers. Some Channelers are more powerful than others; in game terms, a character's level in Essence Channeling determines how much Essence he can bring forth from his inner reserve in one Turn (one to five seconds). The most powerful Channelers can Summon enough Essence to fuel a powerful Invocation as fast or faster than a normal person can fire a gun or strike a blow. Channeling requires some degree of concentration. Involved activity other than Channeling, such as running, would affect that concentration. It might take longer to Channel under those circumstances, or the Chronicler might impose a -2 or -3 penalty to the any subsequent Art using the gathered Essence.

Invocations

Having the ability to manipulate Essence is not enough. The raw energies of Creation need focus, or their potential remains unrealized or, worse, produces effects at random. Invocations are the tools used to weave Essence into the desired shape. As the Magician learns his Art, he acquires a transcendental understanding of how Essence is used to Create specific things. One can think of Essence as a fine thread, a thread that can be used to weave anything. The pattern of the weave determines what the final result will be. Each Invocation helps the Magician to understand one specific pattern or matrix.

To imprint that understanding in his memory, the Magician uses a "code" of words and signs that will, when properly spoken or gestured, "remind" him of the pattern he wishes to weave. So, the Elemental Fire Invocation is learned to weave Essence into fire shapes and forms. The amount of Essence available limits how large or destructive the fire is, but the same Invocation will serve to light a match or to turn a building into a blazing inferno; both effects are part and parcel of the same Invocation.

Learning Invocations

Each Invocation is learned as a separate skill. Due to the complex nature of Invocations (the character is not just memorizing a way of doing things, but also achieving a fundamental understanding of a part of Reality), Invocations cost 2 character points per level up to level 5, and 5 character points per level thereafter. Learning a new Invocation after character creation costs 10 character points for the first level; the rest are learned normally.

Casting Invocations

Using an Invocation requires two steps, as long as everything goes well. First, the required amount of Essence must be gathered together. This is the Summoning. Second, the Essence must be focused. A Focus roll is necessary, using the Invocation level and the Willpower Attribute. The more powerful the Magical effect desired is, the more difficult it is to Focus the power. Finally, the powers called forth must be dismissed, lest they run without control.

The Summoning

During this step, the Magician visualizes the desired effect while gathering the Essence he needs to make it happen. The Summoning may be a matter of seconds if the character has Essence Channeling, or may take hours or days if ambient Essence is gathered through rituals and ceremonies.

The Summoning is always an intoxicating moment for a Magician. The gathered Essence fills the sorcerer with contentment and a feeling of almost sexual pleasure. He experiences a sense of being all-powerful and god-like. Some Magicians become addicted to that feeling. “Power tripping,” the Summoning of Essence for no reason other than to get a “high,” is a common vice among some of the younger and more inexperienced Magicians.

While the Summoning is taking place, other Gifted characters may notice the “glow” of Essence around the Magician; this requires a Simple Perception Test, at +1 for every 5 Essence Points gathered around the caster. A success on the Test will tell the observer

how powerful the magical aura is (i.e., how much Essence is being gathered). If a lot of Essence is being Summoned, the magical activity may be detected by other Gifted characters. If 20 Essence Points are Summoned, magicians within half a mile (three-quarters of a kilometer) of the caster may sense the mystical disturbance by passing a Difficult Perception Test. Add another half a mile (.75 kilometers) to the radius for every additional 20 Essence that is being gathered. The Gifted will not know exactly where the power is being summoned, only the general direction and how much power is being used. The Shielding Invocation (see p. 220) can be used to avoid this detection.

It is theoretically possible to Summon enough energy for an Invocation and then “hold” it indefinitely or until needed. Holding Summoned Essence for long periods of time is not advisable, however. For one thing, the longer a character holds pure Essence in, the more it affects his senses and stability. Holding Essence for a few minutes is like drinking a shot of hard liquor; the longer it is held, the more consecutive shots are drunk. In game terms, a character can hold Summoned Essence safely for 10 minutes plus an additional minute for each level of his Willpower Attribute. Every five minutes after that, the feeling of hubris causes the Magician to temporarily lower one of his mental Attributes by 1 (Chronicler’s choice); the second time, another mental Attribute is affected, and so on, going up and down all three Attributes. When any one mental Attribute is reduced to 0, the Magician collapses in an orgiastic stupor, and the Essence is released randomly (see Random Essence Effects, p. 201).

In game terms, the Summoning takes as many Turns as required to accumulate the Essence needed in the Invocation. If the Magician can summon all the Essence he needs in one Turn, he may perform the Focus Task (see below) on that same Turn. For characters without Essence Channeling, this is likely to take minutes, hours, or even days. This process requires no Task rolls, unless rituals are being used to accumulate ambient Essence or tap into a Place of Power (see pp. 201-202)

The Focus and Dismissal

Once all the needed energy has been Summoned, the Magician uses the Invocation to weave it in the desired pattern and dismiss its energies when the pattern's usefulness is at an end. This is the actual "spell-casting" Task. Some Invocations can be resisted by the target or victim; treat these as Resisted Tasks. If an Invocation is performed successfully, the Essence is given form, and then harmlessly dismissed.

In game terms, the Focus and normal Dismissal are both resolved as a single Task, using the Invocation level of the character, the appropriate Attribute (typically Willpower, but sometimes Intelligence or Perception), and any other modifiers that apply to the situation. The whole process may take a few seconds, the equivalent of a Turn. Where the Essence used in the Invocation derives from a limited source (such as the character's Essence Pool or an Item of Power), it is subtracted from that source once the Task is completed. If the Invocation fails, the Essence is still "spent," but it becomes a potential danger.

Failed and Corrupted Invocations -- Preventative Dismissal

When an Invocation Task fails, the energies released by the Magician do not simply fade away. Indeed, they may strike at random, turn against the Magician, or produce unpredictable and often lethal effects. To prevent this, a Magician who has failed an Invocation Task must Dismiss the Essence gathered.

A similar, separate Dismissal Task is required for any Invocation cast in anger, or with malicious intent, to dissipate the negative "vibes" created. Using Soulfire to destroy a demonic monster is not malicious; using it to win a bar fight is. Magic is a force shaped by emotion and intent; negative emotions produce negative consequences.

In game terms, such a Preventative Dismissal counts as a new Task, which takes at least one Turn to perform. Ideally, the Dismissal should be performed as soon as possible -- but often, a failed Invocation occurs when the Magician is running or fighting for his life. If the Essence of a failed or corrupted Invocation is not Dismissed immediately, the backlash may occur before the character has a chance to Dismiss the Essence!

Use Willpower and the Incantation level to perform the Dismissal Task. The more Essence used in the Incantation, the more difficult the Dismissal becomes. Dismissal Tasks have a base penalty of -1 per every 5 Essence Points spent (rounded up). Also, the intent and emotions of the Magician may make the Dismissal more difficult -- an Invocation cast in anger is more likely to get out of hand than one performed with perfect serenity. An additional penalty of -1 to -5 may be applied based on the mind frame of the Magician (see Intent and Magic, p. 199).

If the Dismissal is successful, no further repercussions result. If the Dismissal is unsuccessful, the magic continues to affect the world, in unpredictable and often dangerous ways (see Random Essence Effects, p. 201 for some possibilities).

The Process of Casting Invocations

MOST INVOCATIONS REQUIRE AT LEAST A FEW SPOKEN WORDS OR QUICK GESTURES TO HELP THE MAGICIAN FOCUS HIS MIND ON THE PROCESS. IF THE MAGICIAN IS RESTRAINED IN SUCH A WAY THAT NEITHER WORDS NOR GESTURES ARE POSSIBLE, THE PROCESS REQUIRES MORE TIME (AT LEAST ONE ADDITIONAL TURN) AND INCURS A -2 PENALTY. IF THE MAGICIAN IS BLINDED OR BLINDFOLDED, ANY INVOCATION THAT HAS A SPECIFIC TARGET IS NOT POSSIBLE UNLESS THE MAGICIAN CAN TOUCH HIM OR CAN SENSE THE TARGET IN SOME WAY (A DIFFICULT PERCEPTION TEST WITH A PENALTY DETERMINED BY THE CHRONICLER MAY BE REQUIRED). ANY INVOCATION THAT ONLY AFFECTS THE CASTER CAN BE PERFORMED AS LONG AS THE MAGICIAN'S MIND IS FUNCTIONAL. EVEN A BLIND AND PARALYTIC SORCERER COULD USE SUCH INVOCATIONS AS SPIRIT PROJECTION, FOR EXAMPLE.

Optional Task Penalties and Mandatory Dismissal

The First Edition *Witchcraft* rules had separate mandatory Tasks for Focus and Dismissal, and more strict penalties, based on the Essence spent, for both Tasks. Those who wish to lower the power of Magic in their games, and who do not mind the extra rolls or draws, may use the table below instead of the new default rules found in the main text. It should be noted that when using this optional system, powerful magicks, such as Group Magic, will almost always have harmful consequences unless done as an extended ritual.

Optional Essence Control Table

Essence Summoned	Focus Modifier	Dismissal Modifier
1-2	0	0
3-4	-1	-2
5-10	-2	-4
11-15	-4	-6
16-20	-5	-8

For each additional 5 Essence Points Summoned, increase the penalties by one.

Using Invocations in Combat

A witch finds herself facing two hitmen from the Combine. Dealing with them is an easy matter of casting a couple of spells -- or is it? Before players start thinking that their characters are like comic book superheroes, they should take into consideration the difficulties involved in using Magic during a fast and furious fight.

Using Magic often takes time. In many cases, more time than the Gifted has got. A trained gunman can fire several rounds before most Magicians can finish a sentence. Only Invocations that can be fueled by the amount of Essence the character can release in one Turn can be cast instantly. This means that the caster needs to be creative. Instead of incinerating the gunmen with a fireball, the witch might set his hair on fire -- not immediately lethal, but confusing and painful.

Using Essence Defensively

When being targeted by a supernatural attack (be it the hypnotic gaze of an undead, a hostile Invocation, or a Seer Power), a Essence Channeler may use some of his Essence to defend himself. A defense is only possible if the character knows he is being targeted with an opposing power. Most of the time, the Gifted may sense this by passing a Difficult Perception Test.

A Resisted Task is made. The attacker uses the result of his Focus, Seer Art or other supernatural ability Task. The attacker may gain a bonus of +1 for every 10 Essence Points used in the supernatural attack (a minimum of 10 Essence must be spent to gain the bonus; attackers who spend no Essence have no bonuses or penalties). The defender uses his Willpower and adds 1 for every point of Essence spent in the defensive maneuver. If the defender is reacting quickly, he is limited by the amount of Essence he can release in one Turn through Essence Channeling. If the defender wins or ties, the Metaphysical effect fizzles out before affecting him. Otherwise, the Invocation, Seer Power or other supernatural ability works normally.

This defensive Task is used in addition to any normal Resisted Tasks or Tests that apply to the power. For example, if a power can be resisted by a Simple Willpower Test, the character can perform two resistance rolls, one using the rules above, and the other using the Simple Willpower Test. Both would be applied against the same Task total by the attacker.

For example, Tanya the Wicce, played by Grace, is targeted by an insane Solitaire. The babbling maniac points a hand towards Tanya, who can see the glow of Essence gathering around him. Grace announces that Tanya is going to try to defend against the hostile magic. Tanya has a Willpower of 5 and an Essence Channeling of 3; she uses all 3 Essence Points, for a total of +8 to her defense roll (this is not an Invocation, so the normal Wicce defensive Invocation bonus does not apply). The Solitaire is using Soulfire and spending less than 10 Essence Points -- he gains no additional bonuses. The man's combined

Willpower and Invocation levels total a 7. Grace rolls a 6, for a total of 14. The Chronicler rolls a 7, for a total of 14 -- a tie. Tanya makes a sweeping gesture and a wave of energy meets the jet of Soulfire, dispersing it a foot away from her body.

Intent and Magic

Unlike mindless natural forces, Magic is a function of the will of the Magician, and it is colored by the emotions and intentions of the Magician. The forces invoked reflect his inner desires and his intentions. If the Magician holds evil in his heart, the Magic itself will be evil and treacherous, and will seek to turn against its wielder at the first opportunity. This is the origin of the old Wicce saying, "What you bring unto others, you get back three times."

Using Magic for revenge or to abuse the weak is a risky proposition. The Wicce claim that the forces summoned in such undertakings are the most twisted and malign ones, as good and neutral spirits would not lend their strength to such undertakings. Rosicrucians hold a more pragmatic view: the mental state of the Magician is seen as the determinant, not the nature of the spirit forces summoned. In either case, the result is the same: Magic used for malicious purposes tends to fail and backfire more often.

In game terms, the intent of the Magician must be taken into account by the Chronicler. Using Magic to defend oneself, to gain some measure of good fortune (that does not harm others), or to accomplish similar, non-malicious purposes will not have unusual consequences. Using Magic to harm people who cannot defend themselves, especially for frivolous and petty purposes, requires a Dismissal Task regardless of success and suffers additional penalties. As a rule of thumb, the Dismissal of such Invocations incurs an additional penalty of -1 to -5. The same happens to Invocations that, although not meant to harm the innocent, do so because of carelessness. A Magician who unleashes a tornado in a busy street to destroy an enemy will pay dearly for any innocent bystanders who are hurt.

The Crowd Effect

“Fear the multitude, the angry crowd, the audience of unbelievers, for they are the bane of all magic.”

-- Horace Brown, Rosicrucian Equestrian

One of the reasons the Gifted seldom operate openly is that, when confronted in great numbers, mundanes and their emotions can overcome or dim the powers of Magic through the unwitting focus of their Essence. The two most dangerous emotions the Magician faces are unbelief and hatred.

Disbelief is the most common obstacle found among the people of the late 20th century, especially in the more “civilized” regions of the world. Most people in present-day North America have no animosity towards the practice of Magic -- they simply do not believe that Magic exists. Once Magic is used successfully in front of a crowd of skeptics, however, the unbelief of mundanes no longer restrains the Magician. No matter what they tell themselves later on, the mundanes, even if only momentarily, become believers and thus their defenses are shattered.

Rage and hatred are more difficult to overcome. The most direct way to circumvent such emotions is to instill fear in the hearts of the crowd. In the past, many a witch has had to start a panic among her pursuers by a graphic demonstration of power, sometimes killing one or more members of the mob. Fear has no negative effects on the use of Magic. Terror contains an implicit acceptance of the Magician’s power within itself; in effect, it is a surrender to the will of the sorcerer. Only another Gifted can face a Magician with fear in his heart.

The truly fanatical are the most difficult to overcome. In many cases, their hatred or dedication deflects all attempts at instilling fear. The only defense against their kind is a quick retreat -- or to use up enough Essence to overcome their defenses and destroy them.

Neutralizing Essence

By unwittingly spending Essence, the members of a crowd “jam” the flow of Essence around the Magician. This occurs only during very specific circumstances. First, at least ten people must be present; only groups of mundanes can generate enough power to seriously hinder a Magician. Secondly, the crowd must be aware that the Gifted is trying to perform Magic, unless he is trying to affect members of the crowd with the Magical effect, in which case the resistance is automatic. In other words, a Gifted character casting an Invocation without drawing attention to himself would be spared unless he was targeting the crowd itself.

When those conditions are met, the crowd “neutralizes” several Essence Points. This either ruins the Invocation, forces the Magician to settle for a lesser effect, or requires the Magician to spend extra Essence to overcome this resistance. The amount of Essence neutralized varies by the size of the crowd (see the nearby Crowd Effect Table).

Crowd Effect Table

Number in Crowd	Essence Neutralized
10-20	1 per person
21-50	20 plus 1 per 5 people
51-100	30 plus 1 per 10 people
101+	40 plus 1 per 20 people

All Essence amounts in the table are rounded down.



Random Essence Effects

If Summoned Essence is not properly Dismissed when required, it produces a random Magical effect sometime in the near future (within 24 hours). The effect occurs in the vicinity of the Magician who summoned it. The Chronicler can pick one of the entries on the Random Essence Effects Table, or roll D6 and apply the result.

Random Essence Effects Table

1 or 6: Reiteration

The original Invocation effect manifests itself somewhere around the Magician. This could be beneficial, harmful or merely disturbing or startling.

2: Activation

An Invocation that the Magician knows suddenly activates itself, fueled by the un-Dismissed Essence. The Magical effect appears suddenly and without apparent cause.

3: Burn

The Magician is suddenly affected by a fever-like state. He feels extremely hot and a cold sweat starts running down his face and body. He loses 1 Endurance Point for every un-Dismissed Essence Point. If reduced below 0 Endurance, he collapses, unconscious.

4: Grounding

The Essence “grounds” itself on the Magician, who suddenly convulses and then goes rigid. After a few seconds, the spell passes but may return. One convulsion/paralysis occurs for every 5 points of un-Dismissed Essence (round up). Each one costs the Magician D6(3) Life Points and D10(5) Endurance Points. Further, the Magician is helpless for the duration of the spell (usually 2-5 seconds).

5: Hallucination

The Magician’s senses are plagued by hallucinatory lights and sounds. Mundanes cannot see the lights, but other Gifted can sense the Essence flaring up around him. This effect lasts 1 minute for every 10 un-Dismissed Essence Points (round up). During that time all Perception and Intelligence-based Tasks are at a -5 penalty.

Other Sources of Essence

Most magicians have Essence Channeling, and thus rely on the Essence they hold within themselves. There are other sources of Essence however, which can be tapped by those who need some extra power, or to cast the most ambitious Invocations.

Rituals -- Tapping Ambient Essence

A ritual is an involved, often repetitive activity meant to tap into ambient Essence. This is the only way people without Essence Channeling can use Invocations, as they lack the ability to tap into their own Essence Pool except in the most basic and limited ways. Rituals are time-consuming and require a great deal of preparation, effort and dedication. Whereas a character with Essence Channeling could summon a spirit in a couple of minutes with a gesture or word, one without this power would have to spend several hours or days in a prolonged ceremony until he had accumulated enough Essence to be able to summon the entity. Rituals are often used even by those with Essence Channeling, however, because they can provide a great deal of extra power.

Magic rituals use the Rituals skill. Each magical Covenant or tradition has its own set of rites and ceremonies. The Tasks typically use Intelligence and Rituals. A ritual must last a minimum of 10 minutes, at the end of which time the Task is attempted. Each Success Level in the Task provides D4(2) Essence Points to be used in an Invocation. This Essence is added to any other Sources of Power. If the Task fails, the Essence gathered must be Dismissed (see p. 197), or it will haunt the Magician!

Extending the length of the ritual adds bonuses to the Rituals Task: +1 for every hour the ritual lasts, to a maximum bonus of +6. Longer lasting rituals add a +1 per 24-hour period after the first 24 hours, to a maximum additional bonus of +6 (for a total of +12). At the end of the ritual, a participant can contribute some of his own Essence. If he has Essence Channeling, he simply releases as much as he needs, limited only by time. Those without Essence Channeling must make a Difficult Willpower Roll. Each Success Level releases 1 Essence Point from their personal Pool, to be used in the ritual.

Places of Power

Certain areas have a greater flow of Essence than normal. Most of them are places where the barriers between Earth and the Otherworlds are thin, allowing for energies from other places to enter into our world. Others are places where ancient magical cults conducted their magical ceremonies.

Any Invocation performed in such places can tap into this extra power. The extra power can also be tapped by supernatural beings, some of which use it to manifest themselves in the area. Places of Power are often plagued by haunts, evil spirits and strange occurrences.

Most such places become shrines, temples, haunted houses, or other remarkable areas, often the focus of local legends. Many have been claimed by groups of Magicians, and they do not look kindly on intruders. Finding a Place of Power that nobody has laid a claim to can be an adventure in itself. Keeping it once it has been found may also be harder than it sounds.

All Places of Power have an "overflow" of Essence that can be tapped by anybody performing Invocations in the area. This overflow renews itself every twenty-four hours, and it works on a "first come, first served" basis -- after somebody exhausts the overflow, no extra Essence is available for the rest of the day. A minor Place of Power has an overflow of 10 to 50 Essence Points. Most Places of Power have 50 to 100 Essence Points. The most powerful ones have hundreds or even thousands of available Essence Points. Chroniclers must devise the rationale for each Place of Power, its background story, and the number of available Essence Points.

Some Places of Power

Described below are sample Places of Power, to provide guidelines for Chroniclers.

Shrine: A lesser shrine or holy place, used for at least a century, has 10 Essence Points. The site of a great temple, a sanctified burial ground, or similar holy place has 25 Essence Points, but the spirits of those associated with the place will have a say on who uses their power -- or at least, who uses that power without consequences. An ancient holy place (over 1,000 years old) has 100 Essence.

Crime Scene or Battlefield: Places where many people died at once, or where someone died a horrible death, can become storehouses of Essence. The site of a gruesome crime or a medium-sized battlefield has 10 points of Essence; a major historical battlefield, or the former place of operations for a serial killer has 30 Essence. In all cases, the Place of Power is tainted with negative emotions, however; all magicks used with the help of this power require a Dismissal Task. These places are also likely to be haunted, and the local ghosts may react badly to anybody "poaching" in their turf.

Major Occult Locales: Stonehenge has over 1,000 Essence Points, but it appears that the Combine, or some Covenant working with the Combine is tapping that power for its own uses. The Pyramids should have a lot of power, but for some reason it cannot be accessed; perhaps only those with the right supernatural "keys" can use them. Finally, places like the Bermuda Triangle appear to be huge Places of Power (with up to 100 points of Essence per person), powerful enough to break the barriers between worlds.

Times of Power

Essence flows from many things. The Sun, the Moon, the planets and the stars emit Essence as well as gravity, light and other forms of energy. Their influence does have an impact on this world. In that matter, astrology is correct (although often misused and misunderstood). The external powers create a special significance to some times of the day, dates of the year and special events. During these Times of Power, extra Essence can be tapped by the Gifted to perform Invocations. The same is true for supernatural beings, which means that those Times of Power are also more dangerous than usual. During periods other than the Times of Power, the amount of ambient Essence is only sufficient for regular Channelling and ritual practice. No additional Essence is available.

The extra Essence available during a Time of Power can be tapped by any Magician once during that period, and not again until the next such time. In general, the extra Essence available is cumulative. For example, a ritual conducted during the Vernal Equinox at Midnight garners a total of 25 extra Essence Points. Some of the most common Times of Power are listed below.

Noon and Midnight: Midnight is known as “the Witching Hour” and is a traditional time of Magic and the supernatural. Less well known is the fact that noon is a similar Time of Power. These two times see a “peak” in the flows of Essence energies. Any Invocation or supernatural ability performed during these hours (the benefits last for the entire hour) gains an additional 5 Essence Points.

Full Moon: The moon emits great quantities of Essence, perhaps as a result of its proximity to Earth. During the full moon, lunar energies bathe the land at peak strength. Rituals conducted at night during a full moon can tap an additional 5 Essence Points, or a total of 10 points when conducted at midnight.

The Solstices and Equinoxes: These solar dates mark the beginning of the seasons, and are important times of change and transition. They also provide great power. The Summer and Winter Solstices are approximately June 21 and December 22, respectively. The Vernal (spring) and Autumnal Equinoxes are

approximately March 21 and September 23. During these days, Magicians can tap an additional 20 Essence Points.

The Four Days of Power: During four particular dates of the year, Magical forces flow in greater abundance. So noticeable are these flows that the four dates have long held religious significance. They are each traditional pagan holidays. The four dates are, in chronological order: Imbolc (February 2nd), Beltane (April 30th), Lughnasadh (August 1st) and Samhain (October 31st -- Halloween). During these four days, 30 extra Essence Points are available to Magicians.

The extra Essence available from a Source of Power can be used for several Invocations, but when it is used up, it is no longer available. For example, during the hour of midnight, the extra 5 points of Essence can be divided up among as many Invocations as the Magician wants (to a maximum of five Invocations with one free Essence Point each). Similarly, a group of three Magicians can use the extra 45 Essence Points (see Group Magic, pp. 205-206) on as many Invocations as they care to cast (dividing up the 45 points among them), but once the 45 points are used up, they do not get any extra Essence for a period of 24 hours.



Symbols of Power

Many symbols have a great deal of power. It appears that some geometrical configurations attract power naturally, acting like magical magnets or lightning rods. By taking the time to use these symbols while casting an Invocation, the Magician can tap their power. The most common symbols or configurations of power are listed below.

The Circle: The Circle represents infinity, as it is a line without ending or beginning. It can be used for protection against hostile magicks, or to tap into the flows of Essence. The Circle must be drawn or carved on the floor. Although a perfect circle is best, a not-quite exact drawing will often do the job. When used for protection, those being protected must stand or sit within the Circle. Used in this manner, the Circle attracts an additional 10 Essence Points, usable on defensive Invocations only. To use the Circle as a source of power, the Magician or Magicians stand outside the drawing. Used in this manner, the Circle grants 5 extra Essence Points to those standing outside the Circle, which can be used for any Invocation.

The Pentagram: The five-pointed star has long been a symbol of magic. Popular culture wrongly believes that Pentagrams are Satanic symbols. They were in use long before Christianity ever existed, and have come to represent many different things (pentagrams were actually used in some old Churches to represent Christ's five wounds). In the practice of Magic, the Pentagram often represents the four cardinal points, which also coincide with the Four Classical Elements. The fifth point is said to represent the Fifth Element, Spirit. Drawing a Pentagram requires a Rituals and Intelligence Task (the Wicce



and the Rosicrucians both use Pentagrams). A drawn Pentagram contributes 5 Essence Points to any Invocation cast within it. A Pentagram inside a Circle will contribute a total of 7 Essence Points, or 15 to any defensive Invocation.

Items of Power

Certain common objects and articles have inherent power, either because they can hold Essence more easily, or because they interfere with the flows of Essence. These items and materials are very useful in both the pursuit of magic and the fight against supernatural creatures.

Crystals: Crystalline formations have special shapes that seem to interact with Essence in a manner similar to that of Symbols of Power. Even carrying a crystal on a chain is helpful in preventing Essence loss due to the stress of highly emotional situations (see Essence Point Loss, p. 154). A crystal worn against the skin reduces such losses by half. Using a crystal as the basis for a magical symbol, amulet or Essence Vessel provides 1 to 4 extra Essence Points (roll D4 or as determined by the Chronieler).

Salt: Common table salt is made up of crystalline particles, and is a powerful weapon against spirits and other incorporeal beings. Salt somehow interferes with the Essence pattern of these creatures! Actually tossing a handful of salt at a Phantasm, Ghost or immaterial spirit inflicts D4(2) points of damage to their Vital Essence.

Using a circle of salt for protection will prevent such spirit beings from reaching a Magician. Using salt in protective Invocations (such as the Warding, p. 224) adds 5 extra Essence to the process.

Group Magic

Sorcery is more effective when performed by a group. One of the obvious reasons is that all the participants can infuse their Essence into the Invocation, speeding up the Magic and allowing more powerful effects to take place. Additionally, certain numbers of participants actually draw ambient Essence towards the group, increasing the available energy beyond the sum of the Essence Pools of the participants.

The Power of Numbers

Certain numbers and combinations of numbers seem to have a degree of intrinsic power (see Numbers and Magic sidebar). By working as a group, Magicians can gain great amounts of Essence. Even three relatively weak Magicians working together can create powerful effects by tapping into this additional energy. Of course, when manipulating such amounts of Essence, the problem of controlling, focusing and then dismissing the power remains. More than one overly ambitious group of Gifted has been obliterated by playing with far too much power.

Why are certain numbers of participants more powerful than others? Students of Magic have come up with a number of possible theories, many of them contradictory. Possible explanations include the theory that some numbers act as keys that unlock hidden power reservoirs in the universe; that certain repetitions and rhythms (which by their very nature have numerical natures) somehow generate reverberations in the flows of Essence, which in turn release energy from it; or that numbers are symbols of Nature which can be used to manipulate Reality itself. Or, in the words of a cynical Wicce: "Nobody is sure."

Whatever the explanation may be, groups of the specific size attract a great deal of power. The most powerful groups are those numbering three, five, seven and thirteen individuals. Groups of nine and eleven also grant extra Essence, but less on a person-by-person basis than the previous ones. The Group Magic Essence Table nearby provides the amount of extra Essence generated by groups of various numbers. This Essence is immediately available to the group, even if the Magicians only spend one Turn in the Summoning step of Invocation casting.

Numbers and Magic

Numbers and mathematics are one of the pillars of Science and Reason. In the physical world, where two plus two always equals four, numbers are our way of perceiving and measuring the Universe. Numbers also play a role in Magic, however. Like Science, Magic has a set of rules, although they tend to be more malleable and flexible.

Certain numbers have intrinsic Magical power. Odd numbers (those that cannot be divided by two) seem to have a mystic resonance, acting as magnets of Essence.

Prime numbers (numbers that can only be divided by themselves or 1) are also important. In the working of Magic, the most important numbers are 3, 5, 7 and 13. The numbers 9 and 11 have some power, but are less important.

The effect of numbers in Magical rituals is described under the Group Magic section. The number seven has some power beyond that, however. The seventh son of a seventh son is said to always have the potential to be a powerful Magician, for example. Further, rituals that last seven days and seven nights greatly magnify their power (in game terms, such a ritual may have a +3 bonus to Focus and Dismissal Tasks or +25% to Essence, in the Chronicler's discretion).

Group Magic Essence Table

Size of Group	Increase in Essence
3	45
5	60
7	105
9	90
11	100
13	132

Conducting Group Magic

Working as a group requires coordination and skill as well as power. Most group Magic is conducted by forming a Circle, facing inward. As a closed form, the Circle is useful in focusing the power of the gathering on the Task at hand without letting it escape through any corners or gaps. Sometimes, the members of the group hold hands, although this is not necessary. A member of the group, usually the most skilled Magician at the Invocation or Invocations to be attempted, becomes the Leader of the Circle.

The basic steps to cast group Magic Invocations are the same as for normal Invocations: Summoning, Focus and Dismissal. The only changes are the contributions of the group to the process. Only characters with the Essence Channeling Quality can participate in a Circle.

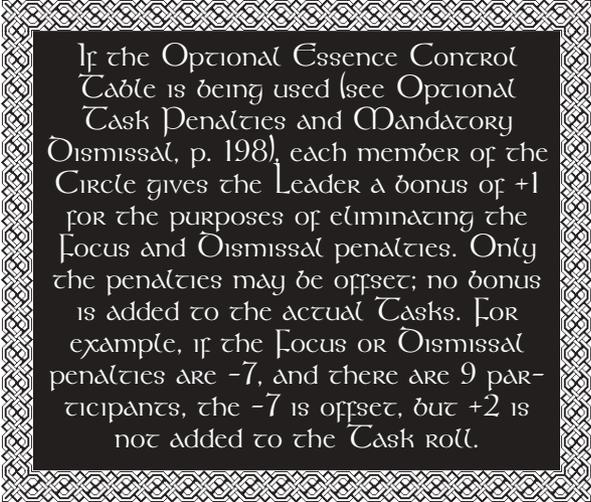
The Summoning: During the Summoning, the members of the Circle all contribute Essence to the process. The participants can contribute as much Essence as they wish, limited only by how long the Circle wishes to wait. Circle members who do not know the Invocation being attempted are less effective, however; every 2 Essence Points they contribute only count as 1 Essence Point. This is due to their inability to visualize the specifics of the Invocation.

Like individual Summoning, the process can take as few as a handful of seconds or as long as the members can stand in a Circle. The process ends when all the available Essence has been absorbed by the Leader, or when the Leader decides he has gathered

enough power. The Leader takes all the combined energy unto himself; this includes any “free” Essence generated because of the number of participants present (see the Group Magic Essence Table). In some cases, the Leader will be holding hundreds of Essence Points. This experience is intense -- a feeling of power and exaltation pervades the Leader until the Essence is released.

The Focus: The Leader performs all the Tasks involved in the Invocation. Everything else works just the same as normal Invocations.

The Dismissal: When a Dismissal Task is necessary, the Leader gains a +1 bonus per member (including the Leader) of the Circle. These bonuses may only be used to offset the Dismissal penalties; they do not add to the Dismissal Task roll. This helps the Leader Dismiss the often-enormous energies gathered by the group’s efforts.



If the Optional Essence Control Table is being used (see Optional Task Penalties and Mandatory Dismissal, p. 198), each member of the Circle gives the Leader a bonus of +1 for the purposes of eliminating the Focus and Dismissal penalties. Only the penalties may be offset; no bonus is added to the actual Tasks. For example, if the Focus or Dismissal penalties are -7, and there are 9 participants, the -7 is offset, but +2 is not added to the Task roll.

For example, a group of five Rosicrucians gather together to attack a farmhouse where a Black Magic cult is holed up. To flush out their enemies, the Rosicrucians have planned to create a devastating tornado. The Rosicrucians are Nathaniel, the Leader (his Willpower is 4, his Elemental Air Invocation is 7, and he has Essence Channeling 6), Audrey (Essence Channeling 4), John (Essence Channeling 6), and Kate and Ben (both with Essence Channeling 4). Kate and Ben do not know the Elemental Air Invocation; everyone else does.

The group gathers and starts Summoning. They do not have a long time to prepare, so Nathaniel wants to cast the Invocation instantly (one Turn). Everybody contributes as much Essence as they can to the free Essence generated by the group (60 Essence Points). Since the characters only have one Turn, they are limited to their Essence Channeling levels. Thus, Nathaniel and John each contribute 6 points, Audrey contributes 4. Kate and Ben spend 4 each, but this sum is halved because they do not know the particular Invocation. The total gathered Essence is 60 plus the 20 from the Magicians themselves, for a total of 80 points, far more than necessary. Nathaniel glows with mystical energy as he takes all that power unto himself and prepares to use it.

Next comes the Focus Task. Confident in his abilities, Nathaniel decides to use 30 Essence Points to create a tornado with a radius of 10 yards (meters). Such a blast should wreck the house and most likely severely injure the cultists. Nathaniel's player rolls a D10, adds his Willpower of 4 and Elemental Air Invocation of 7. The total result is a 17. The Invocation is successful, and a tornado takes shape in a matter of seconds. Nathaniel successfully directs it toward the house and smashes the cult.

As the tornado is a destructive force, and because weather effects must be Dismissed, the group must now try and calm the storm. The Dismissal Task has a penalty of -6 due to the amount of Essence involved. The group mostly offsets this penalty (+5). Added to Nathaniel's abilities (Willpower 4, Invocation 7), D10 is rolled with a -1 modifier. Unless Nathaniel's player rolls a 1, the Dismissal will be successful. Such is the power of group Magic.



Essence and Immortality

Many cultures, from the Gnostic heretics of early Christianity to the Taoists of China, hold beliefs about Immortals -- enlightened humans who have transcended the boundaries of Life and Death and who are no longer subject to the ravages of age. In the world of *WitchCraft*, some of these “immortals” are supernatural creatures, like the Vampyres or the Sidhe, whose lifespans are much greater than those of humans. Other Undying Ones are Gifted humans whose power and wisdom have defeated the aging process. Those who know the occult truths of the world refer to them as “Lesser” or “Common” Immortals.

Any Gifted character whose Essence Pool grows beyond certain limits starts aging more slowly. Characters with over 75 points in their Essence capacity age at a rate one-third as fast as normal people. Such a character would only age the equivalent of ten years over a period of three decades. Many Magicians reach their sixties and seventies while still appearing to be in their late thirties or early forties -- enough to be the envy of their contemporaries but not unprecedented in modern times, where plastic surgery and “clean living” can hide the effects of age. Gifted characters with over 100 points of Essence age at one-fifth the normal rate. These men and women can be over a hundred years old, but still appear to be fairly young. Such characters need to cover their tracks after a certain point, or their continued good health and youth will become suspicious to those around them. After exceeding 125 points of Essence, the aging process is reduced to one-tenth the normal rate, resulting in people living for over two centuries without appearing to be much older than forty years old. Some of the leaders of the Rosicrucians were alive during the American Revolution, for example. Upon reaching 150 Essence Points, the aging process nearly stops, and the character ages at one-twentieth the normal rate. At 200 Essence and beyond, aging is reduced to one fiftieth of its normal rate.

Regardless of how much Essence the character had during his childhood, the slowdown in the aging process does not “kick in” until the person has reached full adulthood -- roughly the mid to late twenties. Essence does not stop growth, but only the decay caused by age. Also, the slowed aging does not begin until the character has accumulated the requisite Essence. For example, a character who grew in power and reached 75 points of Essence at age forty would start aging at one-third the normal rate from that point on; at age seventy he would look like he was fifty years old.

How the Essence is accumulated is usually not relevant. Magicians, Necromancers and practitioners of any of the Gifted Arts can increase their Essence Pool through experience. By focusing and refining their Powers, the characters strengthen their souls and begin to transcend the limits of age.



Lesser Invocations

A number of Invocations are described below. A brief description reveals their characteristics, followed by a list of possible effects and Essence costs. The list for each Invocation covers some basic examples. Creative players will probably come up with other effects; the Chronicler can use the examples provided to figure out their Essence cost.

The enchantments listed below are some of the most common Lesser Invocations. Lesser Invocations cover most of the aspects of Magic, including the four classical elements and the powers over spirits, emotions and chance. Most Gifted sorcerers never advance past this level. These are the only magicks that can be learned by beginning characters. More Lesser Invocations and the more powerful Greater Invocations will appear in future *WitchCraft* sourcebooks.

Invocations and Range

Unless otherwise specified, most Invocations have an effective “range” equal to line-of-sight; if the Magician can see the target, he can affect it. Typically, this means the target must be in the presence of the Magician, or relatively close (within arm’s length). In theory, one could cast an Invocation on a target over a mile away, but if the Magician cannot clearly see the target, a -3 penalty is applied to all Tasks. Casting an Invocation through a remote viewing device, like a television camera, only works if the Magician knows exactly and intimately the location the device is showing (security cameras in the Magician’s own home would work; a television interview “somewhere in New York” would not). Even when possible, using an Invocation through such a device would be at a -4 penalty.

Affect the Psyche

This Invocation uses the emotional nature of Essence to change the feelings of a person. It can be used to impress, charm or scare the target. The Chronicler decides whether or not the emotional state of the person being affected changes their behavior in the way the Magician intended: a scared would-be attacker might flee, surrender, or attack like a cornered animal, for example.

Influence Emotional State

This effect costs 1 Essence if the person was leaning towards the intended emotion, 2 Essence to inspire a different emotion, and 5 Essence for an utterly opposite emotion (e.g., anger if the person was happy, fear if the person was calm). This ability is resisted by a Difficult Willpower Test. Normally, the

emotional change is short-lived, lasting 1 Turn per Success Level in the Focus Task. Used in combination with normal psychological manipulation and seduction, the Invocation may actually change the person’s outlook over time. This will depend on the (mundane) skills of the Magician, the target’s personality, and other factors, at the Chronicler’s discretion.

Aura of Confidence

This effect creates an impression of power and control around the Magician, making others unwilling to oppose him. The caster gains a +2 bonus on most social interaction Tasks, with an additional bonus equal to the Success Levels of the Focus Task. People who have a reason to dislike or hate the Magician resist with a Simple Willpower Test. This effect costs 2 Essence and lasts 5 minutes per Success Level; at the end of that time, the Invocation must be repeated.

Blessing

Essence can be used to alter probability, increasing the chances that one specific, beneficial outcome will take place. Blessings alter probability in favor of the subject of the Invocation, making the person luckier and more successful.

The Essence spent on all Blessings must come from the Magician himself. Ambient Essence, Times and Places of Power, or other sources may not be used for this purpose. Furthermore, the Essence spent is not regained until the Blessing benefits end. For example, a Magician who gives himself or someone else a +5 Luck bonus has his own Essence Pool depleted by 15 points until the bonuses are used up.

Good Luck

This effect gives the recipient Luck. A +1 bonus is gained for every 3 Essence Points spent that may be used on any Task or Test. The bonuses may all be applied to one Task/Test, or may be split as desired among many such attempts. Once the Luck bonuses are spent, the effects of the Blessing stop.

Success Blessing

This effect guarantees success in some small matter involving mundane affairs, such as a business deal, school examination or sporting event, provided the recipient had a chance to succeed anyway. This effect costs 5 Essence.

Blessing of Protection

This effect protects the subject from Metaphysical harm. Each 4 Essence Points spent gives the subject a +1 bonus to resist one supernatural attack of any kind. This protection is activated whenever a hostile attack is taken against the recipient of the blessing. The protection is only good against one such attack; after helping defend against one attack, the protection ends. A Blessing of Protection can also be oriented against all forms of supernatural attack (including Magic, the Sight, Vampyre powers, and so on), at the cost of 6 Essence per +1 bonus.

Cleansing

Negative Essence, colored by bad emotions or evil intent, can “pollute” places, things and people. Areas where violence, abuse and other ugliness occurred often retain the taint of the Essence that was released during those incidents. In some cases, they can make people uncomfortable, especially the Gifted, who can sense the great evil. Nightmares are often experienced in these places. The Cleansing Invocation is used to remove this negative taint from areas. The process can also be used to help against harmful magicks, especially those that linger around the victim.

All Cleansing Invocations require separate Dismissal Tasks; the Dismissal is an intricate part of the Cleansing process. Failure to Dismiss a Cleansing Invocation means the negative Essence removed from an area or person follows the Magician around instead. It may require a new Cleansing Invocation to remove such effects.

Remove Emotional Debris

When mundanes are extremely angry or are suffering other strong emotions, their Essence is inadvertently “spilled” onto objects and areas. These negative emotions can affect the well-being of people, making them short-tempered, prone to nightmares, and even unlucky.

Cleansing a room or an object of such negative “vibes” costs 3 Essence. Cleansing an entire house costs 6 Essence.

Failure to Dismiss this effect causes the negative emotions to become attached to the cleanser.

Remove Curse

This effect neutralizes a curse or other harmful effect that has been temporarily attached to the target. It works against curses of all types, Metaphysical and supernatural. This effect will not work on those with the Accursed Drawback. Removing harmful Magic costs the same amount of Essence as the harmful power cost in the first place, and is resisted by the Task effect of whoever inflicted the curse.

Communion

Each mind is usually trapped inside its skull, relying only on its senses to perceive the world around it. The Communion Invocation puts the Magician in direct contact with an area and every living thing and spirit within it. Through this Invocation, the Magician achieves a powerful connection with the land, and is aware of everything in it, from the plight of the smallest ant to the intentions of the most powerful nature spirit. Such a connection is full of dangers, however. When achieved in a place of evil or negative emotions, the backlash can do significant harm to the Magician's body and sanity.

Communion Invocations are usually conducted in forests, gardens or other places of Nature, where the majority of the spiritual forces are benevolent and friendly. Using the Invocation in a city fills the Magician with the cries of dying trees, the cold calculation of rats and other vermin, and the petty maliciousness, bitterness and anguish of most humans living there. Magicians who make that mistake often find their sanity permanently impaired as a result.

One With the Land

Becoming one with the land costs 2 Essence Points per minute. The Magician enters a trance state in which he is aware of everything occurring in the area centered around him. The area affected by this Invocation has a radius of 10 yards (meters) for every level of Willpower of the caster. This can be increased at additional Essence cost; +5 yards (meters) to the radius per additional Essence Point spent, per minute.

Once Communion is established, the caster can sense the whereabouts and emotions of every living thing in the area, including spirits and supernatural beings. The Magician is able to pinpoint the location of anybody entering the area, even those who are Shielded or hidden by illusions. Attempts by the caster to communicate, invoke or awaken any spirits in the area gain a bonus of +5 as long as the Communion is active.

While the Communion is active, the Magician can also cast any Invocation (positive or negative) on anyone or anything in the area as if he was in direct contact or line of sight of them.

The main drawback is that the connection works both ways. The Magician is exposed to any pain and suffering, anger, or other negative feelings of every living thing in the area. The more intense the negative emotions, the greater the danger of a psychic backlash. When performing the Communion in an area plagued by suffering or anger, the Magician must pass a Difficult Willpower Test to avoid being harmed by the experience. Note that the entire area must be permeated with negative emotions to pose a danger. If a group of men with murder in their minds entered an otherwise tranquil forest, for example, the Magician would know of the men and their emotions but would not be affected by them. If the Magician casts the Communion in the middle of a burning forest, a city slum or a concentration camp, the concentrated misery and agony in such places would sear him.

Penalties to the sanity Willpower Test are determined by the Chronicler. Places of some misery and pain (a dirty park, a lightly polluted forest) have no penalty to the Test. A city slum is at -2 (more for really bad areas where everybody is suffering). A burning forest or a concentration camp is at -4 to -6. A serial killer's torture dungeon would be at -8 or worse! If the Willpower Test is failed, the Magician loses D4 x 10(20) Essence Points. If brought below 0, he may suffer physical or mental harm (see Essence Point Loss, p. 154).



Consecration

This Invocation creates a Vessel that can be imbued with Essence. The Vessel can be a small article; most Invocations of this type are cast on rings, necklaces, and other articles of jewelry. Vessels must be in contact with the skin of the user to work. The Consecration “attaches” some quantity of Essence to the object, at a high energy cost (only one-third of the Essence used is actually imbued into the object). Additionally, each Vessel created drains Essence Points from the creator and this Essence cannot be recovered until after the Vessel is emptied. The energy drain is caused by the magical link between the Magician and the Vessel he has created.

The benefit of owning one or more Consecrated objects is worth the price, however, because a Magician can use some or all the power in the Vessel for any Invocation or defensive Magic. The energy in a Vessel must be Channeled in the same manner that a Magician uses his internal Essence Energies.

Once the Essence in the Vessel is gone, a new Consecration is necessary to empower the object once again. Anybody can use the Vessel and its energies, unless the Magician wills the Vessel to work only for him, or for whomever he designates. This restriction costs extra energy.

The maximum number of Vessels a character can create is equal to his Consecration Level.

Create Vessel

This effect imbues Essence into the object, at the cost of 3 Essence Points for every Essence Point held by the Vessel. The Magician must touch the object being consecrated during the Invocation. Each Consecrated object created also drains 2 Essence Points from the Magician; these points cannot be recovered until the Vessel is used up. For example, a character with an Essence Pool of 40 who creates a 10-point Vessel could regain all but 2 points back; his Essence Pool would be reduced to 38 points until the Vessel’s energy was exhausted. If the Vessel was created through Group Magic, everyone in the group is drained of 2 Essence Points until the Vessel is exhausted. Accessing the Essence requires the

Magician to touch or hold the object close to him; for that reason, the most favored Vessels are pieces of jewelry that can be worn. Vessels should also be durable; if a Vessel is destroyed, its Essence is lost.

Restricted Vessel

Most Consecrated objects can be used by whomever is holding them. By attuning the Vessel to the Essence “signature” of specific people, the Magician can ensure that only those he wants to use the Vessel have access to its power. This adds 5 Essence Points to the cost of the Invocation, and all people to be allowed to use the item must be touching the Vessel during its creation.

Elemental Air

One of the classic elements, Air or Wind is a powerful force. Most Elemental Air effects change wind direction and speed, but the Magician can also create air where none existed before.

Creating and maintaining steady winds for long periods of time has been discovered to have severe effects on the weather. Even a relatively small wind, if not Dismissed, can trigger storms, tornadoes and worse hundreds of miles away. Most Magicians (especially the Wicce) are advised to always be careful about the use of wind and weather effects. Furthermore, all weather effects require a separate Dismissal Task or cause both Random Essence Effects (see p. 201) and random weather patterns.

Stirring Air

Creating a brief stirring in the air (roughly equivalent to a low-powered electric fan) costs 1 Essence Point per Turn.

Gust of Wind

This effect uses 1 Essence Point for every 5 miles per hour (8 kilometer per hour) of the wind gust. The wind only affects a small area -- about two to three yards (meters) in radius -- and will only last for a couple of seconds. Very strong winds (over 50 mph/80 kph) knock people over, throw objects around, and inflict D4(2) points of damage on people for every 10 mph of speed over 50 mph. So, a 60-mph wind does

D4(2) points of damage; a 100-mph gust inflicts D4 x 5(10) points. The wind can be created within 10 yards (meters) per level of the Invocation; so, a character with Elemental Air of 5 could trigger the wind up to 50 yards (meters) away. The wind gust will only travel some 10 feet (3 meters) per 10 mph (15 km) of base speed (so, a 100 mph wind will rush forward for about 100 feet).

Steady Wind

This creates a continual wind rather than a gust. This costs 2 Essence Points for every 2 mph (3 kph) of speed, plus 1 Essence Point for every minute the wind lasts, and 1 Essence for every 10 yards (meters) of width of the wind. For example, creating a steady wind with a speed of 10 mph (15 kph) that lasts 15 minutes and affects an area 100 yards (meters) wide would cost 35 Essence Points (10 for the wind speed, 15 for the duration and 10 for the area).

Calm Wind

Changing the speed of a natural wind is possible. This has the same cost as the Steady Wind Effect, except that the modifier reduces the wind speed in the area affected. The effect will last a limited amount of time, but it would create an area of relative calmness around the character. So, for example, stopping a hurricane-level wind (100 mph/150 kph) over a 10-yard (meter) wide radius for 5 minutes would cost a total of 106 Essence Points!

Whirlwind

This costs 3 Essence Points for every yard (meter) of radius of the whirlwind, with a minimum of a 5-yard (meter) radius. The same cost must be paid every minute to maintain the effect. A tornado can lift objects of up to 30 pounds (15 kg) per yard (meter) of radius. It can be used to carry a person or passengers, but piloting it requires a Focus roll every minute if traveling in a straight line, or every Turn if attempting complex maneuvers. A whirlwind or tornado obscures vision, breaks and tosses around objects, and can inflict damage on buildings, trees and other fixed structures. Damage is equal to D6 x 2(6) times the radius in yards (meters) of the twister. People and small objects take no direct damage from tornadoes, but are lifted up and eventually hurled away, taking

damage from the fall (see Other Sources of Injury, p. 143). People picked up are lifted up to one half the tornado's width, rounded up, in yards (meters). Also, objects in the tornado are likely to hit victims nearby, inflicting half the normal damage of the tornado, as noted above.

Cleanse and Create Air

With this effect, the Magician can transform pure Essence into normal air, and remove any impurities and poisons in a volume of air. He may avoid suffocation even if locked in a small airtight room. It costs 2 Essence Points to create enough air for a person to breathe for a minute. The Magician can also neutralize the effects of smoke, poison gas and other hazards. By spending 1 Essence Point per Turn, the Magician can create a "bubble" of clean air around himself at a higher pressure than the surrounding area. This bubble allows the Magician to walk through areas filled with toxic gases without suffering ill effect. Additional targets could also be protected in this way, at the cost of 2 Essence per Turn per person. The Magician can either spend the Essence beforehand or maintain the Essence expenditure continuously, if his Essence Channeling is high enough. So, to protect himself for 1 minute (12 Turns), the character could perform the Invocation and spend 12 Essence, or cast the Invocation and then spend the Essence every Turn, for however long he needed -- which might be more (or less) than 12 Turns.

Lightning Bolt

The Magician can ionize a section of air, and channel a powerful electrical discharge that can shock people, destroy electronics, and start fires. The lightning bolt inflicts D6(3) points of damage per Essence Point spent. The Armor Value of metal armor is divided by 5 before applying it to these attacks. Furthermore, machines with electronic parts take double damage from the bolt. The base range of the effect is 20 yards (meters) times the Willpower of the caster. This can be extended at the cost of 1 Essence per extra 10 yards (meters). This is a rarely known effect, and jealously guarded by those that do.

Elemental Earth

This Invocation gives the Magician total control over earth. Given enough Essence, a Magician can cause avalanches and earthquakes.

Shift Earth

The sorcerer can move earth (including such materials as soil, gravel, sand and similar relatively loose and powdery minerals). This can range from digging small holes to causing avalanches and even engulfing man-sized and larger targets under a wave of earth. This effect costs 3 Essence per cubic foot (0.03 cubic meters) of earth moved; this cost must be paid every Turn the earth is moving. The controlled matter can be moved at a speed of 10 mph (15 kph) or some 25 yards (meters) per Turn. This speed can be increased by spending more Essence: 1 Essence per additional mile per hour (1.5 kph) or 2.5 yards (meters) per Turn. Once the Magician releases his control over the earth, it collapses normally. This power enables the Magician to dig holes (a large enough hole, if opened in one Turn, could cause running or walking people to fall in), pile earth onto a target, and even launch earth waves that hit targets with a Strength equal to half the volume of earth in cubic feet (or three times its volume in cubic meters), inflicting 1 point of damage times the Strength of the wave.

Crumble Stone

Stone may be crushed for 1 Essence Point per 5 pounds (2.5 kilograms) up to 100 pounds (50 kilograms). After that, it costs 1 point per 100 pounds.

Weaken Metal

This effect causes metal to weaken or break for 1 Essence Point per pound up to 50 pounds (25 kilograms), and 1 point per 50 pounds (25 kilograms) after that.

Dust Devil

This effect creates a cloud of swirling dust that blocks vision and blinds people within it. The cloud costs 5 Essence and affects a radius of 1 yard (meter). Each additional yard (meter) of radius costs 1 Essence Point. The swirling dust can be made to

appear up to 1 yard (meter) away per level of the caster's Willpower, plus an additional yard (meter) for each Essence Point spent. After it is created, it can be moved as far away as the caster wants, provided he can see it directly (see *Invocations and Range*, p. 209). Note that a large dust devil, conjured at minimum range, may affect the Magician!

Stone Attack

This effect causes any stone within 10 yards (meters) of the Magician to fly out and strike a target. Stones must be available (even brick or concrete will do, as long as it is loose, or has been previously broken by using the *Crumble Stone* Invocation). Damage is $D4(2) \times$ Willpower points and the range is equal to 10 yards (meters) per level of the Magician's Willpower, at the cost of 5 Essence Points. The character can raise the Multiplier or range of the attack by 1 for every additional point spent. Multiple targets can be hit by spending 1 point per additional target.

Earth Tremor

This powerful effect causes the earth to shake in a specific area. Magicians are advised to take care with this power, as it may trigger earthquakes if performed in unstable areas such as near fault lines. The base area affected has a radius of 10 yards (meters) times the Magician's Willpower. Increasing the area affected costs 1 Essence Point per additional 5-yard (meter) radius.

A slight tremor (enough to be noticed but little else) costs 10 Essence Points. A medium tremor (enough to knock small objects off their shelves, and make people stagger, experiencing a -2 penalty to any Task involving moving or similar activities) costs 20 Essence Points. A strong tremor (which may initiate avalanches on rocky or snowy slopes, knock people down unless they pass a Simple Dexterity Test, cause large objects to topple and fall, etc.) costs 40 Essence. An earthquake that causes structures to collapse (unless specially designed) costs 100 Essence. An Invocation that spends over 100 Essence to perform this effect triggers a real earthquake if any fault line is within 10 miles of the effect.

This effect is very powerful, and very dangerous, and always requires a separate Dismissal Task. A sorcerer who sets up a tremor must make a special modified Dismissal Task at -1 per 20 Essence Points spent (rounded up). If the Dismissal fails, the character's body is struck by a devastating backlash (which the Wicce refer to as "Gaea's revenge"), inflicting D8(4) points of Life Point damage for every 10 points of Essence put into the Invocation. No Random Essence effect occurs unless over 100 Essence Points are used. If the Invocation was cast maliciously, or where innocents could be harmed, normal Dismissal penalties apply (-1 per 5 Essence Points), and failure imposes damage on the Magician instead of a Random Essence effect, at the rate of D10(5) points for every 10 Essence Points put into the Invocation.

For example, Gina successfully casts an Earth Tremor using 50 Essence Points. A separate Dismissal Task is required. If she is careful in its placement (no innocents threatened), and was not malicious in its use, the Dismissal Task suffers a -3 penalty and failure harms her for D8 x 5(20) points of damage. No Random Essence effect occurs even with failure. If Gina was careless or malicious, her Dismissal Task would suffer a -10 penalty and failure would harm her for D10 x 5(25) points of damage.

If Gina used 100 Essence Points and was careful, the separate Dismissal Task suffers a penalty of -5, and failure harms her for D8 x 10(40) points of damage. If Gina wrecks a city, her Dismissal Task suffers a penalty of -20, and failure imposes D10 x 10(50) points of damage. Furthermore, in either case, failure results in a Random Essence effect. Playing with earthquakes is not something one does lightly!

Elemental Fire

This powerful Invocation gives the Magician control over combustion and fire. Many Magicians favor Elemental Fire, for it is a powerful and lethal weapon. As a weapon, however, it is assuredly a two-edged sword, for it will just as happily consume the caster and his friends as it will his enemies. Failure to Dismiss a Fire Invocation almost always ends up with the caster feeling the agonies he inflicted on others. Many "fire Magicians" (known by the Rosicrucians as "pyromancers") have nasty scars on their hands, bodies, and (sometimes) faces as a result of their dangerous games.

Flicker

With this effect, a Magician can produce a weak light, or cause existing light to flicker. This costs 1 Essence Point per Turn.

Fire Protection

A Magician may reduce the impact of fire, heat and flames on a subject. This can be a man-sized person or object, or smaller. Larger objects require double, triple or even more Essence, based on their size. Basically, anything larger than a person but smaller than a car would require double the Essence, and something larger triple the Essence. Anything larger than a small aircraft or a truck requires ten times the Essence! Reduce the damage imposed by one Multiplier level per Essence Point spent, for 1 Turn.

Flame

This effect produces strong light, causes flammable objects to ignite, or creates a brief flame (equivalent to a cigarette lighter's flash). It costs 3 Essence Points per Turn.

Extinguish Flame

A flame, fire or heat source may be extinguished for a cost of 3 Essence per 1-yard (meter) radius, plus 1 Essence per additional yard (meter) radius.

Striking Flames

The Magician can summon flames to strike down his foes. The flames can be manifested either as a jet or blast of flame originating from the Magician's hands, or as a rolling wave of fire starting at the Magician's feet, which is more expensive to maintain but difficult to avoid. This is a very destructive Invocation -- the flames readily ignite flammable substances and may spark deadly conflagrations. Careless or malicious use of this power requires a separate Dismissal Task, with an additional penalty. Rather than a Random Essence Effect, the caster suffers D6(3) points of damage times the total Essence spent on the Effect!

It costs 1 Essence Point to create a jet or bolt of flame, inflicting D6 x 2(6) points of damage with a range of 10 yards (meters) per Willpower level of the caster. Additional Essence Points may be spent to increase the Damage Multiplier by 1 per point, or the range by 10 yards (meters) per point. For example, a jet of flame inflicting D6 x 10(15) points of damage would cost 9 Essence Points (1 for the base, an additional 8 for the higher damage). A jet of flame can be Dodged. A wave of flame is 1 yard (meter) wide for every 4 additional Essence Points spent on it. Dodging a wave of flame incurs a penalty equal to the width of the wave in yards (meters).

Elemental Water

This Invocation allows the caster to control water in all its forms, be it liquid, gaseous or frozen. It is often used to increase the chance of rain, although careless use of this powerful effect will produce droughts in other areas.

Water Flow

A Magician may slow or speed up the flow of water. By spending 2 Essence Points per 1 gallon (5 liters) per minute, the character can halve or double the speed of water. This can cause pipes to burst.

Create Fog

One Essence Point per cubic yard (meter) creates a thin mist that imposes a -1 penalty on Perception-

based Tests or Tasks. Tripling that cost gives rise to a thick fog that blocks visibility to a couple of yards (meters) and makes most vision Perception Tests or Tasks nearly impossible. The fog forms during the time it takes to cast the Invocation; with sufficient Essence Channeling, it happens in one Turn. The duration of the effect depends on local weather conditions (according to the Chronicler, but obviously no weather conditions exist inside most structures).

Create Ice

A sorcerer can create 1 pound (half a kilogram) of ice for every Essence Point spent. If water is available, 2 pounds (1 kilogram) of ice are created per Essence Point spent. The ice can cause the ground to become slippery, seal doors by freezing them over, or anything the player's imagination can devise (except materializing inside a living being and similar abominations). Once created, the ice melts (or remain) depending on the ambient temperature; creating a lot of ice in an enclosed and well-insulated space effectively creates a refrigerator, for a while at least.

Cause Rain

This effect causes rainfall over a small area. It costs 5 Essence Points for 1 minute of light rain over a radius of 3 yards (meters) for every level of Willpower and Intelligence combined. Increase the Essence Point cost by one for each additional 3 yards (meters) of radius. Add 4 Essence for hard rain or sleet, 6 Essence for light hail, or 10 Essence for heavy hail (enough to inflict D4(2) points of damage on unprotected humans every minute or so). If the day is sunny, double all costs. During a dry spell, in a desert, or similar area where rain is unlikely, triple all the costs. Like all weather effects, a separate Dismissal Task is required to restore weather patterns to their proper and natural conditions.

Destroy Water

Eliminating 1 gallon (5 liters) of water in its natural state costs 2 Essence. Using this effect on a corporeal being inflicts D4(2) points of damage for every 2 Essence Points spent. The target must be in sight of the character, and he resists the Focus Task with a Willpower and Constitution Test. Armor does not protect against this attack.

Farsight

This is the power to see into other places and to search areas by projecting a fraction of one's Essence beyond one's body. The principles of magic involved in Farsight are similar to those of Soul Projection (see p. 221), but are more limited and do not require the Magician to relinquish control of his body. Failure to Dismiss the Invocation after a Focus Task failure often causes inconvenient visions and flashbacks that bother the Magician for D4(2) hours.

Farsee

This ability allows the Magician to look into a distant area. Five Essence Points allow him to look into any area within range, but he must be aware of the general location of the area. The Magician decides the viewpoint of the vision, limited by the range (for example, the magician can select a bird's eye view, to look in a specific direction, and so on), but the viewpoint cannot be changed, unless the Invocation is recast. The base range is 100 yards (meters) for each point of the character's Perception Attribute. This can be raised to 1 mile (1.5 kilometers) times the Perception Attribute for another 5 Essence, and an additional 1 mile per Essence Point spent thereafter. The vision lasts for up to a 1 minute.

Search Person

Using Perception instead of Willpower, this effect searches for a person in the area covered by the Invocation. The Magician must know the target, either personally or by contact with his Essence signature. The more powerful the person being searched for is, the easier it is, as his Essence acts like a beacon for those with the right senses. This effect costs 10 points to search for a Mundane, 5 points for a Gifted person with less than 30 Essence, and 2 points for a Gifted person with more than 30 Essence Points. If the person being sought has used Magic or other supernatural abilities during the past few hours, all Focus Tasks gain a +1 bonus for every 5 Essence Points used by the target. If the Gifted character is Shielded (see Shielding Invocation, p. 220), his Essence is hidden and he must be sought out like a Mundane. The base area has a radius of 1 mile (1.5 kilometers) per level of Perception. Each additional 1 mile (1.5 kilometers) costs 1 extra Essence Point.

Gateway

The ways to the Otherworlds are few and hard to find. Only a few among the Gifted know how to open and close them. Perhaps it is for the best, because there are beings in some of the Otherworlds that humans have no business encountering; some of them would be only too delighted for the opportunity to rend an unwanted visitor limb from limb. The danger is not always enough to deter the Gifted, of course, and many have ventured into the Otherworlds, looking for power or adventure.

Having this Invocation does not automatically allow a character to travel across the dimensions, just like learning how to walk does not mean that the person knows where every road leads. The "locations" of different Otherworlds are closely held secrets. Most Covens, even entire Covenants, may not know how to access any of them. Most visits to the Otherworlds are made through Soul Projection, and are limited to those Realms most closely linked to our own. The Death Realms are the most commonly visited ones. See Chapter Seven: Supernatural for more information about the Otherworlds (see p. 254).

Activate Existing Gateway

Most Gateways were created centuries (some say eons) ago, by long-lost cultures. Even when not activated, their locations often have the reputation of being "haunted," because it is easier for beings from the Otherworlds to slip through there. If the Magician is able to find a Gateway, he can activate it by spending 25 Essence. This energy fuels the long-lasting magicks used to create the doorway between universes, allowing it to open for short periods of time (typically 1 minute per Success Level in the Focus Task).

Travel

This effect allows the Magician to travel body and soul to one of the Otherworlds. Only the Magician himself and about 50 pounds (25 kilograms) of equipment or clothing can be transported by this effect, and the Magician must have previously visited that dimension through a Gateway. This effect does not use a permanent Gateway; it is in effect a "mini-Gateway" for only one person. This effect costs 20 Essence Points.

Close Gateway

This power allows the Magician to shut down a Gateway by neutralizing the Essence used in powering it. The energy spent is always very high, as the Magician or forces opening the Gateway will resist this. Treat closing a Gateway as a Resisted Task. Both sides use their Willpower and Gateway Invocation; the side that used the most Essence in the Invocation adds a +1 bonus for every 10 Essence Points of difference. A minimum of 20 Essence Points must be spent in this process.

Closing the Gateway does not make it go away. The walls between worlds remain weak at that location, and somebody might use it at a later date.

Create Gateway

This expensive and difficult effect is beyond the abilities of most Magicians and even most groups of Magicians. The energy cost for such an undertaking is huge, ranging from five hundred to thousands of Essence Points, depending on the actual size and destination of the Gateway. Once created, the rip in reality will be there, if not forever, long enough to seem so to most beings.

Insight

All the Gifted are sensitive to the supernatural, Magical activity, and other psychic phenomena. Insight allows the Magician to go even further and understand another being's true nature -- even uncover its deepest secrets.

Perceive True Nature

This effect allows the sorcerer to see a person's true self. Humans subjected to this ability resist with their Intelligence and Willpower. If the Invocation works, the Magician gains a degree of understanding about the person's wants, fears and flaws. Basically, the Magician knows all of the character's mental Qualities and Drawbacks, as well as his main goals and fears. On supernatural creatures, this effect (also resisted by the creature's Intelligence and Willpower)

reveals the being's species in addition to his goals and personality. This effect costs 6 Essence Points. An Essence Shield (see Shielding Invocation, p. 220) blocks this power. The Insight will show the presence and strength of the Shield, but nothing else. This power comes as an instant flash of knowledge, and must be cast on each person one wishes to "scan."

Lesser Curse

Essence is the force behind all things, including chance. By surrounding a person with negative Essence, a vengeful sorcerer may cause the person to experience misfortune, feel ugly and unwanted, and otherwise have a bad time. The unwarranted use of this power often turns back on the caster, however. Even if the Dismissal is successful, Magicians who curse others for petty reasons may find themselves visited with the same maladies they inflicted on others, and then only the Cleansing Invocation will remove them.

Bad Luck

This gives the character a bad luck "pool;" each point of Bad Luck costs 3 Essence Points. The Chronicler controls the Bad Luck pool. When something can be wrong or go wrong, the Chronicler may opt to spend a point of Bad Luck to make sure it does. Spending 1 point of Bad Luck when a character is attempting a Task or Test works as if the character had rolled a 1 or drawn an ace (see Rule of 1, p. 127).

When the situation is resolved through roleplaying or the Chronicler's decision, things simply take a turn for the worse for the victim. People take what he says the wrong way, or some unforeseen circumstance turns his success to ashes. This lasts until the last of the Bad Luck points are spent, the victim finds the Magician who cursed him and forces him to remove the Magic, or a Cleansing Invocation is performed on the character. The latter is treated as a Resisted Task using the Magicians' Willpowers and respective Invocation levels.

Lesser Healing

This Invocation can restore minor wounds, reduce the severity of major wounds and cure minor diseases or maladies. It requires the Magician to lay hands on the wounded or sick person.

During the Invocation, the Magician feels the pain and the ailment of the victim. Severe wounds and painful ailments require the Magician to pass a Simple Willpower Test to endure the second-hand pain and discomfort. If the Test is passed, the Magician can continue unimpeded. Otherwise, the Focus Task is at -5. If the first attempt does not completely cure the wound or disease, any further attempts are at a -2 penalty on both the Focus and any Dismissal Tasks necessary (this only occurs when the Focus Task fails). A failed Dismissal Task means the Magician is affected by the wound or disease he attempted to cure!

Heal Wounds

This restores 1 Life Point for every Essence Point spent. The victim loses 1 Endurance Point for each Life Point restored; this accounts for blood loss and the energy cost of the accelerated healing process. This effect will close cuts and puncture wounds, mend broken bones and even reattach any fresh body part (provided the Invocation heals the entire damage inflicted). It will not restore missing limbs or organs, especially long-gone ones. In other words, a severed finger can be grafted on if the finger is fresh and available; a ruined eye cannot be fixed. Lost Endurance Points can be restored, at the same Essence cost as Life Points. The subjects feel refreshed by the infusion of Essence. Obviously, this effect causes no drain of Endurance on the subject.

Cure Disease

Only any minor, non-terminal disease can be cured -- anything that can be treated with antibiotics or is no more severe than a cold or the flu. This costs 10 Essence Points.

Lesser Illusion

Essence can be used to fool the senses, creating a simulacrum that may appear, sound and even smell like the real thing. Such illusions are not solid, however, nor do they cast a shadow (although the illusion of a shadow can be created to get around that). Sometimes, illusions do not look quite right, allowing people to realize that what they are looking at is not real. Most illusions work as a Resisted Task, pitting the caster's Focus result against the Perception and Intelligence of those who see the illusion. Illusions are not selective -- the effect can be perceived by everyone. Illusions with an extended duration must remain in the Magician's line of sight or other senses, or they will disappear.

Visual Illusion

This illusion can look like anything the character can picture, but is soundless. This costs 1 Essence per cubic foot (.03 cubic meters) of the illusion. The illusion lasts for 5 minutes.

Auditory Illusion

This effect works like a visual illusion, but creates only sounds. The loudest sound possible will be strong enough to be uncomfortable, but not enough to actually damage or stun people. The cost in Essence is for each sound made: 1 Essence for a soft noise (equivalent to a whisper), 2 for the equivalent of normal speech, 3 for a shout or scream, 5 for a loud (but not deafening) sound. To produce an extended sound illusion, pay triple the cost (e.g., 6 Essence for the sounds of a conversation); this lasts 5 minutes.

Full Illusion

This effect creates a realistic illusion that will fool all senses except touch. This costs 5 Essence Points per cubic foot (.03 cubic meters) of the illusion, and lasts 1 minute.

Shielding

Most Magicians who put themselves in harm's way know this Invocation. Shielding weaves pure Essence around the Magician, protecting him from harm. Most Shields work only against hostile Essence effects; at great cost, Magicians can also weave Shields that protect against physical harm. A truly powerful Magician may be virtually bulletproof thanks to Shielding. Further, Essence and Physical Shields can be combined; the Magician must pay the Essence cost for both. A Shield can be woven around another person, but at great Essence cost.

To the Gifted, Shields may be seen with a Simple Perception Test. Their actual appearance is up to the casting character. Some Shields are simple spheres of light, while others appear like suits of armor, complex crystalline structures, organic-looking shells or exoskeletons. By spending more Essence, the Shielding can be made invisible, hiding its very existence. With such a Shield, a powerful Magician could pass himself off as a Mundane, fooling even the senses of other Gifted. In addition to protecting the victim from harm and perhaps sight, Shielding also hides the person's emotions and thoughts.

The main drawback of Shields is that they must be "fed" by a continuous stream of Essence, which must come from the Magician's internal supplies (not ambient or from consecrated objects). This means that the energy used on a Shield cannot be used for anything else until the Shield is dispelled. The character can keep the Shield around himself indefinitely, until an outside force destroys or neutralizes it, or until he switches it off with a second Focus Task.

Essence Shield

This is the simplest Shield available; it blocks Essence-based attacks. For 3 Essence Points, the character gets a Shield with a Protection Level of 10 plus the Success Levels of the Focus Task. Each additional point of Essence spent adds 1 to that Protection Level. Any hostile Magic, Seer Power, or other supernatural or Gifted power aimed at the protected character must have a Focus result higher than the Protection Level of the Shield, or the Metaphysical effect will not work at all. For example, Lisa has a Shield with a Protection Level of 19, at the cost of 11 Essence (1 Success Level in the Focus Task). An enemy Magician tries to inflict a Lesser Curse on her. His Focus roll is 6, and his com-



bined Willpower and Lesser Curse levels are 8, for a total result of 14. This is less than the Protection Level, so the Invocation fails. Only powers and effects that directly affect the target are resisted by the Shield.

Attacks that drain Essence (like Soulfire, and the powers of some supernatural beings) can damage the Shield. Any such attack reduces the Shield's Protection Level by 1 for every 3 points of Essence damage inflicted.

In addition to this protection, the Essence Shield blocks any attempts to sense anything about the Magician (except that he is surrounded by a Shield).

Physical Shield

Physical Shields deflect any attack that seeks to damage the subject directly (i.e., by wounding him). It works against bullets, punches and laser beams, somewhat like armor does. A Physical Shield can have an Armor Value and a Damage Capacity. The Armor Value subtracts from the damage inflicted by an attack. The Damage Capacity acts like a cushion, deflecting some of the energy of an attack but getting weaker with every attack it dissipates. In game terms, each Essence Point used in this effect gives the character either 1 point of Armor Value or 5 points of Damage Capacity.

Any damaging attack that hits the Shielded character must first get through the Armor Value and then must exhaust the Damage Capacity of the Shield. Any remaining damage is applied normally. The maximum Armor Value possible is equal to the character's Invocation level times 10. There is no limit to the Damage Capacity of the Shield.

For example, Jana has a Shielding level of 3. She is about to rush into a firefight with Combine agents, so she decides to put 45 Essence Points into protecting herself. She can have a maximum AV of 30 (her Invocation level x 10) so she spends 30 points to that purpose. The remaining 15 points she puts into Damage Capacity, for a total of 75 points. When she ventures out, the Combine agents open fire, and she is hit 17 times in a deadly fusillade. Out of the 17 shots, 14 inflict less than 30 points of damage, and so fail to penetrate the Armor Value of the Shield; they bounce off her (note that such an effect, in a public

place, would be subject to the Crowd Effect, see p. 200 -- the magician would be drained of Essence as per the Crowd Effect table; if he didn't have enough, the shield would go down)! The other 3 shots do 34, 42 and 41 points of damage, respectively. Subtracting 30 points from each produces 4, 12 and 11 points, respectively, for a total of 27; these 27 points of damage reduce the Damage Capacity of the Shield from 75 to 48 (75 - 27). Jana is completely unharmed -- for now at least.

All Physical Shields have a major drawback. They do not stop the effects of any movement or action taken by the Magician. The Magician can walk without bouncing off walls or people, and he can shoot or attack without interference from the Shield. However, the Magician could also run into a spike and impale himself, and the Shield would offer no protection. For the same reason, Shields are of no use against falling damage.

Invisible Shield

Any type of Shield can be made invisible at the cost of 15 Essence. Nobody will be able to see or sense the Shield until it flares up to stop an attack. Sensory Invocations and abilities will sense neither the Shield nor any special powers of the character. Insistent mental probing may pierce the invisibility. This is a Resisted Task, pitting the character's Willpower and Shielding Invocation levels against the Gifted or supernatural entity's abilities or Invocations.

Soul Projection

This ability is popularly known as "astral projection" or "astral travel." The Magician releases his soul from his body, leaving enough Essence behind to anchor him there. While in this state, the Magician is a being of pure Essence, unconstrained by physical barriers, but also unable to affect the physical world except through the use of Magic and Gifted Powers. Through the use of Soul Projection, the Magician can travel anywhere not protected by Essence-based barriers, see and interact with other spirit entities, and travel to the Otherworlds.

Projection

This effect projects the Magician's Essence and his consciousness out of his body. A minimum of 5 Essence must be left in the body to act as an "anchor" between the Magician and his physical self. The transformation costs 3 Essence Points. Additionally, 1 Essence Point is drained from the projecting Magician after every hour spent in the immaterial state. This Essence cannot be regained until the Magician returns to his body.

While in spirit form, the Magician can travel through walls and other obstacles, and fly at speeds of up to 100 mph (150 kph) per Willpower level. The character can use Magic and other Gifted powers while incorporeal, but anything other than detection and sensory powers affect only other spirit/astral entities, not the material world. This applies to all forms of astral projection, be they the product of Magic, Necromancy or other powers.

Soulfire

Pure Essence can be used as a weapon. This Invocation allows the caster to fire bolts of pure Essence. To the mundane, the bolts are invisible; the Gifted see them as swirling streams of blue-white energy. Soulfire is extremely lethal when used against supernatural beings; against humans, it causes Essence loss, which may be dangerous (see Essence Point Loss, p. 154). Like all destructive magicks, Soulfire attacks used maliciously require Dismissal Tasks, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Soulfire Blast

Soulfire inflicts D6(3) x Essence Points of damage. Human beings struck by Soulfire lose 1 Essence Point for every 3 points of damage inflicted by the attack. Corporeal supernatural entities (like Vampyres and manifested spirits) take Life Point and Essence Point damage at the same time (the same amount of damage is applied to both pools). Immaterial spirits (like ghosts) lose Vital Essence. Soulfire can strike any target within line of sight. Mundanes cannot Dodge the attack, because the Soulfire is invisible; Gifted and supernatural beings can see Soulfire, and may Dodge normally.

Spirit Mastery

Calling on spirits is a fundamental part of Magic. The Spirit Mastery Invocation allows the Magician to summon, bind and dismiss spirits. Many sorcerers prefer to use the powers and abilities of spirits rather than their own. These specialists in the Arts of summoning often have meager Magical talents in other areas, but their mastery over a host of different spirits makes them tremendously powerful. The same Invocation can be used to banish a spirit from an area, or to exorcise it from a human body it is possessing.

There are many kind of spirits, from the ghosts of the dead to nature spirits, elementals, the Ethereals (lesser spirits of good said to be the servants of angels), Fiends (the Ethereal's evil counterparts) and many others. Each type of spirit requires a different type of Invocation. Thus, a Magician might have Spirit Mastery (Elementals) and Spirit Mastery (Ethereals), or only one of the two.

After a spirit is summoned, or if the spirit was already present, the Magician must secure its aid. Some Covenants (the Wicce among them) prefer to work out an informal agreement, in which the spirit agrees to help the Magician in return for a future favor. This is little more than a verbal promise; most of the spirits summoned by the Wicce are nature spirits, who resent being bound into doing anything (see Nature Spirits, p. 260). The Rosicrucians and other ceremonial Magicians like to have a very detailed and "legal" relationship with their spirits. This is known as a Compact (if the spirit goes along willingly) or a Bond (if the spirit is coerced by force). Compacts and Bonds have very specific language, and the spirits must follow the agreements to the letter, but often will interpret them in unexpected or malicious ways.

When a spirit is invoked and convinced or coerced to aid the Magician, any of its powers can be used by the summoner. On the other hand, the Essence spent on a Bond or Compact cannot be regained until the spirit is released from the character's service.

Summoning

This effect has a +4 bonus if the Magician summons a specific spirit using its True Name. Summoning costs 5 Essence plus 1/5 of the spirit's Energy Essence Pool, rounded up. If the spirit is summoned unwillingly, a Resisted Task between the spirit's Willpower doubled and the Focus result is made.

Bond

When a Magician wants to totally control the actions of a spirit, he must either Bind it to do his bidding, or he must enter into a Compact (see below) with it. Binding a spirit is both difficult and dangerous; spirits do not like to be bound. First, the spirit must be subdued or restrained (a Ward will usually keep the spirit in one place; see the Warding Invocation, p. 224). Binding the spirit costs 1 Essence Point for every 5 Energy Essence Points in the spirit's Pool (maximum points, not current points). The Magician must state exactly what the service entails and the terms of the service.

Compact

A Compact is a formal agreement between the Magician and a spirit. It only costs 2 Essence Points to create a Compact, but the spirit must be willing to enter into the agreement. As the Compact is formulated, the Magician specifies what the conditions and term of service are, and the payment for those services. Then, both the Magician and the spirit swear on their True Name and Power. This oath is binding; breaking it will not only break the contract, but it will automatically drain the guilty party of all his Essence (this is a temporary loss, regained normally), plus it will permanently reduce his Essence Pool (or Energy Essence Pool if applicable) by 2 points.

Dismiss

This is a special form of the regular Dismissal, with the difference being that in this case the Magician is attempting to dismiss a living, thinking being. Dismissing a spirit if the spirit is willing costs 5 Essence Points. If it does not wish to go, it costs 10 Essence plus 1/5 of the spirit's Energy Essence Pool. Further, a Resisted Task must be performed, using the spirit's Willpower doubled against the character's Focus Task result.

Remove Malignant Spirits

This effect forces a spirit out of an area it has claimed as its own. This requires an Essence expenditure equal to 1/3 of the spirit's own Energy Essence (rounded down) and is resisted by the Willpower and Intelligence of the spirit.

Symbols of Protection

This Invocation imbues Essence into an amulet that can be used to protect against Magical or supernatural attacks, including other Gifted powers. The amulet must be hand-made by the Magician or Magicians imbuing it with Essence (unless the character is a competent craftsman or artist, the amulet will not look very nice). As long as the amulet is worn close to the skin, the character can use its protection.

Each symbol or amulet created reduces the Magician's Essence Pool by 1 point until the amulet's Essence is depleted. This makes it difficult for Magicians to mass-produce symbols.

Protection Against Magic

The Essence stored in the symbol will oppose any hostile Magic used against the wielder. This works like any Essence-based defense (see Using Essence Defensively, p. 199). The Essence in the amulet can be brought forth instantly to block any Magical effect. Up to 5 Essence Points can be used in this way. The creation of this amulet costs 3 times the amount of Essence stored in it.

Protection Against Supernatural

This amulet will help the wearer against any Gifted ability or supernatural power that can be resisted. The amulet, alas, will provide no protection against physical attacks. This effect costs 3 Essence Points per +1 bonus on Resisted Tasks or Tests against a particular type of being or power (such as Vampyres, or all mind control effects), or 6 Essence Points per +1 bonus on Resisted Tasks or Tests against any and all supernatural attacks. Every time the amulet is used, its strength is reduced by one (i.e., an amulet that originally conferred a +5 bonus against the supernatural is reduced to +4 after the first use, and so on, losing all power after 5 uses).



Warding

This Invocation creates a Ward, a field of Essence that blocks magical senses and the passage of supernatural beings. Most Wards are drawn, painted or sketched on the ground. Often, a Symbol of Power is used in the design to add to the available Essence. Common symbols include the Circle, Pentagram and Hexagram (also known as the Seal of Solomon). The Warding acts as an invisible barrier against most otherworldly beings, Ghosts, characters using Soul Projection, and similar creatures. Most spirit summoning is arranged so the spirit appears within the Warded area.

Once created, a Ward remains in place until Dismissed by its creator(s) or until the drawing on the ground is erased or destroyed. As long as the Ward is in place, the Magician must keep it fueled by temporarily reducing his Essence Pool by 5 points. These 5 points cannot be regained until the Ward has been Dismissed or destroyed.

Create Ward

This effect creates a Ward with a Strength Rating; which represents its power and the amount of Essence spent on it. Spirits or supernatural beings trying to cross the Ward (either to leave or enter it) must win a Resisted Task, using their Strength and Willpower against the Strength of the Ward, doubled. If the supernatural being loses the contest, it is barred from crossing, suffers D4(2) points of Essence (Vital Essence in the case of spirits) damage and is wracked by pain (-4 on all Tasks/Tests for the next Turn or two).

The Ward also interferes with any location or sensory power trying to peer into it, but will not affect other Metaphysical Powers and abilities. The base Strength of a Ward is 5; this costs 10 Essence Points, including the 5 points that cannot be regained until the Ward has been Dismissed or destroyed as discussed previously. The Strength can be increased by 1 for every additional 4 Essence Points spent.

The base Ward fills an area with a radius equal to the Magician's Willpower in yards (meters) but can be made smaller as desired. Larger Wards (sometimes used to protect buildings or houses from supernatural intrusion) cost 1 additional Essence Point per extra yard (meter) of radius.

The Sight

Since humankind gained the gift of self-awareness (and perhaps before then), some people have been blessed with senses and abilities beyond the physical. A select few have always been able to see into the minds of others, to catch glimpses of the past and future, and even to affect the world directly with no tools but their strength of will. These powers have long been known as “the Sight” or “the Second Sight,” since many such abilities involve sensing or seeing things beyond the scope of the five senses. Science has also labeled those powers, calling them ESP (short for Extra-Sensory Perception), and psychic or psionic abilities. Of all the powers of the Gifted, the Sight is the most widely accepted by the general public. Its existence is no longer doubted among most people, although the scientific community still strongly denies it. Most people have not been exposed to these powers, however, and they are likely to react to such displays with fear or hatred.

The Sight does not require rituals or Invocations, although some Seers have Magical training and can use both Arts. Unlike Magic, the Sight does not involve invoking outside forces to perform Tasks; the power is entirely internal. Also unlike Magic, mundanes cannot neutralize these abilities.

Seer Powers

Each Seer Power is a branch of the same tree. All the powers are related, and all Seers have the potential to develop all such abilities. They include telepathic abilities (the power to directly communicate with and control other minds, such as Mindsight, Mindtalk and Mindrule), psychokinetic powers (the power of the mind over matter and energy, such as Mindhands and Mindfire), and the ability to see into places and times where the normal senses cannot reach (Mindtime, Mindview).

Each Seer ability has two elements: Strength and Art. The Strength of the ability represents the raw power the psychic has. This governs how far away the Seer can reach others with his abilities, the amount of damage he can inflict, and how lasting the effects he creates are. The Art represents the degree of expertise a psychic has in using his abilities.

The Effects of Strength

All Seer Powers have a table that shows the limits of the ability at each of the Strength levels. The higher the Strength level of the power, the more far-reaching and impressive those abilities are. Each level of Strength costs 3 character points up to level 5, and 6 points thereafter during character generation. After character creation, the cost rises to 6 and 10 respectively.

The Effects of Art

The Art of a power determines how skilled the Seer is at its manipulation. Most Tasks will use the Art level of the power added to the appropriate Attribute (typically a mental Attribute). Each Art is learned as a Special Skill, costing 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter during character creation. The cost is 5 and 8 respectively after character generation.

Defenses Against Seer Powers

Mundanes can resist some Seer Powers like Mindrule by using their Willpower. The effect of other powers, like Mindsight and Mindtalk, can be felt with a Difficult Perception Test (with at least three Success Levels), but normal humans cannot resist the use of such powers.

Gifted may use their Magic or Seer Powers to resist intrusion. Magicians and Essence Channelers can project Essence to interfere against psychic attacks (see Using Essence Defensively, p. 199). A Magical Shield also counters the use of Seer Powers. Most Seer Powers can be used defensively against mental intrusions or attempts at mind control. Each entry has a description on how to use that power defensively. The Inspired can resist any Seer powers with a Simple Willpower Test.

The Gestalt Effect

A Gestalt is a group of psychics using their powers together to increase their overall Strength. If the Seers involved know the power being used, the group adds their combined Strengths together. Seers who do not have the power being used add half of the Strength of their weakest power (rounded up) to the total. The Seer with the highest Art level in the power being used becomes the “leader” of the Gestalt, and all Tasks use the leader’s Art and appropriate Attribute.

For example, Julianne, Doug, Mark and Perin are locked up in a basement, slated to be the next sacrificial victims of a satanic cult. Before trying to escape, the group attempts to communicate with a Coven of witches that lives in the city. The four characters all have Seer abilities. Julianne, Doug and Perin all have the power of Mindtalk with a Strength of 4, 3 and 6, respectively. Mark does not have Mindtalk but is a powerful Seer with Mindsight 8 and Mindhands 4. Perin has the highest Art in Mindtalk (level 6), so she is the “leader” of the Gestalt. The combined Strengths total 13 for those with Mindtalk, plus 2 levels from Mark (who adds in only half of his weakest power) -- a total of 15. The range of Mindtalk at level 15 is equal to twenty miles for every level of the group’s Strength plus the leader’s Willpower (Perin’s Willpower is 4). As long as the group remains connected, they can communicate with the Coven if it is within 380 miles of their location!

Essence and Seers

Most Seers do not use Essence directly, but their powers have the side effect of strengthening their spiritual energy. A Seer’s Essence Pool gains an additional point for every level of Strength and Art in any and all powers he possesses. For example, a Seer with a Mindsight Strength 4 and Art 3, and a Mindrule Strength 3 and Art 6 would add a total of 16 Essence Points to his Pool. For the most part, however, a Seer’s enhanced Essence is more of a curse than a blessing, for it makes him more easily detected by other Gifted, and it renders him a more desirable prey for supernatural predators.

Some Seers also learn the Magical Art, and are greatly feared for the combination of these powers. Others have the ability to channel Essence, and it gives them a huge edge, as they can strengthen their natural powers with it. Characters with Essence Channeling can temporarily raise the Strength of any of their Seer Powers by spending Essence Points. Each 2 Essence Points spent raises the Strength of a power by 1 during its next use. Only the amount of Essence the character can channel for one Turn can be used to increase a Seer power, however. Unlike Invocations, a character cannot spend several Turns building up Essence to augment a Seer power.

Seer Powers List

The following list has the most common Seer Powers, their advantages and limitations, and some of the things a skilled user can do with them. Most of the powers also have a Strength table (and a few have an Art table) to determine the result of successful Tasks. A Seer of a higher Strength or Art level may choose to use the effects of a lower level.



Mindfire

This power (also known as pyrokinesis) converts the inner strength of the subject into pure energy. Fire is the most common manifestation of this power. Mindfire is a dangerous power, for all the Essence that is transformed into fire acquires a mischievous, destructive character. The psychic must learn to keep his power in check, lest it turn on others or himself.

Using Mindfire

Mindfire Tasks use Willpower and the Mindfire Art. If the Task is successful, flame manifests itself somewhere within line of sight of the psychic. If the Seer uses the power extensively over a short period of time (continually over a minute or so, for example), he must pass a Simple Willpower Test to make sure the fire does not run rampant; add the Success Levels of the last Mindfire Task to the Test. On a failure, a random flame effect occurs, with a Strength level of 1-4 (roll D4 or Chronieler's determination). If the failure occurred as the result of a Rule of 1 roll (see p. 127), the effect strikes the psychic directly!

The psychic can make the fire he manifests appear right on top of a victim. No Dodge is possible, but targets of such an attack can use a Difficult Willpower Test to resist. If the victim wins the Resisted Task, the Mindfire Power fails. Igniting something near a target cannot be resisted, but the victim may try to Dodge. Dodges are possible against jets or balls of flame.

Using Mindfire Defensively

The character can surround himself with an aura of incredibly hot air that melts bullets, burns anybody trying to touch the psychic, and deflects other flame or energy attacks. While this ability is activated, no other uses of Mindfire are possible. This fire "shield" reduces the Damage Multiplier from any flame or energy attack by 1 (if reduced to 0, no damage is inflicted) for every level of Mindfire Strength. It also has an Armor Value of 2 times the Mindfire Strength level. Finally anybody coming within 2-5 feet (in the area of a meter) of the character will suffer D6(3) times the Mindfire Strength level of the psychic in damage. Mindfire does not protect against Essence-based attacks, like the Soulfire Invocation (see p. 222).

Mindfire Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	A small flame, the size a match makes, is created. It can ignite highly flammable substances. Inflicts 1 point of damage, if used on a person.
2	A flame the size of a torch inflicts damage of D4(2) per Mindfire Strength level. It can ignite flammable substances (oily rags, dry leaves, or what a lit match would ignite).
3	The flame created can ignite clothing, wood, or anything that continuous contact with an open flame would ignite.
4	A jet of flame, doing D6(3) points of damage per level of Mindfire Strength, is created. Range is equal to Willpower and Mindfire Strength, in yards (meters)
5	A ball of fire doing D4(2) points of damage per level of Mindfire Strength can be tossed. Range is equal to (Willpower + Mindfire Strength) x 10, in yards (meters). Range modifiers are as per handguns (see Ranged Weapon Table, p. 146).
6	An area of flames with a 1-yard (meter) radius per Strength level can be extinguished.
7	Can cause a person to be engulfed in flames, doing D8(4) points of damage times the Seer's Mindfire Strength level.
9	Anything even vaguely flammable (wet wood, flame-retardant fabrics) can be ignited, and metal can be melted.
10+	Can ignite fires over an area with a radius of 1-yard (meter) per Willpower level. Anybody in the area is engulfed, taking the damage listed for Strength level 7.

Mindhands

This is the power to move objects with the mind alone, often called telekinesis or psychokinesis by psychic researchers. A character with Mindhands can move objects, throw them and even manipulate them. A highly skilled psychic can play the piano at a distance, or use a typewriter without having to touch it physically. The most powerful psychics can casually toss cars around, crush objects and people with “invisible hands” and bring down houses. Fortunately, such powerhouses are rare, at least now.

Using Mindhands

Moving an object in a relatively straight line uses Intelligence and the Mindhands Art. Any object within line of sight can be grabbed by Mindhands. The maximum weight that can be lifted and moved (slowly) is determined by the Strength of the power. In this case, the Strength of the power works just like the Strength Attribute (the same table is applicable, see Strength Table, p. 67).

To determine the speed of the object being moved, subtract the Strength level needed to lift the object from the total Mindhands Strength. Take the difference (rounded up) and multiply it by 10; that is the Speed of the object in miles per hour. For example, a character with a Mindhands Strength of 5 can lift up to 250 pounds (125 kilograms). A 10-pound (5 kilogram) object requires less than a Strength of 1, so the psychic gets to use his full Strength of 5, multiplied by 10 -- he can move the object up to 50 miles per hour (75 kph). Using the same method, the psychic can levitate himself. If the character weighed 200 pounds (100 kilograms; which requires a Strength of 4), the character could fly (or rather, float) around at a speed of 10 miles per hour (15 kph).

Tossing objects uses Dexterity and the Mindhands Art. Thrown objects can be dodged normally. Most small objects (hand-sized or smaller) inflict $D4(2) \times$ Mindhands Strength points of damage. Long distance throwing is subject to range penalties (use the ranges for normal handguns on the Ranged Weapon Table, pp. 146-147).

Massive objects (which require a large Mindhands Strength level to throw around) do $D6(3)$ to $D12(6)$ points of damage multiplied by the Mindhands Strength level minus the Strength Level needed to lift the object in the first place. That is because very heavy objects, which require a great deal of power simply to lift, will not fly as fast, inflicting less damage. See the Mindhands Thrown Object Damage Table nearby for the damage inflicted by objects of a given weight, and the minimum Mindhands Strength needed to lift them. If the character's Mindhands Strength is below this number, the character may be able to lift and move the object around very slowly, but the object inflicts little or no damage.

A Channeler can resist being picked up through a Resisted Task. The Channeler uses Willpower plus a bonus equal to the amount of Essence released (could be only one Turn's worth). The Seer uses Willpower and Mindhands Art. Also, anyone with a Shielding Invocation (see p. 220) active would be granted a Resisted Task against being lifted with a bonus equal to the Strength of the Shield.

For example, Scannin' Joe has a Mindhands Strength Level of 9. He can throw a small object (an 8 lb rock) at very high speeds, inflicting $D4 \times 9(18)$ points of damage. He could lift a 200-pound bag of gravel and toss it more slowly, inflicting $D8 \times 5(20)$. The Multiplier (5) is the result of subtracting 4 (the minimum Strength needed to lift the bag) from his base Mindhands Strength of 9. And he could toss a 650+ lb. motorcycle, but barely fast enough to inflict damage -- $D10(5)$ (no Multiplier).

The Seer can also toss invisible “punches” by projecting hard streams of telekinetic energy. These blows use the Mindhands Art and Brawling to hit. Mundanes cannot see the blows coming, and cannot defend against them except by jumping around and hoping to make the psychic miss (their only defense becomes a Difficult Dexterity Test, and that only if they realize what is happening). Gifted characters can see the Essence in such attacks, and can Dodge or defend normally. Telekinetic punches inflict 1 point of damage per Mindhands Strength level.

Mindhands Thrown Object Damage Table

Object Weight	Base Damage	Minimum Mindhands Strength
Less than 10 lbs (20 kg)	D4(2)	0
Up to 50 lbs (25 kg)	D4+1(3)	1
Up to 100 lbs (50 kg)	D6(3)	2
Up to 250 lbs (125 kg)	D8(4)	3-5
Up to 650 lbs (325 kg)	D10(5)	6-7
Up to 1,250 lbs (625 kg)	D12(6)	8-10
Above 1,250 lbs (625 kg)	D12+1(7)	11+

For heavier objects, figure out the power level needed to lift the object, and subtract it from the Multiplier for damage purposes.

It is possible to use Mindhands to manipulate weapons and machinery at a distance, but it requires a high degree of concentration and proficiency. The Chronicler determines what skill is necessary. This works like a Task, but instead of an Attribute and skill, the character uses the Mindhands Art (replacing the normal Attribute) and a skill. Such uses have a penalty of -1 to -6, depending on how complex the Task is. Using a weapon, for example, would require the Mindhands Art and the weapon skill, at a penalty of at least -2 (for a hand weapon like a sword) to -4 (for a gun or similar firearm). Lock picking might have penalties of -4 to -5 if performed at a distance.

Alternatively, the Seer may want to use Mindhands to supplement his own physical abilities. So, a character trying to lift something with his hands can add his Mindhands Strength to his physical Strength.

Using Mindhands Defensively

Mindhands can be used to deflect physical attacks. A telekinetic “parry” uses the Dexterity and Mindhands Art of the character, and can deflect any attack the Seer can see (arrows can be seen, but bullets are too fast to be parried). Alternatively, the psychic can concentrate on projecting his telekinetic power around himself like a “bubble” that acts like invisible armor. This is a Task involving Intelligence and the Mindhands Art; each Success Level increases the duration of the field for 1 minute. The energy bubble has an Armor Value of D4(2) times 1/2 of the Mindhands Strength; it will slow down and interfere with any physical attacks.

Mindheal

Healers who can undo wounds, make the crippled whole again, and cure terrible diseases have been the subjects of countless legends among the peoples of every culture. Some such healers use Magic, while others use the strength of their faith. Some have the inborn ability to take the pain and suffering of others and absorb it themselves. Mindheal is extremely powerful, and at its highest levels it can make the psychic nearly immortal. Healing the wounded is always a very draining process; even healing oneself is exhausting, both physically and emotionally.

Using Mindheal

When curing a wound or disease, the psychic must be in physical contact with the patient. Healing somebody is a Willpower and Mindheal Art Task. The degree of healing possible is determined by the Strength of the power (see the Mindheal Strength Table, p. 230).

The healing process is extremely painful, however, because the healer must feel the agonies and suffering of the victim. Even if the patient is sedated, the healer will feel the full torment that the anesthetics have masked. Although psychics soon learn to detach themselves from the pain, doing so is a draining experience. After the Mindheal Task is concluded, the character must make a Difficult Willpower Test or lose 1 Essence and 1 Endurance Point for each 2 points of damage he healed (rounded down). Each

additional healing attempt on the same person in the same 24-hour period adds a cumulative penalty of -1 to the Willpower Test.

Curing a disease also risks draining the healer if the Willpower Test is failed. Mild diseases (a cold, the flu) drain 2 points from both Essence and Endurance; Moderate diseases (smallpox, simple pneumonia) drains 5 points from each; Serious diseases (tuberculosis, malaria) drain 10 points from each; and Terminal diseases (cancer, AIDS) can drain 20 points from each (see p. 142 for more information about diseases). These losses are recovered normally.

Healing oneself is also possible, but the Willpower Test to resist draining incurs a -2 penalty. A character with Mindheal and other medical skills can use his powers in more subtle and indirect ways. A Perception and Mindheal Art Task adds a +1 to any medical skill Task for every Success Level achieved; this is done by using the power as a diagnostic tool.

Using Mindheal Defensively

Mindheal can counter any supernatural power or attack that directly attacks the psychic's body and health. Curses that afflict the body, the Mindkill Power, and certain harmful Necromantic Powers can all be resisted by the psychic's Mindheal Strength

and his Willpower. While in combat, a psychic can try to regenerate damage as it is inflicted. This counts as an action, and usually is the only action possible unless the character wishes to divide his concentration (see Multiple Actions, p. 134).



This deadly power is the reverse of Mindheal. This psychic power can break down the body of the victim, causing lethal effects ranging from heart attacks to exploding heads! This power can also be used against supernatural creatures by targeting their Essence directly or by breaking down their material bodies. The main drawback of this powerful ability is that it requires intense concentration, and, like Mindheal, it drains the psychic physically and emotionally. Although the connection between the psychic and the target is not as intense with Mindkill as it is with Mindheal, enough of the agony the psychic inflicts reflects back on him to exact a toll.

Mindkillers are feared and distrusted even by other Gifted. The Cabal of Psyche discourages the training and practice of this power, considering it to have no redeeming qualities whatsoever.

Mindheal Strength Table

Strength	Ability
1	Injuries are healed at the rate of 1 Life Point or Endurance Point per Mindheal Strength level. Minor diseases can be healed.
4	Wounds are healed at the rate of D6(3) Life Points or Endurance Points per Mindheal Strength level. Moderate diseases can be treated and cured. Crippled or lamed limbs (as the result of a recent injury) can be healed.
6	Serious diseases can be treated and cured.
8	Wounds are healed at the rate of D8(4) Life Points or Endurance Points per Mindheal Strength level.
10+	Complete cellular reconstruction is possible. Crippled limbs (regardless of when they were injured) can be brought to full activity, although missing ones cannot be regrown. Terminal diseases can be cured, or a recently dead body resuscitated.

Past the tenth level, the character can actually stop the aging process, making himself effectively immortal. The character merely stops aging at this level; he cannot reverse his current chronological age, and he could still be killed, by accident or design. Beginning characters with this level of Mindheal Strength (assuming the Chroniclers allows such Mindheal Strength levels in his game) can purchase the Age Quality (see p. 84).

Mindkill Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	1 point of Life, Endurance or Essence damage (pick one or split among the three) per level of Strength can be inflicted.
3	Pure pain can be inflicted which drains Endurance normally (determined by the Mindkill Strength) and gives a Task/Test penalty of -1 per point of Endurance damage. The pain lasts for 1 Turn for every 3 Success Levels in the Task (rounded up).
5	Damage inflicted is raised to D4(2) times the Mindkill Strength level, which can be allocated among any of the 3 Secondary Attributes (Life, Endurance or Essence Points).
8	The victim's heart can be stopped. This does no actual Life Point damage, but the victim is incapacitated and will die in (D10(5) + Constitution) minutes unless CPR (First Aid) is administered in that time.
10+	Life Point damage (D4(2) x Mindkill Strength) will manifest in burst blood vessels, torn flesh and even exploding heads if enough damage is inflicted to kill the victim!

Using Mindkill

The target must be within line of sight of the psychic. A Mindkill attack is resolved as a Resisted Task, using the psychic's Willpower and Mindkill Art against the victim's Willpower and Constitution. Mindkill can also be resisted by any power or Invocation that heals damage, obstructs mental probes or restricts the flow of Essence. The psychic can opt to inflict Life, Endurance or Essence Point damage; the degree of damage is determined by the Mindkill Strength level (see the Mindkill Strength Table nearby).

The psychic does not escape unscathed after harming his target. He feels some of the pain his victim is suffering, and may lose some Endurance and Essence as a consequence. The Seer must pass a Difficult Willpower Test or lose 1 Essence and 1 Endurance Point for every 2 points of damage he inflicted (round down). There are no cumulative penalties for multiple attacks, but if the victim is killed by a Mindkill attack, the Willpower Test is at a -3 penalty.

Using Mindkill Defensively

Mindkill is primarily an aggressive power. It can help resist an enemy's Mindkill attack (using Willpower and the Mindkill Strength level), but otherwise it is useless as a defense.

Mindrul

This is the power to control the minds of others. Seers with Mindrule can command others to do their bidding, and even force people to do things they would never normally do. Making people do something that goes completely against their personality (making someone murder a loved one, for example) is much more difficult to accomplish than "pushing" somebody into doing something they were considering doing anyway (like convincing an already-scared attacker to run away). At the higher Strength levels, Mindrule allows the Seer to completely take control over the target, becoming his puppet master.

Using Mindrule

Seers using Mindrule must be within line of sight of the target. The victim must also be able to look into the psychic's eyes or hear his voice. If eye contact is used, the psychic must Mindtalk to communicate his desires telepathically; otherwise, the orders or suggestions must be spoken out loud.

Mindrul is a Resisted Task, using the Seer's Willpower and Mindrule Art against a Difficult Willpower Test on the part of the victim. Gifted may be able to replace the Test with a Magical, Essence or

Mindrul Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Can cause a person to hesitate for a few seconds before doing something, or to follow a fairly reasonable suggestion.
3	Can stop the person from doing something, or force him to obey a one-phrase command like "Freeze!" "Run away" or "Don't bother me."
5	The victim will follow a one sentence command to the letter.
8	The victim can be made to follow detailed instructions.
10+	The Seer can replace the victim's mind with his own, taking total control for 1 Turn. During that Turn, the Seer completely dictates the words and actions of the victim. At the end of the Turn, another Resisted Task is needed to maintain control.

psychic defense. If the orders are totally contrary to what the victim would normally do, the victim gets a bonus of +3 to +7 to the Willpower Test. This is left to the Chronicler's discretion. Keep in mind that it is much easier to suggest "These are not the androids you're looking for" than it is to order "Use your gun against your partner, then kill yourself."

The Strength of the power determines how powerful the commands can be, and how extensive the control achieved is (see nearby Mindrule Strength Table).

Using Mindrule Defensively

The same power that lets a Seer control others allows him to maintain control over himself. When attacked by any form of mind control (including an enemy's attempt to use Mindrule), the Seer resists with his Willpower and Mindrule Strength level.

Mindsight

Thought is an expression of Essence; basically "thought waves" are on the same wavelength as the flow of Essence. This means that any Seer Power that works on the minds of others has similar effects on creatures and constructs of Essence, including Magical effects. Characters with Mindsight have the ability to see the thoughts of others; they can also see the normally invisible flows of Essence and spirit beings. Even 1 Strength level of Mindsight is enough for the character to see any spirit entity that comes

within 10 yards (meters) of the character, unless the entity is trying to remain hidden (a Resisted Task using the Seer's Perception and Mindsight versus the spirit's Simple Willpower Test is needed in that case).

Using Mindsight

The most common use of Mindsight is to peer into the minds of others. The target of the mind probe must be within range (which is determined by the Mindsight Strength of the psychic) and within line of sight of the Seer, unless previously contacted. This Task uses the Seer's Perception and Mindsight Art level. The Success Levels of the Task determine how deep the psychic sees into the target's mind.

Mundanes who pass a Difficult Perception Test can sense something strange, a feeling of being watched or a disturbance at the back of their minds, but unless they are experienced and knowledgeable in the area of psychic phenomena, they will not know exactly what is happening. Gifted characters may resist the intrusion in a number of ways. In such a case, this would be treated as a Resisted Task, with the Gifted using their own Seer Powers, Magic or other abilities to fight off the mind probe.

Most of the time, Mindsight produces short-lived flashes of information. A successful attempt reveals images and words from the subject's mind. Prolonged contact can be attempted, but it is fatiguing and difficult. To maintain mind-to-mind contact, the Seer must succeed at a new Willpower and Mindsight Art Task. Each Success Level allows for 1 minute of constant supervision. Each minute of mind contact drains

Mindsight Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Must touch a person to sense his thoughts; can see large concentrations of Essence and spirit beings within 10 yards (meters).
2	Can reach the minds of others, up to 1 yard (meter) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
3	Range increases to 5 yards (meters) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
5	Range increases to 50 yards (meters) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength. Line of sight is no longer necessary. The Seer can "scan" an area looking for a particular mind, as long as he has telepathically contacted that mind in the past.
6	Range increases to 100 yards (meters) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
10	Range increases to 1 mile (1.5 kilometers) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
15+	Range increases to 20 miles (30 kilometers) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.

Mindsight Art Table

Level of Success	Result
1	Can sense emotions only.
2	Can sense surface thoughts (whatever the subject is thinking at the moment).
3	Can delve deeper into the mind of the target. Any one simple question (i.e., anything that can be answered in one sentence or less) can be "asked" of the subject, and the information plucked from his mind. Each additional Success Level adds one more answer.
4+	Can get a clear picture of the subject's personality, find memories, and get any information the target has, provided the Seer specifically asks for it.

the Seer of D4(2) Endurance Points, and requires a great deal of concentration. Should the Seer be attacked or distracted, the contact will be lost. During that time, the psychic can peruse the target's thoughts and memories at will.

Mindsight Defenses

Characters with Mindsight can try to resist mental attacks. Any Magic, Seer Power or ability that controls, probes or influences the mind is resisted by using Willpower and the Mindsight Strength level. This works as a Resisted Task against whatever force is being used to attack the character.



Mindtalk

Seers with this power can project their thoughts at others, causing them to be "heard" as words inside their heads. Once contact has been established, the Seer can also hear any mental reply from his target (only thoughts deliberately "sent" to the Seer can be perceived; to delve into another person's mind requires Mindsight and a different set of Tasks).

Using Mindtalk

Sending a mental message uses the character's Intelligence plus Mindtalk Art level. The psychic can converse mentally with the target for 1 minute per Success Level. The range of this power is determined by the Strength level of the caster. Mindtalk uses the same Strength/range table as Mindsight (see p. 233).

Mindtalk can be used for more than simple communication. By making the mental "voice" sound strange or unearthly, the Seer can scare mundanes who do not know about psychic abilities. Some evil Seers have also manipulated disturbed and weak-willed humans by telling them to commit crimes repeatedly, until the victim finally decides to do what the "voices" tell him.

At a Strength of 4 or higher, the Seer can use Mindtalk to send a deafening psychic "scream" that inflicts some damage and overloads the victim's mind. Psychic "screams" are treated as a Resisted Task, using the Willpower and Art of the psychic against the Willpower (not doubled) of mundanes. Gifted characters can resist this power in a variety of ways, such as Defensive Essence (see p. 199) and the Shielding Invocation (see p. 220). At worst, they use a Difficult Willpower Test with a +2 bonus.

This "scream" attack drains the psychic of 1 Essence Point every time it is used. A successful attack inflicts D4(2) points of damage for every four levels of Mindtalk Strength (rounded down). Further, the victim loses all of his actions for 1 Turn, and will be at a penalty of -4 on all Tasks and Tests for 1 additional Turn per Success Level of the attack. The range of the scream is limited to 2 yards (meters) per Strength level.

Using Mindtalk Defensively

Mindtalk can be used to block any attempts to communicate with or probe the Seer's mind. The character is basically throwing up a wall of "noise" around himself, disrupting any mental communications. When using Mindtalk in this way, the psychic resists such powers as Mindsight and Mindrule, as well as Invocations like Affect the Psyche. The Seer uses his Willpower and Mindtalk Strength (not Art) in such Resisted Tasks. While the power is being used in this way, other uses of Mindtalk are impossible.

Mindtime

Seers were particularly valued in the past for their ability to peer into the past or future. The Mindtime Power lets the psychic see past the curtains of time. Characters with this ability are prone to flashes of insight and visions of doom. Experience has also shown that the future is not immune to change; precognitive flashes only show the most likely future (which is also the hardest to change), and active determination is often enough to alter the course of events to come. In general, events involving mundanes are harder to change than those involving the Gifted; mundanes tend to be more tied to the decrees of Fate, while the Gifted, while often pulled along by the vagaries of Fate, are more capable of defining their final destiny.

Using Mindtime

Many uses of Mindtime are spontaneous and not under the control of the psychic. Chroniclers are advised to make a special note of any characters with this ability, as psychic flashes and premonitions have an important part to play in most *WitchCraft* campaigns. Typically, the Chronicler tells the player to use the character's Perception and Mindtime Art in a Task. The level of success of the Task and the Strength of the power determines how much detail is made available to the player. If the Task fails, the Chronicler simply says that the character feels a vague uneasiness, as if he had something important on the tip of his tongue but cannot quite remember it.

Sometimes, the character will attempt an active use of the power, trying to force a vision about the past or the future. Those attempts use the same rules above, with the power's Strength and Success Levels determining the outcome.

Looking into the past is easier than looking into the future. The Chronicler may impose penalties on attempts to see the future, depending on how inevitable the future is. If the issue hangs in the balance, the future vision might only reveal uncertainty.

Mindtime Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Vague premonitions about important events or vague feelings about objects and places where memorable events took place are seen.
3	Short flashes of future events or flashbacks about the recent past (one week for each Perception level) are seen.
5	The visions are more detailed and last longer; the images make more sense and are easier to interpret. Visions of the past reach back 1 month per Mindtime Strength plus Perception level.
7	Visions of the past reach back 1 year per Mindtime Strength plus Perception level.
9	Clear visions that replay past or future events with crystalline detail are seen.
10+	Visions of the past reach back up to 1 century per Mindtime Strength plus Perception level.

Using Mindtime Defensively

Characters with a high Mindtime Art level can try to use their power in combat. By knowing what their opponents may do beforehand, the psychics can sidestep or avoid the attack. Treat this as a Difficult Attribute Test, using Mindtime Art as an Attribute. This counts as one action in a Turn. If successful, each Success Level of the Test adds a +2 bonus to the psychic's attack and defense rolls for the next two Turns, representing the ability to react to attacks before they get started! If the attempt fails, however, the character is overwhelmed by the possibilities flashing through his head, and he is at -4 to all Task attempts during the next two Turns.

Mindview

This power allows the psychic to transcend the limits of the senses. Characters with Mindview can "see" things unimpeded by distance or barriers. Usually, these visions are triggered by intense emotions or releases of Essence. The psychic often sees crimes being committed, supernatural beings preying on helpless humans, and other disturbing events and incidents. Generally, these visions also have a purpose -- many times, the psychic is in a position to do something about the situation he sees. Gifted of a religious bent see Mindview as being messages from Gods or orders from Fate. The more cynical consider

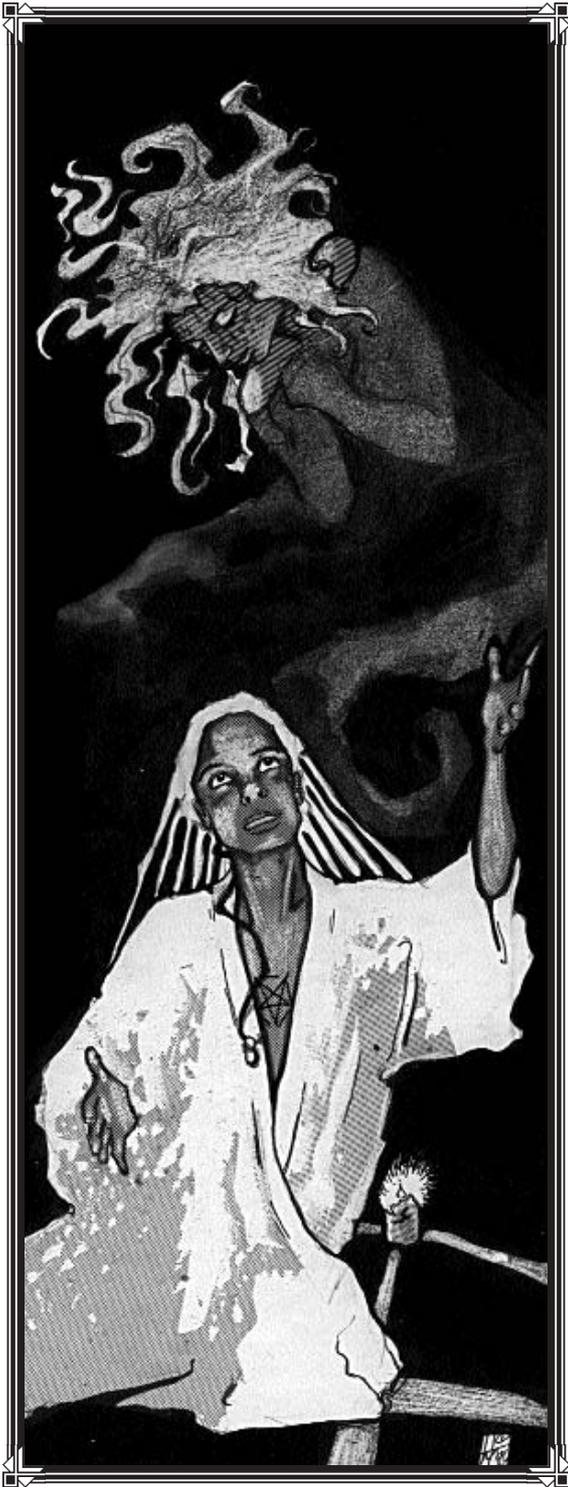
this to be a curse where the victim has two choices -- get involved in dangerous and horrifying situations, or live with the terrible images of the things he allows to happen.

Mindview can also be used actively by the character. These clairvoyant effects allow the psychic to see through walls or containers. The ability is thus very useful for spies and investigators -- provided they accept the terrible price for these powers.

Using Mindview

All characters with Mindview are subject to random visions of danger and horror; this power works in many ways like Mindtime, and the Chronicler should make use of it in this fashion. Mindview is a powerful Chronicler tool in guiding the characters. Visions may alert the Cast Members to possible threats and enemies, and, if interpreted correctly, may provide valuable clues and information. Random Mindview flashes are also a burden, as the character is often plagued by visions of vicious crimes and disasters, and sometimes he may not be able to do anything to prevent them.

Mindview Tasks use Perception and Mindview Art. There are two types of activities possible. The first, visions, are flashes of insight about ongoing events controlled by the Chronicler. Often, the character sees through the eyes of a victim or perpetrator, or from a worm or bird's eye view. Each vision works differently, but the point of view is often confusing, and most visions are short. Typically, the character



will get multiple related visions each adding a little more information to the overall puzzle. The range of the visions is irrelevant; if the Chronicler believes the character is in a position to be involved in the related events, the vision could be of events occurring halfway across the world.

Viewings are attempts to see past barriers or beyond the range of the normal sense of sight -- looking inside a safe, or a place the character has never seen but knows about. The range of viewings is based on the Strength of the power.

Using Mindview Defensively

Characters with Mindview often get flashes of nearby danger or threats -- a sniper on a roof, a group of assassins waiting for the character to come out of a building, a speeding car just turning the corner. The Chronicler may warn the psychic of any such danger by requiring a Perception and Mindview Art Task. Even if the Task is failed, the psychic should have the impression that something is going on (just as his player will have, having just been required to perform a Task).

Mindview Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Only brief glimpses of events are seen, equivalent to the blink of an eye. The range of a viewing is 1 yard (meter) per level of Perception plus Mindview Strength.
3	A few seconds (1 Turn) are seen of the scene or vision. The viewing range is 10 yards (meters) per level of Perception and Mindview Strength.
6	A whole scene, lasting a few minutes, can be seen in a vision.
8	Viewing range is equal to 100 yards (meters) per level of Perception and Mindview Strength.
10	Detailed, extended visions are possible. Viewing range is equal to 1 mile (1.5 kilometers) per level of Perception and Mindview Strength.

Necromancy

The Speech of the Dead

Necromancy evokes visions of dark magic, the raising of the Dead for unspeakable purposes, and worse. In reality, for most of human history, Necromancy was merely a form of divination, involving communicating with the spirits of the dead to learn about the past, present or future.

Necromancy is the power Mediums use to traffic with the spirits of the dead. Necromancy at its lowest levels is mostly used for information on the past, and to some degree about the future. More powerful Mediums can also control spirits, harm and even destroy them, and tap into their power. Popular mythology to the contrary, in the world of *WitchCraft*, Necromancy is not inherently evil, nor does it involve dealing with demonic forces. Like all other Gifted Powers, it can be used for good as well as for evil.

Necromancy combines some elements of Magic with aspects of the Sight. At its root, it is an inborn power. One can either work Necromancy, or one cannot. At the same time, however, developing the Art requires learning and achieving a greater understanding of the forces of the cycle of life and death. The higher-level powers of Necromancy are enabled by Essence, which requires either Essence Channeling or the use of rituals and other mystical aids. Further, all the Sources of Power, and all things that benefit or hinder Essence in Magic also help or bother Necromancers. Unlike Magic, most Necromantic powers will only work on the spirits of the dead, not on elementals, nature spirits and the like. Unless specified otherwise, assume that a given Necromantic power only affects the dead.

This Art has four major specialties, each of which is purchased as a separate power, and a basic Necromancy Skill that applies to the use of all the powers. The four elements of Necromancy are Death Speech (communications with the spirits of the dead), Death Vessel (the ability to let spirits of the dead inhabit the Medium's body), Death Lordship (the ability to command and control the spirits of the dead), and Death Mastery (the ability to manipulate the very forces that rule life and death).

Purchasing Necromantic Powers

The Necromancy Skill is bought at a cost of 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. Each Necromantic element is purchased as a separate power, at the cost of 3 points per level until level 5, and 6 points thereafter. This price must be paid for each power; it is perfectly possible to have Death Speech at level 5 and Death Control at level 2, for example. Beginning characters can choose between buying relatively low power levels in all four Necromantic elements, or specializing in one or two of them at high levels.

Using Necromantic Powers

The power level of each Necromantic element determines what a character can or cannot do. The higher the power level, the greater the range of abilities available. Most Necromantic Tasks use the Necromancy Skill and a mental Attribute. Some of the Tasks can be resisted by spirits of the dead who oppose the Necromancer.

The four best known Necromantic Powers are listed below. Powers are listed up to Level Five. More powerful abilities are very rare and restricted to only the oldest and most experienced Mediums. Some have even learned to cheat death and live forever through the use of these advanced powers!

Death Lordship

Death Lordship is the power to manipulate the Essence of spirits. The Necromancer can use this power to either reward good deeds (by paying the spirit with Essence Points) or force spirits to do his bidding. At beginning levels, the character can force spirits to depart an area, or force them to perform simple actions. Higher power levels allow for greater control, as well as the ability to harm the Essence of a spirit, which may cause permanent destruction.

All Death Lordship Tasks use Willpower and Necromancy, and they all cost Essence Points. Reluctant Spirits will resist all these powers with a Simple Willpower Test.

Level 1 — Expel Spirit

The Medium can try to force a spirit to leave an area. The spirit resists with a Simple Willpower Test. This ability costs 2 Essence Points per attempt. Non-human spirits (like elementals or Fiends) may also be commanded, but the spirit gains a +2 bonus to resist, and the attempt costs 4 Essence Points.

Level 2 — Enforced Obedience

The Medium can command a spirit to perform one specific action or task. This activity may not last more than a few minutes. Possible actions include scaring somebody, accepting Communion with the Necromancer or lending him Strength (see the Death Vessel Power, p. 238). Note that powerful spirits will be able to resist Death Lordship Powers and will not take kindly to attempts to control them. This costs 5 Essence Points per task.

Level 3 — Rule the Dead

The control can be maintained over the spirit for one hour. During that time, the spirit will do whatever the Necromancer tells it to do, except facilitate its own destruction (the spirit will resist such orders with a Simple Willpower Test at +6). Forcing the spirit to perform Tasks it does not wish to do may beget a grudge or a feud, however. This costs 10 Essence Points per hour.

Level 4 — Dominion

As in level 3 above, but the control lasts for an entire day and night, at the cost of 20 Essence Points.

Level 5 — Necromantic Bolts

The Medium can weaken and damage spirits, inflicting D4(2) x Death Lordship level damage directly to the Vital Essence of the spirit. This power will affect any incorporeal spirit (including elementals) and undead at full strength. Each bolt costs 3 Essence Points.

Corporeal supernatural beings can also be damaged, but at half strength. The power manifests itself as bright bolts of fiery red energies. These bolts are invisible to mundanes but clearly visible to the Gifted. They can be used to inflict Essence damage on humans as well; every 2 points of damage rolled or determined reduces a human being's Essence Pool by one. This power can be resisted by any protective Magic or power that restricts the flow of Essence.

Death Mastery

Death Mastery is perhaps the most powerful ability available to Necromancers. With it, power over the very forces of Life and Death can be brought to bear, to heal and to destroy both spirits and living beings, human or otherwise.

Level 1 — Delay/Accelerate the Departing

The Necromancer can “pull” or “push” the soul of a person near death, either to snuff his life out, or to keep him alive a while longer. Use Willpower and Necromancy in the Task; each Success Level keeps the subject alive for 1 extra minute, or reduces his life expectancy by a like amount. In the latter case, however, the Task is resisted by the victim's Willpower and Constitution. This costs 5 Essence Points.

Level 2 — Death Sight

This power is as much a curse as a blessing, as the Necromancer becomes acutely aware of the futile race against the inevitable coming of Death. The Medium can sense if somebody is in imminent danger of dying by noticing the shadow of a spiritual avatar of Death, approaching the person or animal.

The Death Sight also allows the character to readily identify killers and predators, for their auras glow darkly while the power is active. This vision may allow the character to do something to cheat the

Reaper and save that person's life (that person, of course, could be the Medium himself).

While this power is activated, the character sees everything through Death's eyes -- all living things seem to be decaying rapidly, too rapidly. Every man and woman appears like a corpse in the beginning stages of decomposition. In some cases, the Medium sees the future causes of their death -- for example, a cancer bursting through the stomach of that man, a pulsing brain tumor on the head of that woman, the blackened lungs of a smoker hideously displayed on the chest of the man reading a newspaper. The character may need to pass a Simple Willpower Test to avoid being shocked and depressed by those revelations -- and he should avoid looking in a mirror if he hasn't been living right.

Activating this power uses Perception and Necromancy, costs 4 Essence, and lasts for 1 minute.

Level 3 --- A Taste of Death

The Necromancer can, for a brief moment, push a person's soul out of his body, giving him a momentary out-of-body experience, and causing some physical and spiritual damage in the process. This Task uses the Necromancer's Willpower and Necromancy Skill, resisted by the target's Willpower and Constitution, and costs 6 Essence Points. If the Medium wins, the victim "dies" for one second. This experience inflicts D4(2) Life Points damage, D6(3) points of Endurance and Essence loss (roll separately for each), and shocks the victim for 1 to 4 Turns, imposing a -3 penalty to all Tasks. Gifted characters may resist this attack with any power or Invocation that counters psychic intrusions or mind control.

Level 4 --- Death Projection

This is equivalent to the Soul Projection Invocation. The Medium gains the power to separate his Essence from his body and send it forth as a ghostly force, connected to his body by a psychic link. Activating the power uses Intelligence and Necromancy, and it lasts for 1 hour per Success Level. The character must leave a minimum of 5 Essence Points behind to anchor the spirit to its body, and astral travel drains 1 Essence Point per hour spent away from the body. While in spirit form, the Necromancer can travel through walls and other

obstacles, and fly at speeds of up to 100 mph (150 kph) per Willpower level. The character can use Gifted powers while incorporeal, but anything other than detection and sensory powers affect only other spirit/astral entities, not the material world. This applies to all forms of astral projection, be they the product of Magic, Necromancy or other powers.

Level 5 --- Wishkill

If the Medium wishes to kill somebody, he can do so by merely wishing it. The Wishkill Power is dangerous, however, for it attracts the attention of the Grim Reapers, and they may decide to take the Necromancer as well. This power calls for a Resisted Task using the Medium's Willpower and Necromancy and the victim's Constitution and Willpower. Other Gifted Powers, such as Magic and the Seer Power Mindheal can resist this power directly as well. If the Necromancer wins, the victim takes D6(3) Life Points of damage per Success Level in the Task. Further, the victim will be in terrible agony, suffering a -2 penalty to all actions per Success Level in the Task, for 1 Turn.

Death Speech

Death Speech is the basic power of the Necromancer, allowing him to communicate with and perceive the spirits of the dead, and to summon specific spirits from the Otherworlds to Earth. A spirit that is called may answer questions about his life and death, and can provide any knowledge he had in life. Spirits who have traveled to the Otherworlds are also able to see the future, or the most likely future (see *Spirits of the Dead*, p. 226).

Level 1 --- Glimpse the Dead

By spending 1 Essence Point and using a Perception and Necromancy Task, the Medium can see a spirit within the range of the power, and mentally "hear" what such a spirit says to him. The range is 10 yards (meters) for each level of his Willpower. The Glimpse lasts for 1 minute per Success Level in the Task.

Although the Gift Quality (see p. 86) itself allows a character to sense the presence of a supernatural being like a spirit, Death Speech pinpoints the appearance and location of the spirit.

Level 2 --- See the Dead

The Necromancer can see spirits of the dead without needing to spend energy or make Perception Tasks, unless the spirit is trying to make itself invisible, in which case a Resisted Task (using the Medium's Perception and Necromancy versus the spirit's Willpower and Intelligence) is necessary.

Level 3 --- Recall the Dead

The Medium can try to summon and communicate with the spirit of a recently dead person (no more than three days after his death). This costs 3 Essence Points. If the attempt is made in the presence of the body of the deceased, the Task has a bonus of +3; many spirits linger near the location of their bodies for some time after their deaths. The Task uses Willpower and Necromancy; if the spirit is unwilling, treat this as a Resisted Task, and the spirit uses its Willpower, doubled. Once summoned, the spirit can be asked questions. Most answer willingly; those who refuse may be forced, but this is only possible at higher levels (see Level 4).

Level 4 --- Command the Dead

The Necromancer can summon the spirit of anybody who died within the previous month, at the cost of 5 Essence Points. If the spirit has not gone Beyond or reincarnated, the spirit may come (or be compelled to come as in level 3). Also, the Necromancer can compel an answer from a spirit. This Resisted Task uses the Medium's Willpower and Death Speech level and the spirit's Willpower and Intelligence, and costs 6 Essence to perform. If the Medium wins, each Success Level guarantees one answer to one question. In all cases, the spirit only answers with either "Yes," "No," or "I don't know." Only simple questions will be answered; asking an improper question (at the Chronicler's discretion) still counts as a question.

Level 5 --- Summon the Dead

The Medium can call upon any spirit of the dead dwelling on Earth in incorporeal form, or any spirit who has died within the past year. This process costs 8 Essence which is "fed" to the spirit to keep it talking, or 10 Essence if the spirit must be forced to speak. More detailed answers can be made forthcoming; spirits will answer in the form of one sentence.

Death Vessel

By using this power, the Medium voluntarily surrenders his body and lets a spirit inhabit it. This surrender is temporary, although there is always the risk that a malicious spirit may try to make it permanent and shove the Necromancer's soul into the Otherworlds. At low levels, this channeling leaves the Medium helpless and gives total control to the spirit. The possession typically only allows the spirit to speak and perform some minor actions. At higher levels, the Necromancer remains in control of his body, and can actually tap into the power of the dead, using the spirit's knowledge, skills and Attributes.

Level 1 --- Invite Spirit

The Medium temporarily surrenders control of his body and allows a spirit to inhabit it. The spirit can only stay in the Medium's body for 1 to 4 minutes, after which time it is forced to depart. During that time, the spirit can answer questions (as per Death Speech) and converse with other people. The Necromancer remains in a state of stasis during this process and retains no memory of the event. This Task uses Intelligence and Necromancy. This ability has no Essence cost.

Level 2 --- Aware Possession

At this level, the ability works the same way as it does in the previous level, but the Medium is aware of what is happening while the spirit is in his body. Still, he has no control over the entity's actions, or over his body. Again, this power has no Essence cost.

Level 3 --- Communion with the Dead

At this level, the Necromancer communes with the spirit inhabiting his body. While the Communion lasts, the Necromancer “knows” and can use any and all of the spirit’s skills and memories. Spirits often accede to this limited form of possession so they can once again perceive the body as a creature of the flesh. This Task costs 10 Essence Points and uses the Medium’s Willpower and Necromancy. The effect lasts 5 minutes. At the end of this period, another 10 Essence must be spent and a new Task must be performed. If the spirit tries to contest ownership of the body, a Resisted Task is conducted pitting the Medium’s Willpower and Necromancy against the spirit’s Willpower, doubled. A sure way to deal with this problem is to use Death Lordship to ensure the spirit’s cooperation.

While the Communion lasts, the spirit can speak inside the Necromancer’s head, and may give advice, make jokes, or curse him. The Chronicler decides what the spirit’s attitude and personality are, and role-plays it for entertainment or dramatic effects.

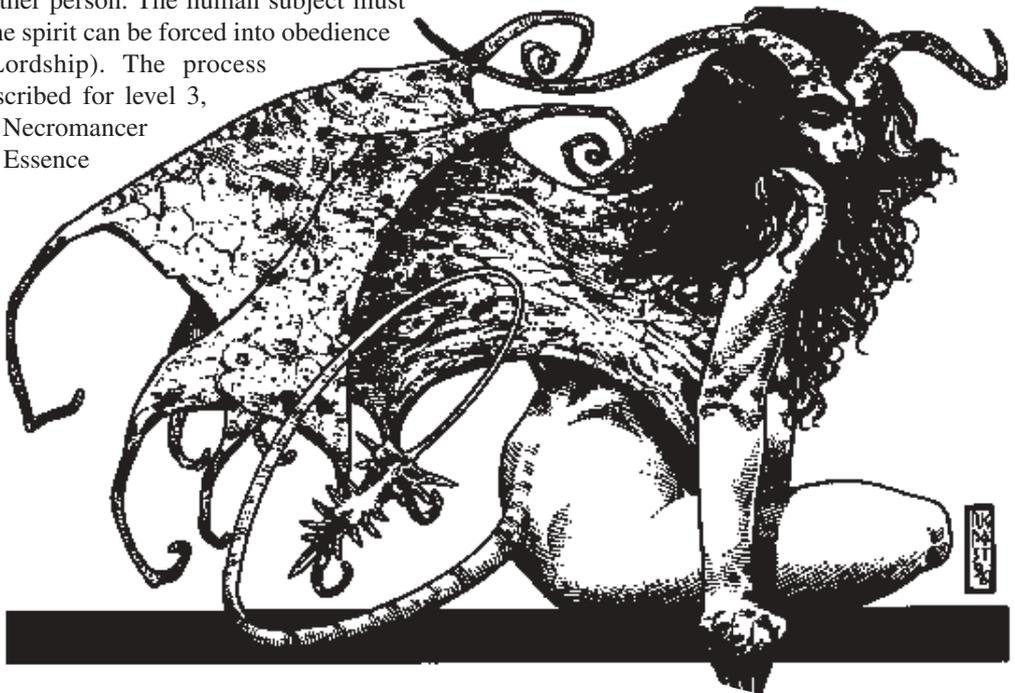
Level 4 --- Transferred Communion

The Medium can perform a Communion with the Dead on another person. The human subject must be willing (the spirit can be forced into obedience by Death Lordship). The process works as described for level 3, but costs the Necromancer a total of 20 Essence Points.

Level 5 --- Strength of the Dead

The Medium can use the spirit’s energy to increase his physical Attributes. The spirit’s Willpower and Intelligence can be distributed among the Necromancer’s Strength, Dexterity and Constitution. Attributes can be raised beyond the normal human maximum of 6 through this method. This also temporarily raises the character’s Life and Endurance Points (but not his Essence Points). This Task works as per Level 3 (and has the same risk), but it costs 15 Essence Points.

For example, Rudolf the Medium has Strength 2, Dexterity 2 and Constitution 1. He performs the Strength of the Dead rite with a spirit of Intelligence 3 and Willpower 5, for a total of 8 levels that can be used by Rudolf. Rudolf puts 5 points into his Strength, raising it to 7, 2 points in Dexterity, raising it to 4, and 1 point in Constitution, raising it to 2. For the next 5 minutes, he will be gifted with superhuman strength and endurance. If both the Communion and Strength of the Dead Powers are used at the same time, the Essence cost stacks up to 25 Essence for a 5-minute duration.



DIVINE INSPIRATION

This is the least understood Gift, believed to be granted by a Greater Power, possibly the Creator. While scientists scoff at such notions and occultists theorize that these powers are nothing but misguided magical abilities with a psychological dependency on faith, the effectiveness of Divine Inspiration is without question. Those whose faith is strong enough can indeed perform miracles, heal the sick, and smite the unrighteous.

The Inspired have access to an assortment of abilities allegedly derived from the connection of the character to the Creating Agency. Some occultists claim that these powers come from inside the Inspired, and are nothing more than the channeling of their own Essence to fuel their religious fanaticism. No matter who is right, without their Faith, the Inspired would not be able to perform their incredible feats. To use a Miracle, the character must firmly believe that he is fighting the forces of evil in the name of his God. Otherwise, he will be left with nothing but his own meager strength.

ACQUIRING MIRACLES

Miracles are not skills; they are learned through mystical revelation by the Inspired. To acquire Miracles, the character must first buy the Divine Inspiration Quality (which has its own Gift Quality prerequisite; see p. 85). Miracles cost 5 character points each during character creation, and 10 points apiece thereafter.

Additionally, the Inspired often have a large Essence Pool as a result of their connection to the Creator. The Inspired may have Seer Powers, although such combinations are rare. No Inspired (at least among the known Covenants in this book) can acquire or learn Necromantic or Magical abilities. Even when such powers are not considered to be tools of Satan (as many Inspired believe), they are seen contemptuously as distractions from the righteous service to the Deity.

USING MIRACLES

The Inspired use Miracles in a manner similar to Magic, by channeling Essence into the effects they desire. Unlike Magicians, however, the Inspired have no limits as to how much Essence they can use. The Inspired can use up their entire Essence Pool in one Miracle if it seems necessary. Essence is regained at the rate of 1 point per Willpower level every 5 minutes.

Also unlike Magic, Miracles cannot be used at the whim of their wielder. Only extreme situations, where lives are at stake or supernatural powers have manifested openly, warrant the use of Miracles. A Sentinel who tries to call upon the Strength of Ten to win a bar fight will fail; even worse, the blasphemy of trying to use God's powers to do profane work may cost the Sentinel his Inspired Powers, perhaps permanently! In most cases, the Inspired must try to solve their problems through mundane means. Only when confronting beings who are clearly agents of an unnatural power will using one's abilities be justified. Even trying to fight mundane evil may not warrant using Miracles.

Within these parameters, the use of Miracles is relatively easy. If enough Essence is available to power the Miracle, it automatically manifests itself. Some Miracles may need additional Tests or Tasks to fulfill the intended goal, but there are no Miracle-related skills.

THE DENIAL

In addition to their repertoire of Miracles, all the Inspired can use their Essence to neutralize Magic and any Gifted or supernatural power that uses Essence. The Denial (as this power is called) consists of projecting Essence against the Gifted or supernatural being using the special power. If the Inspired used up more Essence than the target did, the power fails. In the case of a Seer Power, each level of Strength is the equivalent of 3 Essence; thus, neutralizing a Strength 4 power would require an expenditure of more than 12 Essence Points.

WHEN MIRACLES CLASH

What happens when the Inspired of two different religions run up against each other? In the past, such individuals might face off, each confident of being the servant of the one True God. Even then, however, more often than not, Miracles of either side would not work against another Inspired, regardless of their religious persuasion. In recent times, this is almost always the case.

It may appear (and many Inspired believe this) that the members of every monotheistic religion are worshipping the same Deity, and that their differences are meaningless in His/Her/Its eyes. Inspired who have publicly said such things, however, have often found themselves excommunicated or shunned as a result.

TESTS OF FAITH

Unlike other Gifted powers, Inspired Miracles can be lost at any moment. Should the character lose his Faith, his powers become nothing but memories. Falling from Grace is a terrible tragedy for the Inspired, and in the strange and vicious world of *WitchCraft*, it is easy to do. Pride (which “Goeth before the Fall”), temptation, greed, lust and cynicism are among the many pitfalls that await the Inspired in their war against the forces of darkness. Some beings, demons and Fiends in particular, take a perverse delight in tricking the Inspired into making that fatal mistake which costs them their state of Grace.

Sometimes the moral dilemmas are truly harrowing. Should the Inspired save an innocent or take the opportunity to destroy a being that, left to its own devices, will surely kill again? Should the character break his word if given to a supernatural monster, even if the monster seeks to twist the meaning of the promise? Is accepting a reward for one’s actions a sign of greed, or is turning it down one of pride? The Inspired have to come up with the right answer or risk losing it all.

Chroniclers should throw these and similar quandaries in the path of Inspired characters, although they should take care not to purposefully trip up the characters. The temptation of the Inspired can make for powerful Story devices, but try not to be too cruel implementing them. Touching up on a few books on philosophy and morality might not be a bad idea to prepare interesting and devious tricks.



MIRACLES

These are some of the most common Miracles among the Inspired. More Miracles will appear in future *WitchCraft* sourcebooks.

THE BINDING

This is the power to restrain supernatural beings, at least temporarily, by using Essence. The Inspired orders the creature to halt in the name of his God. This power is used to prevent monsters from attacking or fleeing while the Inspired mete out justice. The Binding only works against supernatural creatures, not the Gifted.

This Miracle costs 2 Essence Points per Strength and Willpower level of the supernatural creature. The Inspired may not know how much Essence is necessary. If he does not have enough, his Essence Pool is drained and the Miracle does not take place.

In addition to the Essence cost, the Inspired must win a Resisted Test involving Simple Willpower rolls from both the Inspired and the creature. If the being is not truly evil (as determined by the Inspired's religion or the Chronicler), it gains a bonus of +2 to +5 in the Resisted Test. If the Inspired wins, the creature is bound in place for 1 Turn per Success Level on the Willpower Test; during that time, the creature may not attack or defend itself, and is rooted in place.

DIVINE SIGHT

This Miracle allows the Inspired to find the Truth in everything he sees. Although this ability is very useful in uncovering the presence of the supernatural, the Divine Sight sometimes shines a light on some unwanted truths as well. While the Miracle is activated, the Inspired can not only see invisible spiritual entities and the strange auras of supernatural beings, but it also shows the true nature of human beings. In a world of hypocrisy and lies, this ability often shows taint among pillars of the community, respected leaders of Church and State, and other seemingly benign and honest people. Inspired with the ability to invoke the Divine Sight sometimes remove themselves from their original Church, unable to deal with the complacency and greed that can mar such institutions. Many



start to develop a cynicism that clashes badly with the Faith necessary to carry on the good fight.

Activating this Miracle costs 5 Essence, and it lasts 10 minutes. Unless the creature or person is protected from scrying or mental probing (such protection is apparent using the Divine Sight), his nature, personality and goals will be clearly seen by the Inspired.

EXORCISM

This is the power to banish spirit entities and demons from both places and people. Exorcisms often take a long time, and are risky undertakings. To conduct an Exorcism, the Inspired must stand next to the possessed person, or nearby/inside the place.

A series of Simple Willpower Tests follow. The first Test costs 5 Essence Points and forces the possessing creature to reveal its identity. Some are Fiends, malevolent spirits who are said to serve the Adversary, while others are hostile spirits of the dead. Sometimes, they are creatures so strange and alien that they defy explanation.

The next several Willpower Tests encompass an effort to push the offending being out of its current dwelling. The Inspired has to accumulate a total of 10 Success Levels to remove the possessing entity. Since 1 Test is unlikely to ever accumulate that many successes, the Inspired must keep making them until the necessary number of Success Levels is accumulated. Each such Test costs an additional 5 Essence Points and takes D10(5) minutes of preparation.

In the meanwhile, the possessing spirit is rarely a passive spectator. Most of the time, the Exorcism process protects the Inspired from direct attack; the creature must pass a Difficult Willpower Test (at a -4 penalty) to even consider attacking the Inspired once the Exorcism has begun. However, the creature may try to intimidate, cajole or seduce the character away from his labors. Fiends and ghosts are the best at these tactics; their abilities allow them to see into the Inspired's mind and soul, and they can bring painful or shameful aspects of the character's personality to light. Insults and threats are often offered. The Inspired may need to pass Willpower Tests to see if he can continue the Exorcism without losing his temper or composure.

If the Exorcism is successful, the being is removed from the body. If it lingers and the Inspired can see it, he can attack it with other Miracles or drive it away through the use of Prayer and holy symbols (see pp. 246-247). Most of the time, however, the entity flees to the Otherworlds where it was spawned -- bearing a deadly grudge against the human who thwarted it.

HOLY FIRE

This powerful Miracle calls down divine retribution upon the forces of evil. This retribution comes in the form of a blast of blinding white flames, or a bolt of lightning striking from above. This attack can only be attempted on supernatural beings. Sometimes, if the being in question is not truly evil or is somehow part of the mysterious ways of the Deity, the blast will not inflict full damage, or will inflict no damage at all. Such an event clearly demonstrates that the Inspired is not meant to destroy the creature -- for the time being, at least.

This power costs 20 Essence Points and inflicts D8(4) points of damage times twice the Willpower of the Inspired. For example, an Inspired with a Willpower of 4 inflicts D8 x 8(32) points of damage. Any being within line of sight can be targeted. No attack roll is necessary; the power zeroes in on the selected target. Mundane body armor will not protect against this power, but Magical Shields will. Dodging (automatic -4 penalty) is possible but only if the target knows where the fire originates.

STRENGTH OF TEN

This ability allows the Inspired, when confronted with evil, to summon the strength of the righteous -- temporarily transforming him into a nearly unstoppable warrior of vengeance. The Inspired becomes inured to pain and fatigue, gains inhuman levels of strength, and can fight until killed. This display of power is only possible under the most extreme situations, however. To try to invoke it when there are other viable options is considered sinful. Only when facing overwhelming odds should the Strength of Ten be summoned.

This Miracle costs 15 Essence Points. The Inspired gains +5 to Strength (which also raises his Life Points by 20 points), and is immune to shock and pain until the battle is over. This means the character can keep fighting even when reduced to 0 Life Points or below (he still needs to pass Survival Tests after reaching -10 Life Points to stay alive, however). Once invoked, the power lasts until the threat is gone or until the Inspired succeeds in martyring himself.

THE TOUCH OF HEALING

This is the ability to cure wounds, disease and disabilities. In the past, most Divinely Inspired people were healers; now far too many are warriors. The Miracle costs 1 Essence Point to heal D4(2) points of damage. Mild diseases cost 2 points, Moderate ones 5 points, Serious diseases cost 15 points, and the cost is 25 points for a Terminal disease (see Disease, p. 142 for more information).

The Touch of Healing may only be used under extraordinary circumstances, and is generally used only on the faithful. The Inspired may elect to make exceptions for non-believers who are nonetheless fighting the good fight (interestingly enough, some among the Inspired are actually a lot more tolerant than the mundane leaders of many Churches)

VISIONS

Through this Miracle, the Inspired opens himself to the Deity for guidance and advice. The Inspired is often visited by flashes of insight about places and people; these insights may come in the form of dreams or sudden visions that may strike at any time, without warning. Sometimes, the Inspired will pray for guidance and be rewarded with a sign or vision of some kind. Most of the time, the visions are ambiguous and need interpretation. For example, the Inspired might see the face of a man, a famous politician. Is the man a tool of evil, or is he being threatened by the forces of evil? The Inspired would have to find out somehow.

This ability costs 5 Essence Points when the Inspired actively seeks guidance. The Inspired's prayers may or may not be answered, depending on what the Chronicler feels is appropriate to the moment, although such attempts should usually be successful -- provided the Inspired is appropriately humble in his petitions. When the Chronicler sees fit to visit a spontaneous Vision upon a character, however, there should be no Essence Point cost.

The actual details of the visions will vary widely. Some may be a single image, while others may give more clues as to places, people, and circumstances. The nature of visions should always be determined by the needs of the Story.

PRAYERS

In the world of *WitchCraft*, a simple prayer has more power than most scoffers could imagine. As a focus of faith and willpower, Prayers can be as effective as an Invocation under the right circumstances. The Inspired can use Prayer to convert Essence into Miracles, and even to gather Essence. Mundanes with enough piety and strength of will (one will not work without the other) can also make use of Prayers to focus some of their Essence into actual defenses or even attacks against the supernatural.

Prayers will only have an effect if the character's life shows enough devotion and respect to his religion. Most people only pay lip service to their beliefs; that will not do at all. In the course of a game, however, a character might "discover religion" as part of the often traumatic events that make up most Stories. A character undergoing such a revelation might be able to make use of Prayers.

Some gamers may find the use of Prayer as a game mechanic to be controversial. As with any and all material in this game, feel free to disallow this entire subject if it upsets or offends any players. *WitchCraft* is a game, and it is meant to be fun, not to annoy or disturb anybody.

THE INSPIRED AND PRAYERS

The Inspired may find additional strength through Prayers. After the character has spent at least an hour in deep prayer and meditation, he may find himself replenishing Essence at double the normal rate. The use of prayers in the course of a Miracle is considered to be part and parcel of such a Miracle. A Christian Inspired would be expected to quote from the Bible, just as a Muslim one might recite a line from the Qur'an. This conveys no special bonuses or penalties, beyond the increased Essence recovery.

MUNDANES AND PRAYERS

Mundanes are the main beneficiaries of the power of Prayer. The ancient chants of religious scriptures hold a great deal of power for those who truly believe. A faithful character who prays may gain unexpected strength in his time of need. In game terms, treat this as a Task using Willpower and Humanities (Theology). Modifiers for the character's piety range from -10 (for a foxhole convert who is just trying to save his skin) to +10 (for a truly saintly individual, very rare in today's world). Each level of success in the Task releases a point of Essence from the character's Essence Pool. This Essence can be used as a defense against any supernatural attack, including Magic. Each Essence Point released confers a +2 bonus on any Resisted Task or Test against

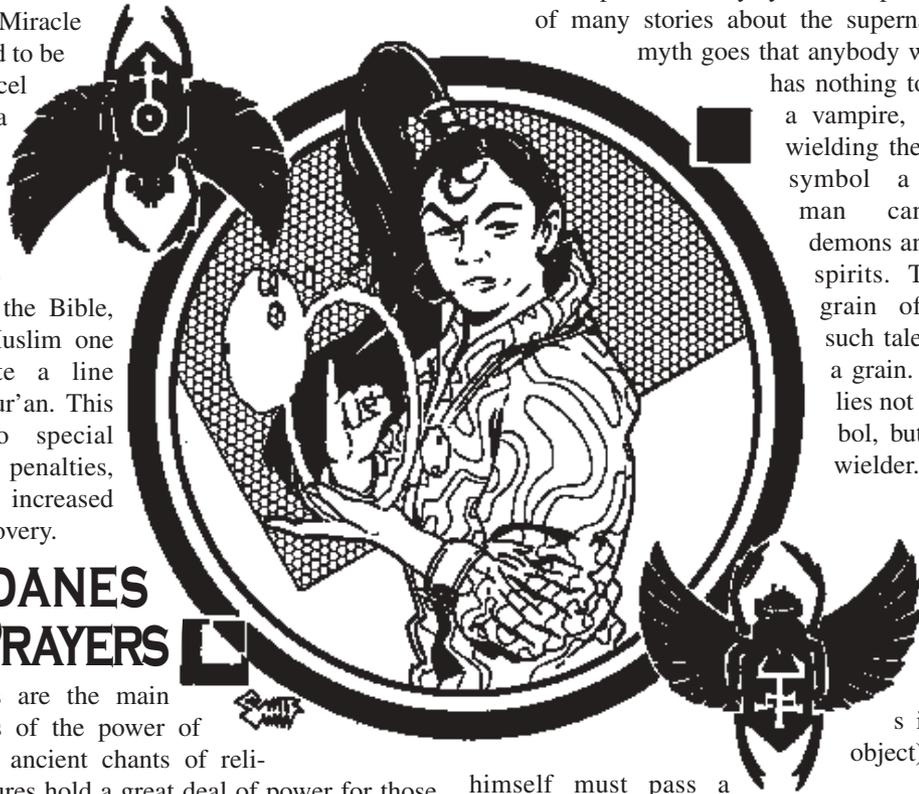
a supernatural ability of any kind, including all Gifted powers and the inherent powers of supernatural beings.

HOLY SYMBOLS

From the legends of antiquity to Hollywood movies, the power of holy symbols is part and parcel of many stories about the supernatural. The myth goes that anybody with a cross

has nothing to fear from a vampire, or that by wielding the right holy symbol a righteous man can banish demons and scare off spirits. There is a grain of truth in such tales, but only a grain. The power lies not in the symbol, but within its wielder. A character using a holy symbol (be it a Cross, an Ankh or any similar object) to protect

himself must pass a Simple Willpower Test, with the same modifiers used in Prayer Tasks (see above). Each Success Level allows the character to focus 1 Essence Point through the holy symbol. Supernatural beings confronting the charged holy symbol must make a Difficult Willpower Test, at -1 per Essence Point focused through the symbol, or feel pain and fear when faced with it. The creatures will hesitate to come near the wielder, let alone attack him; even if the monster does not flee the symbol, all its actions will be at a -4 penalty.







Chapter Seven Supernatural

Even at the end, he refused to believe.

His was an ordered world, a nine to five world, a world, sure, with more than its share of flaws -- and who is perfect, ladies and gents? -- and sometimes, a place that did not make much sense, but which had some rules. Money talks. Taxes are always too high. We are all going to die, but concentrate on the jazz aerobics and fiber and use protection and, who knows, you can keep the Grim Reaper at arm's length for longer than you'd think. So make as much money as you can, broker the right deals, kiss the right asses, and you get to be the guy sitting in the big office, playing racquetball to stave off a heart attack, and taking that truly stunning red-headed project manager out for a weekend to your time-share cabin in the hills. So maybe the papers were full of bad news, but to him, bad news was a corporate downsizing, and he had worked long and hard to get himself a golden parachute so that being "downsized" only meant a nice paid vacation while he fielded offers from a half a dozen former competitors. The world was all right.

The world had no place for the thing that had knocked a hole in the cabin wall that night.

He had been in the process of consummating his relationship with the red-headed project manager (although, truth to tell, he was beginning to suspect the whole weekend was her cold-blooded attempt to cozy up to the Boss, but what the Hell, it's not like he signed a contract to do something in return for the weekend), when she had stopped what she had been doing (so well) and whispered, "What was that?"

"What was that?" he grunted, somewhat miffed at the interruption.

"I thought I heard an animal or something. Outside."

"Raccoons, I 'm sure," he replied confidently.

That's when the thing smashed through the wall.

They both screamed as splinters and chunks of wood rained on them. Boxer shorts and a black silk nightie offered scant protection against the deluge. But the big fur-covered thing that stood inside the cabin was what made him scream in unbelieving terror, because such things belonged in movies and novels, not in his cabin.

The thing roared and stepped toward them.

He didn't believe in what he was seeing, but his instincts did not fail him. He reacted with a speed and strength that surprised him. He grabbed the red-head by the long red hair, and sent her rolling towards the thing with a savage underarm half-throw, half-pull, using the momentum to propel himself off the bed. Her shriek was cut short by a crunching sound, and something warm splashed his naked back as he darted out the door, unmindful of the splinters, running as fast as he could.

"Just a nut in a costume just a nut a nut," his mind gibbered as his body, well ahead of him, ran as if it was a real monster. He actually made it to the car and opened the door when the thing slammed into him, and suddenly the sports car seemed very small and cramped when he found himself sharing space with a ripping and slashing creature. "Not real, not real," his mind screamed even as the claws started scoring. "Just a nut" was his next to last thought.

"Lousy weekend" was his last thought before a claw swipe took his head clean off.

Introduction

The world of *WitchCraft* is, in most ways, our modern world, a place of technology and science, where governments and corporations do things about which the “man on the street” has little understanding. The economy swings back and forth, destroying thousands of lives along the way. Strange and brutal crimes are described in loving detail by the media, and many people are mired in fear and uncertainty. In *WitchCraft*, however, many of these events and the uncertainty are the result of conspiracies and supernatural forces -- many of which are not human. On the surface, it is a world of sanity where electric lights banish the dark fears of old, and television and computers have replaced God. But late at night, in back alleys and small, forgotten towns, things crawl unmolested and slay at will. In the dark corners of this world, strange forces are gathering strength, and becoming bolder and more active with each passing day.

This chapter covers many of the supernatural aspects of the *WitchCraft* game. It begins with the protagonists of most of the *WitchCraft* Stories, the Gifted. A section concerning the nature of the Reckoning is then covered. A series of supernatural beings, from spirits to demons to worse, are discussed. Finally, evil humans are detailed. In all, the chapter should give Chroniclers an overview of the world of *WitchCraft*. Of course, more material will be presented in the *WitchCraft* supplements to come.

The Gifted

They can see the future and look into the minds of others. Their wishes often come true, although not always in the manner they envisioned. They can do things that violate the laws of physics and causality. They are the Gifted. For centuries, they have remained content with living in obscurity and hiding their talents from the rest of the world. The time for hiding is quickly coming to an end.

WitchCraft Stories center around the Gifted, people who somehow have senses and powers beyond the norm. These abilities are as much a curse as a blessing, however, for to be one of the Gifted means being thrown into an unpredictable and dangerous world --

the hidden world of the occult. The Gifted can see the underlying forces of reality, can feel the pain of others, and know of people and creatures who treasure their secrecy and will do anything to maintain it. Even worse, the Gifted have always been met with the fear, scorn or hatred of normal people. Called witches (a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon word for “Wise Ones”), the Gifted were hunted down, tortured and killed by the thousands. Even in the modern world, many of them prefer to hide themselves from public scrutiny.

The origins and goals of the Gifted are manifold. There is no single society or organization that encompasses all the Gifted; perhaps as many as half of them have no affiliation with any group, and operate on their own or in small groups.

History of the Gifted

Since the dawn of humanity, there have been some who could communicate with nature and spiritual entities. Their special abilities distinguished them from the rest. In earlier times, they were shamans and advisers who used their power to help their people survive in the cold world left behind by the Ice Age. Their abilities allowed them to deal with the invisible beings who manipulated reality, the beings which came to be called spirits and gods.

Some of the Gifted learned to manipulate reality themselves, through the use of Magic or by developing inborn abilities collectively known as the Sight. Others worked through their connection to nature spirits, or the spirits of the dead. For millennia, the Gifted were part and parcel of human culture, accepted, albeit often feared, by most people.

Things started changing some three thousand years ago, however. A new movement of ideas swept the lands of the East and West, a movement that denied the power of the old gods and denounced the use of magicks. The struggle between the followers of the ancient pantheons and the believers in a single Deity raged on for centuries. It ended in the victory of the monotheists at the beginning of the Christian Era. Eventually, the old beliefs were denounced as evil or false, and those who upheld them were persecuted or killed. Only the Gifted whose powers derived from the faith in the Deity were allowed to survive, and even then were

often viewed with suspicion by the religious establishment. The witch hunts were one of the last blows of this war, and all but obliterated the Gifted. Most survivors banded together in Covenants, secret societies held together by common beliefs and powers, and hid their nature from the world.

Eventually, new ideas and movements changed the world, and religious persecution started to fall into disfavor. By then, however, a new system of belief, one that denied the existence of anything beyond the physical universe, had become dominant. Where they had once been persecuted, now the Gifted were met with skepticism and ridicule.

Things are beginning to change, however. Many people have lost faith in Science, and they are turning once again towards the metaphysical for answers. And, in the last generation alone, the number of Gifted people has increased tenfold or more. Soon, the Gifted will find it impossible to hide from the mundanes, just like the mundanes will be unable to suppress or eliminate them.

The Reckoning

Imagine a world where the events of every horror movie start taking place all over the world. At first, the authorities are able to come up with rational explanations for the incidents -- "Just a serial killer running amuck" or "Just wearing a vest, that's why he kept comin' after we shot him a dozen times. And high on somethin', I bet." The strange and horrible incidents keep occurring, however. A dead killer comes back to life. A century-old ghost haunts an apartment complex. A nightmarish creature, half-man, half-animal, hunts humans in the slums.

In this world, most people still refuse to say out loud that they believe in the supernatural -- but they are locking their doors at night. Some are putting crucifixes around their necks and going to church every Sunday for the first time in decades. Strangers are met with suspicion. Police officers are getting very nervous and trigger-happy. The mainstream press is beginning to publish some outlandish accounts, but for the most part, the tabloids are the ones reporting the truth for the first time since their creation.

This is what is happening in the world of *WitchCraft*. The world is edging towards a great change, where science and superstition are equally likely to be right or wrong.

Sensing the Reckoning

By virtue of their special abilities and senses, the Gifted can sense that the world is approaching a new stage, the end of a cycle, and the beginning of a new one. Like all major changes, it is taking place slowly. Most people don't realize what is happening at first, but it steadily gains momentum and speed. This is no mere change in culture or politics, however. When the change is over, every living thing on the planet (and, some say, the Otherworlds as well) will be affected.

The Society of the Sentinels was the first to start speaking of a "Time of Reckoning." To them, the signs indicate the coming of the Apocalypse, the final struggle between Good and Evil with the hearts and souls of humankind as the ultimate prize. As events grew more dire and troubling, the Wicce, Rosicrucians and other Covenants started using the same name for the looming crisis. Some Covenants see the Reckoning as the end of all things, while others believe this is a time of opportunity as much as of danger, the end of an era that may herald a new Golden Age.

The approaching Time of Reckoning and its effects are a major theme in *WitchCraft*. Its signs are a growing acceptance of magic and the supernatural among the common people, the increase in the numbers of both Gifted humans and supernatural beings, and a number of unexplainable events, apocalyptic signs that scare even the most powerful of the Gifted.

Earlier Reckonings

Some occultists have studied ancient records to understand the Reckoning, and even used their Magic or Second Sight to catch glimpses of the distant past. Their research hints that the Reckoning is not a unique or new event, and that similar things have happened in the past, often with disastrous results.

The most radical occultists claim the last

Reckoning occurred millions of years ago -- leading to the extinction of most large life forms on Earth, and ending the time of the dinosaurs. If this is true, the Reckoning would threaten the obliteration of every living being larger than a mouse. This disquieting notion is not shared by many, but, strangely, some of the oldest and most powerful among the Gifted seem to quietly agree with it.

A number of Rosicrucian scholars see the Reckoning as the most powerful of a series of “ripples in reality” that have shaken the world time after time. Some of these “ripples” are recorded in history as major disasters. They claim that the Black Plagues that devastated most of the world during the Middle Ages was the result of one of those ripples; the disease was but the physical symptom of the crisis. The historical records from that time are full of strange stories of the dead rising from their graves and walking the streets, of dark magicks and strange, insane cults. Hidden writings of some Covenants reveal even darker events, as forces powerful enough to rend entire planets were barely kept in check through the efforts of the Gifted of those times. The horrors of the Time of the Plague were such that they spawned an intense fear of magic and the occult, a fear that in turn fueled the persecution of witches, other Gifted and even those who were just a bit unlike their neighbors.

A more recent ripple occurred in the early part of the century. It began with World War I, continued with the Influenza Epidemic that killed 20 million people worldwide, and ended with a savage bang during World War II. In the mundane world, it was a time of fear and uncertainty, where faith in science and progress was severely shaken by the horrors of war, plague and famine. The occult historians also noted a number of strange events, visions of giant monstrosities being awakened by the mad chanting of ancient cults, and dark forces that were once again stopped in the nick of time through the heroic efforts of both Gifted and mundane people, many of whom lost their lives and sanity in the process.

In most ways, however, this new ripple is even

more powerful and profound than either of the two described above. The fact that it started so soon after the end of the last one makes it all the more ominous. The last ripple caused, directly or indirectly, the deaths of over a hundred million human beings. The next one may be a lot worse.

The First Signs

Most Covenants agree that the first signs of the Reckoning occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. A brief respite had followed at the end of the Second World War, during which most people tried to rebuild their lives and forget the horrors of the past. In a few years, however, the younger generation felt a growing dissatisfaction with the way of things. By the end of the 1960s, new alternatives of looking at things started emerging in the Western World, and people started looking toward mysticism as an alternative to cold, hollow materialism. People meditated, experimented with drugs, and sought spiritual guidance. Along the way, some discovered they were of the Gifted. Some Covenant members tried for the first time in centuries to “go public,” and appeared in the public eye without fear of persecution.

Many people started talking of a “New Age,” where humans would discover and unlock their hidden potentials. Beneath such catch phrases as “self help” and “positive thinking” lay some of the principles of the Gifted’s abilities. To some hopeful Covenant members, it appeared that a paradigm shift (a deep change in the way people see things) was at hand.

At the same time, however, a darker, more sinister change was affecting many other aspects of society. Crime skyrocketed, and violence became widespread. Serial killers appeared in surprising numbers, and some of them were nearly deified by the media. Many people lost faith in all things and concentrated mainly on gratifying their needs. Cynicism and despair became commonplace.

Beneath all these circumstances lurked a number of paranormal beings and events. Once again, deranged cultists started surfacing in great numbers. Many people disappeared without a trace for no apparent reason. Tales of ghosts and spirits multiplied.

The New Generation

The better-organized Covenants (like the Rosicrucians, the Cabal of Psyche, and the Twilight Order) have noticed an “explosion” in the birth of people with paranormal powers. Apparently, people born since the 1960s have a greater propensity to be Gifted than at any time before. The later the year of their birth, the greater the chance of developing supernatural abilities. Where previously there might have been one Gifted for every ten thousand mundanes (or even one in a hundred thousand), now the number of people with at least a minor touch of the supernatural is closer to one in one thousand. Circumstances and disbelief often cause many of these Gifted to be institutionalized in psychiatric centers, or to suppress their powers (often unconsciously), but many are accepting and developing their abilities. Eventually, they will be too numerous to hide, and their powers too obvious to avoid public notice.

Why this unexpected rise in the numbers of the Gifted? Some point to the growth of humankind in general, and see it as the consequence of overpopulation. Those with a more mystical bent believe that the souls of many Gifted who for centuries had wandered far from the material world are now returning in great numbers and reincarnating among the members of this new generation. And some gloomily reflect that whatever powers protect this world may have decided to increase the number of Gifted to be used as cannon fodder in the upcoming war.

The Unexplained

As the new millennium dawns, the world is becoming strange and fearsome. In the world of *WitchCraft*, strange events, horrendous crimes and supernatural occurrences are becoming more numerous and harder to explain away. As time goes by, these events will increase in size and intensity. Whole towns will vanish without a trace. Rivers will turn into streams of blood. Corpses will walk the streets, slaying at random. At first, only the tabloids took notice, and their reports were lost amidst a sea of lies. Even now, most of these incidents are being hushed up by governments across the world, who realize that panic might ensue otherwise.

The barriers separating the material world from the Otherworlds are weakening. Ghosts are coming back to Earth in growing numbers. Vampyres hunt unsuspecting humans. Stranger supernatural predators are becoming a real threat in both large cities and small towns. Some supernatural beings hunt and kill humans. Others enjoy exploiting or manipulating them for their own ends. Several prefer to feed on the energies of the Gifted, making them a direct threat to all Covenants.

These manifestations are becoming too widespread to control quickly, however. Already a sizable percentage of the population believes in the existence of the supernatural. As the events continue to occur, the world will come to understand that they are being plunged into a new era where magic and fairy tales are only too real. That point will probably trigger the Time of Reckoning.

The Otherworlds

Every religion and mystical tradition in the world teaches that the physical world is not the only realm of existence. There are other realities out there, linked to our world but difficult to perceive under normal circumstances. They are the planes of spirits and dreams, the Heavens and Hells some hope to reach or avoid, the realms of myth and legend. Collectively, they are known as the Otherworlds.

Advanced occultists have discovered that reality is divided into several layers, the physical world being just one of them. Most traditions believe that there are nine or ten such layers, and call them Spheres of Reality or Sephiroths. Each Sephiroth in turn holds several Realms, self-contained “worlds” with their own population, physical laws, and mystical significance. Those Realms include places like the Elemental Planes, the Death Realms and the Fey Kingdoms. Some among the Gifted are able to pass through the barriers separating Earth from the Otherworlds. This is becoming easier, as the approaching Reckoning weakens those barriers.

Dealing With the Reckoning

The Gifted, by their very nature, were among the first to perceive the signs of the Reckoning, and to understand their possible meanings. This also gives them the opportunity to do something about it. The first signs only appeared some thirty years ago, however, and they did not become obvious to most Gifted until the last years of the 20th century, so there really hasn't been much time to devise a plan of action. For the most part, the Gifted have been reacting to strange events rather than taking the initiative. Many *WitchCraft Stories* will deal with the characters' action in regards to the Reckoning. Some possible courses of action include the following.

Stopping the Reckoning: Some Covenant members see the Reckoning as the End of All Things. Naturally, they want to prevent that from happening. There are rumors that ancient magical relics or sorcerous formulas might help restore the balance and cause this ripple in reality to subside, perhaps for centuries or millennia. Many Covens, Shrines or teams are devoting all their energies to finding these magical items. Others believe (rightly) that the Mad Gods (see p. 281), the strange entities beyond reality, are the true cause behind the Reckoning. Their solution is to stamp out the cults and minions of the Mad Gods, denying the monsters the chance to open gateways from their reality to our own. If successful, they could prevent the Reckoning altogether.

Delaying the Reckoning: Many Gifted believe the Reckoning is inevitable, but its outcome may not be as disastrous as some think. They are sure that if humankind is properly prepared, it may prevail against whatever dark forces are being raised against the world. To do this, however, the final battle must be postponed; every year that passes means more Gifted humans are born and more mundanes become believers and potential allies. Some Covenants have started referring to these people as the Delayers. The Delayers' methods are very similar to those who seek to prevent the Reckoning altogether, but they are more concerned with finding and destroying supernatural outbreaks and the followers of the Mad Gods than in capturing some "Holy Grail" that will make everything right.

Protecting Humankind: This is the Sentinels' way. Rather than spend much time searching for the "cause" of the Reckoning (which, to the Sentinels' thinking, is nothing more than God's Will), they carry on with their purpose, which is to defend the meek from the evil of the supernatural. They do what they have been doing for centuries, except they have a lot more work to do.

Protecting One's Covenant: Some Covenant members (especially among the Rosicrucians and the Cadat of Psyche, but everywhere else as well) care mostly about protecting the integrity of their secret societies. They concentrate on defending fellow members from attacks of the supernatural (some predators prefer to go after the Gifted rather than mundanes), and on maintaining the secrecy of their organization from the mundanes, who, it is feared, may start a rash of persecutions in reaction to the supernatural threat.

Supernatural Beings

In the world of *WitchCraft*, the truth may be out there -- but so are the monsters. Bogeymen prey on children and hide in closets or under beds. Feral creatures howl at the starless sky and eat human flesh. Sly seducers drink the blood of the innocent or taint the souls of the unwary. Unspeakable monstrosities slumber in the folds between the worlds, awaiting dark chants in alien languages that will allow them to enter our reality and tear it apart.

Supernatural beings are becoming more numerous as the Time of Reckoning draws near. Perhaps the barriers between Earth and the Otherworlds are collapsing, or some unknown power is granting passage to all manner of beings for its own unfathomable purpose. For whatever reasons, spirits and stranger beings, good, evil or indifferent, are appearing in ever-increasing numbers, and their actions are becoming more and more overt.

The following sections depict some of the many strange beings that exist in the world of *WitchCraft*. The list and descriptions of supernatural beings is far from exhaustive. To mention and describe every being that exists or could exist in the world of *WitchCraft* would take several books -- and we will be producing them soon enough. Meanwhile, the following list should provide enough ideas to keep Stories lively, and may inspire Chroniclers to create their own bestiary of paranormal beasts and predators.

The creatures described below are meant to be used by the Chronicler, not the players. The first sourcebook for *WitchCraft*, the *Mystery Codex*, provides rules for Chroniclers wishing to allow players to create and run supernatural character types such as Vampyres and Phantasms. Other *WitchCraft* sourcebooks will detail other fantastic beings, such as the Fey and the spirits of nature.

The Predators

A number of supernatural creatures hunt and harm human beings for nourishment, pleasure or other, darker needs. These beings are collectively known as the Predators. The powers, goals and practices of Predators vary widely. Some are very human-like beings who may be driven by undeniable urges; others view humans like we see cattle -- as a source of food to be quickly disposed of and consumed.

Characteristics of Supernatural Beings

Beneath the description of each type of supernatural being, a list of typical characteristics (like Attributes, Secondary Attributes, skills, special powers and attacks) is given. This list allows for a great deal of variation. In some cases, the Attributes of a type of creature may vary widely. The listing under most Attributes depict a range: 4-6 means "ranging from 4 to 6," for example, while a listing of "3-10+" means "ranging from 3-10 or even higher." Secondary Attributes are not calculated the same as those for Cast Members; supernatural beings often have much greater (or, in some cases, lower) Life Points, Endurance Points and Essence Pools. The common range of those Secondary Attributes is presented below; Chroniclers can basically choose the numbers that work for her conception of the entity in question.

Chroniclers should determine the power of a specific creature based on the needs of the Story. If a Vampyre will only take part in a casual encounter not meant to be the climax of a story, it should be relatively weak and uninteresting (or the characters may decide to concentrate on it instead). If the creature is the main adversary of an entire game, however, it should be an ancient and powerful enemy, somebody to instill fear in the hearts of the characters.



Spirits

The world is full of forces that cannot be seen but which affect those around them anyway. Magnetic currents, UV rays, gravity -- their effects can be seen, but they are invisible and perhaps unknowable. Some of these forces are alive and self-aware. Some inhabit the Otherworlds, but many dwell on Earth, carrying on their ancient purposes without humankind's knowledge. They are spirits, animae, kami and manitou of legend.

Spirits are incorporeal beings who appear to be living symbols of several aspects of reality. Their origins and goals are the subject of much debate among students of the occult. Some believe that these beings are the descendants of the Sephyr and Naturas (see *Treatise On Reality*, p. 20), entities who were either the first servants of the Creator, or those who were born when the Universe came into being. Others think that spirits are manifestations of Essence that became self-aware by accident, or as the result of the first magical manipulations of human beings.

Their origins notwithstanding, spirits can be contacted and dealt with. Many magicians owe much of their power to their compacts with spiritual entities. Spirits are not to be trifled with, however; many sorcerers who exploited and abused these creatures often paid the ultimate price for their actions.

The types, powers and personalities of spirits vary widely, from the menial to the god-like, from the all-too-human to the utterly alien. Some sample spirits are described below. Chroniclers are encouraged to create their own spirits, basing them on myths or legends, or using only their imagination.

Powers Common Among Spirits

Most spirits share a number of traits. When creating new spirits, the Chronicler should keep these abilities in mind. A few of the most powerful or unusual spirits are able to transcend the common limits of their kind, but they are the exception to the rule.

Beings of Essence: Spirits are made out of pure Essence. Instead of Life and Endurance Points, their vitality is expressed in Essence Points. Most spirits have two Essence Pools. One is their Vital Essence, the energy that makes up their very existence, and which is almost never used; Vital Essence is bound in the matrix that defines the spirit. The other is their Energy Essence, pure Essence that can be used to empower their many abilities. In extreme cases, spirits use some of their Vital Essence to activate their abilities, but any such Essence used is permanently lost; a spirit whose Vital Essence is depleted becomes "Unraveled" and ceases to exist.

Channel and Tap into Essence: Spirits can manipulate and channel Essence. In game terms, most spirits have the equivalent of Essence Channeling, with a level equal to their Willpower or even Willpower doubled. They can also tap into the extra Essence made available at Places and Times of Power (see p. 202-203). This is one of the reasons

some areas are said to be "haunted" and why Halloween and similar dates have a reputation for being ghostly times -- many of these creatures take the opportunity to use the extra energy to power a number of strange effects.

Some spirits have the power to take Essence from living beings, either absorbing the power that is unwittingly released during intense emotional reactions, or by actively draining a victim of her Essence! Such abilities are noted in individual entries.

Evolution: Spirits do not remain the same over the course of Eternity. Like all other living things, they change, grow or decay. Spirits slowly gain power by absorbing Essence given to them or taken from other living things (but not ambient Essence, which is useful but not "nourishing"). Very old spirits may increase their power tenfold over the course of centuries in this manner.

Draining Essence from living things for the purpose of evolution is a painful or harrowing experience for the target. The "deeper" level of Essence is hoarded and slowly absorbed into the spirit (it is considered "spent" as soon as it is gathered). When acquiring Essence, a spirit must designate whether it is for evolution or not. If so, the victim recovers that Essence in a much slower manner. Normal humans regain such Essence at the rate of 1 point per week; those

with Essence Channeling regain it at that level per week. For each 20 points of “evolution-designated” Essence that has been gathered by a spirit, the spirit’s Vital and Energy Essence Pools increase by 1.

Immaterial: The natural form of spirits is a manifestation of Essence that cannot interact directly with the physical world. Spirits are unbound by physical barriers. They cannot be perceived by normal senses, and physical attacks cannot harm them. By the same token, they cannot affect the physical world (including living beings) except in indirect ways. Only Essence attacks will harm them, first by depleting their Energy Essence (the power they use to activate their special abilities), and then by destroying their Vital Essence (their actual life force). Some Gifted Powers will affect the spirit’s Vital Essence directly, however. Spirits have physical Attributes, but they can only be used on other spirit beings (including ghosts and astral travelers), unless they manifest physically somehow.

While Immaterial, the spirit has two basic movement rates. While moving normally, it can hover, walk or run. This uses the Speed Secondary Attribute. If the spirit needs to travel fast between two points, spending 1 Essence Point per hour allows it to travel 100 miles an hour times the spirit’s Willpower Attribute (so, a spirit with a Willpower of 4 can travel at 400 miles an hour). In this form of travel, things move in a blur, and the spirit is largely unaware of its surroundings. Some spirits are bound to a specific area, however, and cannot use this mode of travel.

Oathbound: Most spirits (with the notable exception of the souls of dead humans) are bound by any oaths they make. If a spirit swears upon its True Name and Power, it cannot break the oath any more than a mundane can reverse the pull of gravity. A spirit’s True Name is the symbol of its Vital Essence, a “code” more unique and personal than a DNA signature is among humans. It is entirely bound to the oath, and breaking it, even inadvertently, would mean a sudden and utter obliteration. Spirits are sticklers to the terms of such oaths, however, and often prove to be devilishly tricky in following the letter while violating the spirit (no pun intended) of the oath.

Perceive Essence: Being what they are, spirits see the world, both physical and spiritual, in terms of the flows of Essence. Spirits can tell the different “flavors” and “scents” of Essence in both living and inanimate things, other spirits, magic, and all other elements of Reality. Spirits do not see things in terms of color and shape, like humans do. Instead, they perceive the Essence patterns that make up all things. Spirits see people’s souls rather than their bodies. They are automatically aware of the emotional states of living things, and can tell if they are lying. Only humans protected by Essence Shields (see Shielding Invocation, p. 220) can avoid this scrutiny.

Physical Manifestation: Most spirits are unable to assume a physical form -- at least not by themselves. In general, spirits cannot use their Energy Essence to manifest themselves, but can use the Essence provided from outside sources for this purpose. They can tap into ambient Essence; most spirits can materialize during such Times of Power as Halloween and the Equinoxes, for example. Another source of Essence is provided by a summoning sorcerer; the Essence spent by the sorcerer will in effect be used by the spirit to assume a material form. The energy cost and abilities of such manifestations are noted under each spirit entry. Typically, it costs 1 Essence for each Vital Essence Point the creature has.

While manifested, the creature has the equivalent of 1 Life Point for every Vital and Energy Essence Point in its Pool. Reducing the Life Points to 0 (note that even manifested spirits may be highly resistant to conventional weapons and dangers) dematerializes the creature and costs it D10(5) Vital Essence Points, which are permanently lost (and which may destroy minor spirits).

Spiritus: This is a Special Skill all spiritual entities have. It determines the degree of control the spirit can exercise over its surroundings and the skill with which it can use its abilities. Most nature spirits will have a Spiritus level equal to their Willpower Level, although more skilled spirits do exist. Ghosts, Phantasms and other spirits will have widely varying levels, with the value rising depending on the experience accumulated by the entity.

Nature Spirits

In the world of *WitchCraft*, where every aspect of Reality is made up of Essence, there is no such thing as an “unliving” thing. The Essence of every rock and stone, of flowing water and any old tree, is alive and can assume a self-aware form under some circumstances. Nature spirits are living manifestations of this Essence. There are animal spirits, tree spirits, mountain and river and lake spirits; there are also spirits of the city and the sewers, of garbage and rats. This is not to say that every grain of sand or bush has a living consciousness trapped within it, though. Rather, nature spirits seem to represent the collective consciousness of such beings. One would not find a spirit for every drop of water in a river, but one spirit that dwells in the river as a whole, for example. A family of rats would share one spirit among them. Some creatures, like trees and large animals, do have personal spirits with their own personalities and goals.

Most of the time, these spirits are dormant, existing in a state of “slumber” while the beings they inhabit or symbolize lead their normal existence. Magicians and other Gifted have the ability to “awaken” these spirits and converse with them. The personalities of nature spirits are usually representative of the characteristics of the being or thing they symbolize. A rock spirit, for example, will be slow and ponderous, while that of a swarm of cockroaches will be skittish and always hungry.

When aroused to anger, nature spirits can be extremely dangerous. By using Essence, they can transform the things they inhabit, allowing them to perform amazing feats. An enraged rock spirit could trigger an avalanche or earthquake, for example, while tree spirits could animate their “bodies” and become wooden giants. Such acts are rare, however, because such manifestations often use up the spirit’s Vital Essence.

Dealing With Nature Spirits

Perhaps because of their closeness to the physical world, nature spirits are oddly human-like in their personalities. They tend to be cautious towards humans (who have often brought untold destruction to their physical counterparts), but can be friendly enough towards those who show the proper respect and politeness. Many of these spirits have a light and simple sense of humor, while others (trees especially) take themselves too seriously sometimes.

Nature spirits rarely make pacts with sorcerers. They prefer informal dealings with humans. Shamans and medicine men from animistic cultures know best how to deal with these spirits. Even a mundane from those cultures will, for example, ask permission of an animal before killing it, or thank a tree for giving up one of its branches for firewood. Magicians dealing with nature spirits should think in terms of asking favors rather than making complex pacts with lots of legal clauses. Attempts at oathbinding are typically offensive to nature spirits. Despite their reluctance to enter into formal agreements, most nature spirits will do what they say they will do, even without swearing on their Name and Power.



Nature Spirit

There are huge variations in the power levels of nature spirits. Described below are some generalities.

Strength: 1-10+

Dexterity: 2-7

Constitution: 1-10+

Intelligence: 1-6+

Perception: 2-11

Willpower: 3-10+

Vital Essence: 10-100+

Energy Essence: 10-100+

Spiritus: 3-10+

Powers: Nature spirits can animate material forms. If performed on a normally unmoving thing (like a tree or stone), the spirit will make it move and perform actions. On an animal, this power greatly increases the strength and toughness of the animal (add the spirit's Strength and other physical Attributes to those of the animal). These manifestations cost 10-20 Vital Essence Points; most spirits will only do so under extreme circumstances. Spirits can also physically manifest themselves. This costs the spirit one point of Essence for each point of its Vital Essence Pool and requires a Willpower and Spiritus Task (or the Chronicler may simply rule the attempt is automatically successful). This Essence must be acquired from outside sources; the spirit cannot use its own Vital or Energy Essence for this purpose.

Elementals

These spirits are manifestations of the classical elements -- Air, Earth, Fire and Water. Some Covenants have also discovered more exotic elementals representing things like Light, Darkness, Metal, and Electricity. They may be a special form of nature spirit, although for the most part they do not exist in the physical world, dwelling instead in strange dimensions among certain Otherworlds, planes of existence made completely out of one specific element. Some occultists believe they are manifestations of intellectual concepts among humanity (which may explain how Electricity Elementals have only started appearing in the past two hundred years or so). Other theorists believe that elementals are the descendants of the Sephyr, the living manifestations of elements of Reality used by the Creator to give shape to the Universe.

Elementals are commonly summoned by the Rosicrucians and other ceremonial magicians. They make powerful servants and allies. A few of the most powerful sorcerers keep one or two of these beings as their “familiar,” always ready to appear in defense of their masters. Elementals who manifest physically on Earth have powers similar to the Elemental Invocations used by human sorcerers, as well as having all the advantages of their strange forms.

There are all kinds of ranks and varieties among elementals. Most of the spirits summoned to Earth by sorcerers are relatively weak and small. It is said that the Otherworldly homes of these beings are ruled by Greater Elementals, huge beings of tremendous power, the size of office buildings, and holding more Essence than any dozen sorcerers combined.

Dealing With Elementals

These spirits have a tendency to act like distorted mirrors of their summoners’ personalities, filtered through their natural propensities. Elementals typically adopt the speech pattern, habits and behavior of the magician who summoned them. Fire Elementals typically adopt the behavior of the summoner when angry or infuriated, while Air Elementals concentrate on the person’s impulsive and lustful side. Earth Elementals focus on the cold-blooded and rational, and Water Elementals adopt the contemplative and any maudlin or melancholy aspects of the magician’s personality. This can sometimes make the creatures very difficult to deal with, and many a magician prefers to minimize their dealings with them to simple orders that require no dialogue.

Elementals never do any favors for anybody; they must either enter into a Compact or be Bound by force. Compacts with elementals often involve “feeding” the creatures large amounts of Essence or allowing them to wander through the physical world for short periods of time -- some elementals find Earth to be a delightfully strange environment. Bound elementals usually fulfill their duties without complaint, but they often seize any opportunity to avenge their period of slavery.



Fire Elemental

This is a brief description of a typical Fire Elemental. Other elementals have a similar range of Attributes and powers, as determined by their particular persuasion. More information on elemental creatures will be made available in future WitchCraft sourcebooks.

Strength: 1-7+

Dexterity: 2-6+

Constitution: 2-10+

Intelligence: 2-5+

Perception: 2-5+

Willpower: 3-6+

Vital Essence: 15-50+

Energy Essence: 10-100+

Spiritus: 3-6+

Skills: Brawling at the same level as Dexterity, and Occult Knowledge at levels 1-5.

Powers: Elementals can channel 1 Essence Point per Turn for each Willpower and Intelligence level. Further, Fire Elementals can use all the effects of the Elemental Fire Invocation at normal Essence costs (see p. 215), with an effective Invocation Level equal to their Spiritus. Fire Elementals can also manifest a body of flame. While manifested, the creature inflicts 1 point of fire damage per Strength level to anything it touches (even 1 or 2 points will ignite flammable objects, so keeping the creature around where a lot of paper or gasoline can be found is not advisable). The Fire Elemental takes minimum damage from physical attacks (e.g., a gun doing D6 x 3 will only do 3 points of damage per shot) and half damage from fire and energy attacks. A bucketful of water will do D4 x 4(8) points of damage; a fire hose will inflict D10 x 5(25) points of damage.

Wildlings

These malevolent spirits are said to be corrupted and twisted nature spirits. According to some occultists, they are created when an animal is horribly abused or tortured to death by a human. The suffering inflicted somehow alters the Essence matrix of the original nature spirit, turning it into a sadistic being that savors the suffering and fear of humans. These spirits materialize by possessing and magically mutating small animals and vermin, typically dogs, cats, rats and other domesticated or human-dependent creatures. The result is a hideous mockery of life -- a little monster that sometimes has vaguely human features, or oversized claws and fangs for an animal of its size. The most common host body is a recently killed animal. Some of the younger Gifted contemptuously refer to Wildlings as “re-animated roadkill.” Their goals appear to be to harm humans, especially the weak and defenseless -- children are the favorite prey of Wildlings.

Wildlings are frequently found near human towns and cities, although the occasional creature can be found prowling through farmlands. Their numbers were few in the past, and were typically explained away as cases of rabies or other disease, or malformed animals. Wildlings are becoming increasingly common, however, and they are responsible for over a dozen deaths and nearly a hundred cases of freak “animal attacks” per year in the last few years. This will only get worse with time.

Fortunately, most Wildlings are lone hunters, or perhaps there were never enough of the creatures to result in any gatherings. Some Gifted have heard tales of Wildlings that hunt in packs. So far no credible evidence has been recorded to support this claim, although a couple of campers’ disappearances in Midwestern national parks may be linked to such events.

Dealing With Wildlings

Most Covenants have no dealings with Wildlings beyond destroying them on sight. The little beasts, either in spirit or physical form, make sullen, treacherous servants at best, and most of them will die before being Bound into servitude. The only exceptions to this rule are Black Magic practitioners, whose thirst for human suffering often equals or exceeds that of Wildlings. Some of these evil magicians have one or two of these creatures as guardians, pets or familiars.



Wildling

This is a sample Wildling, in both spirit form and, in this case, the re-animated corpse of a raccoon. The creature has enormous canines and long claws, and combines the raccoon's manual dexterity with the ferocity of a wolverine. Other Wildlings may be somewhat stronger or weaker.

Strength: 2

Intelligence: 3

Dexterity: 4

Perception: 5

Constitution: 3

Willpower: 4

Vital Essence: 19

Energy Essence: 8

Spiritus: 3

Life Points (in Raccoon Form): 27

Skills: Brawling 4, Dodge 3, Stealth 4

Powers: The Wildling needs 5 Essence and the corpse of a small animal (no larger than a dog) to physically manifest itself for 4 hours. Every night at midnight, this creature once again takes over the rotting body of the dead raccoon (the spirit will continue to use the body until it completely falls apart through decomposition) and prowls around until about four in the morning, looking for victims. During a full moon, the creature can operate for most of the night (see Times of Power, p. 203). While waiting for these times, the creature typically hovers in spirit form near the corpse. When manifested, this Wildling has claws that inflict $D6 \times 2(6)$ points of slashing damage. In spirit form, its claws will rend the Vital Essence of spirit entities.



Spirits of the Dead

Ghosts and other spirits of the dead are all too real in *WitchCraft*, and they are coming back from the grave in increasing numbers. Some are misguided and lost souls trying to finish things death left undone. Others are the souls of those who would not go gently into the night, who wish to perpetuate their existence at any cost.

In the world of *WitchCraft*, death is not the end of everything, but only the next stage in an ongoing cycle. Death releases the person's Essence from her body. This Essence contains the dead person's memories, personality and thinking processes. It is, in effect, the soul, which is almost impossible to destroy, although it can certainly be damned and diminished.

The recently dead have a number of choices. The Cycle of Life and Death has many possibilities, some dictated by the beliefs of the deceased, others a combination of chance and destiny, and by what the Eastern cultures call Karma -- one's actions through life, and the consequences of those acts. Many humans are reborn in a new human existence, forgetting their previous lives except in the most rudimentary of ways; these reincarnations appear to be shaped to fit as a reward or punishment for one's previous existence, although often in strange and mysterious ways.

Many others end up in the Death Realms, sections of the Otherworlds where the spirits of the dead can recreate their pasts, be punished for their misdeeds, or enter into the service of many of the powerful entities that dwell therein, for good or ill. Some Death Realms are the dwellings of demons and Fiends, and some humans are dragged there to be punished for their misdeeds. Others are the abodes of entities that claim the names of mythological gods, the realms of Hades and Valhalla and the Underworld. A spirit venturing into the Otherworlds may experience many lifetimes of adventure, strangeness and horror.

Finally, some go into the great Beyond, into the part of the Otherworlds known as Kether, the Fount of Creation, where it is said the True God, the Creator, dwells. What happens to these souls that enter Kether remains a mystery. Not even such beings as the Seraphim truly know the fate of these souls. They may become one with God, or enter into Heaven or Nirvana.

Such is the Cycle of Life and Death. Not all souls choose to participate in it, however. A few have the determination to remain in the physical world. These are the beings known as ghosts, phantasms and apparitions. Some do not realize they are dead, while others have urgent reasons that necessitate their remaining on Earth. Here only Ghosts are discussed. Other spirits of the dead are covered in the *Mystery Codex*, and future *WitchCraft* supplements.

Ghosts

Like the legends say, Ghosts are the souls of the dead who, for some reason or another, have elected to remain in the world of the Living. Most Ghosts are weak, pathetic things, bound to the world because of their traumatic deaths or because they feel they cannot leave before finishing some task or mission. Others have slowly accumulated power and taken total control of an area or locality; some of the most powerful Ghosts have completely taken over houses, caves, buildings and even small towns!

Powers Common to Ghosts

Ghosts and other spirits of the dead have a number of common abilities. Several of them are identical to those of other spirit entities (see pp. 258-259; others are unique.

Beings of Essence: Ghosts have Vital Essence and Energy Essence Pools. If the former is depleted, the Ghost will face dissolution; this may mean utter destruction, or perhaps a transfer to a removed plane of existence, but the Ghost will, effectively, cease to exist in our reality.

Channel and Tap into Essence: This is also identical to the spirit ability. During certain times, Ghosts can manifest themselves or use their special abilities with greater ease, by absorbing ambient Essence.

Evolution: Just like other spirits, Ghosts who learn how to take power from living beings can become increasingly more powerful.

Ghost Senses: Unlike other spirits, Ghosts have a unique blend of normal human senses and the ability to perceive the flow of Essence. Most of the time, Ghosts see the world like humans do, perceiving shapes and colors normally. They are also sensitive to the flow of Essence in living things, and they can see other invisible spirits and entities.

Immaterial: This is almost identical to the general spirit ability. The presence of a Ghost has a number of physical effects, however. When a Ghost is in the physical world, its presence causes the temperature around it to drop at least ten degrees Fahrenheit, and often much more. Small children, animals and imaginative adults will feel uneasy and tense without any good reason while the Ghost is near them.

Physical Manifestation: It takes a great deal of energy for Ghosts to manifest themselves. It takes an amount of Essence equal to the Ghost's total Vital and Energy Essence Pools, and the power must come from outside sources.

Spiritus: This is just like the general spirit ability.

Powers Special to Ghosts

Most Ghosts have at least one of the following abilities. Few have more than three, and only the most ancient and powerful ones have all of them. A Ghost with all available powers should also have high levels of Essence.

Anchoring: Many Ghosts are bound to a physical place or object. While they are in contact with or close to that place or object (no further than a dozen yards/meters away), the Ghost has access to an additional 10 to 50 Essence Points. This additional energy can be used for physical manifestations and to power other abilities. The drawback is that an Anchored Ghost suffers damage if it does not remain in close proximity to the Anchor, losing 1 Essence

Point (first from the Energy Essence Pool, but eventually from the Vital Essence Pool) for every minute it remains away. This is why most Ghosts tend to stay in one area for the duration of their existence.

Animate: Some Ghosts can toss objects around, manipulate things, and even attack people; those spirits have the Animate Power. This process uses a lot of Essence. Each point of Essence used gives the Ghost an effective Strength of 1 for the purposes of lifting, pushing, or throwing things (or people) around. This Strength lasts for 2 Turns, after which more Essence must be spent. Instead of Dexterity, manipulating objects requires either Willpower (for brute force actions like throwing things or pushing people) or Perception (for delicate activities like playing the piano with invisible fingers) plus any appropriate skills the Ghost knows.

Banshee: The Ghost can make sounds, from mocking laughter to deafening howls. The louder the sound, the more costly the power. Costs range from 1 point for a whisper to 16 points for a screech that will shatter glass.

Phantom Shape: By spending Essence, a Ghost with this power can make herself partially visible. It costs 5 Essence Points to make the Ghost translucent and 10 to appear truly solid and life-like. By spending 15 Essence Points, the Ghost can become partially material, with an effective Strength of 1 and a Dexterity equal to its Willpower. If a point of damage is inflicted on the Phantom Shape, however, it vanishes. All Phantom Shapes last one minute or until dispelled, whichever comes first.

Purpose: Most Ghosts stay on Earth for a reason, some job left undone or some obsession that brought them back from the grave. When performing any activities that would serve that Purpose, the Ghost temporarily gains an additional 10 to 50 Essence Points for every day that the activity is being pursued. The more urgent and important the activity and the Ghost's Purpose are, the more Essence the spirit gains. Once the Ghost's Purpose is finally fulfilled, it will usually Pass On.

Becoming a Ghost During Play

Given the dangers facing characters during a *WitchCraft* game, death is always a possibility. If a well-loved character dies tragically with her goals left unfinished, she might remain in the game -- as an incorporeal spirit of the dead. The Chronicler must be the judge of whether or not the return of the dead character as a Ghost will fit with the needs of the Story. In some cases, such an allowance may lead to players risking their characters recklessly, believing they will all get the chance to play a Ghost if their characters die. Also, keep in mind that characters from some Covenants (especially the Sentinels) consider death to be a natural ending to their current existence, and they would rarely return to the world as Ghosts.

If the Chronicler agrees to allow the deceased character to become a Ghost, the following rules of thumb can be used. The character loses her Gifted Powers and abilities, with the exception of Essence Channeling and Increased Essence (if any). To replace those abilities, she can pick any two of the special powers listed above. The character's Essence Pool in life becomes her Vital Essence; her Energy Essence is half that amount (rounded up). All other Attributes, Qualities and Drawbacks (except those that death would render meaningless, like Social Status), and skills remain the same. The character can only communicate with Gifted characters with Death Speech and similar powers, and she can only interact with the physical world in a limited way at best.



A Typical Ghost

This is a relatively "young" Ghost, with few powers or abilities. This spirit used to be a lovesick youngster who died trying to protect the woman he loved. He is determined to protect her in any way he can. Sometimes, he bounces his old basketball around his family's garage, which has greatly upset them.

Strength: 2 **Intelligence:** 3
Dexterity: 1 **Perception:** 2
Constitution: 2 **Willpower:** 4

Vital Essence: 28

Energy Essence: 14

Spiritus: 2

Skills: Brawling 2, Driving 2, Sport (Basketball) 2

Powers: Animate, Purpose (protect his girlfriend; gives him an extra 10 Essence per day when actively helping or protecting her).

Undead

Some of the dead refuse to abandon their existence. While many of those end up becoming ghosts and other disembodied spirits, a few actually violate the Life and Death Cycle and continue inhabiting their flesh, long after they should have surrendered it. These beings are known as the undead. To most humans, both Gifted and mundane, the undead are an abomination against the laws of Nature (of course, as some undead point out, many Gifted have also been called that, and worse). Although many of the undead are indeed evil, often preying on humans for sustenance, others have managed to strike a balance between their unearthly urges and their moral code, and lead unives that are not much worse than those of many humans.

The origins and powers of the undead are manifold. Some, like the Relentless Dead, are driven by emotions whose power overwhelms even the forces of death. Others are the creation of twisted sorcerers or alien beings from beyond the bounds of Reality. Among the ranks of the undead are nearly mindless creatures, ancient and wise hunters, and tragic and even heroic figures. Each “type” of undead has its own unique advantages and weaknesses. The differences among them are so profound that some occultists consider the term to be useless except as a broad categorization.

As the Time or Reckoning draws near, the dead are rising from their graves. Some can pass as human, and have very clear, if often inhuman, goals and purposes. Others simply shuffle along, hungering for fresh human flesh. Yet others have risen to stand alongside humankind in the coming struggle.

Two types of undead, the Relentless Dead and the Vampyres, are briefly described in this book. Rules on creating such beings as Cast Members for a *WitchCraft* game appear in the *Mystery Codex*.

Relentless Dead

Many of the dead leave behind families, loved ones, unfinished tasks, and long-kept memories. The Relentless Dead (also known simply as the Relentless) are those who, even after death, could not let go of their passion and pain, their righteous anger or their murderous fury. These passions were so strong that they overwhelmed the tides of the Cycle of Life and Death. Whereas others saw their connection to their bodies severed and they had to drift into the Otherworlds, Reincarnation or an incorporeal existence, the Relentless Dead remained behind, slowly gathering energy, preparing to return and give free rein to their passions.

Most Relentless Dead are driven by anger and the quest for revenge. Sometimes, such anger is justified, and is aimed at the guilty party. Some Relentless are supernatural vigilantes, striking back at their tormentors. A few only seek certain individuals; some have marked an entire family or clan for destruction, and make no distinction between the innocent and guilty. And many others are simply killing machines, whose anger encompasses all living things and who rise from the grave to commit murder in as many grisly ways as can be imagined. The latter type of creature has been responsible for many murders in remote forest areas and summer camps, their crimes discounted as the acts of lunatics. Their numbers are rising . . .

Powers Common to the Relentless Dead

Regardless of their origins and goals, the Relentless have a number of inhuman abilities and traits. They are almost impossible to destroy without the help of magic or other mystical powers, and as long as they have a goal, they will carry it out until destroyed. All the Relentless have the following abilities:

Inhuman Strength and Vitality: Most Relentless Dead are stronger than normal humans. Typically, their Strength and Constitution are 3 to 5 levels higher than average humans, and many have other Attributes above the human maximum. Life Points are affected by this rise in Attributes. The most powerful of these beings are able to overturn cars, kill human beings with single blows, and smash through walls and doors with terrifying ease. The Relentless do not have Endurance Points; they do not become fatigued or tired under any circumstances.

Invulnerability: The physical bodies of the Relentless Dead are animated by their Essence and their obsessions. As a result, they heal all damage inflicted with awesome speed. The rate of regeneration varies from creature to creature, but it will be no less than 1 Life Point per minute, and can be as high as 20 Life Points per Turn! Massive damage (large explosions, bonfires, or radical dismemberment, for example) may take days to heal, but no matter how thoroughly the Relentless is “killed,” it will eventually come back.

For example, Razorhand (see p. 271) is trapped in a burning warehouse, and his body is utterly immobilized. In game terms, he has been brought to -300 Life Points. The animated corpse repairs damage at the rate of 5 Life Points per Turn, however, or about 1 Life Point per second! In five minutes or so, Razorhand will be back up to 0 Life Points, and in another minute or so he will be back to full health.

Semblance of Life: The Relentless act, feel and look alive, complete with a pulse and all the normal signs of life. Even if the person was embalmed and dissected, the Relentless’ body will rise from the grave looking like that of a human. Often, the creature looks more pale than normal, but beyond that the appearance of normalcy is complete. Some Relentless display the scars of the injuries that killed them, and a few are hideously disfigured, but those wounds are only visible if the undead chooses (consciously or otherwise).

Wrath: The Relentless Dead are driven by Wrath, an overwhelming feeling of anger and a desire for revenge. This is a special Quality that only some supernatural beings possess. There are two types of Wrath. Noble Wrath is righteous indignation taken to

its extreme; a Relentless Dead with Noble Wrath is trying to right a wrong. Dark Wrath is a state of mindless fury at the Universe; the Relentless was hurt by the world often enough that all it knows is pain -- and the need to inflict it on others.

Whether it is Dark or Noble, Wrath is measured in levels. Most Relentless Dead have a Wrath rating of 3 or higher. The more horrible the crimes against them were, the higher the Wrath rating (a victim of child abuse may have a Wrath rating of 2 to 3; somebody who saw everyone she loved tortured to death before her eyes might have a Wrath rating of 5 or higher once she became a Relentless). Each Wrath level adds 4 points to the character’s Life Points and Essence Pools.

Additionally, this fury somehow helps deflect supernatural attacks. Any Magical, Seer or Necromantic attempt at controlling the mind of one of the Relentless is resisted using a Willpower and Wrath Task. Wrath also resists most supernatural attempts to restrain, limit or subdue the undead. Only direct attacks are unaffected by the driving anger of the Relentless.

Destroying the Relentless Dead

Mundanes are all but helpless against these creatures. Only a large number of people equipped with modern weapons and endowed with unusual courage would have a chance. The Relentless Dead can be subdued, and might be imprisoned for a long time: encasing the creature in a block of concrete and dropping it in a deep body of water would take care of the problem for at least some time. Sooner or later, however, the creature will rise again.

The only way to completely destroy the creature involves several steps. First, the undead must be reduced to -20 or less Life Points and -20 or less Essence Points. Achieving one without the other simply slows down the Relentless. Then, the link between the Relentless’ soul and body must be severed; this will require an Invocation like Spirit Mastery or Necromantic Death Lordship, and it will be resisted by the undead’s Willpower and Wrath levels. Only that will suffice to kill the Relentless.

Razorhand

The story of Razorhand is told around many a campfire late at night. He was raised by a madman in some God-forsaken wilderness, constantly beaten and abused. When he was five, his mother was murdered in front of him by his father, and the child was forced to help bury her body in the woods. His older brothers were killed one by one by the insane patriarch, and the young child was forced to help in disposing of their bodies. At age sixteen, the child's left hand was cut off for stealing. As the story goes, the cackling patriarch cauterized the wound with an open flame, and the young man died of the shock and pain and horror. And then he came back, replacing his hand with a cleaver knife which he used first on his father, then on the neighbors who had let the crimes happen, and then on anybody who crosses his path.

Strength: 7

Intelligence: 2

Dexterity: 3

Perception: 2

Constitution: 8

Willpower: 7

Vital Essence: 19

Energy Essence: 53

Life Points: 94

Skills: Brawling 4, Hand Weapon (Axe) (for the razor hand) 4, Stealth 3

Powers: Dark Wrath 6, and all Relentless Dead abilities

Special Attacks: Razor Hand does D6 x 7(21) points of slashing damage



Vampyres

The legends and tales about blood-drinkers are numerous and common among many different cultures. The Nosferatu are said to be the re-animated corpses of suicides, murderers or evil men, damned for all eternity, who live indefinitely by preying on the living. Many of the legends are not far off the mark.

Vampyres are created when the soul of a dying person refuses to abandon her body. Not all reluctant souls can escape their fate, but a few have enough strength of will, or are desperate enough, to manage this feat. Suicides sometimes refuse to Move On when they discover that death is not the end or escape they had hoped for, but just the beginning of a new stage of existence. People who fear the unknown are occasionally able to resist the currents of death. And finally, some are seduced into undeath by another Vampyre; in the modern world, they are the most numerous. The end result is the same, a creature of Essence bound to a corpse.

The living dead become more attuned to pain and pleasure than mere mortals. To be a Vampyre means becoming addicted to the temptations of the flesh. All feelings are magnified and savored tenfold by Vampyres. Coupled with this is the fact that their bodies are no longer subjected to the ravages of old age and disease. From a purely materialistic sense, becoming a Vampyre is a paradise of the senses.

The price for immortality is high, however. It requires a great deal of Essence to give the semblance of life to a dead body. Unlike the Relentless Dead, whose existence is fueled by strong emotions or an overriding obsession, Vampyres must gain Essence from the living. To survive, Vampyres must prey on humankind. Only the Essence of intelligent beings can provide the sustenance the undead require.

Contrary to popular myth, Vampyres do not need to drink blood to survive, although many of them do bleed their victims. In reality, Vampyres can only absorb the Essence of human beings who are experiencing strong emotions. Love, fear and sexual ecstasy are the best emotions for a Vampyre's needs. To feed, the undead must inspire any of these emotions on their victims. Some do not stop until the victim has nothing more to give.

The Nosferatu are not always evil, however. True, they were once seduced into rejecting the Cycle of Life and Death, but many are no more malevolent than any mundane, and some are a great deal more humane and kind. Many Vampyres live to enjoy intense experiences, and would not harm anybody without good cause. The feeling of superiority over humankind is hard to overcome, however, and most Vampyres fall prey to hubris at some point of their existence.

Most Vampyres are lone hunters, although small bands of the creatures, often led by their creator, sometimes travel and hunt together. There are rumors of a "Vampyre Covenant" that operates throughout some major cities of the world, but very few Gifted have heard more than a few rumors and wild tales about this, and no proof has ever been widely presented.

The signs of the Reckoning include an increase in the number of Vampyres being "born" through the simple refusal to Move On. Some Vampyres see the approaching time of troubles with the same trepidation as humans, seeing the end of their peace of mind and prosperity, and they have started taking action to help prevent this disaster.

Powers Common to Vampyres

Vampyres have a number of powers and abilities. The older and more experienced an undead is, the greater the range and strength of her powers. Most of these creatures have the following powers, to some degree or another.

Creatures of Essence and Flesh: Vampyres, even more so than other undead, mix the attributes of spirits with those of living beings. Vampyres have large Essence Pools (typically with no less than 30 points), but they are constantly being drained of Essence to keep their bodies going. Unlike living beings, Vampyres do not regain Essence normally; they must take it from living beings. Ambient Essence can be tapped, but each 5 points used in this manner will only restore 1 Essence Point to the Vampyre.

Essence Vampirism: Vampyres have the power to drain Essence from the living. Humans (especially the Gifted) are the richest sources of Essence, although Vampyres can also drain Essence from other supernatural beings, including other Vampyres. Indeed, a few undead actually prey on their fellow Nosferatu, either to eliminate the competition, because they are worthy prey, or to rid the world of such monsters. Taking Essence from a human requires the Vampyre to elicit a strong emotion in the victim. The easiest such emotion is fear; a human who falls prey to panic in the presence of a Vampyre unconsciously releases D6(3) Essence Points, which the undead will readily absorb. This process can be repeated until the human is reduced to -10 Essence Points (which gives the Vampyre those points), at which point the human will probably die. Pain produces a similar release of Essence; many Vampyres torture their victims to death.

The emotions do not need to be negative, however. Vampyres can as easily feed on the pleasure of humans as on their pain. Some specialize in the arts of seduction and sensual pleasure. A human brought to ecstasy through any combination of sensations will also be drained of D6(3) to D10(5) Essence Points. Draining a human below -30 Essence Points may still kill, but sybaritic Vampyres rarely resort to such crude methods.

Evolution: Vampyres can increase their Essence Pools over time by absorbing large amounts of Essence. Every time a Vampyre accumulates 50 Essence Points above their maximum capacity, their Essence Pool is raised by 1 level. The oldest Vampyres have Essence Pools in the hundreds of points. Otherwise, this power works just like the spirit's Evolution Power.

Inhuman Strength: Vampyres are much stronger than normal humans. Most of them, except those who were transformed when very young or small, have a minimum Strength of 4, and many of them have Strengths above the human limit of 6.

Invulnerability: Conventional weapons can only slow down Vampyres. Their bodies will recover from any type of injury given time, although they can feel pain and shock from their injuries. Leaving a Vampyre for dead is often a tragic mistake; not only will the creature recover but it will harbor an intense hatred for those who made it suffer. Any damage sustained by a Vampyre will be recovered at the rate of 1 Life Point for every level of Willpower at the end of each Turn. Damage inflicted on the Vampyre's Essence Pool is much harder to replenish, however. Contrary to popular belief, stakes through the heart are no more or less effective against Vampyres than any other weapon -- unless the weapon is somehow empowered through the expenditure of Essence (see Holy Symbols, p. 247). Likewise, religious symbols only affect Vampyres if they are held by the truly faithful -- and if the Vampyre has been truly guilty of serious crimes.

Manipulate Emotions: Just as Vampyres feed on emotions, they can "project" them towards others by manipulating the Essence of their victims. This process requires the Vampyre to succeed at a Simple Willpower Test; this is in turn resisted by a Difficult Willpower Test. The Vampyre can use social skills like Seduction to give this power a greater chance of success; each Success Level in such a Task will add a +1 to the Willpower Test.

If the Vampyre is successful, it can make the victim feel any emotion it wants. Most Vampyres instill in their victims a feeling of devoted love towards the undead. The power lasts for 5 minutes per level of success, and costs the Vampyre 1 Essence Point per level of Willpower of their victims (the easily led are easier to control). By repeated uses of this power, the Vampyre can extend this influence: every time this ability is successfully used on the same person, the duration of its effect is twice as long.

Eventually, some victims will truly come to feel the emotion instilled by the Vampyre, especially if treated appropriately (i.e., with the occasional word of kindness in return for loyal service). These entranced humans make loyal servants and minions.

Manipulations of the Flesh: Vampyres can use their Essence to manipulate their forms. Among other things, the creatures can make their bodies more attractive and life-like. Fangs and claws can be made to grow to inhuman lengths, the better to terrify and slay victims. By spending enough Essence, Vampyres can even assume the shape of animals. Birds, bats, rats and wolves are the most common shapes assumed. A few of the most powerful and skilled undead can also assume the form of other human beings, and try to impersonate other people; this requires a very precise focusing of the will and a constant expenditure of Essence that is beyond most common Vampyres.

Most changes, like growing claws, reshaping the face into an inhuman or monstrous shape, or growing fangs, costs 1 Essence Point, and the changes can be undone without spending any energy. Changing into an animal form costs 2 to 5 Essence Points (the larger the animal, the higher the cost), and lasts for 5 minutes before more Essence must be spent.

Semblance of Life: Vampyres can counterfeit life, at the cost of Essence. Giving a body the full semblance of life (including such signs as a pulse, warmth and a healthy skin color) costs 2 Essence Points per day. Maintaining vitality and strength but abandoning any pretense of being alive costs only 1 Essence Point every other day, but anybody touching or performing a medical exam on the Vampyre will realize something is terribly wrong (among other things, the Vampyre will lack a pulse and its flesh will be at room temperature). Furthermore, if a Vampyre's Essence Pool is reduced to 10 points or less, its body starts showing signs of deterioration. The skin becomes pale and increasingly discolored and dis-tended, and the Vampyre starts smelling of decay.

Weaknesses of the Vampyre

The Nosferatu do not enjoy a perfect, god-like existence, however. The creatures have a number of weaknesses and often uncontrollable lusts that frequently lead to their destruction. They also have many enemies.

Addiction to Suffering: Some Vampyres develop a taste for Essence with a particular “flavoring” -- that of agony and suffering. These monsters can feed on Essence released by other emotions, but they crave the flavor of terror and pain, and they often take insane risks to satisfy their craven urges. These Vampyres are the primary targets of such organizations as the Sentinels.

Daylight: Another major threat to the undead is sunlight. The Essence released by the sun and stars is a force of Life, and as such it reacts badly with a being that violates the normal order of Life. Although, contrary to myth, Vampyres can be active during the daylight hours, the Essence cost is high. An Essence Point is drained for every ten minutes of activity during the day, indoors or out. Direct sunlight also feels uncomfortable and almost painful, resulting in a -1 penalty to all Tasks or Tests while not in the shade or underground. To minimize Essence losses, most Vampyres slumber during those times; waking up during the day is very difficult, requiring a Difficult Willpower Test at a base -2 penalty.

Essence Depletion: The biggest weakness of Vampyres is their dependency on living things for Essence. If the undead's Essence Pool is reduced to -10 points or below, the Vampyre's body decomposes rapidly, and its soul is released, typically to an unhappy end in one of the Otherworlds. Essence attacks and simple starvation will destroy the Vampyre.

Holy Burial: Specialized religious burial rites for the undead, which usually include beheading the Vampyre, may also sever the link between the creature's body and soul. If such a rite is performed on the (typically slumbering) Vampyre, the creature must pass a Difficult Willpower Test, with a penalty of -1 per Success Level on the burying party's Humanities (Theology) Task (use the skill of the person officiating the ritual).

Donna DeBois

Donna DeBois is a rich recluse living in a beautiful manor house outside the town of Jerusalem, Massachusetts. She is an exotic dancer who performs at the Doll House, a strip joint in town. She is also the Truck Stop Killer, the uncaught murderer responsible for the deaths of over a dozen truckers throughout New England. Donna is 150 years old, a pale blonde with light blue eyes and a sensuous, come-hither smile. She enjoys playing with the lust of men, and occasionally kills the more obnoxious of her admirers.

The Vampyre's lair is a beautiful manor house that has seen few visitors (and even fewer who leave). It is staffed by two men and a woman who are utterly devoted to their mistress and who help clean up the occasional "mess" she makes when going hunting.

Strength: 8 **Intelligence:** 4

Dexterity: 5 **Perception:** 3

Constitution: 4 **Willpower:** 5

Energy Essence: 69

Life Points: 58

Qualities: Attractive +3, Cruel (level 1), Paranoid, Resources +5

Skills: Dancing 4, Driving (Cars) 4, Driving (Trucks) 4, Hand Weapons (Knife) 3, Seduction 7, Stealth 2

Powers: All Vampyre Powers



Bast

Cats have often inspired strong emotions in humans. At times, they have been worshipped; sometimes, they have been persecuted and murdered by the thousands. Superstition warns against leaving a cat in a room with a child, lest it steals the child's breath. They are considered to be symbols of bad luck, the familiars of witches, and, to many people, beloved pets.

Among the simple domestic cats, unknown to humankind, walk a special breed of felines. They are the ones behind many of the legends and the fears, the awe and myths. They are the Bast, the Spirit Cats, intelligent and mysterious, combining the powers of the Gifted with the unique nature of the cat and the intelligence of a human being. They are the friends of other Gifted.

Origins

The Bast originated in ancient Egypt, sometime during the First Kingdom period, over three thousand years before the Christian Era. Only the Bast themselves know the true story, and it has been garbled after centuries of retelling. Most versions agree that a Covenant of long-forgotten magicians somehow summoned hundreds of otherworldly spirits to Earth and then housed their Essence in the bodies of a number of wildcats that had been captured for that purpose. The goal of this massive ritual appears to have been the creation of an army of lithe creatures who would be stealthy, intelligent and who would combine the best elements of the wildcat with the natural magicks of spirits. Some of the spirits' links with the cats were stronger than others. While all the created creatures were intelligent and had special powers, a few, perhaps one in ten, could actually change their shape and assume the forms of short and slender humans for short periods of time.

The creatures adapted well to the process, and they served the magicians faithfully over the generations. The idea of having felines as pets and servants caught on, and eventually the wildcat species, whether inhabited by spirits or not, was domesticated by the ancient Egyptians. The Bast remained the most important among these creatures; some of their bodies were mummified alongside their human friends. Their name was eventually used for one of the deities of Egypt, Bast the cat-headed goddess, and all cats, Bast or not, were universally respected and loved.

Eventually, however, the power of Egypt waned as new nations and peoples raised their own civiliza-

tions. The ancient Covenants of Egypt disappeared or went underground, and so did the Bast. Persecuted out of the Middle East, a few traveled West during the time of the Crusades and reached Europe, where they and their animal brethren crossbred with the local wildcat species. In Europe, the Bast discovered and befriended the hidden witch covens of Europe. Among the Wicce, the Bast found a new home, and new human allies. When the Wicce were persecuted and killed, so were their "pets." Cats of all kinds were slaughtered throughout Europe, and many Bast suffered these indignities. Many remained with the surviving Wicce. Others fled for the safety of cities or the wilderness, and learned to trust only a few humans, Gifted and mundane, and to hide their abilities from all others. A few even turned feral and violent, and became a new bane of humankind, crawling through windows and killing the children of their tormentors -- these rogues gave rise to the tales of "breath-stealers," and their name is anathema among the other Bast.

In modern times, the Bast remain in hiding, either with Gifted human friends or living by their wits. They also sense that a dangerous new world is being born, and they need to take action against it.

Bast Characters

The specifics of generating Bast Cast Members are presented in Chapter Three: Roles (see pp. 52-54). These rules may be used by Chroniclers to create Supporting Cast or Adversaries out of the Bast as well. An example of a Bast character may be found among the Archetypes outlined at the end of Chapter Three: Roles (see p. 112).

Demons

Demons are the fallen angels of religious stories, beings of great power who harbor a deep hatred for humankind. Their main goal is the downfall of humans, but they are prevented from acting openly. They almost always rely on human pawns, and only use their powers when defending themselves or if confronted by other supernatural beings. The reasons for this are a matter of speculation. According to some Gifted lore, demons are Fallen Seraphim, angels who tried to turn against humankind and thus fell from Grace. Prevented by the Will of God (or, some suggest, the might of the victorious Seraphim) from hurting humans directly, demons must try to use the Free Will of the mundanes against them, making humans hurt and destroy each other and themselves through their greed, prejudice, ignorance and lusts. Hate a neighbor? A demon (usually in an attractive human shape) is only too happy to make sure a gun is laying around that may be used to kill her with. Want to do hard drugs? An evil Seraphim is always running the best stuff.

Demons are tempters and seducers. Their goal is to lead humans astray, and to spread misery on Earth. They whisper in the ears of hatemongers, criminals and the gullible. They are behind many tragedies and unthinkable acts. They despise humankind, and in each human they successfully tempt they see further proof that they were right in their hatred for that species.

However, these strange beings have a stake in our Reality, and they are as worried as the Gifted about the signs of the Reckoning. These strange, apocalyptic events are not their work, and they don't like an unknown third party "muscling in" on their territory. Occasionally, a demon has actually come to the aid of a group of Gifted fighting the Mad Gods (see p. 281). Most of the time, the fallen angel followed the help with an attempt to tempt and deceive their Gifted allies. Even in the face of the Apocalypse, demons try to come out on top.

Powers Common to Demons

Demons have great reservoirs of Essence and are lethal opponents, even against a group of Gifted humans. However, the restriction against harming humans applies to demons -- as long as the Gifted do not attack the demon first. Often, these creatures try to provoke their opponents into striking the first blow, and then they are free to use their vast power. The best way to defeat a demon is to outmaneuver it, to help those it has tempted find their way back, or to undo the harm it has wrought. Remember that, to most evil Seraphim, humans are stupid, violent and weak-willed; showing them nobility, generosity and kindness often ruins their disposition and forces them to beat a hasty retreat.

Essence: Most demons have vast reservoirs of Essence, with no less than fifty and as many as several hundred points. Demons can channel Essence freely; basically, they can spend as much Essence as they want, when they want, as long as they have it. Their Essence Pool regenerates at very high rates.

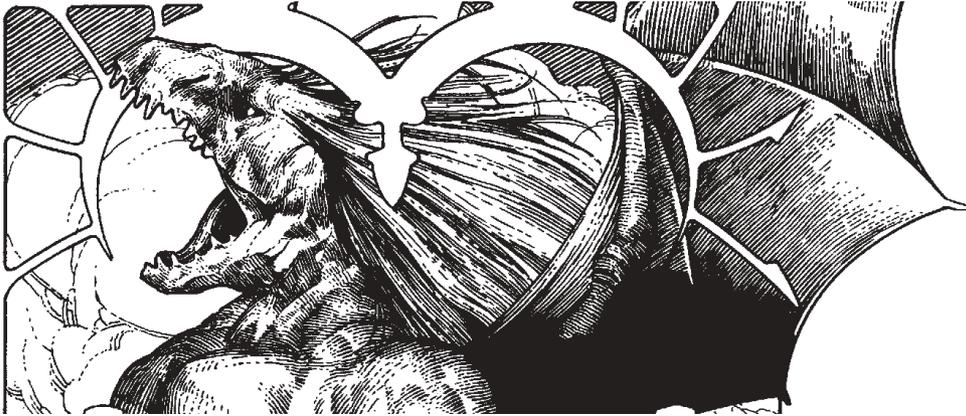
Inhuman Attributes: Demons will rarely have Attributes below a 4 or a 5, and most will be between 6 and 9, with a couple at 10 or higher!

Invulnerability: Destroying a demon's material body does not kill it. It is an inconvenience, however, as the creature's spirit is catapulted back to the Otherworlds, to the hellish realm its kind inhabit, and it will take some time (at least a number of months) to craft a new body. On the other hand, a demon can heal any damage by spending Essence, repairing its body at the rate of D10(5) points per Essence Point spent. The only sure way to destroy a demon through conventional means is to use high explosives; that should do enough damage to destroy the demon's body before it can repair the damage. Still, explosives often kill innocents, and a demon will gladly trade a mortal sheath for the chance to turn heroic saviors into baby killers.

Supernatural Abilities: Demons can spend Essence to produce a number of powerful effects, such as shape-shifting and illusions. These powers can be simulated using Invocations and Seer Powers. Chroniclers should keep in mind that there is only one way for the Cast Members to know the limits of a demon's powers -- the hard way.

Using Demons in a Story

Demons make better plot devices than random encounters. While Vampyres, malignant spirits and evil Gifted can be great rivals and Adversaries in head-on confrontations, demons are enemies to be faced with care and strategy. Their plots are often devious and complex, and they are usually dependent on the ill will and dark side of a number of mundanes.



Luce "Red" Quisling

Luce (or as he prefers to be called, "Red") is an international weapons dealer. He is also involved in white slavery, drug smuggling, government subversion, and a number of other unsavory trades. One day, he can be found in Los Angeles, selling automatic weapons to young kids. The next, he could be in England, helping supply a splinter IRA group planning to bomb a mall in London. The next could find him in South Carolina, giving a speech about supremacy and selling a truckload of Soviet Bloc weapons after the festivities, or in Brazil, demonstrating the latest methods of torture to a shadowy government agency.

"Red" is a well-muscled, ruggedly handsome man who dresses in whatever clothing fits the occasion. He will sport green fatigues when talking to militia members, a dark business suit when selling poison gas to a foreign government, a colorful shirt and Bermuda shorts when negotiating in a Bangkok bordello for the price of six American college girls. He is surrounded by human servants, each of them well and thoroughly damned for all eternity, their souls blackened by all manner of crimes, each more terrible than the next. "Red" rarely gets his own hands dirty with any of the action. He is a middle-man, making sure that one human supplier meets a human interested in buying the merchandise -- as long as the merchandise costs human lives and inflicts untold suffering. On numerous occasions, revenge seekers have tried to take Luce out; their bodies have never been found.

Strength: 8

Dexterity: 6

Constitution: 7

Intelligence: 8

Perception: 7

Willpower: 8

Life Points: 110

Energy Essence: 140

Qualities and Drawbacks: Attractive +2, Resources +7, Cruel (level 2)

Skills: All combat skills at level 5, every human language at level 6, Smooth Talking 5, Seduction 5.

Powers: All Demon Powers.

Seraphim

There are angels walking among the ranks of humanity. They are the Seraphim, glorious beings of light. These powerful, holy beings are believed to be the Servants of the Deity, the righteous warriors and agents of the Creator, the defenders of all that is good.

Many of them have serious attitude problems, however.

Not all of them, of course. Some are just as nice and gentle as they are depicted in the old stories. But the ones that are manifesting themselves on Earth are filled with more righteous anger than charity or compassion, and some have adopted the attitude that the human "children" have been misbehaving and that it is time for the adults to come in and take over.

It doesn't help that they do not like most of the Gifted -- even the Inspired. They consider all use of paranormal activities to be sinful usurpations of the Divine Powers by the mere mortal, and as such they should be punished. Usually, the Seraphim cannot harm humans; they are under restrictions that are just as strong (and ironically familiar) to those that apply to demons. But occasionally, an angel will try to teach an uppity Mortal a lesson or two.

In the world of *WitchCraft*, all is not well among the Celestial Hosts. A few Gifted have heard rumors, stories of dejected Seraphim muttering about the lack of leadership at the higher ranks. Some of the stories claim that the Archangels have not been in contact with the Deity for thousands of years. There is dissension among the Seraphim as to what to do about the signs of what may be the Final Battle. Some are content with watching and waiting. Others are coming down to the material world, where they often will appear in the nick of time to save the lives of a band of Gifted warriors -- or to spoil their plans for no apparent reason.

Powers Common to the Seraphim

Seraphim are usually more than a match for any Gifted and most supernatural beings. They are not meant to be fought, but rather interacted with in the course of a game. The angels may also act as the "cavalry," arriving just in time to save the Cast Members from disaster. Such contrivances should be used sparingly, and only when the Cast Members have earned them through their behavior.

Essence: Most Seraphim have vast reservoirs of Essence, with no less than 60 and as many as several hundred points. The Seraphim can channel Essence freely; basically, they can spend as much Essence as they want, when they need it, as long as they have it. Their Essence Pool regains lost power at very high rates as well.

Inhuman Attributes: Seraphim will rarely have Attributes below a 4 or a 5, and most will be between 6 and 9, with a couple at 10 or higher!

Invulnerability: Destroying a Seraphim's material body does not kill it. The Seraphim needs time to create a new material body, however, and this may affect its plans on Earth. However, the Seraphim can heal any damage by spending Essence, repairing its body at the rate of D10(5) points per Essence Point spent.

Supernatural Abilities: The Seraphim can use the equivalent of any Inspired Miracle pretty much at will, although they are also restricted from using such powers against the helpless, or for petty, selfish reasons. They can also change their shape, hiding their nature in a humanoid shell.

Using the Seraphim in Stories

The Seraphim are good for the more bizarre games. They can serve to demonstrate that the Reckoning is even more serious than the characters thought. Their self-righteousness and sometimes paternalistic attitude towards humans may cause characters to question their place in the order of things. Perhaps, even angels are not perfect, and as subject to human frailties as mere mortals.



The Angel Galael

This Seraphim is known in some occult circles as "Heaven's Legbreaker." He only appears to eliminate supernatural threats -- including meddling Gifted humans -- that for some reason or another offend the Heavenly Host. One demon who was overtly killing humans, three Dark Magicians, and a Rosicrucian who used his powers to kill a number of mundanes are all known to have died at Galael's hands. The Seraphim does not use his supernatural powers directly. Instead, he appears as a tall, dark-haired man in a black trenchcoat and sunglasses, armed with a sawed-off shotgun and a brace of Bowie knives. His M.O. consists of walking up to the target's home or place of business, and blazing away with the shotgun. Galael will only use his powers to neutralize any hostile magic, and to somehow distort the memories of any mundane witnesses.

The Legbreaker has little concern over "collateral damage." Several innocents have been wounded or even killed in his rampages. Once, when confronted by a Sentinel about this, he simply said: "If their souls are pure, I just sent them to Heaven. What is wrong with that?" The Sentinels believe he is a rogue Seraphim, and his name is on their "Most Wanted" list. Other Covenants think he typifies the arrogance of the Seraphim.

Strength: 9

Intelligence: 7

Dexterity: 8

Perception: 6

Constitution: 7

Willpower: 7

Life Points: 130

Energy Essence: 109

Qualities and Drawbacks: Attractive +3, Delusion (All Humans are Hopeless)

Skills: Guns (Handgun) 6, Guns (Shotgun) 6, Martial Arts 5, Intimidation 5.

Powers: All Seraphim Powers above, plus a special ability to muddle the memories of mundanes; normal humans will forget details of an incident, and usually "remember" a logical explanation for any weirdness they witnessed. Even cameras and other recording devices will malfunction or produce blurred, ambiguous pictures!

The Mad Gods

In the archives of occult societies and in the oral traditions of the oldest Covenants, one can find tales and warnings about beings that are stranger and more dangerous than any spirit, demon or undead. There are creatures that come from beyond Reality, from beyond the Realms of Essence. Their purposes are unfathomable. The ancient peoples had a name for their kind: the Mad Gods, the Beings from Outside.

Some of them can drive humans insane and tear down the fabric of Reality by their mere presence. Others seem to exist only to eat and consume all around them. A few of them show a degree of intelligence and willing malignancy; those seem to wish to displace our Reality with their own. The Reckoning may be their doing, or perhaps just their time to rise.

The occultists who have studied the Mad Gods (often risking their lives and sanity doing so) believe these beings come from an altogether different plane of existence, somewhere outside the order of things on both Earth and the Otherworlds. The Mad Gods may come from one alien plane of existence, or from several. Since the powers and abilities of the Mad Gods vary widely, the second possibility may be the most likely case. Being creatures from beyond our Reality, their intrusion in our worlds brings havoc and destruction just by their innate, fundamental strangeness. They are like cancerous cells growing and slowly destroying a body, or like black holes in the deepest pits of space, sucking light and everything around them. Some are incredibly ancient, and have visited our Reality in the past. Some occultists claim that the Mad Gods (or maybe only one or two of them) were responsible for the disasters that wiped out the dinosaurs on Earth and cleansed the planet Mars of all life. Once manifested in full force, these beings are almost impossible to destroy. Even pure Essence is often not enough.

Fortunately for our existence, even beings like these have to follow some rules. Breaking the barriers between our Reality and the Outside is incredibly difficult. It requires not only enormous power, but the willing connivance of living beings from our own Reality. Most beings from our Reality, from the holiest Sentinel to the most depraved Vampyre and jaded demon, are repulsed by and afraid of the Mad Gods. Only the utterly deluded or insane will willingly cooperate with these beings. Why some humans give themselves up to beings who embody only madness and destruction baffles some Gifted, but there are always willing cultists to perform the obscene rites of summoning necessary (see p. 287).

For all their terrible power and strangeness, the Mad Gods are further hampered from intruding into our Reality by the fact that these beings do not work as a group. It appears that there are many enmities among these beings and their minions. Some Mad Gods are as strange and alien to others as they are to us. Although playing a Mad God and its minions against another is theoretically possible, their incomprehensible natures make such tasks very difficult and likely to backfire on the perpetrators.

The actual shapes of the Mad Gods differ from one to the next. They are almost always inhuman and revolting. Their true shapes are believed to be impossible for humans to behold; what we see and sense is nothing more than our mind's best efforts to cope with a sight we were not meant to envisage. Thus, the Mad Gods often appear to be made of rotting or decaying flesh. They reek of corruption and death. Their forms often have multiple limbs or sensory organs, to represent their alien abilities and senses. Some appear to be moving pools of utter darkness or radiant, feverish heat. In all their forms, they inspire in those from our Reality a feeling of utter horror, of being confronted with something that has no place in our order of being.

Powers Common to the Mad Gods

The Mad Gods are not creatures of Essence; instead, they are made of a form of energy known as Taint, or Dissolution. The Mad Gods, some of their minions, and even some of their human followers, have a Taint Pool, a reserve of the energies of anti-Creation, a force beyond the Order and Entropy that twists Reality in often unexpected ways. Many of their powers are activated by using Taint Points.

Some Chroniclers may hesitate to assign Attributes and Limits to the Mad Gods, simply because their power is so high that statistics become meaningless; as usual, that is their choice. One of the reasons this and other books will list such statistics is to provide a glimmer of hope in the game. Anything with numerical limits may be destroyed by a greater force -- even if it is a force that the Cast Members do not have. If the Chronicler wants to give her players some hope (and hope should be a part of most *WitchCraft* games), then assigning Attributes and Limits to these entities makes sense.

Inhuman Attributes: Some of the Mad Gods are gigantic beings whose physical Strength and Constitution are at least 10, and sometimes reach the hundreds. Their mental Attributes are often inhumanly high, never less than 5.

Invulnerability: The Mad Gods have varying degrees of resistance to harm. Some can be harmed by conventional weapons, but are so large and heal damage so quickly that even military ordinance may not do the job. Others are unaffected by all forms of mundane attacks, and only pure Essence has any prayer of affecting or hindering them in any way.

Shock the Senses: Beings from our Reality are simply not built to perceive the utter alienness of the Mad Gods. Mundanes who see any such creature risk losing their sanity and even their lives. Even the Gifted and other supernatural creatures cannot face these beings unaffected. All Mad Gods inspire Fear in those who behold them, often at very high penalties.

Suck Essence: Some Mad Gods absorb Essence the way a black hole absorbs light. Any living being close enough to a Mad God starts losing Essence at rates ranging from D4(2) points per hour to D10(5) points per Turn! Depending on the size or power of the creature, this distance could be a few yards (meters) away, or a few miles (kilometers) away. This Essence loss can only be stopped by the Shielding Invocation (see p. 220) and similar barriers, and is accompanied by a feeling of utter terror and madness.

Twist Time and Space: Once they manifest in our Reality, the Mad Gods can impose their rules on it. Each Mad God has its own special abilities to make the laws of gravity, of time and space, of relativity, cease to work or behave in unexpected ways. These abilities cost Taint Points.

Minions of the Mad Gods

The Mad Gods are not the only entities from Outside that venture into our Reality. Others, lesser beings, sometimes find it easier to slip in between the cracks between our world and their own. Although not quite as powerful as their Masters, they are capable of much mayhem on their own; even worse, however, most of these beings arrive on Earth and the Otherworlds with the sole purpose of facilitating the arrival of their Masters.

Some minions are utterly mindless, while others are apparently quite intelligent and cunning. A few appear capable of intelligence, but their thought processes so alien and incomprehensible it is difficult to tell. Their shapes are as varied as the beings they serve, ranging from the human-like to the obscene. Many of them are incorporeal entities with some of the properties of spirits, while others inhabit the flesh of living beings and corrupt them thoroughly, infusing them with Taint.



Nath-Shagraa

So what would have happened if the Gifted in the opening story of this book had failed to stop the summoning of this Mad God? First, the farmhouse and the surrounding land, and everything on it, would have been sucked in and given shape to a hundred-foot tall, two-legged, massive monstrosity of tentacles and pincers and gaping mouths. Even if all the beings of power in the area had hurried to join forces to stop it (as they would have certainly done), the ensuing battle would have devastated most of the state, and plunged the world into panic, accelerating the Time of the Reckoning.

Strength: 30

Dexterity: 2

Constitution: 45

Intelligence: 11

Perception: 9

Willpower: 12

Life Points: 500

Taint Pool: 450

Powers: All beings who behold Nath-Shagraa must pass a Fear Test at a -5 penalty. Further, the skin of the Mad God is highly resistant to damage, and the creature regenerates damage at a frightening rate. In game terms, Nath-Shagraa has a natural Armor Value of 20 points, and heals damage at the rate of 12 Life Points per Turn. Also, Nath-Shagraa can bathe an area of fifty square feet (twenty square meters) with a black aura of Corruption by spending 5 Taint Points. Everybody in the area must pass a Difficult Constitution Test or their flesh will sprout sores full of infection, losing D6(3) Life Points per Turn until they move away from the aura, and then for 2 more Turns afterwards. Finally, everyone within 10 yards (meters) of Nath-Shagraa loses D6(3) Essence Points per Turn.

Powers Common to Minions

Some servants of the Mad Gods have reservoirs of Taint that they can use to pervert nature and break down Reality. Others are capable of transcending the limits of the three dimensions or even of the separation between the physical and spirit worlds.

Immaterial: A number of Minions can become immaterial like spirits. These creatures are clearly visible to mundanes and can affect (and harm) physical objects and people, but they can also walk through walls and be unaffected by physical attacks. How the creatures can be both tangible and intangible to suit their needs is a mystery. Only direct Essence attacks appear to work against Minions with these abilities.

Inhuman Attributes: Minions come in all sizes and shapes, from the small and weak (with lower than average Attributes) to the gigantic and powerful. Although never as powerful as the Mad Gods, some Minions have superhuman Attributes.

Invulnerability: A few servants of the Mad Gods are immune to conventional weapons, although most just tend to be very large and hard to kill.

Destroying Minions

Ridding the world of one of the monstrous servants of the Mad Gods is often like destroying any other living thing. In some cases, however, the creatures are extremely hard to kill or banish. The best weapon is pure Essence. Essence reacts violently to creatures of Taint, burning them as it eradicates them from our Reality. These attacks diminish the monster's Taint Pool; if they reduce it to -10 points or below, it is destroyed. In most cases, it ceases to exist altogether. In others, physical trappings explode in a disgusting shower or melt into goo.

Their unnatural existence hinders some creatures. Many of these monsters cannot readily manifest themselves in this Reality, and even when they do, some suffer from Dissolution drain as Existence itself rebels and tries to expel the monsters. The more powerful and alien the creature is, the less likely its long-term survival in the world gets. However, even in a short amount of time, these monsters can do a lot of harm.



"Aunt Beth"

This is the hideous creature that attacked the characters in the opening story of this book. Monsters of this type inhabit the flesh of the recently dead and use it to fashion a bloated monster, barely recognizable as having once been human. Very strong and hard to kill, these monsters cannot survive for long in our plane of existence, however, unless their Master manages to manifest Itself in this Reality.

Strength: 8 **Intelligence:** 1
Dexterity: 3 **Perception:** 1
Constitution: 7 **Willpower:** 2

Life Points: 60

Taint Pool: 20

Skills: Brawling 4

Powers: While these monsters are in possession, the tongue of the human corpse becomes hideously long and prehensile, allowing for attacks at targets up to four yards (meters) away, inflicting D6 x 8(24) points of damage. Further, the Minion's leathery skin is very tough, providing it with an Armor Value of 8.

Vulnerabilities: Every five minutes the creature stays in our Reality, it loses 1 Taint Point.

The Evil That Men Do

Not all, or even most, of the horrors that grow in number as the Time of Reckoning approaches are the work of supernatural creatures. Humankind is quite capable of inflicting all manner of horrors upon itself. In the world of *WitchCraft*, Gifted and mundanes are behind many supernatural dangers.

Some humans pose a magical threat by using their powers to exploit others. Others gain powers by making pacts with dark forces, be they demons or evil spirits, or, even worse, the Mad Gods. There are also organizations that have been secretly manipulating the affairs of the mundanes for generations, and they resent any intrusion or attempt at casting light on their activities. Although not a direct supernatural threat, these organizations may be the unwitting pawns of powerful, inhuman entities.

Dark Covenants

Not all the Gifted choose to use their power wisely and discreetly. Some, in fact, scoff at the idea that the Gifted should not meddle in the affairs of the mundanes. They consider themselves to be far superior to the teeming masses of humankind, and wish to become its rulers. Others are motivated by dark urges and emotions, by hatred or greed or uncontrolled lusts, and they see in their powers a key to get what they want, be it revenge against all who wronged them or the satisfaction of their every craving. Many of these evil Gifted work alone, but many band in large groups, known as the Dark Covenants.

The Dark Covenants are many and have differing goals and purposes. Some are smaller than a prosperous Coven or Shrine, while others have hundreds of members, Gifted and mundane. The Chronicler is encouraged to create her own Dark Covenants, using the suggestions below as a guideline, or to refer to other sourcebooks in the *WitchCraft* line for ideas.

Black Magic

Black Magic Covenants are made up of practitioners who reject the ideals of balance and restraint. For them, the world is free for the taking, and their motto is “Do What You Will,” with no qualifications or conditions. They will use their magicks to get anything they want, regardless of who gets hurt in the process.

The nature of Magic generally rejects this type of behavior. Magicians who attempt to do this often find themselves unable to Dismiss the forces they have raised, and are eventually consumed by them. A few

Gifted have discovered a new variety of Magic that does not require as much restraint and balance -- Black Magic.

Black Magic uses a bitter, tainted form of Essence, an Essence colored by suffering and flavored with misery. For Black Magic to work, somebody must get hurt in the process. There are no happy endings when this power is used, and those who use it will never know peace again.

Black Magic does not have any Dismissal penalties occasioned by the intent of the sorcerer (see *Intent and Magic*, p. 199). Additionally, the Magicians can steal the power of unwilling humans, usually by torturing or killing them and then tapping into the Essence being released by their agonies. The price for this power is great, however. Any use of Black Magic will hurt either the recipient or the sorcerer herself. If the Magician helps somebody with it, she will be hurt; if she helps herself, somebody around her will suffer for it. Even the members of the same Dark Covenant are not protected from these sinister side effects, and much of their time is spent trying to get ahead by destroying their fellow Black Magicians. This is the reason why Black Magic Covenants are rarely very large or well-organized; the back-stabbing, jealousies and petty feuds are too frequent for these groups to prosper for long.

Creating Black Magicians

These characters are created as normal Gifted or Lesser Gifted characters. Black Magic uses many of the same Invocations as regular Magic, except there will always be consequences, either for the Magician or for those around her. Black Magicians never have

many friends, and rarely care about anybody but themselves. They tend to have a number of severe mental Drawbacks, including Emotional Problems and Delusions. Some start their own little group of Magicians, or they surround themselves with mundane “groupies”.

Chroniclers can vary the point totals of these characters to make them as powerful (or weak) as they need to be to suit the needs of the Story (see *Creating a Supporting Cast and Adversaries*, p. 294).

The Damned

There are some people who will do anything to get what they want. A few will actually barter with the Devil -- or at least some type of demon.

The Damned are humans who are willing to provide services for demons in return for power. They worship demons and their Dark Masters, and perform all manner of obscene acts to curry favor with their hateful overlords. They are fairly rare, for most demons prefer to work with people who do not realize who they are dealing with. Those willing to sell their souls to the Devil are pretty much damned anyway; demons prefer to tempt the holy and pure, the kind and generous, and turn their good qualities into ashes. Those who are willing to Damn themselves are held in great contempt by the fallen angels.

Some Damned gain a measure of power from their dark deeds. One of their main purposes is the corruption of the innocent, usually through the systematic abuse of the young and helpless. Such victims are not only scarred by the abuse, but they grow up disbelieving in the existence of Good and eventually start their own cycle of abuse and terror. To reward them for these acts, demons grant the Damned a number of special abilities, some of them mockeries of the powers of the Inspired. The Damned may get, instead of the Strength of Ten, a Berserker Strength that has similar benefits, but which makes the benefactor become a homicidal maniac. Other Damned receive Gifted Powers similar to the Sight and Necromancy, but conditional on their continual servitude.

Most demon-worshippers are nothing but mundanes, however, pitifully deluded mortals who commit minor blasphemies and hope to get something in return. Some are insane psychopaths who perform all manner of atrocities in the name of Satan, although the responsibility for these actions is theirs alone. Even mundane cultists can be dangerous, however, for their members are often quite willing to kill, and because their hatred and sick faith may act as a barrier against Magic and other powers.

Creating the Damned

Depending on what the Chronicler wants to use them for, the Damned can be pathetic or monstrous. The truly powerful Damned are very rare; many are naturally Gifted who worship the Dark Powers simply out of personal choice. The few that get demonic powers are able to channel Essence and can perform twisted versions of normal Inspired Miracles. These powers work in a manner similar to the Miracles, but always extol a terrible price, or have a dark, often ironic side effect.



The Followers of the Mad Gods

The Mad Gods cannot manifest in this world without the help of humans. Many dark cults have appeared throughout history to help these alien, monstrous beings enter and consume our Reality.

At first glance, it might be easy to confuse the followers of the Mad Gods with “Satanic” groups who worship demons in exchange for power. Demon-worshippers are seduced by promises of pleasure, wealth and decadence. The Cults of the Mad Gods are driven insane by their contact with beings of utter alienness. They do not make a pact and gain something in return: they are enslaved body and soul to beings that make even demons quail in fear.

Why would anyone worship the Mad Gods? Many of these worshippers are men and women who have come to believe, often after horrible experiences, that the world is a cruel, insane place where the only realities are the idiot pain of dying babies and the cruel laughter of serial killers. Their disgust with reality is such that they want nothing less than total oblivion for all things. Many of them are survivors of child abuse, incest, genocide campaigns, prolonged torture, or worse. In the throes of their suffering, some of them made contact with something beyond reality, something that offered revenge and even more than revenge, an end to all things, to all the pain and suffering. Other scarred people were recruited in turn by these visionaries. Still others were otherwise normal humans who accidentally encountered one of the Mad Gods, and had their sanity seared away by the experience, leaving behind a human shell possessed only of an urge to serve their new Master.

These cultists have nothing to lose, and have no compunction about sacrificing their lives, let alone those of other people. In the service of their strange Masters, some of them acquire strange powers or bizarre stigmata that mark them as something inhuman. Most of them are mundanes, driven by fanaticism and hatred, and very dangerous for all their lack of mystical powers.

Creating Cultists

Most of these people are Mundanes with relatively low Attributes and skills, which are sometimes balanced by the fact that one or two have unnatural powers, courtesy of their link with the Mad Gods. A few may even have some of the powers described under the Minions of the Mad Gods, including a Taint Pool, which they can use to warp the natural order. Humans with Trait Pools are becoming cut off from our Reality: a common symptom of their power is that their flesh begins to rot away in a manner similar to leprosy, but much faster and more insidiously.



The Combine

People often wonder why things happen the way they do. All it takes is one look at the world to raise far too many uncomfortable questions. In one country, food is destroyed to keep prices high while in another people starve. Unemployment suddenly drops, but so do the prices in the stock market. An Air Force toilet costs thousands of dollars. It is a world where the actions of governments and corporations often make absolutely no sense. Some people start thinking of “They,” as in “It would be easy to fix the welfare problem, but They don’t want it to be fixed.” A few start speculating about ancient conspiracies, the Bavarian Illuminati, and secret board meetings where the fate of millions is decided in a short conversation. Those speculations may not be completely off the mark.

The new generation of Gifted refer to “They” as the Combine, after the name of the establishment in the novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Due to their powers and interests, some Covenant members have discovered hints and clues pointing to an international conspiracy that is the cause behind much of the seeming lack of sense in world affairs. The Gifted have found indications that this organization has done its best to keep the populace ignorant and entertained through bland mass media programs, while it continues to exploit it. Its real purposes appear to be as strange and unknowable as those of the Mad Gods -- and perhaps this is not a coincidence.

Only a few “facts” are known about the Combine.

Fact: It is extremely secret. Most of its agents are dupes who know little about who or what they are working for.

Fact: Its power is mostly, perhaps exclusively, mundane. So far, nobody with paranormal powers has been identified as working for the Combine, although there are rumors that the Combine is establishing training camps to raise a new breed of Seer agents and soldiers.

Fact: It can wield enormous influence, often in subtle ways. On many occasions, when someone has gotten too close to the Combine, strange things have started to happen to her. Her electrical power gets

shut off, her credit cards get canceled, or she is accused of a crime or sued by somebody she has never heard of. The number and intensity of the problems rise in proportion to how close the person has gotten to learning something important about the organization or its activities.

Fact: They are not afraid to use lethal force to keep the secret. Those who press on despite the difficulties (or who use magic or other powers to circumvent them) eventually are visited by teams of unsmiling men in business suits, who proceeded to murder or attempt to murder them. Many have had to leave their homes, forge a new identity, and live in hiding to avoid being entirely destroyed by the Combine.

Beyond this, very little is known about the Combine. Some people speculate that the organization is a mundane conspiracy of enormous power, but which has little interest in (or perhaps is afraid of) supernatural powers except when they interfere with their business. Others think that the Combine is the puppet of a Mad God, demon or some other powerful supernatural being, who uses its powers subtly to avoid detection, relying whenever possible on its human pawns. And some think that no one organization is in charge, that there are several Combines, each fighting each other.

Using the Combine

Occasionally, it is good to give the Cast a different challenge. Instead of another supernatural threat, how about an enemy that uses only computers and guns and credit histories? Going up against the Combine is like being given a giant puzzle with over half of its pieces missing -- characters must risk getting killed each time they go after one of the missing pieces. A big theme of the Combine is that the truth is always hidden by layer upon layer of lies -- and even when characters think they have uncovered a secret, they may just have been duped by yet another layer of deceit. Even supernatural powers should not be enough to reveal all the facts behind the conspiracy.

For inspiration on how to use the Combine, players may reference the *Conspiracy X* roleplaying game line from Eden Studios, or *GURPS Illuminati* by Steve Jackson Games.



Combine Agent

The assassins and troubleshooters of the Combine are recruited from the militaries and the intelligence communities of the world. They are selected for their willingness to follow orders, to kill without hesitation, and to keep their mouths shut. It is rumored that some of these agents are conditioned with drugs and hypnotic therapy to further enhance their abilities. This brainwashing induces an inability to tell the truth about their employers. A conditioned agent will lie very convincingly, and will not be able to reveal the truth even if subjected to torture. Apparently, the block is so strong that even Seers have not been able to pierce it with their telepathic abilities.

Strength: 4

Dexterity: 4

Constitution: 4

Intelligence: 3

Perception: 3

Willpower: 3

Life Points: 42

Essence Pool: 21

Endurance Points: 38

Qualities and Drawbacks: Fast Reaction Time, Resources +3 (+5 when acting through their patron, the Combine), Situational Awareness, Humorless.

Skills: Demolitions 3, Driving (Pick a Type) 3, Electronic Surveillance 2, Guns (Any two Types) 4, Hand Weapons (Knife) 2, Intimidation 4, Lock Picking 2, Martial Arts 3, Running 2, Stealth 3, Streetwise 2, Surveillance 3, Tracking 2.

Powers: The agents have a mind block and cannot reveal who hired them under any circumstances, including torture. Mindsight and similar mental probes have a -8 penalty to overcome this block. Even if a Seer manages to enter the mind, the employer of the agent is usually another underling who knows little. He too is probably Blocked against revealing even what little he knows . . . and so the layers unfold.

Hickory Dickory Dock... the Mouse ran up the clock...



...the Mouse ran down... Hickory Dickory Dock...

...the clock



struck one...



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Chapter Eight
Chronieling

Introduction

After the Chronicler assembles a Cast of characters, the next step is putting them into a Story, which will develop as the players make decisions about their characters' actions. The Chronicler's choices at this point may make the difference between a fun game and a boring evening.

Character Power Levels

The Character Point allocations for the Character Types described in Chapter Three: Roles (see p. 50) are appropriate for "default" *WitchCraft* Stories -- games where characters are relatively experienced but not overly powerful, people whose connection with the supernatural has yet to set them above the rest of humankind. Some Chroniclers may wish to either reduce the power level of the characters (to represent more "normal" people, or younger or beginning students of the supernatural), or to increase them to higher levels. The simplest way to do this is to adjust the number of points assigned to each category: reducing the number of points allotted to Attributes, for example, will result in more ordinary characters. On the other hand, increasing the number of Metaphysics points by 10 or more allows players to create experienced and powerful Gifted characters.

All the Character Types in this book have a total of 80 points assigned to them, distributed among the different categories (unless the Optional Skill Point Generation System is used; see p. 55). A less powerful game could have 60 points instead, while a more powerful game could have 100, 120 or even more points. Generally speaking, a Character Type should have at least 12 points for Attributes and 10-15 points for skills, so the minimum recommended point total is 30. A game where all the characters have 30-60 points should involve more investigation, mystery and subtle conflict than outright clashes with the supernatural (for one, the characters will not be equipped to handle most supernatural threats described in this book). Such games can be very interesting, however, focusing on character development and roleplaying more than on action.

High power games can have characters generated from as many as 100-120 points total, although generally more than 25 points in Attributes is not recommended, and most extra points should go towards Metaphysics. Note that beyond certain power levels, Mundane characters are no longer a viable option. In a game where the total starting point allocation is, say, 120 points, it is unrealistic to create Mundanes, as their Skill and Attribute category point totals would become ridiculously high. Character Types with more than 120 points are best left for "superhero" games (a power level that may be explored in future Unisystem games). High power levels are not recommended for beginning players; the Chronicler and the gaming group should first get a feel for the setting and the rules before shooting for the sky.

Campaign Levels

WitchCraft may be played a number of different ways with different themes. The easiest way to vary the *WitchCraft* game is to assign a campaign level. Four such levels are suggested below.

Pre-Heroic: This is a campaign involving young or inexperienced characters. They have not accomplished much in life, and their skills, Metaphysics and backgrounds reflect this. Player groups that wish to see their characters develop and evolve quickly should choose a Pre-Heroic game level. Of course, unless they are careful, their weaker characters may not make it to a more experienced age. Characters in Pre-Heroic games can only be Mundane and Lesser Gifted; Gifted or supernatural characters (such as Bast) cannot be selected. Furthermore, characters get 5 fewer Attribute points and 5 fewer skill points than normal. The recommended maximum level for any starting skill is 3, with perhaps one or two at most at level 4.

The skill point modifications listed in this section apply only to the basic skill point allocation system. For those using the Optional Skill Point Generation System, the campaign level is factored into the calculation differently (see Chapter Three: Roles).

Heroic: This is the default campaign level for the *WitchCraft* game. Characters have a goodly number of skills and abilities, but are not world-beaters. Character development is slow but steady, and moderately powerful foes may be engaged, and sometimes beaten. All the regular point allotments in the character creation rules are set for Heroic games. No changes are necessary.

Legendary: In this campaign level, the characters are powerful and renowned. They have many skills and abilities. They are tough, strong and smart. The characters usually wield a degree of power and influence over groups or sectors of society. Such characters advance slowly, if at all, but may challenge, and be challenged by, the mightiest of foes. Characters at this level get an additional 40-50 points divided among the different categories, with most extra points going into the Skills and Metaphysics categories. Mundanes are not really viable at this level, unless one is creating the most heroic figures of fiction and myth; Gifted and supernatural characters are far more appropriate. Legendary characters are not recommended for most *WitchCraft* game settings. They "fit" better in the Armageddon roleplaying game.

Mythical: Mythical games revolve around major forces in the campaign world. The character's abilities and reputations are near or at the top levels of most settings, except perhaps in "super-hero" worlds or a supernatural equivalent. It would be very difficult to run a *WitchCraft* game at this level without making some major changes in the game world. Typically, these characters will get at least 100 extra points distributed among the different categories.

Creating Stories

Unlike your typical board game, roleplaying sessions do not all start (or end) in the same way. Like any fictional tale, what the Cast Members and Chroniclers do in a game changes based on what themes, plot lines and characters are used. The Chronicler must decide what the initial elements of the Story are. The Chronicler's job is to prepare the initial setting, create the Supporting Cast and Adversaries, and devise the initial plot that brings the characters together. This includes the setting -- be it a small Maine town, the slums of Chicago, or a cross-country trek running from coast to coast. Further, the Supporting Cast -- characters that will interact with the player-controlled characters -- must be fleshed out. Finally, the initial themes and plots must be devised -- is the small town haunted by an unspeakable entity, or are the slums a battlefield between two rival Covenants?

The Setting

When creating a setting for a Story, the Chronicler needs to gather or create information. The setting is where most of the Story will take place. It can be as small as a single wood cabin in the middle of a haunted forest, or as large as a teeming city with a cast of millions. Little bits of information that add local color are added to the story; people, landmarks and mood will help make the setting come alive for the players. Mapping out every corner of a setting may be helpful, but it is not really necessary. Rather, the Chronicler should think of interesting details. For example, all towns have their own little landmarks, be they statues



to Civil War heroes or old buildings with a long history. Mention them, describe them, and perhaps make them part of the Story -- perhaps the statue has a hidden compartment at its base containing important documents, or the old building has been used for a number of strange and disturbing rituals.

The details of the setting should match the overall theme of the game. If the mood to be conveyed is fear, for example, the descriptions of the setting should focus on the ominous, on closed-down shops and boarded up buildings, on scared people who move quickly and never meet your eyes, on disturbing graffiti about the end of the world, and on the bloated corpse of a dog at the mouth of an alley adding to a general stench of decay. Make the characters feel isolated even in a crowded setting. If they feel that no aid will be forthcoming beyond their own resources, the monsters and creatures thrown in their path will seem all the more terrifying.

The *WitchCraft* game is set in the present day, so Chroniclers can rely on familiar places and experiences to provide color for the game. A Chronicler may even want to use a place the players are familiar with -- their home town, for example -- and give it some supernatural touches (if possible relying on local legends and lore).

Designing Supporting Cast Characters

Chroniclers do not need to create Supporting Cast members with as much detail as player-controlled characters. In most cases, even Attributes and skills are unnecessary; simply jot down the character's name, basic personality and role in the game, and leave it at that. If you have to give them more detailed traits, then assign them according to the needs of the Story rather than using the point limits in the character creation rules, and making them as powerful or weak as they have to be.

Creating the Supporting Cast and Adversaries

Most games require a Supporting Cast, the Chronicler-controlled characters who will interact with the Cast Members in the course of the game. These characters range from suspicious store clerks and librarians to other Covenant members. Try to make each character distinctive in some way. They don't all need to speak with exotic accents, but they should have some distinguishing quality. Speech patterns and habits are a good start -- the street-bred magician should probably use a lot of profanity, while the bookish occultist may rely on obscure and pedantic words. Describing their habits and behavior will make more real, and will help the players remember them better.

Adversaries are the characters who will provide the conflict in the Story. There may be several Adversaries in a game, from the fellow Covenant member who is trying to outshine or discredit the Cast members to the flesh-eating abomination living in the sewers. Sometimes, the Cast will not meet the Adversary until the end of the Story. In other cases, the Adversary will turn out to be a character the group has come to trust. Adversaries should be resourceful and dangerous; in some cases, the Cast may not be able to truly defeat or destroy them, and they may come back in later Stories.

Story Plot and Mood

What is going to happen in the Story? To some degree, nobody knows -- that's part of what makes roleplaying fun. In some ways, the Chronicler knows what some of the important events and developments will be. The Chronicler sets up the basic plot elements, and helps shape the mood of the story.

Plots in *WitchCraft* tend to revolve around discovery (about oneself and the world at large), conflict (between the Gifted and the supernatural), terror (some discoveries will be horrifying and disturbing) and hope (helping stave off the Reckoning, or changing the world in a positive way). The elements of the plot can be as personal as confronting a childhood fear come to life or as cosmic as preventing the unraveling of Reality.

Some sample plots are given later in this chapter. They may help inspire the Chronicler to come up with his own. Other sources of inspiration are novels and movies, or other roleplaying games. In many cases, great plots can be developed by taken a familiar story and giving it a twist.

Bringing the Cast Members into the Story

The best and most dramatic Story will be useless if the Cast Members are not interested in becoming involved. As Chroniclers create the setting and the Supporting Cast populating it, they should think about ways to involve the Cast Members in the Story. Sometimes, it is better to let the players create their characters first, and then weave the Story around them. Alternatively, the Chronicler should tell the players a little about the Story, its themes and its setting, allowing them to create characters that will fit into the plot.

Story Ideas

The Rekindling

The characters are visited by strange dreams and visions. They all seem to involve a very old truck (it looks like something out of the silent movie era) driving towards a house on top of a hill. The visions always end with flashes of violence and gore and mind-numbing terror, and a laughing man who is not really a man. Over the next few days, the characters start finding strange things in their homes, left on their doorsteps or even somehow brought inside. An old hat, half rotted away, but still stained with blood; a rusty .38 revolver with five spent cartridges and one round (long corroded into uselessness) still in the chamber; a switchblade. Each of these objects will trigger a new vision on the part of one of the characters -- the gun might give a character a flashback of him holding the gun and firing it desperately at a

Adjusting the Power of Adversaries

Adversaries range from simple minions and dupes to dangerous masterminds or inhuman beings. Like the Supporting Cast, they should be created to suit the needs of the Story. Some guidelines for creating them are discussed below.

Note that these guidelines will result in Adversaries that are generally less powerful than the player's characters.

Mundanes: The typical Mundane will have 10-15 points for Attributes, 0-5 points for Qualities (and may have Drawbacks worth 1-10 points), and 10-20 points in skills. Only the most extraordinary Mundanes will have as many points as Cast Members.

Lesser Gifted: Most Covenant members fall into this category. They have about the same numbers for Attributes and skills as Mundanes, plus an extra 5 points for Qualities and 5-10 points in Metaphysics.

Gifted: A typical Gifted character may be created with the same Attributes and skills as the Mundanes above, plus 10 points in Qualities and 20-30 points in Metaphysics. Experienced characters may have an extra 5 to 10 points in some or all the categories, and the truly powerful may have an extra 15 to 20 points in some categories and 5 to 10 points in the rest.

thing that keeps on coming, shrugging off the impacts; the hat might inspire a vision of the character modeling it in front of a mirror while wearing clothing from the 1920s or '30s -- followed by a flash of the hat flying off in a splash of blood as a clawed swipe tears the top of the character's head off . . .

The Plot: In 1926, a group of gangsters left on a short trip to the country to murder a powerful crime boss. The criminal had been muscling in on their action, and had been using a degree of brutality never seen before. The gangsters stormed the crime boss' home -- and discovered that he was no longer human, but an abomination twisted by the worship of a Mad God. The would-be hit men were all horribly killed. It's the present day, and the Cast Members (or most of the characters) are the reincarnations of those gangsters -- all except one, who remained on Earth as a Ghost, and only now has managed to accumulate enough power to get his revenge and finish the job he started over seven decades ago. The visions and clues are the Ghost's doing, trying to rekindle the character's past memories -- and it is working. Eventually, the Ghost will try to contact the characters directly, and lead them to do battle with the crime boss, who is still alive and well and still controlling illegal activities in the city while furthering the twisted goals of his Master.

Police Story

Things at the 13th Precinct have been getting worse and worse. Charges of police brutality have increased dramatically, to the point that several police administrators have resigned in disgrace and dozens of cops have been suspended or even expelled from the force. And that's just the beginning. No more new charges are being filed -- because now the locals are too scared to do so. Over a dozen community members and four lawyers working on suits against the Precinct have disappeared without a trace. Several other people have been mysteriously killed. A riot was brutally stilled when "unknown assailants" opened fire on the rioters with automatic weapons, killing seven people and injuring over two dozen; over thirty people disappeared during that night of chaos, and their bodies are nowhere to be found.

So far, nobody has made the connection that most of the cases of police brutality and the murders have occurred at night.

The Plot: A Vampyre has taken over the 13th Precinct. This powerful and ancient creature has decided to plunge the city into a nightmare of chaos and terror, allowing him to gorge himself on the life-energies of the victims. The Vampyre started by killing and bringing back a number of police officers, always picking the most desperate and life-weary of them. Then he and his minions used their abilities to take control over the rest of the precinct, and of any replacements sent there. The Vampyric cops are now hunting in the streets of the Precinct with impunity -- in the slums, people don't usually call for help, and, in any case, who are they going to call? The police? Sooner or later the entire charade will fail, but by that point the Vampyre and his brood will flee, leaving behind a city in flames.

The evil and horror permeating the 13th Precinct will attract the attention of many Gifted -- and a number of other supernatural creatures. The Cast Members should be made to realize that openly battling undead policemen and their controlled Mundane partners is probably not a good idea -- the corrupted cops have more weapons and resources, and even if victorious, the Cast Members will be wanted for murder. The Cast Members should, after determining who or what is behind the strangeness, find the Vampyre's lair, preferably during the day, and put an end to his plans. Destroying the Vampyre will not affect the other undead he created, but will free many of the humans under his mind control, and put an end to the worst murders and atrocities.

Even after being victorious, the characters may need to deal with the aftermath, with a city on the verge of an explosion, full of fear and hatred -- both of which will attract supernatural creatures -- and very possibly haunted with the spirits of those unjustly killed (and maybe even a Relentless Dead or two).

Town of the Dead

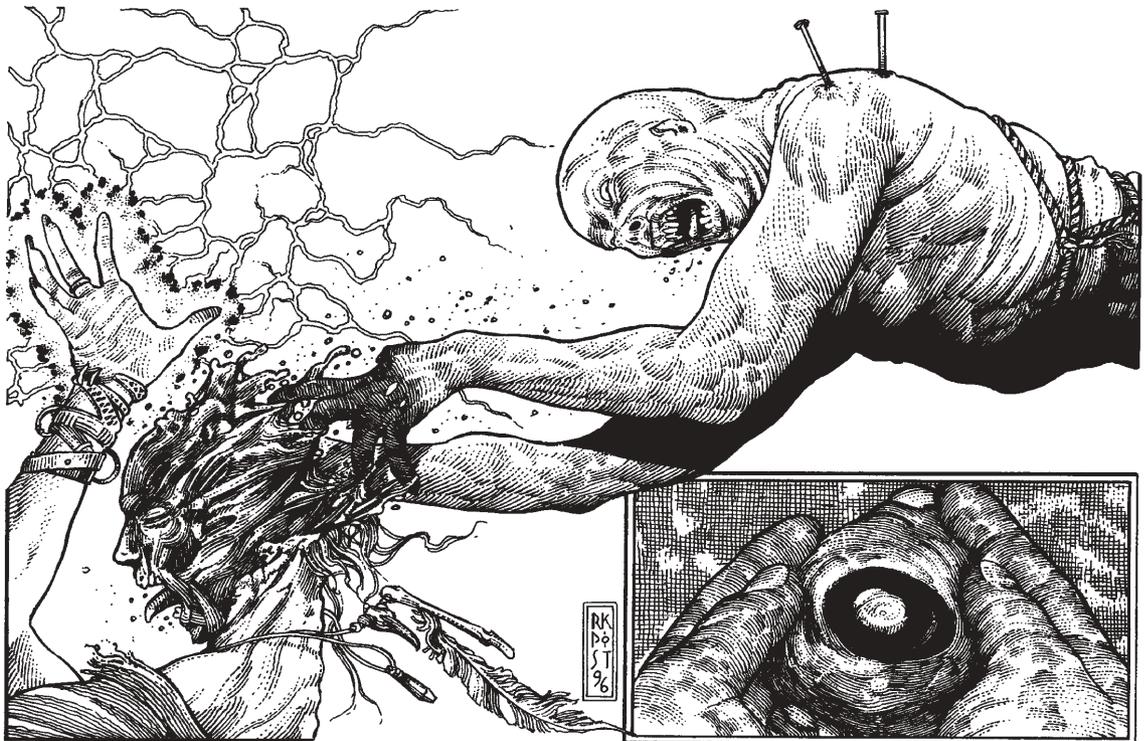
The Cast Members are passing through a sleepy little town in the middle of nowhere. Maybe they are traveling together, or are passengers on the same bus,

or the tides of Fate all arranged for the characters to arrive there within the same day. As they are passing through, their vehicle(s) breaks down catastrophically -- not even magic seems to be able to fix the damage. The characters are forced to spend the night in the town, in an already overcrowded motel. The nightlife is limited to a small country bar; everything else closes down at sundown.

If the characters go to sleep, they wake up to a nasty surprise: everyone else is dead! The entire town and any visitors -- anybody who was not Gifted or not close to a Gifted character -- have died in the night. If the characters stayed up, they experience the effect. At midnight, a wave of pure darkness descended everywhere, dimming all the lights. With the darkness came a flash of Essence, of twisted and murderous Essence that avoided the Gifted and those near them, but which snuffed out every other form of life. In any case, the Cast Members are now stranded in a town full of corpses; even worse, the souls of the corpses appear to have vanished, and no attempt to contact them through Necromancy will work. Some force makes it impossible to leave the town limits -- anyone passing beyond a certain point is wracked by

pain and a steady and accelerating Essence loss. The entire town and its environs (about a ten-mile radius) seems to be under the control of the same force that killed everyone in the town. The characters must find out what caused this horror, or die trying. And they may feel compelled to hurry, because after noon on that day, the corpses start to stir . . .

The Plot: A Dark Covenant of mages and summoners is trying to carve out its own little undead empire. The town has been struck by a truly powerful ritual, powered by the energies of thirteen evil sorcerers, a Place of Power (the top of a hill overlooking the town, once an ancient Indian ceremonial place, now occupied by a manor where the Dark Covenant lives), and the right conjunction of stars (a special Time of Power that only helps a specific ritual -- in this case a massive death curse). Fortunately, however, the thirteen magicians have been drained of most of their power, since the magic is still ongoing and they need to feed it. For the time being, the group of thirteen is limited to minor magicks and the use of weapons. After noon, however, the first corpses will start to move, and by nightfall they will control an army of the walking dead.



Appendix

Glossary

Adversaries: Supporting Cast characters who oppose the Cast Members' actions. Adversaries are the enemies to be beaten, the rivals that provide drama, and the opponents that challenge the Cast Members.

Art: A group of related Metaphysics abilities or powers. Magic, the Sight, and Necromancy are all Arts.

Attribute: A physical or mental trait of the character. See Primary Attributes and Secondary Attributes.

Attribute Test: See Test.

Bast: A Character Type. The Bast are feline animal spirits that have taken residence in a feline. Common Bast remain in their cat bodies; High Bast may shapeshift into a human form.

Cast Members: Also known as player-controlled characters or player characters (PCs for short). Cast Members are characters whose actions, thoughts and responses are controlled by the players, who usually also create them. In a movie, they would be the main roles, each played by a different actor.

Character Concept: The basic motives and focuses of a character's personality. Character Concepts are chosen or formed in the initial stages of the character creation process.

Character Points: The points used to build a character. The specific numbers and categories are dictated by the Character Type (see p. 50), and the Optional Skill Point Generation System, if used (see p. 55).

Character Type: A character's classification. This book presents four Character Types: Gifted, Lesser Gifted, Mundane, and Bast. This number will expand as more *WitchCraft* supplements are released.

Chronicler: Also known as a Game Master or Referee, the Chronicler is the player who prepares the setting, guides the Story, roleplays the Supporting Cast and Adversaries, and makes all the rules decisions.

Close Combat: Any fight conducted at arm's length by people using fists, feet, or hand weapons (such as knives, swords and sticks).

Difficult Test: A Test in which only one Attribute applies and it is not doubled.

Divine Inspiration: The power to perform Miracles in the service of a Greater Entity.

Drawback: A special negative aspect of a character that imposes limitations or hindrances. Drawbacks are chosen during character creation and provide extra Attribute, Quality, Skill or Metaphysics Points as the player chooses. No character can take more than 10 points in Drawbacks.

Essence: Beyond matter and energy, Essence is the basic building block of Reality. It is present in all things, living and unliving. It also flows invisibly in pure form, undetected by most living things except on a primal, emotional level. Magicians and others who know the mystic Arts learn to manipulate Essence to change the world.

Experience Points: Points awarded during the play of *WitchCraft* Stories that may be used to improve a character's capacities.

Game Time: Time as it passes in a game or session of *WitchCraft*. Game Time rarely corresponds directly with Real Time.

Gifted: A Character Type. Those most able to manipulate Essence and master Metaphysical Arts. The Gifted are the principal protagonists of the *WitchCraft* world.

Inspired: Those with the Power of Divine Inspiration.

Initiative: The order in which characters act during Turns. The character with the highest initiative acts first, and the remaining characters act in descending order of initiative. Initiative may be determined by the Chronicler, or through random means.

Invocation: A pattern or matrix learned by a Magician to facilitate the manipulation of Essence by his will.

Items of Power: An item that stores Essence, produces a Metaphysical effect, or facilitates the flow of Essence.

Lesser Gifted: A Character Type. Those with some supernatural capacity but less than the Gifted. Lesser Gifted have more skills than the Gifted.

Level of Success: See Success Levels.

Magic: The Art of using Invocations and channeling Essence to impose the Magician's will on reality.

Magicians: Practitioners of Magic.

Mediums: Practitioners of Necromancy.

Metaphysics: Any of a number of supernatural abilities used to manipulate the world. Most use Essence in some manner.

Miracles: A supernatural effect, powered by Essence, caused by the will of an Inspired.

Multiplier: The number by which a set or range of points is multiplied before arriving at the final result.

Mundane: A Character Type. The Mundanes are without supernatural gifts and cannot use most Metaphysical powers. They have more skills than any other Character Type, and serve as able companions for the Gifted.

Necromancy: Innate and learned powers that allow Mediums to traffic with the spirits of the dead.

Otherworlds: A generic term for Sephiroths and Realms used by non-specialists to refer to regions outside of Earth or the mundane universe.

Outcome Table: Found on p. 129, the Outcome Table specifies the Test or Task results needed to achieve certain Success Levels and the general effects of those Success Levels.

Place of Power: Certain places are imbued with meaning, emotion and supernatural significance. These places provide extra Essence to those who can tap them properly.

Power: A special positive ability of a character that derives from the supernatural or metaphysical and grants certain capacities or benefits. Powers are purchased during character creation by using Metaphysics Points, or granted when certain Qualities are purchased.

Primary Attribute: The principal numerical measures of a character's physical and mental abilities. There are six Primary Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Perception and Willpower.

Quality: A special positive aspect of a character that grants abilities or benefits. Qualities are purchased by expending Quality Points during character creation.

Ranged Combat: Ranged combat involves any sort of missile weapon, from a thrown stone to a machinegun.

Real Time: Time as it passes in the "real" world, as opposed to Game Time.

Realms: A specialist's term for sub-areas of Sephiroths. See Sephiroth, Otherworlds.

Regular Skill: A basic skill of average difficulty to learn and improve. Most skills in *WitchCraft* are Regular Skills. Regular Skills cost 1 character point per level until level 5, and 3 points per level thereafter. See Special Skills.

Resisted Tasks or Tests: This rule applies to any situation where someone or something is trying to perform a specific action and somebody or something else is trying to prevent it, as when two or more individuals are in some sort of competition. These Tasks or Tests are resolved normally for everyone involved, and then the results are compared. The character with the highest number of Success Levels wins. Ties go to the defender, if any. If both sides fail, it means neither side won a significant advantage.

Rule of 1: On a roll of 1, roll again, subtract 5, and if the result is negative, a negative roll replaces the first roll. If the result is positive, the roll remains 1. If the second roll is between 5 and 10, the final result remains 1. If the second roll is 2, 3, or 4, the final result is -3, -2 or -1, respectively. If the second roll is 1, the prior roll is replaced with -5, and the player must roll again (applying the same rule).

Rule of 10: If a natural 10 is rolled or drawn, roll or draw again, subtract 5 from the new roll and add the result, if greater than 1, to the total roll. If another 10 is rolled or drawn, add +5 to the result and roll or draw again, following the same procedure.

Secondary Attribute: A physical or metaphysical trait of a character calculated from Primary Attributes. There are four Secondary Attributes: Life Points, Endurance Points, Essence Points (or Pool), and Speed. For certain Character Types, some Secondary Attributes are replaced or missing. For example, Spirit characters have Vital Essence instead of Life Points; Vampyres do not have Endurance Points.

Second Sight: See the Sight

Seers: Those who use the Sight.

Sephiroth: A specialist's term for locations, areas or dimensions outside the general experience of the majority of mundanes. See Otherworlds, Realms.

Sight: The power of the mind, called psychic ability or ESP by some.

Simple Test: A Test in which the applicable Attribute is doubled (or two different Attributes are added together).

Skill: A learned capability of the character. Skills are purchased during character creation using Skill Points.

Skill Type: A subgroup of certain broader skills. Skill Types must be chosen when the main skill is purchased. Skill Types do not cost character points. For example, character must choose a Type when they take the Science Skill. It may be Biology, Chemistry, Geology or any of the other disciplines of Science.

Special Skill: Skills that require additional time or dedication to master. Special Skills cost 2 character points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. See Regular Skills.

Specialty: A narrow band of expertise in a larger skill. For example, Humanities (Criminal Law) is a Specialty of the Humanities (Law) Skill. Specialties cost 1 character point each, and add 2 levels to the generic skill level. These additional levels only apply when the character tests the Specialty.

Story: Also known as a game or, sometimes, campaign. A series of plot-linked game sessions, like the episodes of a TV series or soap opera. A good Story is the final result and the ultimate objective of any *WitchCraft* game.

Success Level: A measure of how well a character performed a successful Task or Test. The higher the Task result, the higher the level of success. Success Levels are used as a bonus on other Tasks or Tests. The Outcome Table (see p. 129) details Success Levels and their effects.

Supporting Cast: Also known as non-player characters (or NPCs). These are all the characters in a Story who are not Cast Members. These roles are played by the Chronicler.

Symbols of Power: Certain symbols, particularly the circle and pentagram, have supernatural significance. When used for casting Invocation, such symbols provide extra Essence Points.

Task: A Task is any activity that requires some training to accomplish, and whose outcome is in doubt. Tasks are resolved by rolling a ten-sided die (or drawing cards) and adding one of the character's Skills and one of his Primary Attributes. The Chronicler determines which abilities apply, and any additional modifiers that are appropriate. The result, adding the die roll to all the other modifiers, skills and Attributes, must be 9 or higher to indicate success. Results higher than 9 are referenced on the Outcome Table to determine Success Levels.

Tests/Attribute Tests: A Test is an activity or situation where the character's Attribute levels determine the outcome. Any activity that depends exclusively on the character's inborn talents (such as raw strength, pure intelligence and so forth) use Tests. Tests can be Simple or Difficult. A Simple Attribute Test adds the result of a ten-sided die (or the draw of a card) to the appropriate Attribute, doubled, or the sum of two Attributes. The result, after any modifiers, must be 9 or higher. A Difficult Attribute Test adds the result of a ten-sided die (or the draw of a card) to the appropriate Attribute, not doubled. Again, the result, after any modifiers, must be 9 or higher. Results higher than 9 are referenced on the Outcome Table to determine the Success Levels.

Time of Power: Certain times and dates have special supernatural significance. During these times, extra Essence Points may be gathered.

Turn: An arbitrary measure of time designed to break combat and other time-sensitive game play into manageable pieces. A Turn represents between 1 and 5 seconds, and is just long enough for a character to perform one action.

Type: See Skill Type.

Character Creation Table

The following costs are applicable only during character generation. After a campaign has started, the character improves using the Experience Point Cost Table.

Buying Primary Attributes: Each level of an Attribute costs 1 point until level 5, and 3 points per level thereafter. Humans can only buy Attributes up to level 6.

Calculating Secondary Attributes: Life Points: $((\text{Constitution} + \text{Strength}) \times 4) + 10$. Endurance Points: $((\text{Constitution} + \text{Strength} + \text{Willpower}) \times 3) + 5$. Speed: $(\text{Constitution} + \text{Dexterity}) \times 2$. Essence Pool: Add the character's Primary Attributes together.

Buying Qualities and Acquiring Drawbacks: Qualities have different point costs, which are listed under each entry. When a Drawback is acquired, the character gains extra points in either the Attributes, Qualities, Skills or Metaphysics categories. The one limitation is that Drawback Points equal to the new Attribute level must be spent when raising Attributes with Drawback Points. This is cumulative.

Buying Skills: Regular Skills cost 1 point per level until level 5, and 3 points per level thereafter. Special skills cost 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. Specialties cost 1 point and add 2 to the base skill level.

Buying Invocations: Invocations cost 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter.

Buying Seer Powers: Seer Powers have a Strength (the raw power of the talent) and Art (the level of skill in using the power). Strength levels cost 3 points per level until level 5, and 6 points per level thereafter. Art costs 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. Each Seer Power has its own Strength and Art.

Buying Necromantic Powers: The Necromancy Skill costs 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. Each Necromantic Power costs 3 points per level until level 5, and 6 points per level thereafter.

Buying Inspired Miracles: Each Inspired Miracle costs 5 points to acquire.

Character Type Reference Table

Type	Attr Pts	Qual/Draw Pts	Skill Pts	Meta Pts
Gifted	15	10/10	25	30
Traits: Must purchase Gift Quality (5).				
Lesser Gifted	20	15/10	30	15
Traits: Must purchase Gift Quality (5)				
Mundane	25	20/10	35	0
Traits: May not purchase Supernatural Qualities or Metaphysics during character creation.				
Bast	15	10/10	30	25
Common Bast Traits: Must purchase Gift Quality (5); Common Bast powers.				
High Bast Traits: Must purchase Gift Quality (5) and High Bast Quality (5); Common Bast powers.				

Character Association Reference Table

Association	Special Features
Cabal of the Psyche	One free level of any Seer Strength or Art; limited abilities outside Sight Art (Gifted); +1 against any mental or Metaphysical attack that can be resisted by Willpower (Mundane).
Rosicrucians	+2 on all Invocation Tasks to restrain or banish spirits or supernatural beings; must take Rituals (Rosicrucian) Skill; limited abilities outside Magic Art.
Sentinals	Prayer (all); +2 to all Resisted Tasks/Tests against magical or supernatural attacks (if Divine Inspiration Quality is possessed).
Solitaires	+1 to all Tasks involving one Art (the character's strong suit).
Twilight Order	+1 to all Tasks involving any Necromancy Powers; limited Magic Art abilities.
Wicce	+2 on all Invocation Tasks involving defense; -2 to all Dismissal Tasks of those attacking the Wicce; must take Rituals (Wicce) and Humanities (Wicce Theology) Skills.

Quality and Drawback List by Category

Name	Cost/Type	Page
Mental		
Addiction	Variable Drawback	72
Artistic Talent	3-point Quality	74
Charisma	Variable Quality or Drawback (1 point/level)	74
Clown	1-point Drawback	75
Covetous	1- to 3-point Drawback	75
Cowardly	1- to 3-point Drawback	76
Cruel	1- or 3-point Drawback	77
Delusions	Variable Drawback	77
Emotional Problems	Variable Drawback	78
Fast Reaction Time	2-point Quality	78
Honorable	1- to 3-point Drawback	79
Humorless	1-point Drawback	79
Lazy	2-point Drawback	79
Nerves of Steel	3-point Quality	80
Obsession	2-point Drawback	80
Paranoid	2-point Drawback	80
Photographic Memory	2-point Quality	80
Reckless	2-point Drawback	81
Recurring Nightmares	1-point Drawback	81
Showoff	2-point Drawback	82
Situational Awareness	2-point Quality	82
Talentless	2-point Drawback	83
Zealot	3-point Drawback	83
Physical		
Acute/Impaired Senses	2-point Quality or Drawback	72
Attractiveness	Variable Quality or Drawback (1 point/level)	74
Hard to Kill	1 to 5-point Quality	78
Physical Disability	Variable Drawback	81
Social		
Adversary	Variable Drawback	73
Contacts	Variable Quality	75
Minority	1-point Drawback	80
Multiple Identities	2 points/Identity Quality	80
Resources	Variable Quality or Drawback (2 points/level)	82
Secret	Variable Drawback	82
Status	Variable Quality or Drawback (1 point/level)	82
Supernatural		
Accursed	Variable Drawback	84
Age	5 points/level Quality	84
Divine Inspiration	5-point Quality	85
Essence Channeling	Variable Quality	86
Gift	5-point Quality	86
Good Luck/Bad Luck	3 points/level Quality or Drawback	86
High Bast	5-point Quality	87
Increased Essence Pool	1/5-point Quality	87
Medium with Magical Training	2-point Quality	87
Old Soul	4 points/level Quality	87
Rosicrucian Scholar	2-point Quality	88

Quality and Drawback List by Name

Name	Cost/Category/Type	Page
Accursed	Variable Supernatural Drawback	84
Acute/Impaired Senses	2-point Physical Quality or Drawback	72
Addiction	Variable Mental Drawback	72
Adversary	Variable Social Drawback	73
Age	5 points/level Supernatural Quality	84
Artistic Talent	3-point Mental Quality	74
Attractiveness	Variable Physical Quality or Drawback (1 point/level)	74
Charisma	Variable Mental Quality or Drawback (1 point/level)	74
Clown	1-point Mental Drawback	75
Contacts	Variable Social Quality	75
Covetous	1- to 3-point Mental Drawback	75
Cowardly	1- to 3-point Mental Drawback	76
Cruel	1- or 3-point Mental Drawback	77
Delusions	Variable Mental Drawback	77
Divine Inspiration	5-point Supernatural Quality	85
Emotional Problems	Variable Mental Drawback	78
Essence Channeling	Variable Supernatural Quality	86
Fast Reaction Time	2-point Mental Quality	78
Gift	5-point Supernatural Quality	86
Good Luck/Bad Luck	3 points/level Supernatural Quality or Drawback	86
Hard to Kill	1 to 5-point Physical Quality	78
High Bast	5-point Supernatural Quality	87
Honorable	1- to 3-point Mental Drawback	79
Humorless	1-point Mental Drawback	79
Increased Essence Pool	1/5-point Supernatural Quality	87
Lazy	2-point Mental Drawback	79
Medium with Magical Training	2-point Supernatural Quality	87
Minority	1-point Social Drawback	80
Multiple Identities	2 points/Identity Social Quality	80
Nerves of Steel	3-point Mental Quality	80
Obsession	2-point Mental Drawback	80
Old Soul	4 points/level Supernatural Quality	87
Paranoid	2-point Mental Drawback	80
Photographic Memory	2-point Mental Quality	80
Physical Disability	Variable Physical Drawback	81
Reckless	2-point Mental Drawback	81
Recurring Nightmares	1-point Mental Drawback	81
Resources	Variable Social Quality or Drawback (2 points/level)	82
Rosicrucian Scholar	2-point Supernatural Quality	88
Secret	Variable Social Drawback	82
Showoff	2-point Mental Drawback	82
Situational Awareness	2-point Mental Quality	82
Status	Variable Social Quality or Drawback (1 point/level)	82
Talentless	2-point Mental Drawback	83
Zealot	3-point Mental Drawback	83

Skill List by Category

Skill	Category	Cost	Type/Page	Skill	Category	Cost	Type/Page
Acting	Artistic	R	90	Bureaucracy	Scholastic	R	91
Beautician	Artistic	R	90	Computer Programming	Scholastic	R	91
Dancing (Type)	Artistic	R	92	Computers	Scholastic	R	91
Fine Arts (Type)	Artistic	R	93	Craft (Type)	Scholastic	R	91
Play Instrument (Type)	Artistic	R	96	Electronic	Scholastic	R	92
Singing	Artistic	R	98	Engineer (Type)	Scholastic	R	92
Sleight of Hand	Artistic	R	98	Humanities (Type)	Scholastic	R	94
Acrobatics	Athletic	S	90	Instruction	Scholastic	R	94
Climbing	Athletic	R	91	Language (Type)	Scholastic	R	95
Running (Type)	Athletic	R	98	Magic Theory	Scholastic	R	95
Sport (Type)	Athletic	R	98	Myth and Legend (Type)	Scholastic	R	96
Swimming	Athletic	R	99	Occult Knowledge	Scholastic	S	96
Weight Lifting	Athletic	R	100	Research/Investigation	Scholastic	R	97
Brawling	Combat	R	91	Rituals (Type)	Scholastic	R	97
Dodge	Combat	R	92	Sciences (Type)	Scholastic	R	98
Guns (Type)	Combat	R	93	Trance	Scholastic	S	100
Hand Weapon (Type)	Combat	R	93	Writing (Type)	Scholastic	R	100
Martial Arts	Combat	S	95	Cheating	Streetwise	R	91
First Aid	Medical	R	93	Escapism	Streetwise	R	93
Medicine (Type)	Medical	S	96	Gambling	Streetwise	R	93
Uncon. Medicine (Type)	Medical	S	100	Haggling	Streetwise	R	93
Veterinary Medicine	Medical	R	100	Intimidation	Streetwise	R	95
Computer Hacking	Military/Spy	R	91	Lock Picking (Type)	Streetwise	R	95
Demolitions	Military/Spy	R	92	Notice	Streetwise	R	96
Disguise	Military/Spy	R	92	Pick Pocket	Streetwise	R	96
Elec. Surveillance	Military/Spy	R	92	Questioning	Streetwise	R	97
Surveillance	Military/Spy	R	99	Seduction	Streetwise	R	98
Traps	Military/Spy	R	100	Smooth Talking	Streetwise	R	98
Snares	Outdoor	R	98	Stealth	Streetwise	R	99
Survival (Type)	Outdoor	R	99	Storytelling	Streetwise	R	99
Tracking	Outdoor	R	100	Streetwise	Streetwise	R	99
R: Regular				Driving (Type)	Vehicle	R	92
S: Special				Mechanic	Vehicle	R	96
				Piloting (Type)	Vehicle	R	96
				Riding (Type)	Vehicle	R	97

Skill List by Name

Skill	Category	Cost	Type	Skill	Category	Cost	Type
Acrobatics	Athletic	S	90	Mechanic	Vehicle	R	96
Acting	Artistic	R	90	Medicine (Type)	Medical	S	96
Beautician	Artistic	R	90	Myth and Legend (Type)	Scholastic	R	96
Brawling	Combat	R	91	Notice	Streetwise	R	96
Bureaucracy	Scholastic	R	91	Occult Knowledge	Scholastic	S	96
Cheating	Streetwise	R	91	Pick Pocket	Streetwise	R	96
Climbing	Athletic	R	91	Piloting (Type)	Vehicle	R	96
Computer Hacking	Military/Spy	R	91	Play Instrument (Type)	Artistic	R	96
Computer Programming	Scholastic	R	91	Questioning	Streetwise	R	97
Computers	Scholastic	R	91	Research/Investigation	Scholastic	R	97
Craft (Type)	Scholastic	R	91	Riding (Type)	Vehicle	R	97
Dancing (Type)	Artistic	R	92	Rituals (Type)	Scholastic	R	97
Demolitions	Military/Spy	R	92	Running (Type)	Athletic	R	98
Disguise	Military/Spy	R	92	Sciences (Type)	Scholastic	R	98
Dodge	Combat	R	92	Seduction	Streetwise	R	98
Driving (Type)	Vehicle	R	92	Singing	Artistic	R	98
Electronic Surveillance	Military/Spy	R	92	Sleight of Hand	Artistic	R	98
Electronics	Scholastic	R	92	Smooth Talking	Streetwise	R	98
Engineer (Type)	Scholastic	R	92	Snares	Outdoor	R	98
Escapism	Streetwise	R	93	Sport (Type)	Athletic	R	98
Fine Arts (Type)	Artistic	R	93	Stealth	Streetwise	R	99
First Aid	Medical	R	93	Storytelling	Streetwise	R	99
Gambling	Streetwise	R	93	Streetwise	Streetwise	R	99
Guns (Type)	Combat	R	93	Surveillance	Military/Spy	R	99
Haggling	Streetwise	R	93	Survival (Type)	Outdoor	R	99
Hand Weapon (Type)	Combat	R	93	Swimming	Athletic	R	99
Humanities (Type)	Scholastic	R	94	Tracking	Outdoor	R	100
Instruction	Scholastic	R	94	Trance	Scholastic	S	100
Intimidation	Streetwise	R	95	Traps	Military/Spy	R	100
Language (Type)	Scholastic	R	95	Uncon. Medicine (Type)	Medical	S	100
Lock Picking (Type)	Streetwise	R	95	Veterinary Medicine	Medical	R	100
Magic Theory	Scholastic	R	95	Weight Lifting	Athletic	R	100
Martial Arts	Combat	S	95	Writing (Type)	Scholastic	R	100

R: Regular

S: Special

Lesser Invocations

Name	Page	Name	Page
Affect the Psyche	209	Create Ice	216
Influence Emotional State	209	Cause Rain	216
Aura of Confidence	209	Farsight	217
Blessing	210	Farsee	217
Good Luck	210	Search Person	217
Success Blessing	210	Gateway	217
Blessing of Protection	210	Activate Existing Gateway	217
Cleansing	210	Travel	217
Remove Emotional Debris	210	Close Gateway	218
Remove Curse	210	Create Gateway	218
Communion	211	Insight	218
One With the Land	211	Perceive True Nature	218
Consecration	212	Lesser Curse	218
Create Vessel	212	Bad Luck	218
Restricted Vessel	212	Lesser Healing	219
Elemental Air	212	Heal Wounds	219
Stirring Air	212	Cure Disease	219
Gust of Wind	212	Lesser Illusion	219
Steady Wind	213	Visual Illusion	219
Calm Wind	213	Auditory Illusion	219
Whirlwind	213	Full Illusion	219
Cleanse and Create Air	213	Shielding	220
Lightning Bolt	213	Essence Shield	220
Elemental Earth	214	Physical Shield	220
Shift Earth	214	Invisible Shield	221
Crumble Stone	214	Soul Projection	221
Weaken Metal	214	Projection	222
Dust Devil	214	Soulfire	222
Stone Attack	214	Soulfire Blast	222
Earth Tremor	214	Spirit Mastery	222
Elemental Fire	215	Summoning	223
Flicker	215	Bond	223
Fire Protection	215	Compact	223
Flame	215	Dismiss	223
Extinguish Flame	215	Remove Malicious Spirits	223
Striking Flames	216	Symbols of Protection	223
Elemental Water	216	Protection Against Magic	223
Water Flow	216	Protection Against Supernatural	223
Create Fog	216	Warding	224
		Create Ward	224

Necromancy

Name	Page
Death Lordship	238
Expel Spirit	238
Enforced Obedience	238
Rule the Dead	238
Dominion	238
Necromantic Bolts	238
Death Mastery	238
Delay/Accelerate Departing	238
Death Sight	238
A Taste of Death	239
Death Projection	239
Wishkill	239
Death Speech	239
Glimpse the Dead	239
See the Dead	240
Recall the Dead	240
Command the Dead	240
Summon the Dead	240
Death Vessel	240
Invite Spirit	240
Aware Possession	240
Communion with the Dead	241
Transferred Communion	241
Strength of the Dead	241

The Sight

Name	Page
Mindfire	227
Mindhands	228
Mindheal	229
Mindkill	230
Mindrule	231
Mindsight	232
Mindtalk	233
Mindtime	234
Mindview	235

Divine Inspiration

Name	Page
Binding	244
Divine Sight	244
Exorcism	245
Holy Fire	245
Prayer	246
Strength of Ten	245
The Touch of Healing	246
Visions	246



Index

Archtypes41,103-119	Organization.....184	Covenant26,165-189
Bast “Alley Cat”112-113	Stories.....185	Cabal of Psyche.....183-185
Ghost Hunter.....116-117	Character Concepts41-49	Joining.....165
Rosicrucian Stage Magician.108-109	Avenger.....42-43	Rosicrucians.....170-174
Rosicrucian Troubleshooter.110-111	Daredevil.....43	Sentinels.....175-178
Seer Fugitive.....118-119	Fanatic.....43	Solitaires.....186-189
Sentinel Warrior Scholar.....114-115	Forsaken.....44	Twilight Order.....179-182
Wicce Healer of Nature.....104-105	Fugitive.....44	Wicce.....166-169
Wicce Private Eye.....106-107	Reluctant Hero.....45	Damage137-143
Armor143	Scoundrel.....45	Close Combat Weapons Table.....144
Body Armor Table.....147	Seeker of Knowledge.....46	Disease.....142
Encumbrance.....143	Student.....47	Explosive Areas of Effect.....145
Layering.....143	Survivor.....47	Explosive Damage Table.....145
Types.....143	Wanderer.....48	Other Sources of Injury.....143
Associations56-66	Warrior.....49	Poison.....140-141
Cabal of the Psyche.....63-64	Weird One.....49	Ranged Weapon Table.....146-147
Rosicrucians.....58-59	Character Creation40-119	Special Weapons and Damages....139
Sentinels.....60-61	Archtypes.....41,103-119	Supernatural Healing and Poisons142
Solitaires.....65-66	Associations.....56-66	Targeting Specific Body Parts.....138
Twilight Order.....62-63	Attributes.....67-71	Dangers25
Wicce.....56-58	Concept.....41-49	Demon Powers277-278
Attributes67-71	Elements.....41	Essence.....277
BuyingAttributes.....67	Metaphysics.....101	Inhuman Attributes.....277
Constitution.....68	Optional Skill Points.....55	Invulnerability.....277
Dexterity.....68	Possessions.....101-102	Supernatural Abilities.....277
Endurance Points.....70	Qualities & Drawbacks.....71-83	Divine Inspiration242-247
Essence Point.....70	Skills.....89-100	Acquiring Miracles.....242
Intelligence.....68	Supernatural Qualities & Drawbacks	Binding.....244
Life Points.....7084-88	Denial.....243
Meaning of Numbers.....68-69	Type.....50-54	Divine Sight.....244
Perception.....68	Character Type50-54	Exorcism.....245
Secondary Attributes.....70-71	Bast.....52-54	Holy Fire.....245
Speed.....70	Gifted.....50	Holy Symbols.....247
Strength.....67	Lesser Gifted.....51	Inspired.....247
Willpower.....68	Mundanes.....51	Miracles Clash.....243
Bast52-54, 276	Chronicling292-297	Mundanes.....247
Characters.....276	Campaign Levels.....292-293	Prayers.....246-247
Creating.....52-53	Character Power Levels.....292	Strength of Ten.....245
Origins.....276	Creating Stories.....293-295	Tests of Faith.....243
Powers.....53-54	Story Ideas.....295-297	Touch of Healing.....246
Roleplaying.....54	Combat132-137	Using Miracles.....242
Breaking Things148-149	Close Combat.....134-135	Visions.....246
Armor Value of Objects.....149	Firing Multiple Shots.....136	Essence23,194-208
Damage Capacity of Objects.....149	Improvised Weapons.....135	Channeling.....195
Brotherhood of the Rose Cross	Initiative.....133	Crowd Effect.....200
.....see Rosicrucians	Intentions.....133	Defensive Essence.....199
Cabal of Psyche183-185	Multiple Actions.....134	Group Magic.....205-207
Allies and Enemies.....184-185	Performance.....134	Immortality.....208
Beliefs.....184	Ranged Combat.....135-136	Invocations.....195-197
History.....183	Shotguns.....137	Items of Power.....204
	Turns.....132	Neutralizing Essence.....200
	Combine288-289	Places of Power.....202

Random Essence Effects.....	201	Ghost Senses.....	267	Flame.....	215
Rituals.....	201	Immaterial.....	259,267	Flicker.....	215
Sources.....	195	Phantom Shape.....	267	Focus and Dismissal.....	197
Symbols of Power.....	204	Physical Manifestation.....	259,267	Full Illusion.....	219
Times of Power.....	203	Purpose.....	267	Gateway.....	217-218
Experience	157-159	Spiritus.....	259,267	Good Luck.....	210
Awarding.....	157	Gifted	23,251-252	Gust of Wind.....	212
Improving Attributes.....	158	History.....	251-252	Heal Wounds.....	219
Improving Characters.....	158	Glossary	298-300	Influence Emotional State.....	209
Optional Allotments.....	159	Injury	149-152	Insight.....	218
Reasons for Improvement.....	159	Combat Example.....	151-152	Intent and Magic.....	199
Saving.....	159	Consciousness Tests.....	150	Invisible Shield.....	221
Fear	130-131	Knocking People Out.....	150	Learning.....	196
Essence Loss.....	130	Survival Tests.....	150	Lesser Curse.....	218
Table.....	130-131	Lesser Invocations	195-198,209-224	Lesser Healing.....	219
Tests.....	130	Activate Existing Gateway.....	217	Lesser Illusion.....	219
Modifiers.....	130	Affect the Psyche.....	209	Lightning Bolt.....	213
Game Mechanics	122-159	Auditory Illusion.....	219	One With the Land.....	211
Attributes.....	125	Aura of Confidence.....	209	Optional Task Penalties.....	198
Armor.....	143	Bad Luck.....	218	Perceive True Nature.....	218
Basic Rule.....	124	Blessing.....	210	Physical Shield.....	221
Breaking Things.....	148-149	Blessing of Protection.....	210	Projection.....	222
Combat.....	132-137	Bond.....	223	Protection Against Magic.....	223
Damage.....	137-143	Calm Wind.....	213	Protection Against Supernatural.....	223
Dice.....	123,155-157	Cause Rain.....	216	Remove Curse.....	210
Endurance Point Loss.....	154	Casting.....	196	Remove Emotional Debris.....	210
Essence Pool Loss.....	154	Cleanse and Create Air.....	213	Remove Malicious Spirits.....	223
Experience.....	157-159	Cleansing.....	210	Restricted Vessel.....	212
Fear.....	130-131	Close Gateway.....	218	Search Person.....	217
Injury.....	149-152	Communion.....	211	Shift Earth.....	214
Luck.....	126	Compact.....	223	Shielding.....	220-221
Jumping.....	67	Consecration.....	212	Soul Projection.....	221-222
Outcome Table.....	128-129	Create Fog.....	216	Soulfire.....	222
Recuperation.....	153	Create Ice.....	216	Soulfire Blast.....	222
Rule of 1.....	127	Create Vessel.....	212	Spirit Mastery.....	222-223
Rule of 10.....	126	Create Ward.....	224	Steady Wind.....	213
Running a Game.....	122	Crowd Effect.....	200	Stirring Air.....	212
Tasks.....	124	Crumble Stone.....	214	Stone Attack.....	214
Tasks, Resisted.....	126	Cure Disease.....	219	Striking Flames.....	216
Tasks, Modifiers.....	128	Dismiss.....	223	Success Blessing.....	210
Tests.....	124	Dust Devil.....	214	Summoning.....	196, 223
Tests, Resisted.....	126	Earth Tremor.....	214	Symbols of Protection.....	223
Tests, Modifiers.....	128	Elemental Air.....	212	Travel.....	217
Time.....	130	Elemental Earth.....	214	Visual Illusion.....	219
Unskilled attempts.....	125	Elemental Fire.....	215	Warding.....	224
Using the Rules.....	122	Elemental Water.....	216	Water Flow.....	216
Ghost Powers	266-267	Essence Shield.....	220-221	Weaken Metal.....	214
Anchoring.....	267	Extinguish Flame.....	215	Whirlwind.....	213
Animate.....	267	Failed and Corruption.....	197	Mad God Powers	282,284
Banshee.....	267	Farsee.....	217	Immaterial.....	284
Beings of Essence.....	258,266	Farsight.....	217	Inhuman Attributes.....	282, 284
Evolution.....	258,267	Fire Protection.....	215	Invulnerability.....	284

Shock the Senses.....	282	Status.....	82	Brawling.....	91
Suck Essence.....	282	Talentless.....	83	Bureaucracy.....	91
Twist Time and Space.....	282	Zealot.....	83	Buying Skills.....	89
Metaphysics.....	26-35, 194	Reckoning.....	252-253	Cheating.....	91
Divine Inspiration.....	35,101,242-247	Dealing With.....	255	Climbing.....	91
Essence.....	194-208	Recuperation.....	153-154	Computer Hacking.....	91
Magic.....	28,101,194,209-224	Medical Healing.....	153	Computer Programming.....	91
Necromancy.....	32,101,237-241	Endurance Points.....	154	Computers.....	91
Sight.....	29,101,225-236	Essence Points.....	154	Craft.....	91
Necromancy.....	237-241	Life Points.....	153	Dancing.....	92
Death Lordship.....	238	Resuscitation.....	153	Demolitions.....	92
Death Mastery.....	238	Supernatural Healing.....	153	Disguise.....	92
Death Speech.....	239	Roleplaying.....	155-157	Dodge.....	92
Death Vessel.....	240	Cards.....	155	Driving.....	92
Purchasing Powers.....	237	Diceless.....	155-157	Electronic Surveillance.....	92
Using.....	237	Story-Driven.....	156	Electronics.....	92
Possessions.....	101-102	Rosicrucians.....	170-174	Engineer.....	92
Computers.....	101	Allies and Enemies.....	173-174	Escapism.....	93
Vehicles.....	102	Beliefs.....	171-172	Fine Arts.....	93
Weapons.....	102	History.....	170-171	First Aid.....	93
Qualities & Drawbacks.....	71-83	Organization.....	172-173	Gambling.....	93
Acute/Impaired Senses.....	72	Stories.....	174	Guns.....	93
Addiction.....	72-73	Sentinels.....	175-178	Haggling.....	93
Adversary.....	73-74	Allies and Enemies.....	178	Hand Weapon.....	93
Artistic Talent (type).....	74	Beliefs.....	176	Humanities.....	94
Attractiveness.....	74	History.....	175-176	Instruction.....	94
Charisma.....	74	Organization.....	176-177	Intimidation.....	95
Clown.....	75	Stories.....	178	Language.....	95
Contacts.....	75	Seraphim Powers.....	279	Learning Skills.....	90
Covetous.....	75-76	Essence.....	279	Lock Picking.....	95
Cowardly.....	76	Inhuman Attributes.....	279	Magic Theory.....	95
Cruel.....	77	Invulnerability.....	279	Martial Arts.....	95
Delusions.....	77	Supernatural Abilities.....	279	Meaning of Numbers.....	89
Emotional Problems.....	78	Sight Powers.....	225-236	Mechanic.....	96
Fast Reaction Time.....	78	Defenses Against.....	225	Medicine.....	96
Hard to Kill.....	78	Effects of Strength.....	225	Myth and Legend.....	96
Honorable.....	79	Effects of Art.....	225	Notice.....	96
Humorless.....	79	Essence.....	226	Occult Knowledge.....	96
Lazy.....	79	Gestalt Effect.....	226	Pick Pocket.....	96
Minority.....	80	Mindfire.....	227	Piloting.....	96
Multiple Identities.....	80	Mindhands.....	228	Play Instrument.....	96
Nerves of Steel.....	80	Mindheal.....	229	Questioning.....	97
Obsession.....	80	Mindkill.....	230	Research/Investigation.....	97
Paranoid.....	80	Mindrule.....	231	Riding.....	97
Photographic Memory.....	80	Mindsight.....	232	Rituals.....	97
Physical Disability.....	81	Mindtalk.....	228	Running.....	98
Reckless.....	81	Mindtime.....	234	Sciences.....	98
Recurring Nightmares.....	81	Mindview.....	235	Seduction.....	98
Resources.....	82	Skills.....	89-100	Singing.....	98
Secret.....	82	Acrobatics.....	90	Sleight of Hand.....	98
Showoff.....	82	Acting.....	90	Smooth Talking.....	98
Situational Awareness.....	82	Beautician.....	90	Snares.....	98

Special Skills.....	89	High Bast.....	87
Specialties.....	89	Increased Essence Pool.....	87
Sport.....	98	Medium with Magical Training.....	87
Stealth.....	99	Old Soul.....	87-88
Storytelling.....	99	Rosicrucian Scholar.....	88
Streetwise.....	99	Time of Reckoning	21
Surveillance.....	99	Twilight Order	179-182
Survival.....	99	Allies and Enemies.....	182
Swimming.....	99	Beliefs.....	180
Tracking.....	100	History.....	180
Trance.....	100	Organization.....	181-182
Traps.....	100	Stories.....	182
Types, Skill.....	89	Undead Powers	269-271
Unconventional Medicine.....	100	Inhuman Strength and Vitality.....	270
Veterinary Medicine.....	100	Invulnerability.....	270
Weight Lifting.....	100	Semblance of Life.....	270
Writing.....	100	Wrath.....	270
Solitaires	186-189	Vampire Powers	272-275
Aquarians.....	188-189	Creatures of Essence and Flesh.....	273
Stories.....	187	Essence Vampirism.....	273
Spirit Powers	258-259	Evolution.....	273
Beings of Essence.....	258	Invulnerability.....	273
Channel and Tap into Essence.....	258	Manipulate Emotions.....	273-274
Evolution.....	258	Semblance of Life.....	274
Immaterial.....	259	Vampire Weaknesses	274
Oathbound.....	259	Addiction to Suffering.....	274
Perceive Essence.....	259	Daylight.....	274
Physical Manifestation.....	259	Essence Depletion.....	274
Spiritus.....	259	Holy Burial.....	274
Supernatural Beings	256-289	Wicce	166-169
Bast.....	276	Allies and Enemies.....	168-169
Characteristics.....	256	Beliefs.....	167-168
Dark Covenants.....	285-287	History.....	166-167
Demons.....	277-278	Organization.....	168
Elementals.....	262-263	Stories.....	169
Ghosts.....	266-268	World	21, 254
Mad Gods.....	281-284	New Generation.....	254
Nature Spirits.....	260-261	Otherworlds.....	254
Predators.....	256	Unexplained.....	254
Seraphim.....	279-280		
Spirits.....	258-259		
Undead.....	269-271		
Vampyres.....	272-275		
Wildlings.....	264-265		
Supernatural Qualities & Drawbacks	84-88		
Accursed.....	84		
Age.....	84-85		
Divine Inspiration.....	85-86		
Essence Channeling.....	86		
Gift.....	86		
Good/Bad Luck.....	86-87		

Tables and Charts

Addiction Point Value.....	73
Body Armor.....	147
Character Association.....	301
Character Creation.....	301
Character Elements.....	41
Character Improvement.....	158
Character Type.....	301
Close Combat Weapons.....	144
Common Objects Armor Value.....	149
Common Objects Damage Capacity.....	149
Corrosive Damage Table.....	140
Crowd Effect Table.....	200
Divine Inspiration.....	307
Essence Channeling Cost.....	86
Explosives Areas of Effect.....	145
Explosives Damage.....	145
Experience Point Awards.....	157
Fear.....	131
Group Magic Essence.....	206
Language Skill level.....	95
Lesser Invocations.....	306
Mindfire Strength.....	227
Mindhands Thrown Object Damage.....	229
Mindheal Strength.....	230
Mindkill Strength.....	231
Mindrule Strength.....	232
Mindsight Art.....	233
Mindsight Strength.....	233
Mindtime Strength.....	235
Mindview Strength.....	236
Necromancy.....	307
Optional Essence Control.....	198
Optional Skill Point Generation System.....	55
Outcome.....	129
Quantity and Drawbacks by Category.....	302
Quantity and Drawbacks by Name.....	303
Random Essence Effects.....	201
Ranged Combat Modifiers.....	136
Ranged Weapons.....	146
Sight.....	307
Skill List by Category.....	304
Skill List by Name.....	305
Strength.....	67
Targeting Specific Body Parts.....	138
Task/Test Base Modifiers.....	128
Turn Steps.....	132





WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Concept

CHARACTER POINTS	<input type="text"/>	SPENT	<input type="text"/>	UNSPENT	<input type="text"/>
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CHANNELING LEVEL	<input type="text"/>
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B a s c

Primary Attributes (Cat/Human)

Secondary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text"/>

LIFE POINTS	<input type="text"/>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text"/>
SPEED	<input type="text"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text"/>

Qualities

Point

Drawbacks

Point

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Skill

Level

Power

Level

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WITCHCRAFT

Weapons/Hand to Hand

Type	Range	Cap	Damage	Notes

- Sex
- Age
- Height
- Weight
- Hair
- Eyes

Possessions

Allies/Contacts

Character History



**Aliens and Government
Conspiracies
only Scratch the Surface**

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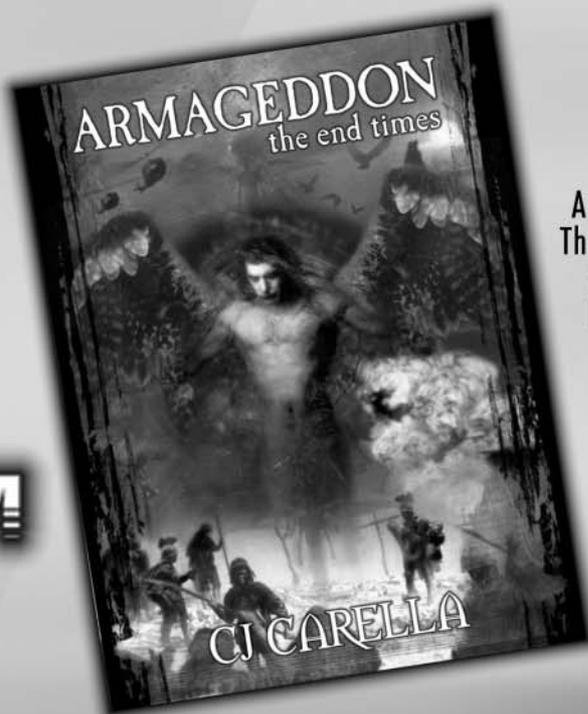
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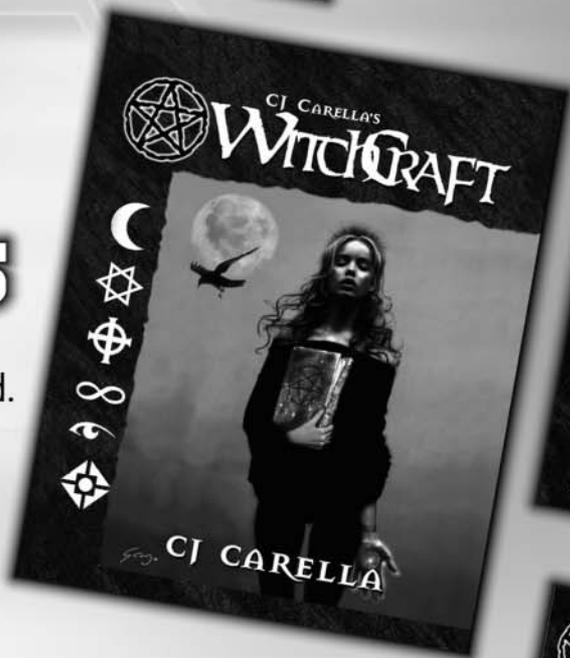
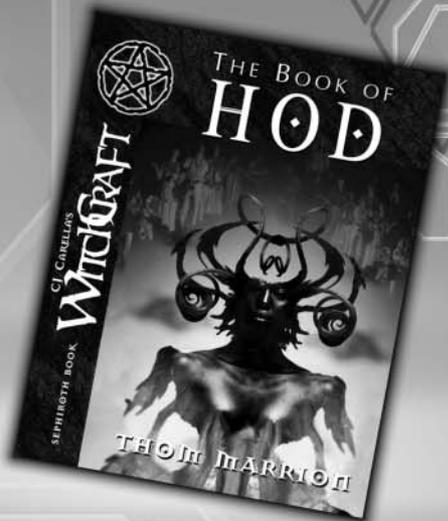
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