

THE MALEFICIUM



The Sourcebook of the Infernal
for ARS MAGICA™ 3rd Edition

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This supplement is designed for use with Ars Magica Third Edition, but can be used with the Second Edition with some adaptation.

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There is a dark side to Mythic Europe. Indeed, Mythic Europe is a gloomy realm with only glimmers of radiance, small bastions against the tide of shadow. True love, true faith, hope, charity, and the stately beauty of God's cathedrals shine through the darkness, offering glimpses of the wonderful afterlife promised to all righteous people. **Maleficium**, however, is about the dark.

Maleficium is about the cravings brought on by darkness, about the cravings for darkness itself, and about the creatures of darkness who corrupt the world and inspire the cravings. The word *maleficium* means "evildoing with the help of demons," and thus demons are the foes at the heart of this prose. Indeed, demons are at the heart of everything foul in Mythic Europe. This grim and violent land is enmeshed in a web of sickness and decay, harboring evil even within its own ecclesiastical armies — armies intended to battle, not spread, the shadow. Demons are not the rare entities of Magi's pentagrams and incense. Far from it — they are the commonplace purveyors of the unnatural in the natural world. They are the embodiment of the corruption and sinfulness ubiquitous to Mythic Europe, on all social levels, at all stages of life, and in all societies that have come before.

Those who perform corrupt acts are sinners. Those who consciously ask favors of Lucifer and his angels in return for evil deeds are diabolists. And those who force demons to do their bidding are a special kind of diabolist known as goetists, or black magicians. Whether through worship or coercion, prayer or magic, the diabolist deals with the Devil, and the diabolist's very soul is the stake in the game played. Souls are the only prize Satan hopes to claim in his war against God, a war which began as a revolt in Heaven. The Order of Hermes, aloof though it may be from the mundane realm, is no less affected by the Infernal realm. Indeed, fallen Magi are powerful parasites gnawing at the foundations of both mortal and magical domains.

Beware that the shadow does not rise and engulf you.

INTRODUCTION

As a sourcebook for the *Ars Magica* Third Edition storytelling game, **The Maleficium** describes and considers the diabolist in its many incarnations. This book also provides you with a means to integrate diabolism and diabolists into your Saga, and establishes rules for diabolic powers and ways.

An understanding of diabolism is necessary before it can be properly portrayed in your game. This book pursues that understanding by exploring the metaphysical truths that serve as backdrop to Infernal perceptions of the cosmos. The **Maleficium** also presents an ecology of Infernal entities residing in Mythic Hell and Mythic Europe alike. Ultimately, these notions of diabolism and demons stem from the perceptions of medieval man and his beliefs, from the medieval paradigm. The beliefs of the Middle Ages are manifested in the reality of Mythic Europe.

The integration of diabolism into your stories does not end with the introduction and understanding of demons as opponents. This text details the rituals of mastery which Mythic Europe's black magicians (namely those of Hermetic origin) use to demand services from demonkind. It also gives examples of the demons that black magicians may contact, and even presents guidelines for bringing diabolists to life as characters in your Saga. This book is therefore invaluable for both Storyguides and players, though only select information is for players' eyes.

Using the Supplement

The **Maleficium** presents a detailed ecology of demons and their minions. As an *Ars Magica* supplement, this work endeavors to fill the Infernal niche of Mythic Europe and add evil spirits to the medieval society already described in preceding books.

The **Maleficium** largely offers guidelines, rather than hard rules, on how to integrate diabolism into your Saga. Indeed, this book is meant more as a tool than rules gospel. Even Chapter Six (which describes Infernal beasts) is small, and should be used as an example of the direction in which demon creation may go rather than a storehouse for "official" demons. Thus, despite the book's numerous pages — there are over seven chapters — demons in your Saga simply won't fly (pardon the pun) without your consideration, imagination, and craftiness.

In the end, this product should serve as inspiration and provide a basic pattern from which all Troupes may create their diabolic foes and characters. If an idea presented here does not appeal to you, do not implement it. If a premise seems weak, make up an alternative or invent your own explanation for the weakness. Above all, always add something unexpected to the standard fare. A book is a static element, no matter how exciting its ideas may be on first perusal. The devious Storyguide who sets this book aside and thinks up demonic ploys of her own has the superior Saga, and is truer to the Infernal ideal.

This book's framework design also makes it useful to players of games other than *Ars Magica*. This design results in a product full of enticing ideas, notions, and complexities which inspire individual creativity rather than thoughtless rule worship. Any fantasy or science-fantasy game which could conceivably accept demons into its milieu will find a pre-made society herein ready for application. Only the power levels and specific mechanics of demons need be changed to suit your game.

A Word on Research

Several problems arose while researching this book. Since there is limited information on authentic medieval demonology in many scholarly works, and the authenticity of books

dealing with the occult is often questionable, a void was discovered between "genuine" medieval diabolism and actual demonic lore. Lore based on demons suggests events and creatures far more corrupt and destructive than the results of "real" medieval diabolists indicate. Given the rift between "fact" and fiction, I was forced to mingle the two in order to respect history and create a dark, dangerous environment in which to tell tales. This book is therefore a combination of history and fancy, the same balance struck in Mythic Europe itself.

Even where information on authentic diabolism was not lacking, it seemed I was always working at cross-purposes with research material. Alas, few scholars write with Storyguides in mind. What information I was trying to glean as an "authentic" and self-consistent system of lore was presented off-the-cuff and treated as an idle curiosity of sociological interest at best. The logical categories and limitations I have designated in this book (if, indeed, I have been so lucky) were therefore hard to come by and required a great deal of selective extrapolation.

Though it is unlikely that full-fledged scholars of theological medievalia are reading a storytelling supplement, an *Ars Magica* supplement covering just that topic is the most probable candidate for such scrutiny. For this reason, I wish to preface the following chapters with both a list of "authentic" sources and a warning not to assume that these sources have been taken too literally. After all, this is *Mythic Europe*, not a true medieval simulation, and historical integrity is not always preserved in that rather fanciful land.

Research credibility thus fortified (or at least closed to debate), a partial bibliography follows, listing only the most influential sources of this reference.

The Holy Bible (several editions, including Revised Standard)*

Encyclopaedia Britannica (macro entry on Magic)

The Dictionary of Demons

American Council of Learned Societies — *The Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*

Alighieri, Dante — *Inferno* (Allen Mandelbaum trans.)

Aquinas, St. Thomas — *Summa Theologica**

Black, Matthew (trans.) — *The Book of Enoch*

Butler, E. M. — *Ritual Magic**

Carus, Paul — *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil*

Cavendish, Richard — *A History of Magic*

Gardiner, Eileen — *Visions of Heaven and Hell Before Dante*

Gilson, Etienne — *The History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*

Hall, Frederic T. — *The Pedigree of the Devil*

Lewis, C. S. — *The Screwtape Letters*

Oggins, Robin — "Knights, Peasants and the Church in Medieval England" [Lectures, University Center at Binghamton]

Russel, Jeffrey Burton — *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages**

Schneweis, Emil — *Angels and Demons According to Lactantius**

Theological Studies #42 — "Angels and Demons: The Teachings of IV Lateran"

Wall, J. Charles — *Devils*

Watts, Alan W. — *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*

Johan Weyer — *Witches, Devils and Doctors in the Renaissance**

* An asterisk indicates a source of heavy influence

Designer Comments

It has been my experience that *Ars Magica* attracts a more mature audience than many other roleplaying or storytelling games. I assume this maturity includes equal parts wisdom and self-awareness. I would have refused to write this supplement if I felt otherwise about its potential readers. Having said this about you, I must say about myself that I am anti-Satanism, anti-violence, and pro-humanity; I know no more direct way to say this.

These pages contain a combination of true medieval thought (however far-flung it may seem from a modern perspective) and my own imaginary adjuncts, compiled for the sole purpose of adding depth and evocative structure to the imaginary setting of a game. This is material upon which people can base stories, and from which they may gain a better understanding of the background of their game Sagas. This work was conceived with no other purpose in mind, and all attempts were made to avoid glamorizing Hell and its offshoots. Indeed, most of this text is written from an adversarial stance, portraying diabolism as despicable and diabolists as having only false perceptions and vile methods.

Everyone who picks up this book should believe as I do, for everything within these pages is imaginary, intended as a fake ecology to promote nothing more than the entertainment value of a game and the fun of its players. I would be quite upset to discover this text being read for other reasons. I would also be perplexed at such use, since everything herein is make-believe, without any "how-to" depth or graphic detail. Neither the author nor the publishers wish to promote devil worship nor any other element of the occult.

I also suggest that young readers sit down with their parents and discuss in depth what this book is and does. Allay any fears parents might have, let them give advice and warnings based on religious and moral conviction, and, above all, accept their judgment if they do not wish you to own this book. If possible, sound them out before you make the purchase.



THE PATHWAY DARK

CHAPTER ONE

Preamble

This chapter provides the background information for what is to come. Diabolism entails a profound divergence from the moral conventions of most story characters, and readers may not yet appreciate the full extent of all things *malefic*. To foster an understanding of the extents diabolism reaches, a practical definition of diabolism is provided here. This definition is followed by a brief history of diabolism in Mythic Europe. A clear-cut argument expounding on the malediction of the Infernal path is provided, along with a rebuttal from the enemy camp. The chapter concludes with sections explaining why some people are influenced by diabolism. This last section investigates how weak folk set out upon the dark path, but also explains how their motives can be more than black and white, for even diabolism involves human complexities.

By the end of this chapter, you should understand the fundamental issues at stake in diabolism. You should also realize the more mundane logistics of diabolists as a subversive human element within medieval society. Demons, diabolic powers, and specific groups of diabolists are detailed in later chapters.

Diabolism by Definition

Since *The Maleficium* proposes to reveal the extent of the Infernal milieu (and specifically detail its Hermetic incursions), it is wise to begin an Infernal discussion with a description of diabolism. Diabolists are human beings who forsake God and their future place in Heaven, choosing instead to deal with Satan and his satellites. Infernal dealings are often pursued to acquire power on earth, usually at the expense of the immortal soul. Some even go so far as to sell that soul. Through their sins and corruption, practitioners of diabolism are denied the eternal reward that those true to the Divinities achieve upon death.

It is possible to forsake God without becoming a diabolist, though. Heaven makes no distinction between those who purposefully worship the Devil, those who are emotionally or intellectually drawn to his realm and therefore commit mortal sins, or those who are hostile to Satan but nevertheless force his minions to aid them in earthly endeavors. All stray from Divine providence, all fall short of the physical and spiritual morals expected of God's children, and all are barred from Heaven. The eternal fires of Hell — or for the lucky ones, the transient



fires of Purgatory — are where these impure souls go. Only sincere repentance before death may save these souls, though that repentance must come from the heart, which in most fallen from God, is black and without remorse.

The true measure of the diabolist, however, does not lie in the embrace of the material or temporal. Certainly lesser demons of mind and flesh are only too willing to affiliate themselves with people consumed by base distractions. Indeed, these demons lead their victims into further corruption and sin. However, people so easily swayed from truth are not necessarily diabolists. Diabolism, by dictionary definition, is an active and willing participation in the Infernal as a religion or a source of worldly power. True, weakness of spirit endangers a soul and makes that soul accessible to Satan upon bodily death. However, actual attempts to reach down and directly contact the Devil and his cohorts place the soul in immediate peril. Those efforts bind the soul to the Sphere of Hell, should the diabolist be lucky enough to survive the encounter. This latter case is the state in which the soul of the "true" diabolist resides.

Based on the above description of diabolism, diabolists may be divided into two camps: the commanders and the beseechers. Those who force demonkind to perform to their specifications through the use of magic are known as goetic sorcerers. This category of diabolist encompasses all individuals able to manipulate magic of one form or another. It includes non-Gifted persons with access to special magic devices, hedge witches and wizards, and Hermetic Magi. The beseechers, on the other hand, request the aid of demonkind by offering something in return. This is usually the soul, but may frequently involve active devil worship in life. This category includes both the impulsive farmer who curses and makes an oral pact when crops die, and the long-term worshipper who forsakes the Church to become a member of the satanic congregation or even a priest of Satan.

There is also a third category of diabolist, that of the siphoners. This group can include both commanders and beseechers. Its qualifying characteristic is a pagan belief system; however, not all pagans are diabolists. On the contrary, most are not. However, some pagan deities find themselves drafted into Lucifer's Infernal regime. This is particularly true with the growth of Christendom and the corresponding increase in Hell's potency throughout Mythic Europe. The worshippers of pagan deities now find their gods' milieus usurped. The power they grant these beings through belief and worship is siphoned and manipulated by Satan.

Thus, diabolists of Mythic Europe can be classified. The category of goetic sorcerer, and specifically the Hermetic "Dark Magus," receives the most attention in this supplement. Worshippers of the "Christian diabolist" persuasion are also discussed, along with brief comments on other forms of diabolism.

Diabolism Throughout History

Diabolism has undergone several transformations throughout earthly history. Indeed, diabolism has existed almost as long as man has, reaching back to the time of Paradise. A study of diabolism's changes over time helps to understand its current manifestations.

THE ISOLATED PAST, THE FOCUSED PRESENT

Diabolism has supported a long and inglorious list of vile practitioners. The first pact between human and devil was concluded over six millennia ago, when the very first generation of humans walked the earth. Due to its nature, there can be no chronological history of diabolic progress in pre-Christian ages. Diabolists throughout history have been individuals or groups in solitary contact with Hell, unaware of the intricacies of their alliance or the precedents set by others of their ilk. Even the dark devotion of groups was custom-tailored to group members, with no thread of tradition carried over from one group to the next. An Infernal group would simply fade away, separate in time and place from the sort of notoriety which might have promoted continuity. Indeed, that is precisely how devils wished things to be — dark, mysterious, and a lure to the curious of future generations, with no lessons or warnings passed on to future victims.

Indeed, each historical diabolist (or group of diabolists) was a trailblazer, if for no other reason than deep-seated isolation and ignorance. Every man and woman of the past who sought aid from Below did so on his or her own terms (though manipulated by devilkind, of course). Each deal was a wholly personal venture.

Only with the coming of Christ, the spread of the Gospel, and the rise of the Church has diabolism gained a single, focused front. It has become an organized unit of social belief and tradition, imitating and inverting the orthodox ministry of the Church. In a sense, the spread of Christendom signaled the rise of the previously silent army of God. Now, with his enemy clearly arrayed before him in every Church and blessing, Satan can plan a cohesive strategy of evil. The forces that oppose him are open to view. The humans who choose to side with the Prince of Darkness are his pawns in this struggle for influence and souls.

By setting up the Dominion as the ultimate earthly fief, the Divinities send forth an open call to arms against evil. The Devil's Church, growing on the underside of this great Christian behemoth, simply observes the battlefield the enemy has chosen. With such a clear view, Hell is allowed to pick and choose its own spiritual battlefields — targets distant from or straying from the protection of the Divine. Thus, after long generations of unfocused exile, Satan's satellites now see their

retribution looming on the horizon. Thus, they knit a following with which to wage the coming war, to stage the sundering of the Divine.

BIBLICAL GENESIS

Despite the nebulous curtain of uncertainty and isolation surrounding pre-Christian practices, both myth and theology supply a starting point for the diabolic story. Even this basic seed is of questionable veracity, however.

To begin at the beginning, Eve was not a diabolist, nor was Adam. Most agree on this premise. Adam and Eve were unaware of sin at the fateful moment when they committed their entire race to damnation. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil stood apart from, but in the midst of the Garden of Eden, and was avoided by God's command until the Devil tricked Eve into believing she would gain God-like power by eating of the Tree.

In this way Satan made mankind imitate his own fall from grace, and ensured Pride's stature as the most heinous of the Seven Deadly Sins. As a result of their fall, human beings were made subject to death and exiled from the bountiful Garden of Eden into an imperfect world. It is this world, the world of Mythic Europe, which now decays under the Devil's shadow.

There is hope, though. The eternal salvation of Heaven is not forever denied man. The Devil and his angels had near-perfect understanding of God yet denied Him of their own volition. They are therefore barred forever from Heaven's salvation. Mankind, on the other hand, knew less of God and was duped into falling from God's grace by that which had already fallen. Man's ignorance therefore allows him the chance to escape the shadow of the Devil. All mankind need do is sincerely recognize the power and truth of God, and obey God's word. Thus, where Satan seems to have greater influence over mankind and the world, God's is actually the stronger power.

Legendary Firsts

According to Rabbinical texts, the first wife of Adam was Lilith. When Adam rejected her for the company of Eve, Lilith vowed revenge. She was approached by the Devil and the two struck a deal. Eve's temptation for the Apple in the Garden of Eden was the result. The fact that this legend contradicts accepted Biblical doctrine seems to matter little; the mythic Lilith is often named as the first diabolist, even in legends that survive to the 13th century.

If Lilith was the first diabolist, then Cain was easily the first unredeemed sinner, and the second soul earmarked for Hell. Cain and Abel were brothers, the sons of Adam and Eve. When God preferred the gifts of Abel, a shepherd, to those of Cain, a tiller of the soil, Cain became jealous and slew Abel. Angered, God put a curse upon Cain that forced him to wander the land for generations to come. Even now, no theologian can state for certain that Cain's soul has arrived at its fiery destination. At any rate, Cain was the second human to earn a place in Hell, as the perpetrator of the first "simple" mortal sin (one that did not directly involve Satan in the act).

OTHER BIBLICAL PRECEDENTS

In Christian orthodox belief, diabolists did not arise until after the Deluge. Before the Deluge, it is said, Satan had an amazingly tight reign upon God's new race, and nurtured an array of depravities and injustices in man's antediluvian societies. The Devil's work eventually became so serious a threat to humanity's cosmic progress that it became necessary for God to once again take a direct hand in the world. Thus, diabolism before the Flood would almost have been redundant.

God's intervention took the form of the Great Flood, 40 days and 40 nights of torrential rains that cleansed the earth of its excesses of evil. To preserve the good of man, God commanded the righteous Noah to build a ship — a huge ark — and to select a group of people and land animals to survive in it. The resting place of Noah's Ark, where land finally reemerged, is traditionally believed to be in ancient Armenia. Upon emerging from the Ark, Noah's clan founded a new society.

However, signs of corruption returned almost immediately after the world's cleansing. That corruption was of much-reduced scope, though. Never again would Satan have such easy access to the world, and not for many generations would evil have a chance to gain the foothold it had previously enjoyed.



History and your Saga

As Storyguide, remember that the history of diabolism only affects your Saga as far as you let it. When creating a diabolic group or opponent to torment the players' characters, you may certainly research historical diabolic groups, hoping to find a genuine one that suits your needs. However, you are also free to fabricate such a "historical" coven as needed. Maybe the best way to create such a diabolic force is to research specific cultures and pick an ideal era or societal upheaval that could have fostered the coven you now thrust into the characters' lives.

The first of the post-Flood sinners was Cham. Cham was the son of Noah and was both jealous of his father's work and contemptuous of his father's behavior. Refusing to let Noah lead him in the rebuilding to come, Cham set out to build his own kingdom with those who would follow him, and thus begot the Canaanites.

Noah cursed Cham and his brood. The people of Canaan suffered under this curse for many generations. Signs of the curse were evident from the very beginning, when Misraim, one of Cham's sons, became the first diabolist in post-Flood history. Misraim's evil exploits were legend even in his own time, and the Canaanites greatly feared their leader's son. Fortunately for the Canaanites, Misraim wandered all lands and rarely stayed in one place. When Misraim died, his ashes became a potent source of power and were scattered over the lands of Persia. Some say those ashes may still be found in the 13th century, and may be tapped for spells of immense might.

CIVILIZATIONS AND EARLY COVENS

As the centuries wore on and civilizations spread after the Flood, it grew common for small coteries of diabolists to rise up, but (as mentioned above) these were usually short-lived, whether due to internal power struggles, outside retribution, or a tendency to overstep themselves.

Egypt (which Hermetic Seekers now strive to learn about) was perhaps the ancient society least in thrall to the Devil. The Egyptian people had their cults of evil disposition to be sure, and their predilection for the dead and the resting places of the dead was second to none. However, this society was fortunate enough to possess a strong pantheon of deities, members of the race of so-called Old Gods. This race was said to rise before God sent His son to reveal the tenets of the Christian faith. Though none can begin to speculate on what sort of deific understanding these beings might have had with the Christian God, it is clear that the Old Gods were strong entities. Although not necessarily opposed to Devil-like modes of behavior, they appear to have been strong enough to assert a cosmic control that thwarted the Devil and limited his powers in certain ways.

More successful diabolic sects existed in the harsh and mystical East, in the millennia preceding Christ's birth and the coming of Christianity. Long-standing orders of devil worship-

pers rose among the Assyrians. The Assyrians believed that two equally powerful deities, representing Light and Darkness respectively, ruled the world. Under this belief dark cults thrived as priests sought to appease the god of Darkness. Indeed, it is said by some Seekers that the Assyrians invested far too much faith, even a terribly disproportionate amount, in darkness. Naturally Satan reveled in his role of deceiver among the Assyrians, using his false legitimacy to ensure the steady collection of human souls.

The Chaldeans were likewise susceptible to Satan's influence. Indeed, diabolists lived openly within the same ancient kingdom from which the Gypsies claim to descend. These diabolists' activities were so public that some were even consulted, alongside less deviant priests and astrologers, by the kings. However, great battles between religious factions took place in the streets, and the most overt diabolists were soon purged from the kingdom.

More successful among the Chaldeans were the Khe'jut, an order of diabolists that hid behind the guise of astrologers, claiming to be a peaceful sect devoted to star worship. The stars, as the Khe'jut knew only too well, were an excellent tool for diabolic communion (see *Star Demons*, in Chapter Four). Disguising their true natures, the Khe'jut continued their vile ways after other diabolists had been driven out. Maybe it is from these corrupt creatures that the diabolists of the 13th century have learned to conduct their affairs in terrible privacy.

The Persians, the Syrians, the Greeks, indeed all manner of peoples down to the current age, have harbored diabolists within their communities. Fortunately, the earliest periods of diabolic growth have never been matched in recent times. History's evil communities have not had the dire effect on modern diabolism that men of virtuous spirit prophesied. The secrecy and isolation of early communities worked to cut them off from the world when they were at the height of their practices. In death, these sinister groups took their ideas, traditions, and sheer volume of demonological knowledge with them. In a sense, the isolation that allowed these groups to survive ultimately destroyed them. However, what influence some newly rediscovered tome of diabolic power might have on the future is for the future to tell.

DIABOLISM AFTER THE BIRTH

One of the most important supernatural events in known world history occurred in the year of Christ's birth. Called the Muting by most diabolists and Magi (and The Cleansing by Christians), this event was marked by a lull in all supernatural forces save the Divine. Indeed, bonds of magic were broken all across the land, and few Infernal covens survived the period. The birth of Christ brought Divine blessing upon the world, wiping clean much of the powers that had stood before. As a result, the Devil once again found himself at a starting point; very few of his followers and plots survived renewed Divine power.

It is widely known that the Devil works in subtle and secret ways, and many years are required for his influences to spread and deceive. Thus, after The Cleansing, no common tradition of diabolism is known to exist in Mythic Europe, let alone the world. No "evolution" of devil worship has been evident through the centuries. However, the wise keep in mind that the Devil, like the Lord, works in mysterious ways, and if his power is again ascendant, mankind might not know until it is too late.

In general, the history of diabolism is a history of case studies, of isolated individuals and groups entering into one-sided bargains with the ever-willing and ever-so-alluring forces of the Devil. If any lesson can be gleaned from research into these various accounts, it is that the Dark One may take many forms, among them the Christian Lucifer, the Rabbinical adversarial "satans," and the dark god of a pagan people. The inhabitant of Mythic Europe who is tempted toward sin by an alluring stranger would do well to keep this in mind.

ANTI-CHRISTIANS

As previously stated, the rise of Christendom heralded the rise of a single anti-Christendom, a force determined to destroy that which, with the birth of a single child, had destroyed nearly all the Devil's accomplishments. As anti-Christians, diabolists are still encouraged to work apart from one another — devils don't want their victims comparing notes. However, as they are presented with a focused enemy, diabolists are likely to develop similar ways of dealing with that enemy. Hence the Devil's Church, or more accurately, the Devil's Churches, where isolated congregations invert the universal practices of the orthodox Church to create a universal Church of the Devil, with priests, masses, and sacraments of its own.

The Devil's Church has a fairly short history, with a simple evolution. It began, obviously enough, in opposition to the campaign Christ's disciples waged in the Roman Empire to spread the Gospel and gain converts. Most of the Dark Church's converts were recruited from disenfranchised pagans, people whose gods were weakened by the nascent seed of the Divine. In league with members of the Jewish populace, pagans tried to enforce drastic persecutions of the Christians. However, few emperors and fewer common citizens took the pagans' measures to heart. Worse yet, the pagans' persecution of Christians tested Christian mettle and resulted in many martyrs and miracles of the new faith, which ironically encouraged the spread of the Dominion.

Many of the disenfranchised statesmen and pagan priests were bitter at this turn of events. Despite their efforts, the pagans' old deities were waning, and a new deity was the enemy responsible for their death. At such a desperate time, what better ally could present himself than an enemy of the pagans' enemy? In response to Christianity, Satanism took root in both the households of city dwellers and the villages of countrymen. By the time Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion, the Devil's congregation was firmly established at the soft underbelly of Roman society. Even sorcerer-priests, working as they were in Mercurian group rituals, were sometimes

lured into diabolism. Indeed, diabolism infected the lives of wizards even before the foundation of the Order of Hermes. This corruption came about through the influence of normal diabolists and the demonic promise of limitless magic — the same temptations present in the 13th century.

The earliest meetings of this Dark Church mirrored those of Christians. Before the first true centers of Christian worship were built or taken over, worship was conducted in neighborhood homes. So too was early worship of the Anti-Christ. These foul ceremonies were conducted with simple rituals and professions of faith to the Dark One. Although there was a host to run the meetings, there was no ordained hierarchy of any kind. Like Christianity of the time, Satanism was flexible. In fact, it allowed the pagan gods to remain in power, albeit in the roles of subservient demons and devils. Any witches known to dabble in the darker arts (as opposed to simple herbal knowledge) were invited into the fold, even though they were not yet targets of specific Christian persecution. Thus, by creating insular groups that worshipped in secret, Satan gained power over pockets of urban dwellers. His true power lay in the countryside, though, where witches were more influential and ceremonies could be practiced with less secrecy. Indeed, Satan took the countryside long before the city-based Church made its own inroads.

The earliest formal Black Masses took place in simple covens. Though such secretive groupings survive into the 13th century, bolder diabolists took over their first Devil's Churches from orthodox holdings in the late fifth century. Such daring

moves were made possible by the confusion of the barbarian attacks which hastened the fall of Rome. These outgoing diabolists initially targeted old pagan temples, with the excuse of reclaiming previous religious haunts. Before long, however, purely Christian structures were the ones most sought after. By this time diabolists had begun to relegate their pagan gods to inferior roles, vaunting Satan as their sole god versus the Christian enemy.

Under the direct influence of Satan, members of Dark Churches eventually shed their retributive outlooks. The pagan gods were largely lost in the shadow of Lucifer's magnificence. With time, the prominence of the orthodox Church as an enemy also precluded worship of anything but Satan. Indeed, to counter the growth of orthodox Christianity, Dark Churches took to undermining Christianity's ways. In fact, specific Devil's Churches evolved ceremonies and hierarchies which mocked and reversed those of Christianity, with priests, ritual desecration of Unholy ground, sacraments, schisms and masses. The phenomenon of the Black Sabbath also developed. The cult of the ancients (the fascination with the past and the factors that led to the present day) also affected the thoughts of the diabolists. They began to invent histories for their churches and covens which dated to before Rome's fall. Some even delved into times before the birth of Christ, imaginatively applying historical research and old legends. Thus it was that the legitimacy of history was infused into the aberrant actions and convictions of Satan's Church.



It is from this basis that the core of 13th century diabolism has evolved. Keep in mind, though, that no general history can take into account every geological region or period of time, and even broadly based trends have their exceptions. Thus, what has been described here should be thought of as a sketch only, to be detailed or amended by you and your Saga's demands.

Society Exposed

As one might expect, the ideas and effects of diabolism are firmly entrenched in the society of Mythic Europe. Practitioners of the *ars magica* and the clergy of the Church can be thought of as members of two meta-classes. These meta-classes span the whole of medieval society, drawing as they do from every social stratum. However, diabolic activity is even more widespread and offers many more charms. It is more alluring and therefore pervades Mythic Europe.

For scholars of magic, the requisites of a personal Gift and an apprenticeship sponsor restrict initiation into the fold. Entry into the Order of Hermes is therefore highly exclusive, not according to social class, but magical potential. Even if one has the Gift, patience and years of study are required to discipline mind and body for the manipulation of magic. This is not an easy path.

There are fewer restrictions on gaining clerical status. True devotion to God is certainly sought after, but in reality is seldom realized. Since True Faith is not mandatory for clergy and the Dominion blossoms conveniently in the midst of all civilized lands of Christendom, entry into the clergy is comparatively easy. However, the duties of a priest are often demanding and uncomfortable. Politics, feudal obligations and competition for offices all place practical barriers on mobility within the hierarchy of the Church. Once settled into Church life, there is still a vast chain of duties and procedures which must be adhered to, not least of which are services and rigorous private prayers.

Certainly there are those who qualify for membership in the Order of Hermes and the Church, and there are people willing to bear the burdens demanded by these institutions. It is a general truth, however, that many more people cannot find a place in these institutions, and thus cannot lay claim to their power. It is also a truism that many people crave power and will do anything to get it. Thus diabolism is even more firmly entrenched in medieval society than the Order of Hermes or the Church. Through diabolism people can claim the physical might they seek for the apparently inconsequential price of secured fate after death.

Diabolism is an alternative to which any powermonger may turn. Diabolism demands no understanding of vast gospels, libraries of doctrine, or theological dispute, and no rare gift is required. Anyone can become a diabolist. The Devil and his brood are more than willing to meet a parishioner halfway, and bothersome understanding is the very last thing the Devil seeks from his flock.

The Lure Without Truth

In the year A.D. 1121, Pope Calixtus II spoke on the topic of diabolism to a synod of bishops in Florence. He later recorded the main thrust of his ideas about the "Lure Without Truth" (as diabolism is called by the Church) in his journals. Calixtus was noted for his synthesis of scholarly and religious concepts, so much of his work has circulated amongst Covenants of Mythic Europe. Magi find his work to be a palatable alternative to the diatribes of other Church officials. The core of Calixtus's work reads as follows:

Why are there diabolists? The answer to this question are numerous, but no single explanation, indeed no general insight derived from the collection of possibilities, is satisfying. The reasons all reduce to ones of power, manifest either as a slice of God's bestowal from the Empyrean element or as our worldly reflection, or adaptation, of that true power to human perspective.

This bestowed power, however, is at the price of the soul; it is, even for those who cannot place belief in the order of spirits in the universe, a selling of freedom and a removal of an irretrievable aspect of the self and the potential granted each of us by God.

The path to Heaven is one of building up the soul, of honing the psyche toward ultimate perfection. Descent into Hell, in contrast, is marked by a series of compromises and losses, a wearing away of the core of being until Succumbing. Becoming one with Heaven is a spiritual joining, a link to Wholeness. Becoming one with Hell is a process of draining away unto oblivion.

This compromise toward Inversion is an inescapable necessity of the cosmos. Through supplications directed Downward, the one who supplicates is not merely supporting a tangible enemy of Good and Light. The very act causes the bodied-soul to become, in its path of destiny, anti-Good. Satan's domain has more universal power as an idea to be grasped and embraced by humanity than as a location and vessel of manifest might. Yet embrace it the diabolists do, as symbol and as physicality.

Why the continued presence of the diabolist throughout mankind's history? Why do some fall prey to the inevitable and eternal oppression of self, merely for power over the body's fate in the brief span of time we spend as body-and-soul? The reason is nothing short of the state of our being. We are the Transient within the stacked Rotae that represent the universe, the only souls possessed of (or perhaps possessed by) bodies. It is flesh itself that creates the need to control things of the flesh.

A diabolist does not accept his boundaries within the plane of Earth, sharing in the experience God has set before him. A diabolist seeks outside aid to secure a place of the flesh in the world of bodies. Yet, even when this extra might proves efficacious, the mortality of the body is ever a boundary of the soul's experience within our Transient world. When the end comes, and the bodies are stripped away, what wonder is there at discovering that the souls which overreached their stations are marked with stains of a nature corrupted? Heaven is denied them, and the lure is proven to be without final truth.

With acceptance of diabolism, excessively esoteric or monotonous chores are also avoided; the tasks demanded of Hermes and Church are escaped. After all, diabolism is characterized by a willingness to give in to base desires, like sloth. Indeed, all Hell desires from applicants is the decision to join the war against Heaven. The more deeply Hell is embraced, the greater the bodily powers gained in life.

It is from these attitudes, which portray diabolism as a quick and easy path to power, that diabolism gains its following and becomes a societal institution. Although hidden and dubious, the institution flourishes wherever a person seeks a quick means to an end. Preserving one's own soul is a formidable task, and can be undone in just a moment's weakness if demons are listening nearby (and they always are). In mortal society, where power over others can mean comfort and leisure in life, the desire for power is eternal. It is thus that diabolism exists in society, just as institutions wherein struggle is required for success do. Wherever there sits a church to God or a laboratory devoted to understanding, a shrine to the Devil exists as well.

Diabolism weaves its influence throughout society by appealing to man's worldly desires. It is the common fear, the hidden enemy, and the ever-present temptation.

SOCIETY TEMPTED

There are innumerable ways to tempt humanity to the Infernal, and there are innumerable reasons why people might turn to the Darkness. Each person has her own reasons for turning from the Light, but in the harsh, desperate world of Mythic Europe there are some common reasons for diabolism.

The Common Man

Throughout their lives peasants and the poor must toil or perform services in unceasing succession, one year to the next, until they die. Yet throughout this labor, uncertainty about their security or the steadiness of their income often gnaws at them until each day is torment. Certain peasants may be better off than others, but for all, the afterlife seems distant reward. When the uneducated man, to whom Saint Thomas Aquinas's dissertations on the soul are as unfathomable as the Greek tongue, supposes that Satan can provide immediate reward, the temptation of Infernal favor is immense.

The middle class, epitomized by the merchant and other town dwellers but also a resident of rustic settings, likewise has much work to do in order to earn a comfortable living. The bourgeoisie is trapped between two worlds, and the strength of his desire to rise higher in status is matched only by his dread of sinking lower. Both prospects tempt the bourgeoisie to seek aid from whatever quarter offers it. As if Infernal temptation for the merchant of the 13th century is not great enough, the worries of a money economy, guilds, joint business ventures and governing bodies are all on the rise. All are inspiration to

sell a soul for assured success. Furthermore, many a disguised demon has walked among the bourgeoisie, leading the unsuspecting into deeper degradation of the soul.

The nobility, though higher in station than most, are no safer from temptation than their lessers. The noble realm is one of intrigues and entertainments, boredom and abuses of power. The nobility are proud enough to think themselves superior by birth. When that superiority is endangered, the noble has more to lose than anyone. Thus, the stakes of life and soul are much higher than for lesser men. The temptation of diabolism, as a source of power or simply a cure for boredom, is strong indeed. Without the entertainments of diabolism, life might actually be dreary and plain, at least as dull as that of a peasant.

The Church

Sadly, not even members of Church hierarchy are immune to the satanic call. In the midst of the Church, in the heart of the Dominion, God still gives His children free will and allows them to be tempted by worldly matters. The power of the clergy is not just an aphrodisiac, but a catalyst for many sins. Sometimes the goal of advancement in Church hierarchy is a primary temptation. More than one Pope has been accused of making a pact with Satan in return for the seat. In fact, the first modern pact was entered into by the bursar Theophilus, who thought he had been unfairly denied the benefice of a bishopric. The Church is ultimately bound to the earth, no matter where its members aspire to travel. Indeed, the Church is a member of the feudal hierarchy; it has the duties and suffers the temptations of all landholders. In the end, the secular world offers many enticements for those not satisfied with the soul.

Magi

Though Magi are far more learned than most, and may live lives far longer than the common person's, they are still human and therefore vulnerable to human failings. In general, Magi, and even wizards not belonging to the Order of Hermes, isolate themselves from mundane society. In theory their remoteness removes them from the base distractions of mundane man. But, the question must be asked, does this aloofness render Magi immune to diabolic temptation? Not in the least. It's easy to guess the weakest chink in a Magus's spiritual armor; few Magi are practicing Christians. Magical areas are usually remote, away from the Dominion and away from churches. What Magus values his precious seasons in the laboratory so little that regular prayer and journeys to a distant church don't seem like a waste of valuable time?

Indeed, some Magi have no regard whatsoever for Church and soul. To them Christianity is merely a bothersome force which can disrupt the workings of wizardly magic. These Magi see the Church as a metaphysical rival that must be watched carefully and strictly avoided. Still others wholeheartedly oppose the Church; magic itself is their substitute for a codified religion. Little wonder, then, that Magi of this ilk are not ill-disposed to bargaining with demons, offering Hell something in which they do not even believe, their souls.

Belief, as has been shown for other medieval classes, is not proof against diabolic temptation. Magi have their own reasons for bargaining with Satan. Most are similar, such as dissatisfaction with failed efforts or the desire to rise in some political hierarchy. Another reason for diabolism, however, is quite unique, or perhaps shared by only the most jaded of Magi.

Though Magi may possess great power, and can use that power to contend with demonkind (at least lesser demons), that same power may be their one greatest weakness. Power breeds arrogance. Because of their locations (isolated from humanity), their avocations (seeking places and objects of great esoteric value), and the forces available to them (magic), Magi are perhaps Mythic Europe's most frequent opponents of demonkind. Simply put, familiarity breeds both content and contempt. In an adventurous Magus's life, demons can become commonplace. Most are easy to vanquish, and it might even be exciting to converse with the more intellectual individuals. Thus, in due time, with confidence in personal power and intellect, Magi may falsely suppose themselves capable of outsmarting the Devil. That arrogance is a Magus's ultimate undoing, for no mortal can match wits with the Prince of Darkness.

THE PATHWAY STRUCK

Mundane civilization has a tenuous hold on law, order and authority. Feudal, political and military structure, coupled with the seigniorial system of agriculture and social obligation, form the foundation of Mythic Europe's temporal stability. Christianity, of course, is the spiritual foundation of the civilized world, providing a code of conduct in a violent age, morale in the face of hardship, and an otherworldly sense of purpose in life.

The Church is also integral to secular matters, though. The marriage between Church and State began in the late Roman Empire, was born anew with the Carolingian Dynasty, and was recently refueled by Germanic kings seeking the title of Emperor. With such a hold on the hearts and minds of European nations, the separation of Church and State is an unthinkable concept, at odds with both tradition and the goals of the Papacy. Indeed, while Pope and monarch continually try to subjugate the other, neither desires the other's extinction. National monarchies shall eventually prevail, as our knowledge of history tells us, but this in no way impinges upon the spirit which permeates Christian society.

Upon this fragile world of delicate calm certain individuals turn their backs, choosing the black while all around them ostensibly choose the white. Diabolism is not a pastime. It is a rejection of the life that medieval folk are raised to value. Even when the idle son of a rich noble delves into the occult as a diversion, that meager break from Divine truth is a deviation from the accepted road, and from salvation. By turning to the Infernal in word and deed, the diabolist spurns the Road of Light for the Pathway Dark, and the spirit follows where word and deed lead.



J.Cobb

Moving from the philosophical to the practical, a diabolist who is spiritually distanced from God and mentally distanced from society is likely to become physically distanced from the mortal world. Remote locations allow the diabolist to freely pursue the chosen path. Isolation ensures distance from the Dominion, protection from Christian enemies, and sometimes the opportunity to discover a remote Infernal Aura in which to work. Beyond this, distance from conventional society facilitates the privacy required for complete spiritual regression (just as the earliest monks chose remote hermitages to nurture spiritually). Distance also allows uninterrupted traffic with the physical manifestations of Hell. On occasion, isolation even allows a diabolist the chance to locate ingredients necessary for Infernal recipes. Thus, the dark path leads to separation from the accepted world to pursue the unaccepted, and may be sought for reasons both practical and aesthetic (but both thoroughly evil).

It is important to note, however, that the tendency for diabolists to shun the mortal world is not unilateral. For reasons of their own, certain diabolists prefer to remain in contact with society. There are peasants who remain in their villages, nobles who remain on their estates, clergy who remain in their dioceses, and Magi who remain in their Covenants. There are many reasons for this. Diabolists are still human (when they first set out on the road to Hell, at any rate) and can feel the twin pressures of habit and insecurity. These pressures

Lure Rebuttal

Here is a passage from a letter of debate sent from Seirgaus of Oxford to Herold, former deacon of a parish outside London. Herold was recently stripped of his position for allowing rumored diabolists to congregate in the churchyard on a night of noted Infernal significance. Seirgaus, the author, was one of the men admitted onto the consecrated grounds, and in this letter he attempts to undermine Herold's faith in the orthodox Church and, ultimately, in God. One section of the letter is given over to a diatribe in which Seirgaus refutes the widely-accepted doctrine of the Lure Without Truth.

...for not only are Calixtus and his brethren ignorant of the true values we uphold, they are self-inconsistent. If physical bodies make us crave power, then why do angels and devils both have well-developed hierarchies and domains of authority? If Satan Fell from a greed for power, which the clergy would have us believe is at the root of the Devil's show of pride, then it can only be because God beat him at the game — God is the greatest powermonger in existence!

We of the Other Church therefore believe quite the opposite must be true of bodies: namely, that they prevent great access to power. In all Christian talk of renouncing the material world, what is the result of this tactic? The implacable spread of an invading Dominion and the unhalting power of the Miracle, stronger than any body-bound magic. That is the ultimate sort of power we bodied-souls may crave (and crave it the clergy do, in spite of their claims to the contrary). When the Church puts such great restraints on the acquisition of power within its own hierarchy, and then goes so far as to array itself for combat against wizards, their closest rivals, who dabble in the inferior magic of earth, is it any wonder that we seek a source beyond our own bodies with which to gain footing?

As to the Church's claim of Good versus Evil, that is also biased beyond reason. The winners pick the perspective, and up until this point in history, the God of the Christian Church has had the upper hand. His followers have implanted their own narrow views on the fabric of the Shadow Empyrean, and they have achieved dominance thus far. Stuck in this paradigm, our souls are veritably thrown into the destiny supplied by God, thrown into His cosmic plan. And still, God's plans are selfish to a point that is humanly incomprehensible. As the doctrine admits, though in grander and less grim terms, God swallows souls whole and allows only the concept of the One — His One.

I submit to you that Satan has a much more acceptable plan. We are allies, participants, individuals, involved in the schemes and sharing in the outcome of a great war with the angels. Once you are able to pierce the "Holy" paradigm and latch onto the Devil's campaign, you will see that Right is Wrong, Good is Evil, and the war is one of the Uncaring, Devouring Entity versus the Struggling Rebel, the angel who prides in the achievements of the individual. Invest your soul with Lucifer, and you will see the right path, even if it looks to be the Dark Path from where you currently sit. If individual power comes of this investment, it is only more proof that you have made the right choice.

weigh heavily on plans for the future life pursued. Though some diabolists diverge from the norm, and would in fact usurp it, nonetheless they cannot divest themselves wholly of it.

There can also be more devious (but no less human) reasons for remaining within society. Diabolists have succumbed to the most horrendous temptation of all, so it is only logical for ancillary sins to play a role in their succeeding decisions. For instance, greed or rampant ambition can foster a desire to maintain a position of power and status. A diabolist might also remain among former fellows out of nothing more than deviant desires or the need to sate a perverse pleasure.

Ultimately, regardless of how the diabolic life is pursued, it is lived for reasons entirely endemic to the personality of the practitioner. Motivation for this lifestyle might be eminently practical or enigmatically incomprehensible. Whatever the reason, acceptance of diabolism demands a change in lifestyle. One cannot simply become a diabolist one day and expect to live life as usual. The transition to diabolism and its effects upon the newly-embarked must be carefully considered. A person who becomes a diabolist undergoes a frightening transformation, receiving that which is craved but losing humanity in the process. Identity cannot remain the same afterward, and that change must be infused into any character you play, whether as Storyguide or player.

RATIONALE OF THE DIABOLIST

It is difficult to attribute a coherent and legitimate rationale to the activity of diabolism. It could be argued that the urge to become a diabolist is by its very nature somewhat unbalanced, and cannot be explained by simple logic. St. Thomas Aquinas and other great thinkers of this age feel that Evil is not something that exists. Rather, it is believed to be a lack of Good, when all vestiges of goodness have withered and a sort of anti-existence remains. This is supposedly the condition of privation known as Satan's Hell. In this age, where the sickness and health of the body are measured in terms of nebulous yet seemingly irrefutable bodily humors, predisposition toward diabolism can itself perhaps be explained in terms of some meta-humor linked to the soul.

Simple observation of Mythic European society reveals a spectrum of behavioral aberrations. Such is humanity. Most of these abnormalities are harmless, but some can be dangerous, as in the case of diabolic tendencies. In a world where baptism is a true demonifuge, not merely a symbolic gesture, the desire to embrace the immortal enemy of the Church is a most heinous aberration. While it would be easy (and not all that inaccurate) to present a person as a worshipper of Satan

because "she feels like it," there is often a pattern of sorts that can be adopted as the outward manifestation of this internal aberration.

People who turn to diabolism are often the outsiders of society, in mindset if not in physical interaction. Inadequacies, either accurately or mistakenly perceived, sometimes drive individuals to isolate themselves from others or to become obsessed with overcoming these inadequacies by any means. People in such a conundrum frequently believe that by exploiting the weaknesses of others, they themselves become stronger. This is a very potent and primal urge, and demons make efficient use of it when seeding societal discord. Since abuse of others is such a primal tool for demons, it's no wonder that humans who use it are close to the Infernal, and can cross the line with but a thought.

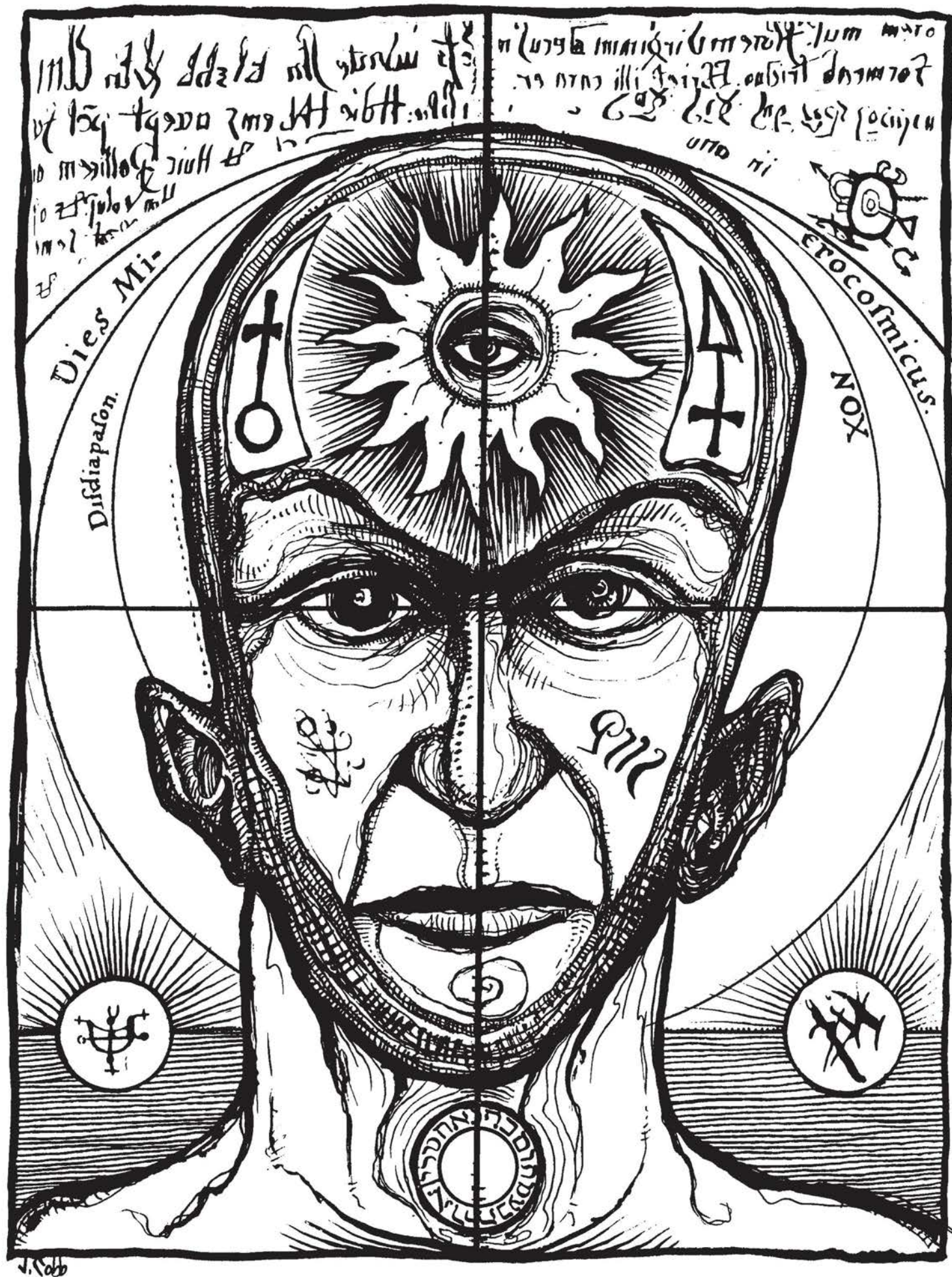
Though perceived inadequacy is one factor behind diabolism, simpler motivations should not be overlooked. A diabolist may often live in very harsh conditions, be they physical or mental, and attempts to escape that existence can lead to Infernal bargaining. Mythic Europe is an exceedingly hostile place and existence in it is often unbearable. A soul seems a small price to pay for refuge from suffering.

It is a mistake, however, to assume that all diabolists are hapless victims of society and the world. Society tells the diabolist that he or she possesses an immortal soul, and by behaving in an empirically "good" manner, may go to Heaven. The diabolist takes this information and uses it for empirically "bad" ends. Whatever the cause of a diabolist's mindset, a social line is clearly crossed. Where does the impetus to cross this line

come from? Are diabolists driven by a worldly desire that outweighs, in their minds, the value of the soul? Do they question the very idea that they have souls? Do they think they have some assured means to escape Satan's clutches or nullify his claim as death draws near? Regardless of Infernal motivation, a diabolist becomes such by defying all that is good. There might simply be an evil flame burning within the Infernal mind, a flame which does not dwindle and cannot be put out, but must be allowed to burn and consume its bearer.

In terms of roleplaying, a player must provide diabolic motivations for her character; otherwise the character is two-dimensional. Characters in *Ars Magica* do not simply defy all that is holy without provocation, just as a character in a story does not change behavior without narrative explanation. Your job is to provide that explanation. Magi in particular are creatures of intellect and debate, and while the ignorant masses might profess faith in Satan to fill their bellies, the Magus has scholastic concerns and well-reasoned justifications. Find a rationalization for diabolists in your Saga, and their apparently irrational acts assume a frightening practicality.

Roleplaying of diabolist characters does not end with the players' characters, though. As an opponent for players' characters, a deviant Storyguide character, if fully developed, smartly played, and excitingly portrayed, can be a terrifying foe. The character's allegiance with Hell alone should add flavor and a severe sense of foreboding to encounters with him. In the end, diabolists are the quintessential people in black, and they offer an array of new possibilities for your Saga.



A METAPHYSICAL INTERLUDE CHAPTER TWO

Preamble

After reading Chapter One you have an understanding of the human side of the Dark equation: the diabolist as character and diabolism as ideology in Mythic Europe. In the next chapter a detailed ecology of diabolists' partners in crime, the devils of Hell, is provided. However, a large void separates man from demon — a boundary between two spheres of the cosmos, to be exact. While previous *Ars Magica* supplements have not needed to deal directly with the metaphysics of the fallen angel and the Infernal cosmos, those subjects must be broached here. This chapter therefore sets forth the metaphysical foundation of the Infernal and its Lord. From this foundation the alien nature of Satan's minions can be discussed in later chapters.

The theories you are about to delve into may be vexing. Keep in mind that this chapter's purpose is to provide explanations of what the Infernal is about. If these accounts are unnecessary to your style of play or deviate from your own ideas about Infernal rationale, feel free to move on to succeeding chapters. However, if you crave some insight into what makes a realm of the universe tick, and want to understand why certain elements of this book are set up the way they are, this chapter is suggested reading.

The Universal Power: Diabolism in Cosmic Perspective

From a treatise by Hilden, the Pious Magus, penned July of 1194:

There is Heaven and there is Hell. We, the Transient, in our state of body-and-soul, exist between these great Wheels of the Universe. And we spin, on our earth, using the physical and spiritual gifts of God to lead lives of distinction. Sentience and free will, knowledge and memory, tradition and assimilation, mastery and ignorance, teachings and learnings, mistakes and atavisms, capacities and limitations, war and worship; ours is a nature unbound but predestined, an orbit of a myriad chains of bodied-souls around a locus beyond our ken.

We are nothing not pre-described, can do nothing but that which affects ourselves alone. In this Sphere of Earth, we, the great experiment, perform insignificant experiments of our own, and in each facet of the individual and group Self so defined, we affect our teetering balance between the two great forces, the Above and the



Below. A single external force is available to us, by God's unknowable motive, and its name is Power. This is the Universal Magic, a force which includes the particular magic of the wizard, the magic of the faerie, the mastery conferred through true Faith, and the anti-Faith of the diabolist.

Whatever its form, Power is pervasive and complete, and as close to Holy perfection and Damnable sin as anything of this Sphere can be. As humans caught in the Spin of a universe far too alien, we crave Power. This craving can start simply, as in the instinctual urge to survive, to live, to take in breath and release it, then go through the process again and again. It could be the power to help others survive, to protect family and home. The levels of power are many and intricate, with no steady truths about which powers are greater. The power of the body to make new life, to procreate; the power of strong hands and discipline to build places and craft objects of lasting quality; the power of the mind to philosophize and make sense of the world; the power of one human's emotional gravitas to rule over the masses and change the course of worldly history.

But, these things are only shadows of the true Power; mankind but mimicks the barest vestiges of God's gift to the earth. It is Universal Magic that gives the greatest power. Through it, even the distant Spheres must take notice of us. Priestly faith is the power, not to create miracles, but to beseech the Upper Spheres to provide such miracles. It is also the power of mind and heart to grow close to and appreciative of the boundaries of humanity's limited understanding of Heaven. That the heavenly rotae, from whence come the angels, is populated by souls once human shows our capacity for enlightenment, and hence our potential effect on Spheres besides that of the earth.

Faerie magic has been put to use as a celebration of the earthly Sphere itself, nature in its primal beauty and mystique. Rather than reaching out, it reaches in, and in so doing makes a difference in the greater scheme. In essence, faerie magic acts to claim the earthly Sphere, to adopt it and make it our own, adding a vigor that marks our fundamental, albeit limited, freedom.

However, it is in the potent pool of Power known as Magic, that of wizardly disposition, that the free will of humanity is given head. A wizard who reaps the bounty of this gift has many choices open to him, dealing almost exclusively with humanity's existence within the Sphere of Earth. The scope of possibilities should be known to the reader already, as it has been discussed to some depth in other works. It shall not be repeated here.

The important fact of concern, though, is that magic, certainly a directed Power, is without the potency to rise into or beyond the Lunar Sphere, or to change the essential nature of our piece of the cosmos. The typical use to which this magic is placed, therefore, is worldly. Despite magic's potential for cosmic significance, we exert our sentient force and bend this Power almost exclusively to our own realm's experiments. This can be called short-sightedness, base ambition, egotism, or a display of ignorance without parallel. Regardless of what we call this shortcoming, it is an extension of man's free will, and therefore a result of our uniqueness in the universe.

But, there remains one facet of magic as Power left yet unexplored. In this Place balanced between two other Places, a very old yet newly invigorated possibility of free will exists. To put previously gleaned concepts in order, it is possible to become close to the Above (Faith), to become close to the Here and Now as it relates to the earth (Faeries and Elementals) or the works of Man himself (Magic), or as a final option, to become close to the Below. This last is the domain of the diabolists, practitioners of the Anti-Faith, and stewards of Satan himself. Power unbound to Heaven or the earth can be used to delve Lower, into the Pit of Agony itself. God's gift thereby becomes the tool of Satan.

It must be known, however, that in all this flaunting of worldly and otherworldly might, there is no sense of a being, a Creator, who has released a tool and lost control of those who use it. God is All-Knowing, and every plot is His own, every mind has some branch of His thoughts, every future is His. Just as an individual is predestined to go to Heaven or Hell, and only at the moment of death, when all a body-and-soul has done is known, does the soul discover its true nature, so too is the entirety of humankind known to God. To call diabolism predicted would be too small a truth. To call it encompassed in and reflective of the whole Scheme of the universe, from before Hell ever came to be, comes closer to the true approximation.

Whatever the place of diabolism in the scheme of the cosmos, it exists. And, in my treatise, I shall shed light on the life and lore of the diabolist, and explore in no timid terms his most foul pending environs, the Pit of Hell.

THE THREE EMPYREANS

The existence of the Empyrean, the realm of pure energy where the Unmoved Mover resides (if He resides in a single place at all), is standard medieval lore. The notion of God's place is therefore, according to the medieval paradigm, a truth known to Mythic Europe's Christian philosophers. Specifically, this realm of power is known as the True Empyrean. It lies in Heaven, in the all-encompassing, outermost circle of the cosmos, beyond the spheres of the planets. The True Empyrean is the source which allows God to manifest His will and His power, forces which humans can occasionally witness and in some sense understand. In a Saga set in Mythic Europe, God's power never has a direct role in events, save when miracles of Faith occur or Divine messengers are sent down to enlighten humanity about matters of great import.

Aside from Heaven, there are two other divisions to the cosmos: Earth and Hell. While Heaven has the True Empyrean, these other divisions have their own sources of power. Both parts are finite manifestations of the True Empyrean, the only true source of power. Earth has what philosophers call the Shadow Empyrean. Hell has the False Empyrean, sometimes called the Ash Empyrean. Both originate by God's will and with His approval.

Some say Satan stole the source of his False Empyrean, others say God sent it with Lucifer as he Fell. Regardless of how it came about, the False Empyrean empowers the inhabitants of Hell and allows them to perform their vile supernatural acts.

The Twilight Void

Magi who suffer a Wizard's Twilight and vanish off the face of the earth are sometimes said to have passed into the Twilight Void. This is a term used for want of a better description, and the existence of an actual place where Twilitaged Magi go is pure speculation. If there is such a place, it is certainly divorced from the Heaven-Hell axis of the cosmos. Thus, the souls, spirits and bodies of Magi in Final Twilight remain unaccounted for in the ledgers of good and evil, save when Twilight strikes a Magus linked to Hell through the Dark Arts (see Chapter Three).

For additional speculation on the nature of the Twilight Void, see the *Ars Magica* supplement on the Divine, *Pax Dei*, from which the idea of the Void originates.

The reason for the existence of the Shadow Empyrean is unclear. Pagan wizards believe the Shadow Empyrean is just another natural layer of Earth to be explored and embraced, and its existence (if there must be a distinct origin) is a gift of the Old Gods. Egotistical Magi believe they, when using magic, tap into a power that God intended to hide from man. Such Magi therefore believe they succeed in the world by virtue of their intellect, maybe even outwitting God, which thus proves them superior beings.

More humble Magi, especially those with nominally Christian beliefs, see the Shadow Empyrean as something purposefully cast down by God as a gift for those able to help themselves. However, clergy have a dimmer view of Magi's tampering with the Shadow Empyrean. Priests tend to agree that God intended Earth to be of inferior power. They conclude this inferiority is intended to tempt man to dabble with the Shadow, yet another forbidden fruit. The offer of such a power therefore tests the strength of Christians. Thus, according to the Church, manipulation of the Shadow Empyrean's power is a sin, a sign that some are not content with what God has allotted them.

THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

A companion idea to the Shadow Empyrean is the idea of the collective unconscious of humanity, first brought up in *Faeries* (see p. 11, *Mundus Faunae*, of this Second Edition *Ars Magica* book). It is postulated, in short, that the beliefs of groups of people in Mythic Europe not only warp their perception of the world, but warp the world itself, making it conform to their expectations. If Christians were not "in charge" of Mythic Europe and didn't believe in Lucifer's ability to touch mankind, presumably Hell would not be so strong. Likewise, if mankind ceased to believe in magic, the supernatural would become a virtually inaccessible quantity.

The Shadow Empyrean is the force that fuels any worldly manifestation of the supernatural, including magic. If humanity's unconscious can manipulate that which exists, as it does Hell and magic, the Shadow Empyrean must likewise be influenced by the human unconscious. Thus, the human tendency to



believe in or refute such places as Purgatory, Limbo, Arcadia and the lesser *regios* influences how powerful those places are. Indeed, in the case of Purgatory, its creation was facilitated by God in conjunction with the will of the human race to create a bridge from earth to the upper Spheres. Humanity's unconscious is therefore extremely powerful, and few humans (or others for that matter) are aware of that power.

God, Satan, and the pagan Old Gods alike appreciate the power of the human unconscious. All of these beings acquire influence through the "support" of the unconscious. Human belief fuels their powers, which explains why the Divine and Infernal, the powers most worshipped in the 13th century, hold greater sway in the world than do the now-forgotten Old Gods.

SOUL VERSUS SPIRIT

St. Thomas Aquinas believed that when the Form of the soul was reflected down from Heaven to earth, that reflection included a body as an inherent part of its composition. Since Aquinas's ideas are not widely circulated until the latter part of the 13th century, the more separatist view of body and soul is accepted in this text (with a small nod to the Thomistic view). That is, body and soul are separate entities in Mythic Europe.

In numerous texts covering the topic of life after death and the state of human existence beyond the physical, the words "spirit" and "soul" are used interchangeably. Authors also use the term "spirit" to identify the incorporeal essences of lesser

forms of life, like animals and heathens. Use of the term spirit as opposed to soul differentiates between inferior substances and the superior human soul, or *anima*.

In *The Maleficium*, a metaphysical composition is proposed that is slightly skewed from the pure bodied-soul concept. This composition approaches but does not match the theories of Thomas Aquinas. In Mythic Europe, spirit and soul are not synonymous. The soul is the immortal, Heaven-based substance which composes the core of a human entity. The spirit, on the other hand, is an inferior, earth-bound substance which does not partake of immortality in God's realm.

Humans have souls and spirits. The spirit is closely linked to the mind and acts as a bridge between body and soul. The spirit is what accounts for certain apparent contradictions between human experience and humanity's place in the cosmos. For instance, how does starvation of the body aid the soul? Bodily starvation puts the mind/spirit mechanism in a state that allows it to effect a change toward faith in the soul. How can philosophers use logic to prove the existence of the unknowable God? The mind has a link to the soul — the spirit — which allows access to certain insights beyond the standard realm of humanity. How can a Magus sell her soul to a devil just by written agreement? She is, as a living, sentient body on earth, capable of affecting the state of her soul by the overt action of writing, in combination with mental/spiritual acquiescence. (Of course, the devils of Hell also play a role in luring the Magus into their trap, but cannot actually force their prize from her.) Finally, how can people perform magic, which requires manipulation of the Shadow extension of God's True Emphyrean? Through effort of will and mind, a Gifted individual can access and manipulate the soul-to-spirit arc, utilizing Plato's Forms and accomplishing the art of magic. Thus, spirit forms the bond which ties body and soul, allowing the two to influence each other on Earth. It is only through death, or the willing disposal of the soul, that the connection between body and soul is broken and the soul is liberated, whether to find reward or suffer eternal damnation.

A soul may not exist on earth without an accompanying body. Human beings living on earth are known as "bodied-souls," and in this realm of matter it is the body which keeps the substance of the soul from fleeing to Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory — the only three places where a soul may remain without a body. Spirits, however, have a different fate, as detailed in the boxed insert entitled *The Earthly Link of Spirits*.

Devils Versus Demons

As with human souls and spirits, here is a case where a distinction exists between two ostensibly interchangeable terms. The dichotomy exists between those understood as devils and demons. Simply put, devils are fallen angels. They are divinely composed yet evilly warped souls cast into the pit of Hell, there to remain until the end of time. In contrast, demons are evil spirits which wander the earth (or Hell), causing mischief and

strife. This separation of devil from demon validates the belief that Infernal beings lurk behind every misfortune in the world, while at the same time residing in Hell to torment sinners.

Most fallen angels, or devils, have souls and spirits as do humans. This similarity arises because true devils are usually thoroughly corrupt humans risen to the status of Infernal angels. As Infernal angels, these former humans retain both soul and spirit because of the inherent corruption of both. On the other hand devils created before the material world existed do not initially have spirits. However, they can come to possess them. A single Infernal entity can thus be termed either devil (if acting in Hell with its soul) or demon (if its soul goes into stasis while its spirit acts on earth).

While devils themselves do not have bodies, demons (the spiritual projections of devils) may take corporeal form. The body of a demon is procured from the Shadow or False Empyrean for existence on earth or in Hell.

Devils possess both souls and spirits, but some Infernal beings possess only spirits. These evil creatures are purely demonic and lack proper "citizen" status in Hell. Such demons can either exist full-time on earth (due to exile or their origin), or can exist full-time in Hell if given bodies (spirits cannot reside in Hell if they don't have either body or soul to keep them company, as the boxed insert, *The Earthly Link of Spirits*, states).

Summoning Devils

Devils, as individual entities, exist only in Hell. Their sentient yet warped emanations of Divine Light can be thought of as their souls. Unlike humans, devils have no bodies; their souls are their primary components of individuality. However, many devils, though bodiless, have spirits as well as souls. Despite popular misconception, a devil can never rise up to Earth, but its spirit suffers no such constraint. When a devil is contacted and asked or forced to come into a diabolist's presence, its spirit is summoned to earth. That spirit is termed a demon. (Note: "Unsouled" spirits in Hell can also be summoned to earth.)

When a summons occurs, the devil's soul in Hell is typically forced into a deep stasis until its demonic spirit is released from service. Despite the call to slumber, especially powerful or knowledgeable devils have resources which still allow their souls limited powers of action. Certain devils even have multiple spirits (see *Avatars* in Chapter Three), thus preserving their freedom of soul until all spirits are commanded to earth. These entities are extremely rare.

If a demon-form is ever banished or destroyed on earth, the related devil-self remains in stasis for a period of time, despite the reunion of parts. This "banishment stasis" is usually so potent that even those devils who could manage independent action while spirits were absent are now forced to slumber.

For practical reasons, a demon summoned to earth can be considered the very same intellectual entity as the devil which resides in Hell. The demon has the same personality, knowl-

The Earthly Link of Spirits

Spirits are manifestations of life force which have their origin on the Sphere of Earth. As such, they may exist most freely on earth, but are limited in the way they may manifest in Heaven and Hell. Spirits are links between Body and Soul; indeed, they exist for this task. Thus, even beyond death they maintain strong attachments to these two components. A spirit usually travels with the soul into the afterlife, rather than remaining with the body. This travel may take the spirit to Heaven or Hell, depending on where the soul travels.

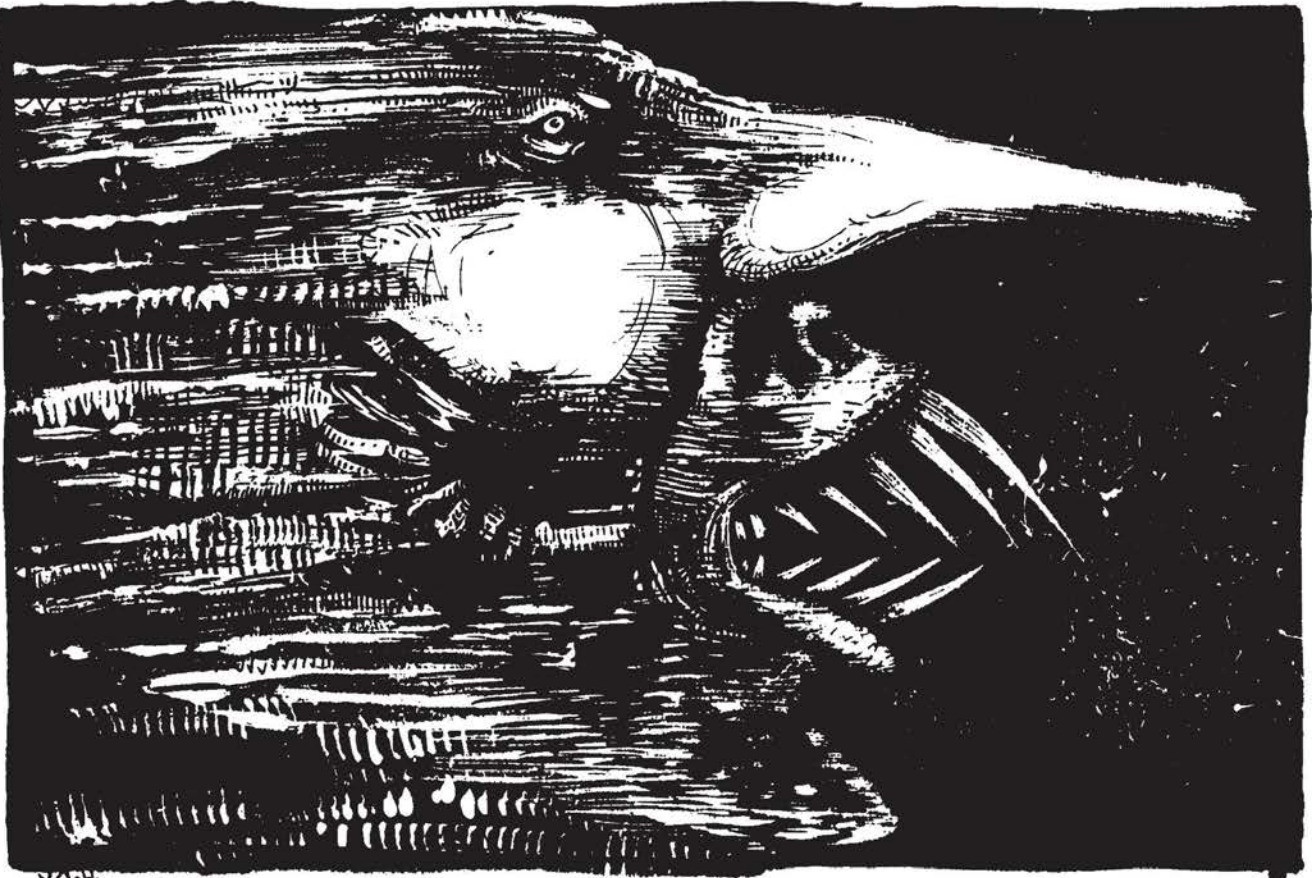
It is possible, though, for certain corruptions or imbalances in the soul (from interfering magics to especially vile manners of death) to more closely unify body and spirit, or completely separate spirit from body and soul (discussed below). In the former case the spirit remains with the body and is usually trapped in that body. The spirit may only see activity again if the body is cast into Hell. Taking a body into Hell by supernatural means results in the corruption of that body and its spirit. The spirit will then reside permanently in Hell as a minion of the Dark One.

It is also possible for a spirit to roam the earth alone, but it cannot cross out of the Earthly Sphere unless it travels in the company of a body or a soul, or such a substance lies waiting for it immediately after it crosses over.

The first race created by God, composed of the *beati* and *depravati*, took part in the battle that was the Revolt of Angels. These creatures had only souls, slivers of Divine essence. As God created the world and created its great soul, the need to provide a link between the earth (low substance) and the World-Soul (high substance) led God to develop a new substance, the spirit. This spirit was given to the World-Soul and from it sprang the elementals. Thus in turn, the race made of clay and dust and soul was granted spirit as well.

Because spirits have their origin with earth's own birth, the first angels and devils do not have personal spirits attached to their souls (or rather, they were not initially created with such matter-linking substance). Infernal angels with souls and spirits are created with the deaths of corrupt humans. These folk die and face judgment, and if deemed evil enough not only go to Hell, but are appointed to the rank of Infernal angel. Ranks of dark angels arising since the creation of the world therefore have personal spirits. Furthermore, as spirit is the link between body and soul, "newer" angels tend to have greater affinity for mankind than do "older" angels. These newer angels are the ones more likely to become personally involved with mortals, even entering into discussions with the learned.

Unlike God, who has control of creation and the great spirit, Satan has no power to parcel out spirits to his minions. Satan's spiritless minions, who are usually ancient followers, must fend for themselves in Hell. A majority of them prefer the mortal anonymity that comes with lack of spirit and do nothing to change their situation. It is impossible to summon one of these devils to earth, for that devil has no spirit to drag up. There are some ancient devils, however, who desire the extra powers and *maleficia* which spirits offer. These devils acquire "mantles," spirits of the earth which they can adopt and wear as their own (for more on mantles, see Chapter Three).



edge, and experience as its devilish counterpart. The ultimate difference between an entity considered devil or demon is therefore one of cosmic metaphysics.

THE ROLES OF THE SPIRIT

Existence as Entity

The spirit may exist separate from both body and soul, dwelling individually on Earth. Ghosts, faeries and elementals are the most common manifestations of solitary spirits.

Upon the death of the body, the spirit usually travels with the soul. Sometimes the soul can be corrupted by outside influences or can be innately unsound, which results in the separation of spirit from soul as well as body. This orphaned spirit is trapped and forced to wander the earth. Hence, the existence of ghosts. God's World-Soul also possesses a characteristic meta-spirit capable of creating disconnected spirits. Over time, splinters of this spiritual source become individual spirits animated by the Shadow Empyrean. Hence, the existence of faeries, elementals and certain pagan gods.

Faeries, almost by definition, are the manifestations of a greater spiritual power. Faeries do not have souls and thus are not bound to the afterlife. They do not appear in either Heaven or Hell. Indeed, many faeries are so divorced from the soul that

any intrusion of it upon their existence, like the sound of a church bell calling the pure of soul, literally immobilizes them. However, their lack of souls renders faeries immortal beyond the bounds of the physical. If killed, faeries may return in another form, beyond conventional physical propagation.

The power of the Earth-spirit is likewise demonstrated in the existence of elemental beings. What is an elemental creature but the embodiment of the world and its realms? Though certainly composed of matter, these beings cannot accurately be accused of having genuine bodies, for what being can truly claim air, sea, ground, or flame as its body?

Elementals are likewise devoid of souls. Although the world as a whole bears a greater soul, the composite of the souls of humanity, the Earth as a physical object bears no soul of its own. Yet elementals are living creatures of this world, so must themselves be without souls.

Although elementals are creatures without true bodies or souls, but that nonetheless exist, there must be some force at work within them that keeps them alive. That force is spirit. If spirit is the energy which provides faeries with individuality and the capacity to thrive without body or soul, as elementals thrive, so too does spirit thrive in elementals.

Existence as Component

Further proof of the independence of spirits is their unaccompanied presence in animals and their presence in animated forms. As popular philosophy suggests, animals,

although living, do not have souls. They do, however, have spirits. Thus, animal life is a coupling of spirit and body — matter and animating force.

Note, however, that the activity of spirit is true only with mundane animals. Supernatural animals and beasts are a combination of body, spirit, and the Shadow Empyrean. This combination gives them further properties and brings up additional considerations beyond the range of this particular text. Suffice it to say that, even though empowered beyond mundane animals, supernatural ones still bear spirit, not soul, as their fueling fire.

There are certain intelligent animals that possess true sentience, however. These creatures are not truly of the animal category in cosmological perspective; they possess souls along with their animating spirits. Such possession of souls may come from many means, but as sentient beings these creatures are able to understand and devote themselves to a faith, either holy or unholy, and it is that sentience which indicates their souls. These creatures are like humans, then, with body, soul and spirit. This being the case, their existence does not refute the authenticity of a unique spirit in the universe, just as human existence does not refute it.

Independence of spirit is also manifest in the magical creations of humanity. When brought into existence by spells alone, these creations, such as "golems," are nothing more than material bodies animated by the Shadow Empyrean. They have bodies of sorts, and weak spirits imbued by God and manipulated by mankind. Regardless of how weak an animating spirit is, it does endow an approximation of life in a creature which by all rights should be inanimate. Without true devotion of any kind other than the mindless ability to follow the creator's commands, such a magical creation lacks a soul. The power of spirit alone, acting beyond soul and, arguably, genuine body, is thus demonstrated in magical creations.

Existence in Supernature

In the eyes of Magi, the most crucial purpose of spirits — of their own spirits, at least — are their roles as conduits from the encompassing Shadow Empyrean to the actuality of Earth. That is to say, Magi are particularly interested in a spirit's ability to permit a bodied-soul to work magic. While magic can occur in nature without intervention of any kind, a human cannot work magic without first finding a way to temporarily eschew the mundane world and reach into realms of supernature. Independent spirit is the means to this power.

As Plato's philosophy states, there exists in the realm of supernature a perfect Form or Ideal for every known and almost every unknown concept. The act of Creation gave us a world filled with reflections of mundane perfect Forms, and even magical Forms. Through the use of a magic spell, a Magus taps into supernature to retrieve yet other Forms. For example, the perfect Form of fire provides models for Ignem spells, while the perfect Ideal of change powers Muto spells.



For bodied-souls, mind and body perform the material acts and spiritual disciplines which orchestrate the use of magic. Material acts are blatant physical maneuvers, the histrionics of spell casting, such as gestures, vocalizations, and manipulation of ingredients. The inner state which these histrionics represent arises from a strong mental discipline, allowing Gifted individuals to enforce their desires upon the Shadow Empyrean. That is, the spirit of a Magus is passed on as arcane instruction.

This instruction bridges the gap between the mundane world and the Shadow Empyrean. Magic therefore plays the same role that the spirit plays between body and soul, moderating changes between the two. Thus, spirit and magic are virtually one and the same. The spirit produces a mystical connection between the bodied-soul's Ideal of a magic effect and the actual material Form of that magic. Thus, magic stands as proof of the existence of independent spirit.

IN REFLECTION

The theories of the preceding pages seek to explain the structure of human existence and allow an understanding of the paths human lives can take. The above material also strives to explain the mechanics of supernatural power, both Divine and Infernal, and illustrate how those powers may influence or be received by humanity. Understanding these metaphysical concepts enables one to understand demons and diabolists as well. Such knowledge helps establish these forces in your Saga,



presenting them as reasoned, impassioned powers. With a metaphysical principle to explain the motives of a devil or diabolist, such a character becomes more than a mere cipher. Comprehension of this chapter's ideas therefore enhances the enjoyment and complexity of your game.

On the Heads of Pins (and other things)

So just how many angels, or devils, can dance on the head of a pin? You won't find the answer in this book. The *Maleficium* ultimately exists to provide an Infernal framework on which to base stories. Granted, some rules are necessary to portray elements of Hell and dealings with devils. However, many situations cannot be reduced to game mechanic quantities, at least not without undermining their narrative value.

To preserve the drama of your stories, and to avoid a decline into number-crunching, three premises are presented here. These ethics help you preserve the passion of your game.

INDIVIDUAL NET WORTH

There are no numbers to describe the holy or unholy value of a person's soul. True Faith and Hierarchy Points (explained in Chapter Five) measure the link between a bodied-soul on earth and that soul's chosen realm — Heaven or Hell. Once a soul passes from earth to Heaven or Hell, these numbers serve only as vague indicators of the soul's resting place Above or its dietary value Below. That otherworldly value cannot be gauged numerically.

Indeed, numerical expression of a soul's place in Hell would defy the very nature of the Infernal. Devils work in elusive and secretive ways. Mankind cannot hope to understand demonic intentions, and therefore cannot truly understand why a soul is located in Hell as it is. The soul of a human whose sins in life were slight might still find itself in the deepest pits of Hell because the Devil has a special fate in store for it. An attempt to equate this fate with numbers only does injustice to the Devil's intentions.

The Corporate Promotion

Demons collect souls because souls are the currency of Mythic Hell. Souls provide power, and power enables advancement in the Infernal hierarchy. The system of demonic superiority and inferiority is complex, arcane in the extreme, and beyond the ken of humans. The fact that Satan's minions keep an account of earned souls does not translate into a neat and simple table of numbers. Trying to tabulate a devil's power would be futile and an injustice to the drama of your Saga.

The Ethics Committee

When you introduce demons into your Saga, you give characters an opportunity to face moral dilemmas and make moral decisions. After all, demons excel at luring people into sin. They do so by putting people in difficult situations which require sinful deeds to escape. The alternative is to suffer the hardship, upholding good and preserving the soul. How a given character responds to these situations is up to the character's personality and player. Do not keep a ledger of the relative virtues and sins of a character, hoping to determine fate in the afterlife. This smells suspiciously like a sliding alignment system. When a character dies, it is best to simply express the drama of the event rather than tally figures to determine destination.

DO ANGELS DANCE?

The bottom line for each of these ethics is this: it may be nice to suggest that angels dance, since the notion lends atmosphere and culture to the cosmological lore of your Saga. However, knowing exactly how many angels can dance on the head of a pin adds nothing to the game. It only gives the impression that powerful, immortal beings such as angels take second place to calculation.





MYTHIC HELL

CHAPTER THREE

Preamble

Having established the ideology behind diabolism, and having accounted for the cosmology that makes diabolism a reality in Mythic Europe, the time is right to explore Mythic Hell itself.

The Sphere of Hell lies deep inside the earth, and the Devil sits at its center, at the point around which the universe rotates, where Time is a prison and torture lasts eternally. From his icy prison amid the flames, the Dark One schemes to unleash his fury upon the bodied-souls, the race which displaced his own angels from God's favor. To torment that race, Lucifer corrupted the world in his days as Prince of the Earth. When Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, they entered Satan's torturous realm, becoming victims of toil, hardship, pain and temptation.

This chapter is a crash course in the realm of Hell itself, the home base of mankind's Great Adversary and his fallen angels. Though not a setting open to exploration in a Saga, Hell is the headquarters of an endless army of evildoers who have set their sights on humanity. Indeed, they see mankind as a source of slaves, power, and advancement over each other. In order to understand the actions of Satan's satellites on earth, it is necessary to know their origins, their society, and the milieu in which they operate.

While demons who are cut off from Hell are most prevalent on earth, actual devils are the most interesting of the Infernal entities. Their intelligence and organization make them the most effective planners of humanity's downfall. When fallen angels project their evil spirits to earth to work mischief, the very foundations of Christianity are slowly and subtly eroded.

The Infernal Origin

The first race created by God was the race of angels, and the first angel was Lucifer the Light Bringer. Lucifer was put in charge of the newly made Earth, and he grew very fond of this territory, with its excess of matter. However, Lucifer was not first in the eyes of God. That honor was reserved for the Word of God, the Logos which made God's designs manifest in the universe. Lucifer was proud of his position and felt that he alone deserved God's foremost love. Thus, he became jealous of the Word, and denied it. By denying the Word he denied God, and through his act of choice Lucifer turned to evil of his own accord.

The other angels were not all steadfast in their adherence to God's ways either. Seven angels in particular, among those whom God had created prior to all others save Lucifer, were quick to throw in their lot with the Prince of the Earth. A plan for a great Revolt in Heaven was devised by Lucifer, and these seven angels agreed to be generals in the army of darkness. Among their other feats, these seven helped Lucifer create a

Stories in Hell

In no way should this chapter be construed as a travel guide or a setting reference for stories. Mythic Hell is off limits to the bodied-soul, even the Gifted bodied-soul. Whereas characters in the earthly plane deal only with the projections of devils on that plane, characters come face to face with devils in Hell. These devils are immeasurably powerful and are certain to bring about intruders' doom. Furthermore, no spell allows Magi to peek into Hell or take even a short trip through Satan's domain. Thus is the deceptive and perplexing power of the Infernal. The only way into Hell is one almost all people strive to avoid, as a soul dragged down from the material world.

If characters absolutely must journey to a realm of devils, the realm of New Hell (see Chapter Four) is suggested as a replacement for the Hell.

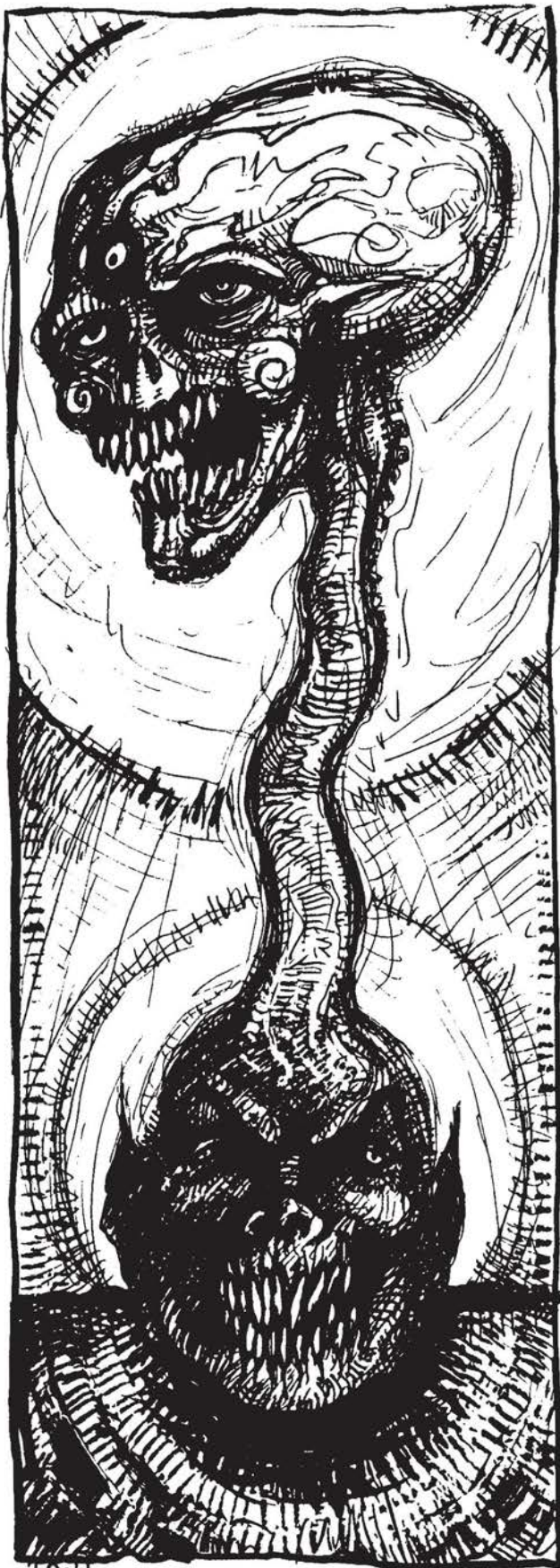
new doctrine against the Word. The doctrine's primary tenets included the Seven Deadly Sins, which have plagued mankind since civilization began.

The force recruited for the Revolt was surprising in its number and content — the angels who opposed God's vision were many, and included members from all ranks in the angelic hierarchy. Inspiration for such widespread revolt arose from God's insistence on creating a race with free will. From their birth, the angels, although only sparks against the Divine Emanation of God, had perfect understanding of the Lord and the cosmos. Thus, none of God's plans were hidden from the angels, and their responses to those plans forever determined the angels' alliance in the revolt. Many were angered by the creation of yet another race with freedom, so many allied against the Lord.

Even "today" in the Divine scope of time, angels new to the cosmos must reflect upon their beliefs and choose to follow good or evil. This moment is known as the *moracula*, or time of decision. Lucifer watched carefully the results of each *moracula* during the recruiting of his forces. It was then that he added souls, one by one, to his army, as other members of the first race found themselves among the *depravati angeli*.

Though it had considerable following, the army of evil was defeated and its supporters cast out of Heaven by the victorious *beati angeli* (angels whose moments of decision had found them eternally loyal to God). Even Lucifer was defeated in the war. Indeed, the archangel Michael used his great sword to cut Lucifer down in single combat. With his wings afire, the Prince of the Earth fell spiraling out of Heaven.

Lucifer's Fall took him past Earth into a new realm of eternal fire and damnation called Hell. The force of the Fallen's impact, as he burrowed through the earth, caused a region on the opposite side of the world to thrust outward. In time this realm would be known as Purgatory. Lucifer had Fallen to Hell and was joined by the rest of his army. However, God did not yet choose to make this realm the angels' prison. The Fall was initially an exile from Heaven, and the fallen were permitted to roam both Earth and Hell without hindrance. The Prince of Earth had not lost his post.



Lucifer used this free run of earth to his advantage. He became Satan, the Great Adversary to God's new race of creatures — an inferior race of dust and clay, but given the most precious breath of life by the Creator. This race was to partake of the immortality of Heaven while the Fallen Ones were denied it, left to a realm of death and eternal fire. The resulting envy the devils felt for mankind was immense; their hatred was without bounds. To appease this hatred, as it says in the Book of Genesis, a serpent entered the Garden of Eden and convinced Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit.

For their presumption, the ancestral man and wife were cast from the Garden and left to a life of toil and hardship under the Devil's shadow. They were left in the realm of matter, which the Light Bringer had steadily warped and corrupted into *mundus infernus* during his stewardship.

By tempting mankind into corruption Satan overstepped his bounds. His exile was transformed to an imprisonment of his evil soul in the deepest center of Hell, bound in chains and ice at the point of the cosmos where Time weighs most heavily. God also spoke to Satan about the new relationship between the Prince of the Earth and mankind, saying of man: "*He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*" God also said, "*Dust you shall eat.*" Ironically, as man is a race made of dust, this proclamation proved a profound insight into the relationship between man and Devil in ages to come.

For their part, the remaining *depravati angeli* were left for a time to interact with man. The result was a great spread of evil which threatened to consume every human soul, leaving none for the grace of Heaven. In response, God subjected earth to the Great Flood, which is spoken of in the Old Testament. No longer willing to let the *depravati* roam the world, God chose to cast them also into the pit of Hell with Satan. Thus did the Revolt finally quiet, with the *depravati* imprisoned in Hell, the *beati* vigilant against them, and the bodied-souls left to live in a world warped by the Devil and still under his evil influence.

The Sphere of Hell

Hell is beyond the reach of living humanity (assuming anyone would wish to reach it, even prematurely) and much of what goes on there is far beyond the human ken. The deceptive nature of demons and the ever-shifting chaos of the realm both work to obscure the true extent of the Infernal realm. As a result, even those things man might be expected to understand are warped from their true aspect or hidden behind notions meant to confuse issues further. In the millennia of mankind's subjugation of and by demonic forces, however, a short list of accepted truths have been uncovered about this most evil Sphere and its inhabitants.

THE ECHELONS

The devils of Hell adhere to a hierarchy of power which consists of nine major ranks, known as echelons. The ninth echelon is of the least political importance and is peopled by the least powerful devils. At the opposite end of the scale, the first

echelon is occupied by a group so strong that its members rarely play a direct role in any wars or meetings, and almost never worry about a specific campaign to corrupt humanity. The closer a devil's domain is to that of Satan (who is above all nine echelons), the greater a devil's status. However, as the Devil resides in the deepest pit of Hell, superior devils are said to be "deeper" in the Infernal hierarchy, while inferior ones are considered "higher."

Echelons represent a recognition of political position. However, as position is linked so closely to the general power of a devil and the extent of its domains, power and domains are as integral to Infernal prestige as is political position. In fact, power and superiority are so important in Hell that devils war constantly (though they also do so to appease long-standing grudges). Victorious devils gain spoils to expand and fortify their fiefs in the crowded realm of Hell.

In Hell, power, domains and political clout — though arising from a number of sources — are affected by one resource more than any other: the human soul. All devils seek to gain souls, which are displayed in their fiefs or harnessed to produce special *malefic* enchantments and rituals. A weak devil is under a "feudal" obligation to grant pleasure, in the form of tormented souls, to powerful devils lording over his estate. A tithe of souls must also be offered to the master of all fiefs, the Devil himself. If any devil is incapable of providing the minimum amount of new souls required of its estate, said estate may be confiscated and the negligent devil may be made the source of eternal entertainment.

In return for the tribute of souls, devils under an Infernal lord may be allowed to participate in the schemes of the lord. Such participation allows these devils access to further souls, for masters constantly plot to corrupt humanity. If the lessers fail in their contributions to the plan, they may again be evicted and made the subject of eternal torture. Ideally, all lesser devils would ally themselves to the most powerful Infernal lords. Such vassalage ensures the greatest treasure. It comes as no surprise that only the more powerful of Hell's underlings can hold these valuable positions. Others must settle for what spiritual dregs they can get.

Should an Infernal lord disallow one of his vassals to participate in a plot, or deny a share of the rewards thereof, that underling may turn traitor or may call upon the lord's political rivals to declare the devil unfit. These rivals may destroy the negligent lord's alliances or take over his domain, with a succulent share going to the vassal aiding the overthrow.

Though lesser devils may acquire souls from their lords by contributing to plots, those souls may not be thereupon used to pay tribute. That is, an underling cannot return souls the lord gave the vassal. The minor devil must acquire corrupt souls on its own to use for payment of vassalage. Accordingly, all devils plot constantly, seeking to ensure that they have enough souls to appease their masters and a sufficient remainder to advance in power.

As accumulation of souls is so integral to advancement, devils ensure that their complete collection is accounted for in the Tally of Souls. The Tally of Souls is a program of surveil-

lance and record keeping run by the impartial Watchers (discussed below). Souls received in payment from allies, as tithe from slaves, or as accused sinners newly brought to Hell all count in the Tally. When the Watchers decree that a devil has accumulated sufficient souls, that devil is invested with might and privilege appropriate to its power. This advance also means membership in the more respected echelons.

THE REALM

The lands of Mythic Hell are divided into nine tiers, the nine "layers" of the Inferno. These tiers have features such as mountains and rivers, lakes and forests, but these features are desolate and warped, much as are Infernal *regios* and Auras on earth. There are likewise castles, bridges, towers and other structures in Hell, representing the artifice of all man's ages and civilizations. The most prevalent features of Hell's terrain, however, are the tormented souls of sinners, painted in a panoramic mural of dread with whatever equipage is necessary for their particular punishments.

Souls that sin without demonic influence (beyond the indirect influence of temptation and knowledge of good and evil) generally sink to Hell of their own accord. They fall to realms in which punishments suit crimes. However, it is possible for such undirected souls to be waylaid before reaching their proper places of torture. This misdirection of souls is the job of scavengers from each fief, demons of armies not currently occupied with war or ceremonies to appease patrons.

The Dense Air

When the *depravati* were cast from Heaven, their natures, though still based on the Divine, became corrupt. Theologians sometimes refer to the diabolic soul as being composed of "dense air," unlike the pure essence of the angels. Devils' souls are composed of a lesser substance called *caligo*. *Caligo* is not truly "air" but rather a subordination to and acknowledgment of matter as a corrupting influence, despite the fallen angels' lack of true bodies as humans know them. It is *caligo* which allows devils to wander Hell as "dense souls," taking part in a society of assault, pain and torture that is heavily body-oriented, unlike the more ethereal society of angels in Heaven.

The souls of human sinners are composed of this *caligo* essence as well. This composition of the Infernal soul explains the logistics behind the tortures of Hell. Even when the human body is destroyed, and just the soul (or soul and spirit) is brought to Hell, it is still possible for devils to "physically" affect it. Devils may carry these souls around in carts, or may pick them up with pitchforks like so much kindling, because souls are made of dense air. In Hell they are therefore objects to be manipulated, drained or used for mere decoration.

All Infernal entities have an Achilles' Heel where the *caligo* is concerned. Each evil spirit and soul has a nodule of *caligo* referred to as a demon-stone. This is where devils' and demons' Infernal Might and powers are focused. Humans would call this "organ" the heart (see Chapter Four for more information on Infernal hearts).

Such thieves typically become engaged in battles each time they go forth to "harvest" souls. As they intrude upon the domains of other devils, these scavengers inevitably compete with the inhabitants of those domains. On occasion scavengers even clash with other thieves out to steal from the same grex ("herd of souls"). Such theft of undirected souls is just one means by which a devil can gain power while simultaneously decreasing another's power.

Souls brought into Hell by direct demonic temptation have very specific places to go. Individual souls can be made the focus of demonic lure, and at the trial of Accusation (in which a soul is judged by the angels), the tempting demon is free to require that the soul go where the demon desires, regardless of the sins weighing upon the soul. Such a soul does not drift, but goes directly to the devil's fief. Thus do Infernal lords send their vassals and other agents up to earth to work in their names. A soul which is Accused and brought directly to a devil's fief has a much greater reservoir of untapped energy than does a soul that has drifted into a grex. Thus, agents who lure souls into temptation are important contributors toward a fief's prosperity.

The punishment inflicted upon a soul can also garner influence and prestige for a devil. A unique or novel torture can attract audiences from beyond a devil's estate, winning the devil much acclaim. Great machines, sometimes the size of a castle, are often built to outdo neighbors in creating the ultimate device of torture. As intrigue and sabotage are so prevalent between estates, these machines are commonly fortified with



malefic charms. If the Watchers declare a torture device a "wonder of Hell," the creator receives visitors and gifts from all layers of the Sphere, and has a chance to ingratiate itself with those of deeper rank.

A Wrench in the Works

Despite the crowding and proliferation of warring fiefs, there are natural phenomena in Hell which can disrupt domains and weaken the established order. Wars, for example, can result in such violent shifts of territory that souls are sometimes lost to all parties as the fabric that makes Hell whole is rent. Furthermore, although devils are usually occupied with large-scale torture, they sometimes overlook the most terrible, and therefore most valuable, forms of torture available. Sometimes the very worst torture suffered by a soul is that which goes unnoticed and unappreciated. Maybe a single lonely soul burns at the stake in an abandoned corner of Hell, forgotten by all. If this one soul and its unbearable suffering is found, the finder may be rewarded with immeasurable Infernal power. Presentation of such a gift to the Dark One is like offering a new toy to a sad child. What effect a single devil's sudden ascent (or descent, as it were) to power as a result of this gift could have on Hell is uncertain. If the devil was formerly lowly in stature, it might be incapable of dealing with its newfound power, and Hell's pursuit of souls might be disrupted by incompetence.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Devils are ultimately loyal to the Prince of Darkness, if only because it is in their nature to act according to Lucifer's wishes. However, in the short term, devils are fractious and acutely competitive. They vie for power with their brethren, seeking to become first in Satan's eyes and to increase their influence over all of Hell's inhabitants. The roles of Master and Slave, dominance and submission, are deeply ingrained in the culture of devils. These roles form the foundation of the vast hierarchy which guides all Infernal politicking and aggression, and these roles justify the abuses devils enjoy inflicting upon one another.

Just as one devil can harm another, so wars can be fought within the bounds of Hell's hierarchy. Indeed, although devils are ultimately loyal to Satan, utter chaos is expected and accounted for in the *malefic* regime. Satan would no more try to stop his children from fighting than he would have them exhibit Godly virtues. In the end, the Dark One understands that power commands respect. Whereas a greater devil might be able to dominate a lesser, Satan holds the greatest power in Hell and thus can dominate all. Brute force and oppression are the bywords of "order" in Hell.

As previously explained, government in Hell is largely modeled on the feudal system. However, whereas the mundane model is based on the relationship between lord and vassal, in which duties and obligations are exchanged, the Infernal model is based more on that of master and slave. In truth, the Infernal feudal system is actually more complex than that of 13th century Mythic Europe. Because Hell's warped

The Regime of Dichotomy

The hierarchy of Hell is an animal in its own right, one greater than the sum of its members. However, the big picture is the result of many smaller relationships, all of which are built on the Regime of Dichotomy. The dichotomy in question is simple: win or lose, rule or be ruled, assert mastery or succumb to slavery. Any subset of Hell's populace shows the Regime of Dichotomy in action, from the individual master and servant, to the greater masteries of one vast kingdom over component dukedoms, to the unflagging leadership of one warlord over entire armies.

This dichotomy is no mere policy or societal trend. The Regime is a supernatural phenomenon that is actually felt, a *geas* permeating the realm and ensnaring its inhabitants. Every demon, no matter how weak, understands the code of dominance and submission. It is burned into the ichor of the devilish race.

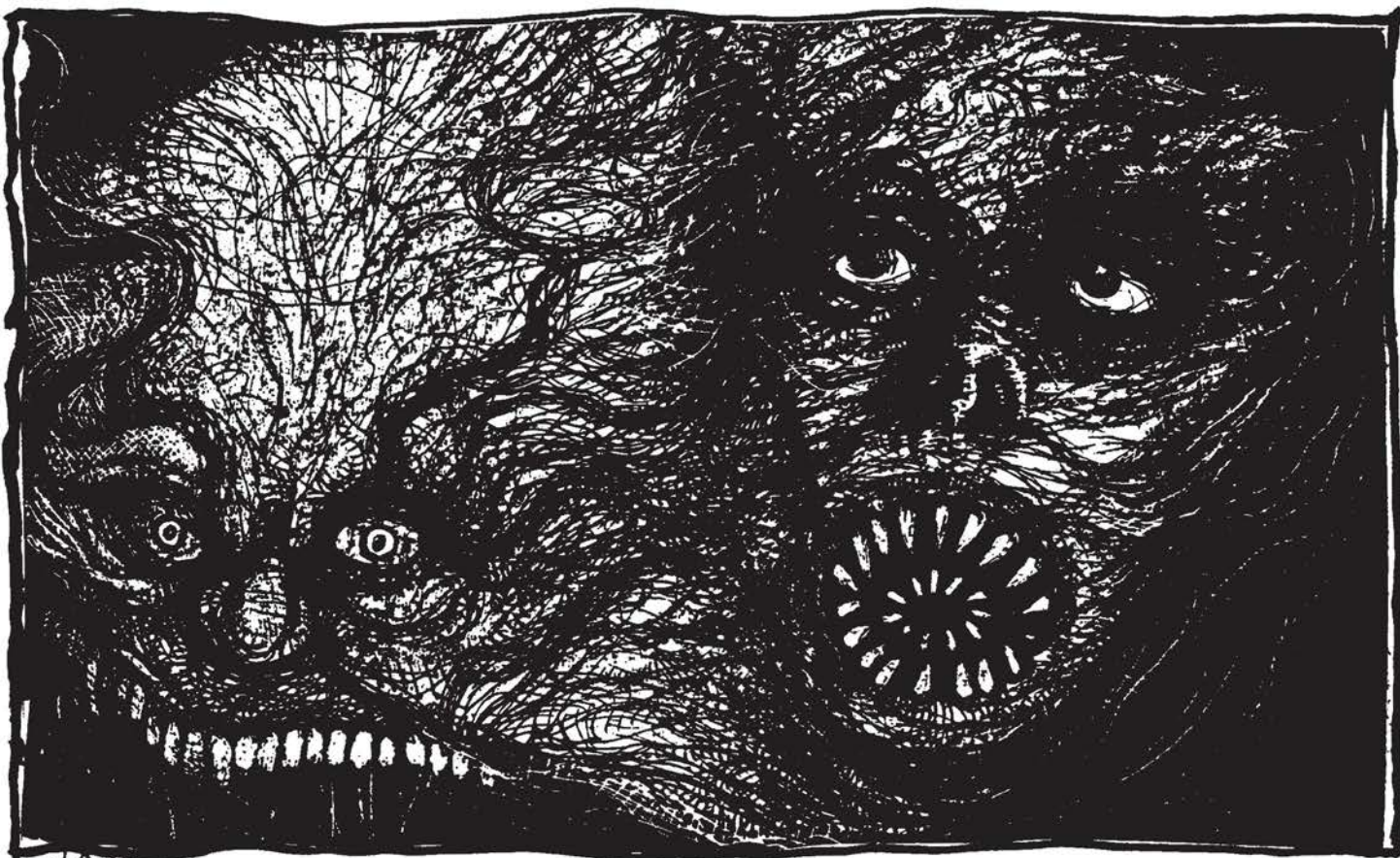
The embodiment of this culturally ingrained phenomenon is called the Ritual of Mastery, and the winner holds the loser in thrall. The pseudo-enchantment of the Ritual is purely in the overt vein, though. Devils know when they are gaining mastery or succumbing to submission, and inevitably accept their fate, hoping to advance further in the future. Indeed, unless completely brainwashed, an enslaved devil retains its mind and has no loyalty to its master beyond feudal obligation and devotion ingrained by the common Infernal psyche.

It is the Regime of Dichotomy, born with the birth of Hell itself, that underlies the dictates of the Watchers. Accordingly, the Watchers' rules are not mere martial law. These highly respected rules are almost racial imperatives. Furthermore, as the Regime of Dichotomy imposes "order" on the Infernal, so too can it impose order on humanity. It can allow humans to devise their own Rituals of Mastery. By tapping into the Regime, goetists may adopt and be adopted into the Infernal fold.

souls have some ability to see into the future, a skill often used to vex humans, they adopt elements from the mortal societies of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Still, many foundations of 13th century feudal systems are maintained in Hell. Titles such as duke, count, earl, chancellor and marquis are in common usage. Whether such titles have genuine meaning is another story. A devil's echelon of power is only one factor determining its influence. Other significant factors include the layer of Inferno on which the devil holds domain, the influence of its liege, and the devil's status in the Tally of Souls. These factors create a great number of permutations and gray areas in the practical hierarchy of Infernal influence. As a result, no devil is truly certain of its ranking against others, save when one devil, like Satan himself, is clearly superior. Given the nebulous nature of true power rankings, Machiavellian intrigues are common throughout Hell, as demands for retributive or punitive measures can rarely be substantiated by rank.

Perpetuating Hell's "managerial chaos" are a number of other "wild card" factors, factors which have an unpredictable influence on events. Among these factors are rules imposed by the Watchers, acts of the Watchers' Nephilim (discussed



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below), associations brought about by making offerings to Patrons, customs and traditions of peacetime etiquette, certain new or rare *maleficia*, acts of diabolists in the realm above, and the ever-active, ever-insidious plots seeded by Satan himself to keep Hell interesting. Taken together, these flies in the ointment make for particularly volatile and unpredictable group dynamics. When these factors are put to use by a race of hateful, deceitful rebels, the result is more than sanity allows. Utter chaos is the tool of Satan.

De Anima

The human soul is vital to the motivations of devils and the organization of their society. Souls are the currency, obsession and fascination of devils and the Dark One. In fact, the human soul is so significant to devilish ways that a full investigation into the devil-soul relationship is necessary to understand the Infernal.

SOUL APPEAL

Devils measure their relative rank in the Infernal hierarchy through what is referred to as the Tally of Souls. The Tally is not a simple head count. It also takes into account the manner in which a soul is captured, and the nature of each target. For instance, if a devil knows an intended victim is prone to violence, the devil could strive to corrupt the soul through

some method other than anger. Such creativity and self-imposed limitation is a sign of style and subtlety encouraged in the Tally, so it garners greater respect.

The target itself is also important. Christian souls have a much greater value in the Tally than pagan souls, and those with True Faith are prizes indeed. On the other hand, the greater the evil of a target, the greater the soul's value. The diabolic priest is therefore more valuable than a member of his diabolic flock, and a member of the flock is more valuable than a mundane mortal who impulsively promises a devil his soul. Sorcery is also a magnifier of a soul's worth. Those with the Gift who forge pacts with the Devil are even more valuable than diabolic priests.

To make the Tally of Souls even more complicated, certain souls have unique "flavors," or rare "auras of pain." The qualities of these souls make them ideal additions to particular landscapes within Hell. To capture one of these souls and bind it to a torture befitting its sins garners notoriety for a devil. Certain Infernal ceremonies might also require the acquisition of very specific souls. The completion of such a ceremony accords the performing devil respect and recognition.

In the end, there is no telling what souls devils favor. Anyone could be a preferred target of demonic activity and might rate highly for the most incomprehensible of reasons. Thus, it is virtually impossible for humans to understand how the Tally of Souls is kept.

THE POWER OF SOULS

Devils have many uses for the souls they collect. They might consume these souls, use them for power, treat them as currency, or simply put them through vigorous regimens of everlasting torture. This last option is clearly the most widely known by mankind, but all are possible and many can be pursued simultaneously.

Devils thrive on a diet of suffering. Their staple meal is that of a soul roasted in Hellfire or otherwise prepared in a recipe of torment. This torture provides sustenance in the form of raw energy, which radiates from the soul until all its "bones" are picked. A generic soul therefore provides nourishment and entertainment at a single sitting. The absorption of the soul's torment supplies some vestige of residual power to its audience and sustains individual devils at the level of power to which they are accustomed. Of course, the soul's torment does not sate its tormentors, or they would not seek out more victims to feed upon. Thus, it is the duty of an Infernal lord to ensure that a regular supply of victims are made available to himself, his vassals, his army and his peasants (the Vulgate). After all, even these petty devils must feast and delight. In return, vassals must provide a supply of fresh souls specifically for the lord.

Although all souls bear some nutritional value for devils, the unadulterated extent of a soul's power does not radiate out indiscriminately. Rather, it is siphoned off in very discrete measures, to be doled out by the lord of the fief in which the soul is tormented. Obviously, much of this power is gobbled up by the host devil. Some, however, is given to loyal (or at least well-controlled) retainers and slaves, some is put into Infernal magics to protect and increase the integrity of the fief, and some is stored for later use.

Whereas thoroughly sinful souls can be nursed and savored, thus providing food and delight for nearly all time, souls can wear out. As their inherent corruption is siphoned, their radiance of power diminishes and eventually ceases to draw an audience. All the fun is taken out of it. At this point the soul is in all likelihood subsumed and transferred to the fief lord's master (see *Subsuming Souls*).

Not all souls are spent when passed on to greater lords. Even a soul new to Hell and not yet siphoned might be sent down from one devil to its master, perhaps as part of a tithe payment, or in return for special consideration or extra boons. Souls which have had some power siphoned can still be transferred to a master's fief (or to any devil expecting payment), but the soul's worth is considerably less than that of a fresh one. In the end, though, all subsumed souls make their way down as a matter of course. Thus, souls in Hell are not only food, entertainment, and power, but treasure.

SOUL PROTOCOLS

By the Watchers' Law of Drawing Down, demons cannot directly take souls. They receive souls in one of three ways: Transmission, Accusation, and Consent.

The first, Transmission, concerns the path of the soul once it has passed below the Sphere of Earth and into Hell itself. Essentially, demons may exchange souls between allies and equals, just as mortal townsmen exchange commodities. Alternately, devils must sometimes pass a soul down to their masters, either because it is a tithe due that master or because the devil has drained a given soul of all available power. In the latter case, only a stronger demon can squeeze more from the soul. Through this discarding of "spent" souls, all souls eventually sift down to Lucifer, in the deepest pit of Hell (see *Subsuming Souls*).

Consent and Accusation deal with ways to snare souls from earth and bring them down to Hell. Accusation is the ceremony wherein a soul that has been corrupted of its own free will (but usually in response to a great many demon-spurred temptations) is pointed out to Divine angels upon the body's death. As the angels judge the soul's worth, the Accusing demon argues in Hell's favor — the ultimate Devil's Advocate. If a soul proves to be sufficiently corrupt, it becomes the property of the Accusing demon. Note, however, that only the spirits of true devils (who have souls in Hell) are "registered" in the Tally of Souls, so "soulless" demons, such as most *terreni*, have no right to Accuse.

Consent is an admission of ownership that is either the result of heartfelt worship or the primary stipulation of a demonic pact. Through this worship or pact a diabolist and/or Satanic witch sells his or her soul to devilkind. This sale waives the "right of trial," as it were. The demon need no longer go through the bother of Accusing the soul upon the body's death. Furthermore, though demons are rarely lucky enough to be able to directly cause their clients' deaths, they often include some agreement within a contract giving them permission to do just that should the human try to save his or her soul. This final stipulation ensures that the devil may collect the soul before the diabolist has a change of heart and seeks out sincere repentance.

By making a pact the diabolist agrees to the devil's terms in exchange for power in the temporal world. The devil goes through the trouble of allotting these powers. It does so because the corrupted soul is even more valuable if collected with the gifts of the pact as baggage. The devil is also bound by the pact. Failure to perform as specified by the letter of the contract breaks the pact and preserves the diabolist's soul (and reclaims the diabolist's spirit if taken, as discussed below).

SUBSUMING SOULS

When human souls first arrive in Hell, they radiate an excess of energy to be eaten, enjoyed and harnessed by the devil who won the soul, and by those it is shared with. Once the soul's initial excess of energy is depleted, the soul is whittled down to its most sublime remnant, the immortal and immutable core of the soul.

The soul is said to be subsumed by this process of sublime depletion. By formal definition, the soul is reduced to its next stable phase in the order of the cosmos. No matter what fief initially earns fresh souls, the souls of all mortal sinners eventually drift down to Satan.

Despite the idea of soul stability, the subsumed soul is further molested during its fall from the original devil to Satan himself. Each superior in the hierarchy of Hell receives a soul sent by underlings, and may milk it for still more energy. Once a soul becomes too sublime to harness, it is sent to the next master, who employs his power to draw even more energy from the victim. In the end, Satan collects all souls and feeds upon the energy only his might may siphon.

A final fact of soul subsumation: the more sublime or "reduced" the soul, the more potent the energy that can be siphoned from it. Thus, Satan, rather than being reduced to harnessing the "dregs," as it were, actually receives the greatest power a soul offers.

SOUL AVATARS (DEMONS)

Avatars are *simulacra*, beings created by devils to invest portions of their own devilish essences with separate mobility. Avatar is actually another term for demon; as the projection of a devil's spirit, an avatar is by definition a demon. As spiritual projections of devils, demons can wander earth and Hell separate from their devilish masters. Demonic avatars have all the personality and knowledge of their creators, but only a fraction of said creatures' Might and *maleficia*.

Avatars can also be the product of spirits that a devil has collected. When devils lure humans into selling their souls, those pacts sometimes force the bodied-soul's spirit down to Hell. This loss of spirit is a gesture of "good will" on the diabolist's part, to guarantee compliance with the pact upon bodily death. These acquired spirits attach themselves to the devil's soul and can be invested in a number of rituals and spells. Among these uses is the creation of a demon. By creating a demon with a spirit that is only its by proxy, a devil does not risk its own personal spirit should the demon be destroyed.

Any devil in Hell (but only a devil with a soul) may create an independent avatar. To a large extent the avatar has a mind of its own. This is mitigated by two factors. One, the avatar's mind is exactly the same as the devil's, with the same personality and enemies, motivations and affinities. Two, the devil has a psychic link that allows it to remain aware of its avatar, and if the avatar is on the same level of Hell, the devil has some control over its specific actions and reactions. Note, though, that this awareness between devil and avatar is only one-way. The avatar knows nothing about the devil's situation. If the avatar's creator is ever destroyed by some extraordinary means or is banished from Hell, the avatar continues to live, but as a mere soulless demon.

Demons may not be created on a whim. The process requires a long ritual and a great expenditure of soul energy. The crucial ingredient of any demon is a spirit. Each devil born after the creation of the material world possesses a personal spirit attached to its soul, so these devils can create demons from themselves.

Avatars possess variable power depending upon the energies seeded into their creation. For the most part avatars are considered members of the Vulgate (lowly minions of Hell); their Infernal status is somewhere between that of soulless demons and newly-fallen devils. *Ischin* avatars (see *Hell's Hierarchy*) are quite high in status, however, and are occasionally confused for the devils who created them.

Devils are not limited to the creation of a single demon. A devil may create a demon for every spirit it has accumulated from pacts made with diabolists, and can create one from its own spirit. These multiple demons can roam earth and Hell at the same time, and the "parent" devil is aware of all its "children."

One must understand the concept of the avatar to understand the metaphysics behind goetic rituals, specifically those directed down at Hell's devils. The goetic summoning ritual actually forces the target devil to create an avatar. A devil is contacted in Hell and commanded to project its demonic spirit up to earth (see *Summoning Devils* in Chapter Two). Having sent its spirit to earth, the devil goes into stasis. Only when the spirit is dismissed from earth may the devil awaken from stasis. However, if a devil has acquired spirits from pacts, the devil may send one of these spirits as an avatar and avoid stasis in Hell. Furthermore, if a devil has but a single accumulated spirit left in its control in Hell (even if the devil's own spirit has been commanded to earth), the devil does not go into stasis. The devil remains conscious in Hell and may continue to control its last avatar (as long as that avatar remains in Hell).

If a demon is ever banished or destroyed, the spirit returns to the projecting devil and that devil suffers a prolonged period of stasis, even if the spirit was not the devil's only one. Banished or "destroyed" spirits are not forever lost, for spirits are immortal. A banished or "destroyed" spirit is incapacitated until it can recover from the abuse suffered.

Celestial Mantles

As explained in the previous chapter, the fallen angels of the first race (those created in Heaven rather than in the shadow of the material world) were Divine souls without the accompanying spirits integral to bodied-souls. Thus, no celestial devil has what is termed a personal spirit—one specifically made for the devil at the moment of its birth. As a result, celestial devils have developed much slower metabolisms, since God intended these rebels to succumb to the weighty chains of Time in the prison of Inferno. These devils are also normally beyond the scope of human interaction; they have no spirits and may not be called up to earth as demons.

However, these devils were as envious of their more active kin as they were of humanity itself, and thus developed a way to compensate for their lack of spirits: the act of spiritual mantling. In short, older devils who wish to gain spirits barter for them — from tormented sinners, from members of the Vulgate, from those who sign a Pact of Ashes, and even from devils of lower echelons who were defeated in battle. Because the stolen spirits are not custom-tailored to the ancient devil, and because this devil typically has such an immense appetite, it is necessary to take several spirits and weave them together to achieve a “personal spirit” effect.

Such spiritual conglomerates are called celestial mantles, since they are analogous to ill-fitting cloaks worn by the older *depravati*. Only older (but not necessarily ancient) angels know the secret, or have the power, to create spiritual mantles. Once a celestial devil is mantled, it may develop soul avatars to make up for its own slothful nature, feeding on the energy of the dynamic spirits.

The devil who creates a celestial mantle does incur a certain risk. The spirits of the mantle can be summoned to earth by diabolists. If all spirits from the devil's mantle are summoned or sent to earth, the devil is forced into stasis.

When a mantled spirit of an ancient devil is called to earth, said spirit is usually but a fraction of the whole mantle the devil possesses. A single summoned spirit therefore only possesses a fraction of the devil's full power — much less power than one would expect of such an ancient entity.



Celestial Devils

Diaboli celestia, or celestial devil, is the name given to those *depravati angeli* who were born as members of the first race created by God. Most of them Fell as a result of participation in the Revolt of Angels (the Watchers are the one exception). Celestial devil status is given to differentiate between the oldest devils and newer ones which come from the ranks of the human race. Since many believe that human souls do not become legitimately angelic in the afterlife (and won't until the end of time), the term “fallen angel” is often sufficient to denote a *depravati* of the Revolt.

Among devils, however, any means of increasing political and societal clout is worthy of attention, so celestial rank is always advertised. Such “veteran” status is quite prestigious, and often earns a devil special rights of custom, greater public consideration, and leniency when punishments are delivered. A celestial devil of one echelon is often as influential as a non-celestial devil of a higher echelon. In practical terms, though, the lower echelon celestial devil has the greater overall power, being more experienced, more cunning, more learned in *malefic* knowledge, and more influential, with deeply-sewn alliances.

At the same time, however, calling forth a mantled demon is extremely dangerous. Though each individual demon has limited power, each also has a demon's heart, and this heart is identical in each demon. If several demons are called from the same devil, those demons, even if physically separate, begin to imbue the world with the devil's collective power. Each “child” may therefore gain power from any and all hearts (the Might score of each demon becomes the sum of all demon Might, but cannot exceed the devil's own Might). Each demon is thus made more powerful, as is the group as a whole. That power continues to grow as more demons are called to earth.

Hell's Hierarchy

When the angels of the Revolt were trapped in Hell by a vengeful God, they comprised a chaotic mob of individual entities, each fighting for survival and territory. Since the angels were inherently different from each another, having been created by God with roles specific to the angelic hierarchy, a pecking order developed which mirrored the original hierarchy of Heaven.

Thus, the earliest Infernal society was an imperfect copy of the Divine model. Satan was a lesser leader than God, without God's power or the loyalty He engendered in His subjects. The fear of another revolt, and the fact that Satan's goals and perceptions lacked God's omniscience, led to changes in Hell's initial social structure. These changes were also spurred by the arrival of the Watchers.

The role of the newly arrived Watchers was to tally the relative success and power of Hell's devils. These observant beings infused method into the devils' struggle for supremacy over each other. Since accumulated souls, domain and prestige became factors of social importance, a social structure arose that accommodated those values. A feudal model was adopted:



a twisted reflection of humanity's most corrupt form of organization, and one in which personal achievement overruled all desire to raise society as a whole.

By adopting humanity's social order, Hell drew even closer to humanity's world. Indeed, similarities between the two prompted the installment of Patron devils, devilish lords over human vassals, and the creation of a few unusual settings and resources, like the Infernal paradise of Elysium described by Virgil. This growing bond between earth and Hell only heightened struggle in the Infernal hierarchy; devils fought all the more for access to human victims.

Even today Hell's proximity to earth allows for the continued existence of the Underworld's oldest beings. Unlike the realm of Arcadia, which is bound to the Earthly Sphere, the realm of the Infernal is in its own Sphere, but the source of the Infernal's power, the False Empyrean, was likely stolen from earth. When the human unconscious, which manipulates the Shadow Empyrean, creates a new notion, it manifests in Hell as well. The dark denizens can thereupon decide to keep the manifestation, even beyond the time when its validity is discarded by humanity's group psyche. This is why the ancient Nephilim still stalk the domains of Hell and the original Fallen Ones of the Revolt maintain a high level of prestige.

In a nutshell, then, the power hierarchy of Hell is composed of something old, something new, something borrowed, and everything cruel.

SATAN

The Devil sits at the center of Hell and is the preeminent power of this lowest Sphere. Never one to pass up an opportunity to blaspheme God and broaden his own doctrine, Satan is set up as a Trinity: the Evil Trinity of Father, Son and Unholy Spirit.

The Father is Lucifer proper, the warped soul who Fell from grace and lies in chains in the pit of eternal torment, orchestrating his satellites while in bondage.

The Son is called Satan, the Adversary of the earth, whose role as Prince was supplanted by the Lord of the Earth, Jesus Christ. Though he is no longer the supreme authority on earth, the Devil's spirit is strong there. Indeed, few humans can tell he is out of office. Only the rise of the Dominion hints at the new order in the world.

The Unholy Spirit is known by several names, among them the Dragon. Just as God bestowed a single World-Soul upon the earth, so the Devil's realm has an evil Hell-Soul which permeates that Sphere. It is conjectured that the soul of Hell came into being because of the False Empyrean entrusted to the Dark One. To those who believe the Devil stole this chunk of power from an unwitting God (i.e. diabolists), the Prince of Darkness is an absolute ruler, biding his time before the next war and subjecting his satellites to a regimen of hardship and protocol.

To those who think the False Empyrean was thrust upon Lucifer as he Fell, or that God permitted its theft, the Devil is a true prisoner. With this perspective, the Devil is seen battering the bars of his cage and trying to find ways for his satellites to free him, despite the punishment inflicted upon them in their own lesser incarcerations.

Regardless of the true origin of Lucifer's might, he has, to be sure, power to offer humanity. However, while he sets up a scheme of reward and punishment meant to supersede God's own boundaries, he is himself working from a highly compromised position. Some artworks of recent centuries depict Lucifer sitting in the mouth of the great Dragon and being consumed by flames. According to this portrayal, Lucifer's own Unholy Spirit metes out his cosmic punishment. Clearly, such a situation does not represent an entity at peace with itself, and this is perhaps a good analogy for all who turn to the Dark Path.

In the end it is unimportant to differentiate between the names of the Devil. Satan, Lucifer, the Dragon, the Dark One, the First to Fall, the Great Adversary — all these and more can be used as befits the mood of the user, and all refer to the same cosmic foe of mankind.

Only in philosophical or scholastic circles does distinction between the Devil's labels arise, since intellectuals love their use of categories. In such circles there is even a debate concerning the veracity of these categories, namely the assignment of Son and Unholy Spirit. Since, it is argued, the "Son" is actually Satan's evil spirit, while the Hell-Soul is (obviously) a soul, the titles should be switched. The majority feel, however, that the category of Son is more important. They claim the Divine Son

is sent by God to redeem sinners. By contrast, the Infernal Son, Prince of the Earth, exists to create sinners and to corrupt the world. What interest the Devil takes in all this theorizing is impossible to gauge, but one might guess he is at least amused by it.

The Devil, as a power, is at the pinnacle of the Infernal hierarchy (or at its nadir if thinking physically). He is also the source of most *maleficia* (Infernal powers and spells). Even when a lesser devil uses human souls to create its own *maleficia*, such magics work only with the approval of the False Empyrean, and by association, the approval of the Dark One. Satan, as a souled entity, may never escape the confinement of his cosmic prison. Accordingly, summonings of Satan are never truly effective. (However, the section on *Soul Avatars* offers ideas on how such summonings can be partially successful, through the summoning of Satan's spirit mantle).

THE ISCHIN

The earliest recruits to Satan's cause, the seven generals of the rebellion and co-conspirators in the forging of the Anti-Word doctrine, are known as the Ischin. Each Ischin embodies one of the Seven Deadly Sins. When the Ischin first sank to earth after the Revolt and encountered mankind (after Satan managed to get humanity cast out of the Garden of Eden and his own soul cast into Hell's deepest pit), the Ischin taught the Cardinal Sins to the bodied-souls. After the introduction of the Cardinal Sins, other "demons of iniquity" took up the Ischin cause. They fostered specific variations on the Cardinal Sins to create varying grades of sin, such as the art of magic, gambling, and the devastating art of warfare.

After the Flood, when all the devils were forced into Hell, God judged the offenses of the Ischin as second only to those of Lucifer. God put the Ischin in a circle around their chained leader and set them into a deep and permanent sleep. From that time, as sinners above continued to pay the Ischin homage by committing Deadly Sins, the Ischin became receivers rather than senders/teachers. It is now their task to draw in souls which fall under their particular domains and siphon their soul energy for Lucifer.

The Ischin are above Hell's politics. They have no fiefs and no servants; the Cardinal Sins themselves are their domains. Furthermore, they do not need to fight masters or slaves for possession of souls. They are the final destination; all souls descend to them through the act of subsumation. The devils of the First Echelon pretend these subsumed souls are tithes and gifts to the Ischin, an attempt to fit the Great Sleepers into the feudal structure. However, no force short of Divine intervention can stay a subsumed soul from its downward course. Thus, there is no profit in the petty schemes of lesser devils to undermine the Ischin.

The Ischin are few in number and firmly entrenched in their places of power. It is thus possible to name their full complement. As this information comes from a race of liars and

their treacherous human henchmen, it must be taken with a grain of salt (i.e. these are probably not the True Names of the Ischin).

Cardinal Sin	Ruling Ischin
Pride	Mephistopheles
Envy	Beelzebub
Wrath	Sathan
Greed	Mammon
Lust	Asmodeus (and sometimes Lilith)
Sloth	Astaroth
Gluttony	Behemoth

Though these devils each have long and glorious histories, and have corrupted uncounted civilizations, their overt activities ended with the Deluge. However, since pride and the like are quite pervasive in the 13th century, it is obvious that the Ischin are still active. Indeed, they can manifest on earth via avatars of themselves. All of the Ischin have large celestial mantles and often influence the affairs of humans through spiritual proxies.

Demons of the Ischin, created with ancient knowledge and empowered by entities second only to Satan in might, are much more powerful than typical avatars. So great is their power that they are often mistaken for the Ischin themselves, even by other devils.

Ischin are so powerful, in fact, that they are beyond Infernal politics and human summonings alike, or so they believe. Two particularly active Ischin avatars are Beelzebub and Mephistopheles. The latter fancies himself above his peers and second only to Lucifer. Enjoying the role of Patron of Sinful Circumstance, Mephistopheles has also decided to assume the role of Patron of Lies. By invoking the principle that all sins are lies against the Word, Mephistopheles intimidates many devils of lower echelon into offering him patronage.

Beelzebub's avatar has long held the title of Grand Sergeant of Pagan Gods, and pagan operations were put under its supervision shortly after the Flood. However, to this celestial devil's great misfortune, his avatar was summoned and bound by King Solomon. Since that time, the sergentry has lapsed and the post remains vacant. No devil would dare vie for it and risk upsetting the sleeping Ischin. Thus, in the 13th century, some pagan cults return to the natural order, and others are allowed to lower their defenses against corruption. Indeed, the Old Gods are now reemerging, but the extent of their influence will be determined by the tenacity of Christianity's grip on the land.

THE WATCHERS

When God created the second race — humanity — He put a fundamentally new and different element in the cosmos: the bodied-soul. As the angels were saddened to discover, their inborn knowledge of the universe did not include this element. Hence, the angels who had persevered through their first *moracula* were faced with a new lure. Most who had passed the

initial test of rejecting pure evil also chose to reject bodily evil. A very small number, however, were attracted to the bodied-souls and committed sins of lust.

These angels became known as the Watchers, because they chose to sin after watching the members of the second race. They too were sent down to Hell. However, because they had not taken part in the Revolt, God knew the Watchers could never fully be a part of that chaotic Infernal tribe. They had once been *beati*; indeed, some had fought on God's side in the Revolt of Angels. God knew the angels would always judge their darker brethren with cold contempt.

Taking the Watchers' less-than-evil natures into account, God implemented them in a Divine plan. By implanting these angels in Hell, God could maintain a foothold in Hell. This foothold would allow God to exact a much more specific influence upon devilkind. Before sending them into Infernal exile, God set the duty of Law upon the Watchers. Hell was a realm of Evil against God's Good, and Chaos against Heaven's Order. By setting a geas upon the Watchers and investing them with the might to enforce their will upon other devils, God placed an affinity for order and protocol upon the Infernal ones.

Thus it was that laws came to be created and obeyed among a race that denied Heaven. While the dominance of master over slave had existed in Hell since the very beginning of the exile, only the seeds planted by the Watchers allowed true Infernal hierarchy to blossom. The Watchers' continued presence in Hell has allowed that hierarchy to evolve into the Byzantine mechanism it is today.

As overseers, the Watchers are outside the machinations of Infernal hierarchy. In fact, they are its highest executives. Echelon devils merely use the hierarchy as a tool and obey its strictures; the Watchers are the ones who keep it in place and enforce its tenets. Watchers may neither be summoned nor exiled to earth, and they may not be warred upon by their dark brethren. They have no domains of their own, but instead monitor all fiefs throughout the nine layers of Hell. The Nephilim are the Watchers' agents, and they may be sent freely to earth to ensure that citizens of Hell in demon form continue to obey the laws. Certain laws created by the Watchers, such as the Soul Protocols, are clearly favors meant to aid mankind, but the Watchers are still *depravati*, and not adverse to creating laws which hinder man.

Only the First through Third Echelons of devilkind are more powerful than the Nephilim in brute force. However, even the Devil is wise enough to carefully tack around the Watchers and Nephilim if he hopes to fulfill any plans that cross their strictures.

Keeping track of these Infernal administrators (to prevent them from getting too far out of hand) is the task of Heaven's Archangel Michael. Nine magical lanterns are set in Hell—one in each layer. Through these Michael monitors the Watchers, giving them commands as he deems appropriate. However, even Michael has other duties to occupy his time, so the Watchers are occasionally left to their own devices.

THE NEPHILIM

When the Watchers faced and failed their second moment of decision, they sinned by breeding with the human race. As a result, a race of malformed giants came into existence and wrought havoc across the lands of man. This breed was sometimes called the third race by man and devil alike. Because of their presence and the tendency for them to be viewed as a new race, God decreed the giants' elimination. His archangels vanquished the giants one by one, and the giants' creators were punished with imprisonment in Hell.

However, that was not the end of the race. The giants were products of man and angel and thus different from either stock. When each giant was slain, its imperfect soul turned to ash instead of journeying to Heaven or Hell. A single great spirit and many lesser spirits then emerged from each corpse and fled the baffled archangel. The lesser spirits merged with and became part of the many *daemones terreni* (worldly demons) generated by Lucifer. The greater spirit took command of the deformed corpse and went on to wander the world in physical and spiritual form as it saw fit. Beings of this latter nature became known as Nephilim spirits.

When the archangels recounted their experiences with the giants and asked what they should do, God told them to let the Nephilim live. In their new incarnations, the Nephilim were certainly nothing more than demons, so the threat of the third race was no longer manifest. Also, God had in mind a specific role for these new entities. As bodied-spirits they could roam earth and Hell with equal ease. Furthermore, the raw power of the Nephilim spirits could match that of demons on earth, and even some devils in Hell.

Because they were new entities, not immersed in Hell's politics following the Revolt, the Nephilim were as uncommitted to the majority of Satan's satellites as the Watchers themselves. Furthermore, as children of the Watchers, the Nephilim had a familial tie to those angels. All these things made the Nephilim ideal enforcers of the Watchers' will. Thus, God bound the Nephilim in servitude to the Watchers.

The Nephilim steadfastly enforce Infernal law. A Watcher need only state its wishes and a Nephilim spirit carries them out to the best of its ability, with no need to resort to the master-and-

Obeying Laws

Specific laws and customs of the Infernal hierarchy are discussed within this chapter (and more are scattered throughout this text). Even if not stated, Infernal laws are laws because the Watchers have made them. There is no honors system at work here. Between the brute force of the Nephilim and the "Divine" qualities invested in the Watchers, devils and demons are watched and reprimanded constantly. The vigil never ceases. As is true for the tortures of sinners, punishment for a demon's Infernal crime suits that crime. If a demon is stopped before a law can be broken (by some deeply implanted magical imperative or by being caught in the act), its punishment might be less severe than if caught after the fact.

slave relationship predominant elsewhere in Hell. However, Nephilim are not consciously loyal to the Watchers. The Nephilim are inherently tied to the Watchers and obey them because Divine command infuses such a tendency into their natures.

Only the First through Third Echelons of devils are more powerful than the Nephilim. Devils of these ranks therefore believe that they may ignore the Nephilim without suffering punishment. All other echelons and lesser devils must obey the Nephilim, save for the more popular Patrons of Sin, who have the influence to defy custom. The lower echelons' deference to the Nephilim is more a matter of expedience than deep-seated respect, though. If a devil thinks it can best a Nephilim and wishes to continue a plan of action which the Nephilim protests, the devil may attempt to defeat the Nephilim. However, there will be an escalation of force against the devil, so it must determine whether its plan is important enough to warrant conflict with all the Nephilim.

Nephilim are equally powerful on earth and in Hell. When a Watcher desires to monitor a demon above, members of the Nephilim may be sent forth by Infernal ritual. (These rituals are comparatively easy for the Watchers to perform, in sharp contrast to the difficulty that other devils suffer when attempting to ascend to earth.) As they are spirits, the Nephilim can also be summoned to earth by sufficiently powerful diabolists. Such summonings are not effected by the wise, though. They know Nephilim spirits are exempt from numerous goetic rules, and the chance of annoying the Watchers is far too great to take.

The Nephilim do not participate in the Tally of Souls. They are also spirits (no matter how superior their composition), and thus may not use the courts of the angels to Accuse souls. Furthermore, the Nephilim act only to fulfill the plans and further the motives of the Watchers, who monitor other devils and demons. Humans are therefore ignored by the Nephilim unless they get in the way, or a scheme enacted by a transgressing devil or demon involves humans.

ECHELON DEVILS

All devils who have corrupted at least seven human souls are full members of the main body of Hell's hierarchy. They are recognized as part of the social and mystical strata known as the Nine Echelons. Those seven souls are a customary "entrance fee" into echelonhood, a custom which devils have not deemed necessary to conceal from humans. Thus diabolists, and (through them) the world at large, know the exact number of souls which promote a devil of the Vulgate to the (least) Ninth Echelon. Soul collection and factors which affect the Tally of Souls below the bottom echelon, wherein the Vulgate is lumped, are not known to man, and probably never shall be.

Devils belonging to the echelons are the lords and vassals who set fiefs within the territories of Hell, and who vigorously participate in Infernal politics. These entities are the most romantic and enviable subjects of goetic summoning, for they are the demons who provide the greatest benefits and prestige to diabolists. On the flip side of the same coin, these are the



devils who are most active in subjugating and corrupting the world. Devils of the upper echelons (higher power) are primarily supervisors who oversee subtle plans, plans which take generations to enact. Lower echelon devils (lesser power) tend to single out specific targets and act directly to corrupt them.

The nine echelons are divided into three sets of three. Members of each successive set are more powerful than those of lower sets. One could almost say this increase in power is logarithmic. Thus, those of the Fourth through Sixth Echelons operate in a class far above their cousins of the Seventh through Ninth. Likewise, the former group comes nowhere near the mind-boggling levels of intelligence, subtlety, and might displayed by devils of the First through Third Echelons. These greatest devils are virtually beyond politics, and are almost impossible to summon to earth. Despite the higher echelons' aloofness, they are not adverse to dabbling in the hierarchy from time to time, generally when one of their long-reaching plans must be set back on course.

Though this account of the echelons is oversimplified and undoubtedly demeaning to its occupants, it is necessary for a basic understanding of demonic activity. Demons can also be classified to some degree according to their involvement in world events. Members of the most powerful class of demon are not even rated, for their power is immeasurable in human terms. The first three echelons rated represent the numerical minority of devilkind. Their members are few and their activity in your Saga usually involves the gradual corruption of power-

Twilight Devils

Wizard's Twilight is a peril which hangs over the heads of Dark Magi no less than it does their untainted cousins. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for diabolists, Twilight can have an entire new dimension when experienced in conjunction with Infernal contact. While temporary Twilights can be truly devastating experiences, providing unparalleled opportunities to return to the mundane world with increased knowledge of things diabolic, Final Twilight is the greatest Infernal experience and the greatest danger of all.

When dabbling with Hell, Magi find themselves entangled in the workings of a supernatural force of potency and deceit. Hell is so warped and alien that it can confound the most knowledgeable practitioners of magic. To deal in the nature of demons is to concentrate upon the Form of Vim, the single greatest link between the earth's Shadow Gift and Hell's Ashen Gift. Magic and the Infernal are tightly bound. Little wonder that Hell has considerable pull on the body and soul of a Magus, even in Twilight. Temporary Twilights for Dark Magi can involve short incursions into high-Aura Infernal realms, face-to-face confrontations with demons, or the close scrutiny of the Magus's soul by a prying devil. The results of an Infernally influenced temporary Twilight are ultimately up to you. Hopefully the information provided by this book will aid your creativity.

Most important of all considerations, though, is the effect of an Infernally related Final Twilight. When a Dark Magus, whose spirit is tied to Hell through a pact, lapses into Final Twilight, Hell does not let the poor soul drift into some questionable Void. Instead, the Magus finds himself stolen into the Infernal realm,

with Twilight the seed that germinates rebirth as a devil. The Magus never even sees judgment by angels.

Devils resulting from Final Twilight are known as Twilight Devils. They retain an affinity for magic and *maleficia* that is unparalleled in diabolic society. Though Twilight Devils begin their new existence within the Vulgate, they are among the most clever of the non-celestial devils and often become deeply entrenched in the echelons in short order. Such Magus-devils are also great threats to wizards of earth because of their ability to make *malefic* spells that closely match earthly magic. Twilight Devils are the most inventive producers of Hell-based *maleficia* within the echelons. Devils who make alliances with Twilight Devils are bound to gain many new and interesting powers with which to battle their rivals.

Twilight Devils are also interesting because they have the ability to precisely manipulate the Twilights of human wizards, specifically those wizards who have sold their souls to the Twilight Devil in question. In fact, Twilight Devils can sometimes instigate Twilight in their subjects. Such afflictions are used to impose illusory experiences upon Gifted slaves, maybe with the chance of affecting others around, as in a mass hallucination (see *The Phantasmata* in Chapter Four).

Aside from their combined magical and Infernal powers, it is rumored that Twilight Devils are also in contact with whatever forces reside in the Twilight Void. This possibility suggests that Satan's power cannot wholly sever the link between Magus and Void, alluding to the potential power of Twilight and the Void. Because of their many bonds, some Twilight Devils demonstrate conflicts of interest between Infernal and outside forces.

ful people. These demons are also usually involved in plots of earth-shattering proportions. Members of the lesser echelons grow progressively less sophisticated and less powerful. The following table lists representative Infernal Might scores of demons from the various echelons:

Echelon	Average Might
Fourth	150
Fifth	120
Sixth	90
Seventh	60
Eighth	45
Ninth	30

Of course, these scores are only a rough guide to demons' relative strength. Different demons have different Might scores, based on the nature of the devil projecting the demon. Individual demons also have unique powers corresponding to these Might scores. By gaining strength and prestige in the Infernal hierarchy, and by impressing the Watchers, a devil can gain more Might and can project a more powerful demon.

Patrons of Sinful Circumstance

The Infernal milieu is not terribly original in its collective thought. Indeed, Satan gains strength from his Anti-Word ideals by directly paralleling aspects of Christianity. Satan's is just an opposed response, not a genuinely creative one. Thus, the Patrons of Sinful Circumstance evolved in Hell as a direct inversion of the Cult of Saints. Just as martyrs and other great people of Mythic Europe and God are canonized and granted sainthood, so too are the vilest scourges of society — murderers, liars, and diabolists — all granted anti-canonization and anti-saint status in Hell.

There are Patrons for every vile circumstance imaginable — a Patron of regicide, a Patron of poisoners, a Patron of spouse murderers, of gamblers, of baby killers, of deserters, of usury, of pagan religion, and of any vice, iniquity or evil act ever to surface in the world. The majority of these devils (for the Patrons are angels of Hell) are sinners who so personified a vice that the Devil chose to offer them "exalted" status rather than eternal torment. (Yes, Satan is willing to let one or two souls get away scot-free if it sets a bad example for many, many others.)

The angels of Hell are not above peaceful interaction with these new Patron devils. In fact, the *depravati* find Patrons' knowledge of and oneness with Satan commendable. Further-

more, the *depravati* are always looking for ways to increase their personal power, and Patrons can sometimes be goaded into detailing particularly vile ways by which a mortal can be coaxed into a sin, always the sin represented by the Patron. It also goes without saying that the *depravati* accept the Patrons because Satan commands them to do so.

The anti-saints, with the power of prayer granted by Satan and fulfilled by diabolists and extreme sinners, can be immense sources of Infernal might. It is no secret that sin runs rampant throughout Mythic Europe. By giving this sin direction in the form of particular sins to pursue, Patrons attract many souls into Hell, there to be tormented by the Dark Ones. Clever devils know how to steal some souls before they arrive in Patrons' domains. Other devils recognize a "good" thing when they see it. These beings attempt to "horn in" on the human-enticing pantheon, trying to create Patron niches for themselves and thereby become anti-saints themselves. Mephistopheles, discussed above, is one such devil.

In terms of hierarchy, Patrons are considered inferior to First through Third Echelon devils. Otherwise, they are superior to all other echelons and the Vulgate. On occasion anti-saints can even exceed their usual bounds of Infernal power. When a particular sinful circumstance is quite popular, either among humans or devils, appropriate anti-saints can become widely respected among devilkind. This allows the anti-saints certain liberties, even to the point of bypassing protocols or the fickle rulings of the Watchers.

There is also one special power that anti-saints have all the time; it is a particularly sore point for the Watchers, and one they would like to change (but Satan will never allow it). Patrons can offer sanctuary to other devils. Patrons have either parcels of land within other fiefs or vast domains of their own. If a devil who has committed a crime against the Watchers is given harbor on a Patron's lands, the devil is under sanctuary and the Nephilim may not touch her. Luckily for the Watchers, Patrons rarely offer genuine sanctuary to guests and can be bribed to refuse sanctuary. This assumes, of course, that the applicant is not a political ally or has not offered a bigger bribe.

To protect Infernal order and enforce some limits on Patrons, the Watchers are careful to keep Patrons' True Names and Contact spells (see Chapter Five) out of mortal hands. If such information was made widely known on earth, the anti-saints could lure untold numbers of souls into their own parts of Hell. Despite the Watchers' efforts, Patrons occasionally get their names known and even written down in Black Ledgers; these tomes periodically surface in the dark corners of Mythic Europe. Though these books are usually destroyed, the damage is done since names are copied in texts not under Watcher control.

Since Patrons represent particular sins, they do not usually need to tax themselves to collect souls. Humanity is all too eager to pursue certain sins. This liberty is useful to Patrons because their main function in Hell is to act as intermediaries between Satan and humanity, relaying desires and granting wishes. Non-gifted diabolists need only pray to their anti-saints Below to be eligible for the "false miracles" of the Devil.

THE VULGATE

The *beati* of the first race are the angels who chose Good in their *moraculas*, before the second race was born. Unless God chooses to place yet another completely new element into the cosmos, as He did when he created humans, the current *beati* will never turn from God or suffer a Fall like their inverted cousins. However, new members are brought into the angelic ranks every day, as good Christians die and go to Heaven (after graduating from Purgatory) to enjoy the afterlife.

While these human angels are typically inducted into the lowest of levels, they too face a *moracula*. The same argument of ignorance which makes humanity redeemable also makes new angels susceptible to a change of attitude, particularly when the mantle of wisdom is lowered over their souls in Heaven. Humans who have been good their whole lives, and thus gain entry into Heaven, could discover that Evil lies at the core of their beings. These angels then Fall and enter Hell as Vulgate devils.

To enter into the lowest of Hell's echelons, a devil must corrupt seven souls. Before these souls are attained, the devil in question is a second-class citizen with no more rights than the demonic entities of Hell composed of spirits and bodies alone. While these latter creatures may never transcend Vulgate status, the newly-Fallen can always gain promotion; indeed, this is their most fervent desire.

Unfortunately, new devils range greatly in intelligence and cunning. While some rise to the Fourth or Fifth Echelon in a few short centuries, others remain in the Infernal peasant class for millennia. These unintelligent devils, and the soulless demons who can never rise in power, are stuck together in the Vulgate. Demons of the Vulgate are the primary targets of diabolic summonings, since they are not subtle enough to be intellectual threats to their human captors. Furthermore, they usually possess a great degree of physical power, which makes them ideal slaves in the material world.

More powerful devils are equally willing to abuse the Vulgate. A devil's fief is inhabited by great numbers of these "peasants," and they fit perfectly into Hell's feudal/seigniorial system. Members of the Vulgate who are taken into service must be allowed to take pleasure in the sight of tortured souls, and they must be protected from the ravages of war. In return, a large portion of them join the estate's militia, while others do chores to keep the estate running. Those in the militia quickly become soldiers of great skill, as they fight in numerous battles between rival fiefs.

Hell's armies, when the devils of the top six echelons muster their forces for all-out war instead of mere battle, are divided into legions of 666 demons, most of whom come from the ranks of the Vulgate. The Vulgate is also the pool from which echelon devils develop their Masks (see the *Mask Demon* boxed insert).

Mask Demons

Individuality is among the most important rights that Satan affords devils. Each dark angel, unlike each human, is a unique species. When it was necessary for the rebellious angels to change their forms in protest of the unity of the *beati*, each picked a unique form and developed somewhat different powers and pastimes. Thus, no true citizen of Inferno may be forced into a common form occupied by another devil.

The devils and demons of the Vulgate, however, have no rights and are not protected from the atrocity of similarity. Accordingly, when the powers of Hell want to create duplicate demons, they recruit victims from among the Vulgate. Duplicate demons might be created to unify an army, to create a force with a single ability, or simply to pursue a powerful devil's twisted aesthetic. Vulgate victims are magically transformed until they assume a specific set of characteristics. Former Vulgate, or Mask Demons, therefore assume the same Might, physical form, *malefic* powers, and (to a large extent) the same personalities and tendencies as the model they're designed after.

Only spirits may be Masked. That is, the spirit of a Vulgate devil is taken from the devil by superior devils and transformed as required. In the meantime, the Vulgate devil goes into stasis. A soulless Vulgate demon, on the other hand, is literally kidnapped. This spirit is then geased with a mission, and the unfortunate demon is allowed no thought or memory of its mission. The devil in control of the Mask Demon assumes control of the demon's actions as well.

All Mask Demons have bodies (they are spirits in Hell, after all). When called to earth they are the type most likely to remain corporeal most of the time.

As Masks are the safest and most stable demons for humans to summon, a large number of Mask Demons are described in tomes of demonology. Persistent Masking of the same image by Hell's devils is what makes demonic tomes accurate down through the ages; demons with the same appearance and powers are summoned throughout time.

If a Masked demon is lucky enough to corrupt its seventh soul while in a Mask (though most Mask Demons are too unintelligent to earn such prizes), the Watchers immediately remove the Mask and restore the demon's true identity. Restored creatures are rarely powerful enough to effect instant retribution on their former masters, but they can hold a grudge for a long time. (Normally, when a Mask is taken off by the Masker, the related ceremony includes a *maleficium* which causes the subject to forget who Masked it, thus preventing retribution.)

There is an endless supply of Masks, and more are invented by Twilight Demons and other devils all the time. So, even though Masks allow for "generic" demons, the permutations they can be made to pursue are limitless.

INFERNAL BEASTS

Through terrible experiments, *malefic* magics which get out of control, or seeds which Satan himself plants in the soil of Hell, there come into existence Infernal beasts. These unintelligent creatures are demonic versions of earthly animals, or even things never known to man. These creatures are the fauna of Hell, not devils or demons of the normal variety. As with earthly animals, these beasts can be tamed, used domestically, or hunted for sport. If an Infernal animal is exceptionally big and nasty, it may be able to kill devils who enter its lair, or it may go on a rampage that destroys an unfortunate estate.

Infernal beasts are generally spirits tied to bodies, or simply bodies made to function through the efforts of the False Empyrean. In this second case, they may not be summoned from Hell by diabolists. Unfortunately, certain Infernal beasts find their way to earth. When a devil has been improperly summoned it can, if it so chooses, send another spirit in its place. Mischievous devils often use Infernal beasts for this purpose. Such creatures are termed Stead-beasts, since they are beasts sent up in the devil's stead. Stead-beasts can only be banished, warded against, or controlled by strong magics. They may not be bound or dismissed. Even worse, the summoning circle created by the diabolist does not transfix a beast. Thus, a Stead-beast may simply wander away and pillage the countryside if it cannot harm the goetist inside the circle.

ASTASIANS

While souls in Hell exist forever, simply becoming more sublime with the passage of time, spirits are finite substances. Whether from excessive Masking, harmful *maleficia*, or too many summonings in which they are stripped of powers, evil spirits can become used up or shrunk. These spent spirits are the lowliest of Hell's inhabitants, even lower than the Vulgate. These tired spirits are astasians, called the Unfixed because they have no domains and no identities of their own.

Astasians float freely throughout the environs of Hell like so many insects in the mundane world. Though they do nothing but hover around scenes of torture when left to their own devices, these remnant spirits can be given tasks by devils. They are typically used as messengers and spies, relaying commands between legion commanders in battle or reconnoitering a rival's territory.

Astasians cannot be summoned to earth since their spirits are too tiny to notice. However, astasians can be sent to earth by the devils of Hell. In fact, earth is almost as crowded with astasians as is Hell, and diabolists or demons stuck on earth can use astasians as devils in Hell can.

Higher Ground

While the entities of Hell usually arrive on earth via summonings from above, the *depravati* are not completely at the mercy of man where such trans-Spheric journeys are concerned. Though no single devil can journey from Hell to earth on its own (unless it finds or creates an amazingly powerful *malefic* device), groups of devils can gather together to perform complex rituals at certain times of the year, or during certain celestial events, in order to send a demon up to earth.

The more powerful the devil involved, the more difficult it is to send its avatar through the Spheres. It is practically impossible to send a demon of the First through Third Echelons up to earth. The members of these levels are far too powerful to be projected upward. Only a pull from above (with a helpful push from below, for that matter) can effect such a transfer of spiritual energy.

The most common reason for sending demons to earth is to further the plans of a particular lord. His agents are sent to earth to do his bidding. Such agents are usually of the soulless class of demon and are thus sent up completely rather than as avatars.

The sending of full-fledged echelon demons is quite a chore. It requires the cooperation of large groups of devils as opposed to the small groups required to send a lesser demon. Even when such a large group consists of a single faction of "allies," devils are too chaotic and hateful to work together for

any prolonged period. Before long, rivalries, arguments and treachery set in. "Allied" devils have to work fast to fulfill their mission.

Demons sent to earth cannot willingly return. The projection of a demon only works in one direction. Devils have yet to figure out a way to retrieve demons from earth, at least without the help of diabolists from that side. Sendings, then, essentially abandon the projected demon to earth. Given this loss, no powerful devil sends its own spirits to earth unless it wishes those demons to remain above for reasons of its own, or if it believes allies above will send the demons back down.

Certain subjects of a planned projection do not have a choice in the matter. One of the most common punishments for crimes against the hierarchy or incompetence is a planned projection — an excommunication of sorts. This is called the Ritual of Exile. The exile's injury does not end there, though. Excommunication rituals also strip the victim of as much Infernal Might and as many powers as the excommunicators can manage to peel away. A demon's exile usually lasts for a set number of years (usually measured in centuries). An early return can be secured, however, if the exile proves itself worthy. This proof commonly involves performing some duty or achieving some goal on earth, typically at the expense of the human race.

Finally, it should be noted that the Watchers have a special projection power which they can use to return spirits, even powerful ones, from earth to Hell. However, it only works on the Nephilim. In this way, the Watchers' enforcers act as proxies on earth, and can come and go between the two realms as their duties require, thus ensuring protocols are always enforced.



KNOW THINE ENEMY CHAPTER FOUR

Preamble

Many supernatural realms influence Mythic Europe, but the Infernal is both the most horrific and the most prevalent. Although the Dominion spreads, Hell's power still works within it, even by the smallest of means, as when a priest catches a cold. It is Satan, the Prince of the Earth, who puts the Darkness in the Dark Ages. His minions range in power from great slumbering entities whose mere thoughts can destroy the strongest of wizards, to a plethora of minute pseudo-spirits whose worst attacks produce only a shooting pain in the back at harvest time.

Each creature of the Infernal works to disrupt mankind's cosmic evolution, both at the Devil's behest and for its own pleasure. Such is the ultimate reason for devils' existence. On a more individual level, as all devils are wont to dwell, the one focal goal of a devil is the capture of human souls. That this action fulfills Satan's goal of theological evolutionary disruption is unimportant to all but the most sensitive devils. In the end, it doesn't even matter that this striving is all part of God's grand scheme; not even the Great Adversary recognizes this final truth.

Ultimately, Mythic Hell is one Sphere removed from the human world. Thus, devils can only plan specific sorties and conscious methods of attack when the elements allow. In the mundane world these attacks are usually made by evil spirits who reside among us, living in and contributing to the corrupt

natural world. These demons are the steady culprits of man's downfall. If mankind still lived within the gates of Paradise, the urge to sin would be a rare and obvious anomaly. Living in a world of toil and hunger, envy and oppression, it is much too easy to commit sin and thereby fall to Hell.

This chapter describes the taint of the Infernal realm upon the Earthly Sphere. Demons are often summoned up from Hell and left to wander the earth; furthermore, entire species of demons are native to the earth and revel in its corruption. Origin aside, all demons have characteristic powers, limitations and ways to affect the environment. Furthermore, some people of Mythic Europe are so deeply affected by corruption and the enticement of Hell that they don't merely succumb to Satan, they meet him halfway. These and other topics of Infernal infiltration are discussed here.

The Mundus Infernus

By formal definition, the *mundus infernus* is the corruption native to the world itself, the evil, non-spiritual environment in which humanity lives, the realm created by God but desecrated by Lucifer. The *mundus infernus* is the darkness surrounding the light, the darkness that encroaches upon all good impulses and shrouds everything in an aura of gloom. Yet, this mundane evil is so intimately connected to the creatures who promote it — the demons in humanity's midst — that by informal definition they are one and the same.

THE EARTH-SENT AND THE HELL-BENT

Within the *mundus infernus* reside the demons who deal directly with humanity in the material world. The fallen angels are imprisoned under the earth and their souls are not in close proximity to man. The demons of the *mundus infernus*, though, roam our world and observe our actions firsthand. There are two places of origin for these mundanely situated evil spirits: Hell and earth.

The depraved angels themselves, whose souls reside in Hell, can send their spirits up to earth when summoned, when they are forced up to endure a term of exile, or when they wish to claim territory on earth rather than fiefs in Hell. Such spirits are usually of the greater demonic class unless stripped of their might through exile (a condition common to spirits abandoned in the mundane world without a source of regeneration).

The Vulgate and certain Infernal beasts may also rise up to earth, but only when summoned by diabolists or sent up as diabolic agents. These spirits are typically minor in station. Whether of "souled" origin or not, Hellish spirits are in the same predicament, relative powers aside. Thus, even lesser agents and members of the Vulgate are referred to as *daemones depravati*, meaning demons from Hell.

The *daemones terreni*, by contrast, are the demons of the earth. These evil spirits call earth's *mundus infernus* their home, not simply a place to visit. Most of these demons are mere evil spirits, created by the Prince of the Earth at some undisclosed point in the world's very early history. These spirits are born of and tied to the earth. Having no souls in Hell, such evil spirits are often minor in nature.

However, the *terreni* also include certain demonic avatars who have decided they prefer domains on earth to fiefs Below. These once-foreign demons have "gone native," adopting the nature of the *terreni*. A foreign *terreni*, if slain, is forced from its body and its spirit regenerates on the earth, yet is still a factor in the measure of a devil's power in Hell. Such demons are obviously major spirits.

Finally, there is a family of demons and Infernal beasts on earth who are the product of the Watchers' lusts and were born before the Nephilim. These children of the angels, earth-bound demons, vary greatly in power.

The *daemones terreni* are truly multitudinous. They exist everywhere in the mundane environment, inflicting hardships upon mankind and populating regions with Infernal Auras and Hellish *regios*. All demons on earth, save the least rational, desire a return or first invitation into the Pit of Agony. They seek this "salvation" by fulfilling their mundane tasks with persistence and enthusiasm, hoping to be noticed and invited into Hell by the Watchers. *Terreni* who desire to enter Hell are sometimes known as the Hell-Bent, while *depravati* trapped on earth are called the Earth-Sent (reflecting their exile on earth).



Forms of Manifestation

Demons on earth are capable of taking different forms depending on their natures and powers. The range of those forms influences how demons can affect the world.

PHYSICAL FORM

Demons may manifest as solid bodies of matter, no different in weight, opacity or mutability than any other worldly forms of comparable size and shape. As physical beings, they are also subject to all laws of nature not bypassed by *malefic* means. Each demon has a single basic and familiar physical body known as its core form. This is the physical appearance and body with which the spirit has its closest connection (similar in nature to the Bjornaer Heart-Beast but with spiritual form replacing human form as the demon's other half).

Any form — human, animal, beast, or some monstrous combination of these — can be a demon's core form. This is the form in which the demon must appear to its summoners when first brought before the magic circle. This is also the form to which the demon's material body reverts upon death (assuming some physical change came about before death). The core form is the way that demons are classified in demonology tomes of human or Infernal design.

Each free echelon demon has a unique core form, one not possessed by any other demon. Minor demons of the *terreni* and Masked demons of Hell are exceptions to this rule of individuality; their core forms are identical to other demons or each other. Demons that have no physical forms to speak of, like eidolons and astasians, still tend to have duplicated identities.

Beyond their core form, demons of physical existence are able to change their current appearance at will, a number of times a day. These other forms are assumed forms, and each demon has a repertoire, or portfolio, of likely alternate forms to assume. This list of alternate appearances remains fixed throughout a demon's unnatural life, even for *depravati* who commute between earth and Hell (though echelon promotions can add to a demon's possible list of alternates). Some of the more powerful demons, or those of lesser power who specialize in form-changing, can assume any form desired at a moment's notice, with no finite list of possibilities.

Unless stated otherwise, a "standard" physical demon has a repertoire of two apparent forms for every five points in its Infernal Might score. The demon may take on these illusory guises only while in physical form. Each image may be worn once per day and the change costs one Might point. An image is only maintained as long as the demon concentrates on it.

On Corporeal Demons

At the root of their very being, demons sent to earth are spiritual creatures. Indeed, the phenomenon of the demon's heart is the only case in which something vaguely physical accompanies a demon from Hell to earth. However, many demons assume physical forms on earth, or are able to move back and forth between spirit and body (the exception being the eidolons, who have no physical forms at all).

If demons are essentially spiritual, where do their earthly bodies come from? Quite simply, they are forged out of the Shadow Empyrean. By conjuring physical bodies, demons do not have to worry about dragging true bodies from place to place. An unneeded body is intentionally returned to the Shadow Empyrean (assuming the demon is capable of shedding its body; some are not).

The corpse of a demon, as a construct of the Shadow Empyrean, is infused with magic. This explains why demonic corpses are often sources of raw vis. The Shadow Empyrean "body" was culled together for the demon's use, and when the spirit is forced from the body, as with destruction or banishment, that "concentration" of magic remains in place. The spirit, in the meantime, may return to Hell to regenerate and become active again at another time (*depravati*), or may dissipate to regenerate elsewhere on earth, forming a new body at that time (*terreni*).

SPIRITUAL FORM

Demons are evil spirits first and foremost (pure fiends notwithstanding); even their physical natures are borrowed from the magical environment. Spirit form is the very definition of what a spirit is; this form can be defined by a combination of three characteristic powers:

- **Invisibility** — Spirits cannot be seen save by those lucky (or unlucky) enough to possess the Virtue of Second Sight (see *Ars Magica*, p. 94), or those with magic capable of perceiving the unholy.

- **Incorporeality** — Spirits cannot be felt and cannot physically affect the environment. This means spiritual demons cannot attack physically, cannot touch or manipulate objects, nor even create a small breeze. Only their *malefic* powers allow spiritual demons to influence the physical world, but that influence comes about through magic, not physical exertion. Evil spirits are multitudinous, indeed ubiquitous, and yet remain undetected by mortals.

Though they cannot directly affect the physical world, incorporeal entities can wander through doors, walls, trees, earthworks and bodies of water as if these barriers do not exist (which, for the spirits, is effectively true). Furthermore, they cannot bump into people or things and cannot be trapped by physical structures. The only barriers faced by evil spirits are other incorporeal entities (which affect them as if they were solid), rare mystical ores such as lodestone, and magic (spells, Auras and certain enchanted weapons).

• Flight — Spirits are not bound by the plane of the earth, for the force which pulls bodies downward does not affect spirits. They may wander upward and downward at whim, and can journey through the sky as easily as the ground.

Speed Demons

Demons in spiritual form operate at about the same speeds; they all have a common power of flight, so their speed with it is fairly common. These speeds fall into three categories: fast, moderate, and slow. Fast is approximately 20 leagues per Round, a speed attainable only by astasians or other demons under the effects of special spells (say, *Rush of the Dark Wings* — ReVi 15). Moderate is the typical speed of all other evil spirits wandering individually from place to place. Moderate speed is about one mile per minute. Slow is seven leagues per hour. Spirits are generally reduced to this speed when under a magical assault or when encumbered (spirits may at times “swallow” or carry small objects, usually with magical prompting).

These speeds should help you determine the logistics of demons in play and determine how far or fast a demon travels. Remember, though, that drama is undermined if numbers take precedence. If your story is improved by the immediate, if improbable, arrival of a demon, allow that arrival and don't worry about traveling speed “rules.”

Senses and Spiritual Form

Demons in spiritual form may use their senses of sight and hearing, but no others. Touch, taste and smell are denied them. As spirits, the *maleficia* available to demons are usually those which affect non-physical things — appetites, emotions, senses and inspired thoughts. This is by no means the rule, though. Certain *maleficia* affect the physical world, much like a poltergeist can affect the physical world by magically manipulating objects.

VISUAL FORM

Though demons generally assume physical forms which please them or put humans at ease, demons are not at all like humans; indeed, the fallen angels are completely foreign to human nature. Any demon that is a projection of a diabolic soul located in Hell has a third form available to it: the warped or phantasmagoric form. Essentially, this is a materially visible representation of the devil's very soul, warped as it was by the Fall and the mutation to dense air. Needless to say, such a form is not very pleasant to look at. More to the point, it is so vile that it can harm the sanity of mortals.

Any human who sees a *depravati* phantasmagoric form must make some kind of resistance roll based upon the image's Might and the function the projecting devil fulfills in Hell. You are encouraged to determine the specifics and results of this roll based on each situation. For example, a character with a



Personality Trait of Brave +2 must make a stress roll involving that Trait if the Patron devil of Pride appears before the character. Confronted with the horrific image of humanity's sin, the character must make a Trait roll to resist fleeing from the vision. The Ease Factor of the roll depends on how high the Might score of the image is; the higher the score, the more difficult it is to resist the demon's attack. In this case, the image is quite powerful and the Ease Factor is 12.

A demon must expend Infernal Might to reveal its phantasmagoric form, provided the demon has the power to do so; most do not. Through their studies, some diabolists have even developed ways to coerce a demon to invoke its phantasmagoric form, forcing others to "face the devil" and survive the experience.

Phantasmagoric form is purely visual and lasts for only brief moments. This form may only be invoked by demons with souls located elsewhere (i.e. Hell). The exception to this rule applies to eidolons, which are spirit demons that can also show their horrific sides through visual images.

Fundamental Powers and Strengths

Certain powers and defenses are inherent to all demonkind. Demons never become Fatigued, never need to sleep or breathe, can never be ensorcelled into telling the truth when they wish to tell a lie, and can comprehend any human language. Furthermore, most are immune to damage from fire, and none are affected by spells which cause decrepitude, aging, disease, virtuous behavior or compassionate emotions. *Intéllego Mentem* spells do not affect demons at all, and other *Mentem* spells meant to work on spirits (such as ghosts) work only when the demon is in spirit form (and only if the spell Penetrates the demon's Magic Resistance).

Finally, spells of the Order of Hermes cannot detect demons if they wish to hide their identities, maybe by assuming the forms of mundane people or animals. Indeed, demons cannot be tracked by magic when in spiritual form. A Magus who wishes to seek out a demon in physical form must have an Arcane Connection to the demon.

Demons may (and often do) choose to let themselves be affected by *Intéllego* magicks if they are trying to pass as mundanes. After all, if an apparently mundane person proves immune to *Intéllego* magic, Hermetic characters may be alerted to trouble. The clever demon provides a false answer to the *Intéllego* spell, making itself seem genuinely human.

This rather straightforward enumeration of strengths aside, demons have a wide range of possible powers — indeed, a veritable arsenal of supernatural abilities. Some are subtle, some are displays of unsurpassed destruction, but all effects fall into one of four general categories: temptation/oppression, obsession, possession and *maleficia*. *Maleficia* is the catch-all category and includes any magic effect or Infernal enchantment that does not fit in the other three groups.

TEMPTATION/ OPPRESSION

Moral oppression is a fairly accurate synonym for moral temptation, but the semantics can be misleading from humanity's perspective. Temptation/oppression applies to all nuances of a human's earthly existence. A demonically-induced event that presents a moral dilemma is a form of soul oppression. However, soul oppression can also stem from physical phenomena that inspire negative emotions or morality. For instance, damp weather, overcast or cold days, and dying cattle are all brought about by the subtle work of demons. These unfortunate conditions of life are part of the *mundus infernus*, and tempt humanity into dark thoughts and curses. If people succumb to this oppression on a regular basis and are tempted toward dark ways, such as anger, their souls may go to Hell.

Of course, humans are free to resist the depression and despair brought about by the *mundus infernus*. In fact, the most pious persevere and strive to "keep a stiff upper lip." These folk particularly frustrate demons, and demons may mark them for further attempts at corruption.

To determine how a character responds to the *mundus infernus*, Personality Trait rolls can be made in response to hardships. A character with an Angry Trait is more likely to have dark thoughts than a character with a Stoic Trait. Oftentimes pure roleplaying, without rules or rolls, is the best means of determining a character's response to suffering.

Note, though, that there is a Law of Temptation, courtesy of the Watchers, which states the following: *If a mortal avoids an assault of moral temptation, the tempting demon loses the right to physically or magically attack that mortal until the following sunset.* Maybe some Divine sliver remaining in the Watchers engenders pity for humanity's pious.

POSSESSION

Demons are evil spirits and as such have a special means of interacting with the bodied-souls they encounter. Demons, like ghosts, have the ability to enter the body and take it over, commandeering its motor skills, its surface thoughts, and its five senses. There are two aspects of demonic possession which differ from ghostly possession, aside from the typical goals and personalities of such possessors. First, the period of Infernal possession is generally of much longer duration. Second, the Infernally possessed person (termed a demoniac or *energumen*) is almost never aware of actions taken during possession. The victim of possession simply wakes, as if from an unsettling dream, when the demon is gone.

A person whose spirit is "crowded" by possession can fight the invading spirit, both at the onset of possession and at oddly spaced intervals throughout the possession's course. These later attempts to resume control usually arise when some

trigger empowers the crowded human spirit. For example, if a loved one tries to reach the buried human spirit, that spirit is allowed a chance to exile the demon.

Sometimes demons allow their victims to regain control of their actions and words for short periods. This release of control usually occurs when the demon believes the human spirit can be tempted toward evil.

(Because the mechanics of possession are somewhat involved, they are described separately in an upcoming section rather than within this entry. Note that even the lowliest of Vulgate demons may possess people, but only for short periods of time. The result is something minor, like a sneeze, wherein the possessed casts the demon out through the nose.)

OBSESSION

Obsession is the manipulation of the victim's behavior from without (in contrast to possession, which is the manipulation of actions from within). The easiest form of obsession is the *phantastikos*, or the injection of brief mental pictures into the victim's mind. The victim usually assumes these are his or her own thoughts, and does not suspect demonic influence. As with temptation/oppression, the victim may be seduced by these images or may resist them; this is determined by Personality Trait rolls or roleplaying.

A more powerful class of obsession is *Psychomachia*, or war of virtue. *Psychomachia* involves altering the victim's personality and emotions, forcing sinful traits to manifest while retarding virtuous ones. Each demon capable of initiating the *Psychomachia* is aligned with a certain emotion or Personality Trait that it inflicts upon its victim.

Modifying Personality

In game terms, when a character makes a Personality Trait roll or any roll that is modified by a Passion, that roll is adjusted by the demon imposing the *Psychomachia*. The Trait or Passion roll can be increased or decreased depending on the emotion involved and the demon's nature. However, the demon always strives to make the character behave in a manner that is "least good." For example, if a character makes an Honest Personality Trait roll, that roll is reduced by the score of the demon's Devious *Psychomachia* Trait. Conversely, if the character makes a Devious Personality Trait roll, the roll is increased by the demon's Devious score. In the case of Passion-modified rolls, the demon's imposed Trait further modifies the roll in a manner appropriate to the Passion and imposed Trait. Thus, if a character applying a Love Passion to rolls in a scene is being influenced by a Hatred *Psychomachia* attack, all rolls modified by Love suffer a penalty equal to the demon's Hate score. If a Hate Passion is modifying a character's rolls, the demon's Hate score acts as a bonus to the character's rolls. The final score of a modified Personality Trait or Passion roll determines how the character behaves — the Honest roll, for example, might still be successful, or might fail — and that behavior should be roleplayed.

A demon's influence over a character's personality increases if the character is in an Infernal Aura. If the victim is in such an Aura during a *Psychomachia* attack, the rating of the Aura is added to the demon's *Psychomachia* score. The Aura tends to warp the character's behavior even more toward evil.

Inflicting Personality

Demons can also use their *Psychomachia* power to force a personality change in a victim. In this case the victim may not normally have even made a Personality Trait roll. How a victim responds to this attack depends on the identity of the character and the Personality Trait being forced on the character. A character's significant Traits in this situation are those that either oppose or align with the Trait being imposed by the demon. The character's significant Personality Trait with the highest score is the one that applies.

Opposing the Demon's Will

The victim of the emotional attack makes a stress roll for the Personality Trait that is most opposed to the Trait being inflicted by the demon. A stress roll is also made on behalf of the demon and the Trait imposed. For instance, if a demon is attempting to instill a desire for vengeance in a character, and the character has a Peaceful Personality Trait, a stress roll is made for the Peaceful Trait. The roll is compared to a stress roll made for the demon (modified by the demon's score in Vengeful). The higher roll wins over the lower. If the demon wins, its Trait and score is imposed on the character. If the character wins, the imposed Trait is resisted. Thus, if the demon wins, the character becomes obsessed with revenge and gains a Vengeful Personality Trait score equal to that of the demon's. If the character wins the contest, the demon's Trait is resisted and the character may behave normally.

Aligning with the Demon's Will

If the character's significant Personality Trait aligns with that being imposed by the demon (i.e., all opposing Personality Traits have lower scores than the Trait similar to the demon's), the score of the character's Trait is subtracted from his stress roll. For example, if a demon forces a Vengeful Trait on a character, and the character has a Peaceful score of +2 and an Angry score of +3, the Angry score takes precedence (it's aligned to the demon's Trait and is of higher value than the opposing Peaceful score). The character therefore makes a stress roll with a -3 modifier and the result is compared to the demon's stress roll. The side with the highest roll is the winner, either imposing a behavior or resisting one.

If a demon has a score of +0 in a *Psychomachia* Trait, the demon is still allowed to force a Personality Trait on the victim. However, the demon's own roll is unmodified since the demon lacks a *Psychomachia* score. If the demon's Trait is successfully imposed on the character, the character behaves with that Trait at +1 or -1, whichever suits the nature of the Trait and the demon imposing it. (The Trait does not simply apply to the character at +0.)

If the demon's imposed Personality Trait is successfully forced on the character, the character behaves in a manner appropriate to that Trait for the remainder of the current scene. The scene is considered to last as long as the current time frame and setting of the story are preserved. As soon as the time frame and/or setting change, the imposed Personality Trait is lost, but the dark side of the character has still been exposed.

As forced Personality Trait rolls in *Psychomachia* involve stress rolls, participants may Botch. If the character Botches, the Trait being forced on the character is immediately embraced at twice the Trait score possessed by the demon. The victim reaches heights of foulness that even the demon does not attain. If the demon Botches its roll, it is overwhelmed by the character's resilience and cannot make another *Psychomachia* attempt of any kind against the character until after the next sunset.

In an ordinary situation, *Psychomachia* can be used several times a day to force an emotion upon a character. Repeated attempts lack subtlety, though, and warn a potential victim of conspiracy. Patient demons attempt to draw emotions from characters during stressful times, when the victim might not notice his personality being manipulated. By imposing a Personality Trait upon a victim, a demon hopes to acclimatize the victim to corrupt acts. Although it can be argued that initial acts are forced upon the victim, with time the victim might willingly adopt those acts, choosing corruption by free will.



Psychomachia and Passions

If *Psychomachia* is used to force a Personality Trait upon a character with a Passion Virtue, that Passion may oppose or invite the demon's Trait.

If a demon forces an Angry Trait upon a character with the Love Passion, the Love Passion may oppose the Personality Trait. On the other hand, if the character has the Hatred Passion and a demon imposes an Angry Trait, the Passion facilitates imposition of the Trait because the two are so similar. If several of a character's Passions are similar or opposed to the demon's imposed Trait, that Passion with the highest score is used.

If a Passion opposes the demon's Trait, the score of the Passion modifies a single stress roll from the character to resist the demon's Trait. In fact, as Passions are all-consuming, the Passion score is doubled to resist the demon. If the demon's Trait roll is still higher than the character's roll, the character gains the imposed Trait. The character's opposed Passion (and any other Passion if several are possessed) cannot be pursued for the remainder of the current scene; thus, the character's other Personality Traits, and the newly imposed one, determine behavior.

If a character's Passion aligns with the demon's imposed Personality Trait, twice the score of the Passion is subtracted from a single stress roll from the character. As the character is so intense in his Passion, and the demon's trait embellishes upon that Passion, the character is more willing to accept the Trait. If the character's final roll is lower than the demon's, the demon's Trait is imposed on the character and the character's foul ways are intensified. In this case, the score of the demon's Trait is added to the normal (not doubled) score of the character's Passion. The character therefore more vigorously pursues such predilections as Hatred.

If a character's Passion roll Botches, the character behaves as discussed elsewhere, doubling the score of the Personality Trait imposed by the demon. In the case of an opposed Passion roll, the effect of the Passion is negated for the scene and the new, intense Personality Trait is likely to assume control. In the case of an aligned Passion roll, the demon's doubled Trait score is added to the character's despicable Passion score.

Note: The above use of Passions against demonic will is not true to conventional *Ars Magica* rules. Passions are usually modifiers to all rolls in a scene, not just a single roll. However, Passions cannot be ignored in *Psychomachia*'s battle of wills, and thus must be altered slightly to fit into the *Psychomachia* rule system. Although Passions are only used with one roll in this situation, the doubling of their value at least reflects their high intensity.

Of course, when *Psychomachia* is not deftly handled, victims can be alerted to danger. Characters so alerted can protect themselves from *Psychomachia*. *Parma Magica* has no effect on the attack, but a spell explicitly designed to prevent anger, for example, could protect its user for the duration of the spell.

Note: Personality Traits can have negative values assigned to them, like Peaceful -2. Depending on the situation, the value of such a Trait may have to be reversed — made positive (to



reflect the possessor's intent) — to resist, accept or impose the Trait. Sometimes the wording of the Trait also has to be reversed, say from Peaceful to Warlike.

(As a final note about obsessions in general, when combined with the *phantasmata*, obsessions can involve "waking dreams" and other ill phenomena — see *Congression* in Chapter Five.)

MALEFICIA

Maleficia are Infernal powers, the "spells" which demons use in their spiritual and physical forms by expending Infernal Might Points. These powers have a variety of effects and, depending on their natures, can be simple combat powers or subtle manipulations of the environment. The most common *maleficia* are illusions (preferred by sophisticated demons) and fire spells (used by belligerent ones). Devils also transfer *maleficia* to diabolists, predominantly destructive powers to spread torment, havoc and hatred. With these gifts, diabolists become devils' proxies on earth, doing to bodies what devils do to souls.

The entirety of the False Empyrean, every supernatural effect God allows Hell to possess, is at the disposal of devilkind. Satan is the source behind access to the False Empyrean and thus has ultimate control over just what *maleficia* are permissible. *Maleficia* in Hell often require souls and spirits to act as catalysts, whereas *maleficia* used on the earth sometimes require blood sacrifice or physical death.

For the sake of game convention, Infernal powers described in this book are generally given titles similar to those of Hermetic spells. This title is accompanied by a Hermetic Form, Technique and equivalent Level. Note that some effects, though routine or easily accomplished by Infernal magic, are quite difficult for Hermetic theorists to duplicate; Level equivalents reflect this. Thus, there can be minor spirits with minimal Might scores capable of *maleficia* with very high-magnitude effects.

As a corollary to this, the expenditure of Might Points to bring about certain effects need not reflect the Hermetic Level of a similar spell. As a general guideline, though, demons tend to use one Point of Might per 10 Levels of spell effect. As a final note on compatibility between spells and *maleficia*, if an effect has the term "unHermetic" in place of Form/Technique/Level, the effect is considered beyond the bounds of accepted Hermetic theory.

Fundamental Limits and Weaknesses

As descendants of the same realm, created from the same stained souls, spirits or bodies, and possessed by an insane desire to tarnish others, demons all have the same inherent weaknesses.

FORMS

No demon may have a core form or an assumed form resembling any of the following creatures: lions, panthers, oxen, doves or lambs. These forms have Divine significance and symbolic value, and while ancient demons whose core forms were in the world since before the birth of Christ may retain these special forms, newly arrived demons may never take these shapes. It is popularly believed that demons may not assume the form of any canonized saint, but the Church fathers have never given this belief official sanction (and St. Paul himself once stated that Satan could appear as an angel of light, so the sanctity of mere sainthood is doubtful).

Specific forms aside, there is also a Rule of Size which states that no demon may appear in a physical form smaller than a barley corn. This is due to the "dense air" of which demons are composed. This "rule" is prominently the case with fallen angels but applies to all beings whose essential natures are distanced from God. While the *caligo* heart (see below) is a concentrated body of dense air, the entire spiritual form is made of *caligo* and no spirit may be compressed into a physical body smaller than a barley corn (except for submundanes, the only exception to the Rule of Size).

Demons have their *maleficia* divided into spiritual and physical powers, and cannot use powers exclusive to one form while in the other (visual form is incidental only, so it does not affect powers). The proximity of a Shadow Empyrean form inhibits spiritual powers, while physical powers are fueled by the raw vis inherent in the physical form.

Each demon also has a form tendency, an affinity for one of the three forms — physical, spiritual or visual. The form to which the demon tends is the form in which it spends the majority of its time on earth when not expending energy to assume a different form. Spiritual form is easily the most prevalent, while visual form is very rare, reserved for apocalyptic and often-dormant entities. Astasians always tend toward spirit, while Masks almost always tend toward physical. Eidolons are evil spirits who have no physical form. Demons that normally reside in physical form (even if they do have spiritual forms) are termed fiends, while those animated bodies without spirits are called pure fiends.

For game purposes, physical and spiritual forms are said to be opposed to one another; thus, a demon with a tendency for one form has the other as its "opposed" form. Switching from spirit to physical form requires one combat Round. Switching from physical to spiritual form requires two Rounds. This time requirement stands regardless of form tendency. If visual form is available to a demon, that form may be assumed as an action in any Round.

A demon may assume its opposed form a number of times per day equal to its Might score. For major demons, each opposed manifestation usually lasts no longer than the demon's Might score expressed in minutes. For minor demons, the Might score equals the number of combat Rounds during which the opposed form may be maintained. Astasians may

Extremes of Form

While demons are evil spirits at heart, most are capable of assuming physical bodies in order to effect changes in the world, either subtle or brutal. Greater demons tend to have the ability to assume multiple forms at will, while lesser ones might have few or even one. Certain members of the demonic race exist exclusively in the spiritual form, though; such demons are known as eidolons.

Eidolons are incapable of assuming physical form. As with all "souled" demonic spirits, they may have a visual form, and this form can be forced into the physical world by those wizards versed in the appropriate magics. Otherwise, eidolons are active as spirits only. Even when summoned into the presence of a goetist, they show only the visual form (as their substitute for a core form) and only for a short moment as a token acknowledgment of the summoner's skills (and in an attempt to frighten her).

A demon who exists through Infernal magics alone, without a spirit, is called a pure fiend, and is always in physical form. Such lowly beings never have souls, so they have no phantasmagoric (visual) forms.

only undergo changes via external aid (so time limits are given in specific spell/ritual descriptions), and submundanes (demons of pathetically low standing) are pretty much irrelevant (make it up). Visual form is always treated as another opposed form unless a demon's description states otherwise, and may be achieved only briefly in all cases.

MALEFIC LIMITS

Demons may only grant powers and cause events which they understand, and demons do not understand virtue. Granted, they are intelligent enough to recognize the external manifestations and results of virtue, and may dampen such feelings with *Psychomachia*. However, *Psychomachia* is an inherent side effect of demonic nature, and the former knowledge resembles the act of memorizing a very difficult mathematical procedure; it is not the product of any intuitive understanding. While a demon may know that an honest person will not steal something she needs, even if she knows she won't get caught, the demon will have no idea why this is. Thus, demons may only offer non-virtuous powers. A person can ask to be feared by her vassals, or to have them follow her commands without question, but she cannot ask to be respected by those vassals; the demon is incapable of creating such an effect.

Demons may not read the human mind unless they enter it via possession, and even then they may only access facts, not genuine emotions concerning those facts. For the rest of their manipulation of human appetites and weaknesses, demons have only external cues from which to develop assumptions about what lies in the human's heart. However, demons are preternaturally perceptive in this regard, and their visual psychoanalysis is often as accurate as true mind-reading.



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(When someone is feeling joy, depression or any other strong emotion, people can see those emotions expressed externally — in the person's eyes, face, mannerisms and tone of voice. Demons are capable of evaluating even subtle emotions and thoughts which have no clear outward signs. When this perception is combined with the constant spying of astasians and lesser demons, so that every waking moment and every sound mumbled in sleep becomes a piece of data to be analyzed, it's no wonder that demons often know their victims better than the victims know themselves.)

Another limit on demonkind's *malefic* powers relates directly to the Divine. The birth of Christ prompted an event which the dark camp calls the Muting (and Christians call the Cleansing). All supernatural powers were disrupted for a time, and Infernal works in particular were devastated. More importantly, demons found they had lost previous powers, among them the ability to bestow the False Gift upon mundane man. After Christ's birth, only goetists and others who already possess the earthly Gift of magic may learn Infernal magics.

Those without the Gift may only request magic from demons or from Infernal magic devices. Where they can, demons permit charges to think they have magical powers, but these powers are illusory and fleeting. The black witches are a special case wherein demonic Familiars provide a link to the Infernal, allowing witches access to more concrete illusions of the *Phantasmata*.

Finally, patience, a quality invaluable to the use of *malefic* powers, is beyond demonkind. Patience is a virtue, so all demons lack it. Without this tool, they must use the nearest non-Good substitute, subtlety. Subtlety is a game of intellect and pride which at its best can duplicate patience as humans know it, but ultimately cannot subvert humanity's free will. Most lesser demons do not even possess subtlety. Their schemes are transparent. Only their spiritual natures offer a source of misdirection, for humanity lives in its world of matter, unaware of the constant and brutal play in the spirit world which surrounds it.

DESTRUCTION AND BANISHMENT

Though demonic spirits regenerate Might each day and do not suffer the effects of aging, they are not immune to death. While the material world still exists, death is only temporary for a demon (only on Judgment Day is death permanent). However, even now the mightiest of the demons, those most in touch with their stations in the cosmos, feel the pull of death more strongly than their weaker cousins. These most powerful demons therefore remain in the state of death longer when that state is forced upon them.

Any demon losing all its Body Levels when in physical form, or all its Might Points when in physical or spiritual form, is destroyed. A demon banished by the use of spells is likewise

destroyed. A demon without a soul in Hell remains on the earth when destroyed; the demon's spirit retreats into the *mundus infernus* and there regenerates. If a demon is in physical form when destroyed or banished, the material body is left behind as a corpse. A devil's avatar spirit returns to its soul in Hell and falls into a death-like stasis. This period of "false death" lasts a number of years equal to twice the demon's full Might score at the time of banishment or destruction. An earth-bound spirit spends an equivalent amount of time regenerating.

THE DOMINION

Demons may live within the Dominion. Indeed, they may flourish there, amid the maddening mortal coil, looking for weak members of the faith. When the Divine Aura in a particular region grows too strong, however, spirits of weak constitution find themselves under assault by the Divine presence as it attempts to realign their natures. Since demons may not change, this influence works to destroy them. Submundanes are immune to such passive supernatural forces, and astasians are sometimes able to slip past them (see Chapter Six).

If a demon is in an area where the square of the Divine Aura rating is greater than the demon's current Might Points (not its full score), the demon loses a simple die worth of Might Points. This die is rolled each Round the demon is in the Aura. If brought to zero Might by the workings of the Divine, the demon is destroyed/banished for the standard amount of time.

Temporal and Spatial Vagaries

Demons have forsaken the timeless spirituality of Heaven and are thus under the sway of Time, Space and Matter. Though more inherently spiritual than humans, demons nevertheless feel the tug of many worldly elements. Just as devils in Hell may treat incorporeal human souls like so much solid kindling, it is often possible for humans on earth to affect demons with rude tools of their own. (However, the biggest temporal influence on earthly demons are the stars above, which also affect the appetites of the human race. These celestial bodies are beyond man's control, though.)

Some examples of humanity's weapons against devilkind follow, but these represent only a rough starting place, not a comprehensive catalog of demonifuges. Add to this list as creative whim, historical lore, and fictional examples dictate.

Church Bells

Whenever church bells can be heard, no matter how distantly, demons lose their concentration. Multi-Round *malefic* spells fail (excluding in-place rituals), new *maleficia* may not be invoked, *Psychomachia* may not be used without first making an Intelligence stress roll of 9+, communication with astasian spirits is impossible, contests of will against summoners suffer a -10 penalty to each roll, and combat suffers a penalty of -5 to First Strike and Attack rolls. Furthermore, all areas of the Dominion within range of the bell's tone are treated as having

double their true Divine Aura ratings (even if that puts an Aura above 10). These new Aura values determine the destructive effect of the Dominion on demons.

Note, however, that this last effect is only true when a bell rings for a planned event of Divine significance, such as the many daily masses, special holidays, weddings or funerals. The simple ringing of a church bell without ceremonial significance by a character does not affect a demon. However, the sanctus bell is especially feared by demons and can kill some outright if they are inside a church when it rings. Any ringing of a sanctus bell affects demons.

LODESTONE

Holding aloft a lodestone in plain sight causes panic among all demons in spiritual and visual form; they flee until the lodestone is no longer in sight. To resist flight, a demon must make a stress roll against its own full Might score (yes, demons of greater power are more vulnerable to lodestones!). The roll is modified by +2 for every magnitude of the demon's Might score. If the roll is higher than Might, the demon may stand its ground. According to old wives' tales, each lodestone may only be used a certain number of times, or against a certain number of demons, before losing power.

Demons in physical form are unaffected by a lodestone. A demon in spiritual form can negate the effects of a lodestone by assuming physical form, if possible for the demon.

SALT

Tossing salt over one's left shoulder causes any invisible astasian spirit struck by the salt to forget what it just saw or overheard; the demon departs as well. If the astasian is under a specific demon's command, the astasian can be told to return. No other spies are affected by the salt unless they are hit themselves. A weapon that is wetted and dipped in salt causes an additional +5 Damage to demons in physical form, and spiritual demons will move out of the weapon's path (out of discomfort more than true danger).

FUMIGATIONS

Incense and other aromatic fragrances, particularly those of sulphur and roses, irritate demons. Forcing a demoniac (possessed person) to chew on a rose or breathe in sulphur adds a bonus to an immediate attempt to expel the possessing demon. A bonus of +5 to the rolls described in the *Possession* in *Play* section is recommended.

HOLY ARTILLERY

True Faith, miracles, exorcism, prayers and holy relics are a few of the religious elements which affect demonkind. These and other items in God's armament, such as holy symbols and holy water, are left to the Divinity supplement, *Pax Dei*. Suffice it to say that the Divine realm is ultimately stronger than the

Infernal realm, and not even Satan may pretend otherwise. Holy miracles always overcome Infernal marvels. Holy relics and men of True Faith have power of fortified quality, provided they do not succumb to temptation.

MISCELLANY

Other assorted tools and factors weaken a demon. These factors include: gems, crossroads, the cardinal compass points, summoning paraphernalia made by the summoner's own hand, air blown on an evil spirit and verbal mockery of the spirit or pointedly ignoring its words. Two special vulnerabilities, True Names and *caligo* hearts, are described in detail below.

True Names

All demons have common names by which they are known; these names serve the same mundane functions as those belonging to mortals. In addition to common names, all unique demons have True Names. These are not mere appellations used for convenient reference. True Names are syllables that evoke the deepest nature of the Infernal entity, names replete with arcane significance and able to form a mystic connection between a demon and the one who speaks its Name. (Knowing a True Name is like having an Arcane Connection to a demon.)

A True Name is a demon's greatest secret, etched in runes of the Black Tongue on its heart-stone, concealed from mortals and dark angels alike. The power of the Name is more encompassing than a mere magic phrase used to cast a spell; it is woven in strands of the False Empyrean and imbedded in the demon's core. Knowledge of the Name makes even the most powerful devils vulnerable to those who know it. Many diabolists theorize that this goes beyond any directives issued by the Watchers, and is in fact the angelic name possessed by a devil before its Fall. According to such a theory, uttering the Name causes a demon great pain because it reminds the demon of God's grace and what it lost by leaving Heaven.

A few diabolists believe True Names are really just an element of the Secret Names, an ancient system of magical power practiced to a limited degree by Kabbalists. These Secret Names are said to be God's very own tools. Since Secret Names were created for God's use, True Names of demons are perceived as minor magics at best.

Whatever the nature and origin of True Names, they hold genuine power over the *depravati* (excluding the Masks) and major *terreni* demons (i.e., all unique evil spirits). There are only a few known ways to learn a demon's True Name: to ravage its mind for the information (remember, however, that demons are immune to *Intéllego* Mentem spells), to discover the demon's well-hidden and protected heart and spend a Season studying its runes, or to find a Hell tome or other text of the Black Tongue in which the subject's Name is impressed (note that game mechanic profiles do not usually include a demon's True Name).

True Names have such great power that even when one is used against its bearer, there is an additional torrent of energy which affects everyone in close proximity to the speaker, human and demon alike. When a True Name is uttered, the effect upon listeners could be very similar to that experienced by viewers of a demon's visual form (above). Some names even affect the environment, causing darkening of the sky, claps of thunder or horrific floods (for demons of very deep echelons). When a True Name is uttered, it is experienced rather than heard. Note that it is impossible to glean a demon's Name simply by hearing another Magus speak it aloud. The name must be taught or learned in slow stages.

True Names may only be written in the Black Tongue, the script of the Infernal realm. Such a name is inscrutable when merely seen on paper for a short time. To truly understand the name it is necessary to first know the Black Tongue and then, over many months of study, work out the layers of meaning behind the word. Hermetic practitioners may effectively approach the problem "from the side," working their way toward understanding the significance of a Name through more conventional research. This effort requires high *Intéllego*, *Vim*, *Occult Lore* or *Magic Theory* scores, as well as a Season's work.

In any case, the Name may not simply be written down or copied. Such a translation turns the true meaning of the word into gibberish. Rather, a True Name must be "impressed" upon the page, made a part of the page itself through an extension of the impressor's own true self. Such impression may be accomplished using the *Translating Spells* rules (*Ars Magica*, p. 240). The "code" of the heart need not be broken, but a roll to determine the name is needed, just as a roll to determine spell effect is needed for *Translating*. *Intéllego* and *Vim* are used for the Lab roll. The "Level" used equals the demon's full *Might* score. Failed attempts to read and impress a name are also dealt with using the *Translating Spells* rules.

For details on utilizing True Names when summoning demons, see Chapter Five.

Caligo Hearts

Each evil spirit, unless of astasian or submundane class, possesses a special "organ" referred to as its heart. This heart (sometimes called a demon-stone) is made of a nodule of very concentrated *caligo*, the dense air into which each demon's spirit has mutated. This organ is the greatest vulnerability of demonkind, for it is the source of an evil spirit's Infernal *Might* and its ability to regenerate *Might Points* daily. A demon's heart also contains the beast's True Name, and may be used to threaten or control.

Concealing its heart is a demon's highest priority (even surpassing the collection of souls). A demon will even give up its right to Accuse a soul in return for its heart's safety. A demon-stone is therefore a major bargaining chip. The ability to keep a *caligo* organ in a separate location while still retaining

access to its powers is of crucial benefit to a demon, as this permits a heart to be hidden far from human influence and Hellish inhabitant alike.

A minor demon does not have the option of hiding its heart. It must keep its heart within its main substance, whether in physical or spiritual form. A major demon may exist apart from its heart, and may conceal the organ as it pleases. Upon crossing over to the Earthly Sphere, a *daemon depravati* of major class may place its heart-stone in a spot its agents have picked for it; indeed, it may choose any spot on earth at any distance. A demon that can hide its heart must explicitly transport its heart in person to some site, and may wander no more than 10 miles per point of its Might score from the heart's location if it intends to draw upon the heart's powers (i.e., to perform Might regeneration and any *maleficia* the demon knows). Major demons of the nine echelon ranks (demons projected from Hell-based devils, excluding the Vulgate) may even possess several hearts, forging and placing a new one on the earth each time they journey there.

A heart which is separate from its owner always hardens into physical form. If the demon is destroyed or banished, its isolated heart turns ethereal and dissolves, just as the demon's spirit dissipates. If a heart is found in solid form, spells can be used to keep it in that form after a demon's death. Thus, even demons able to keep their hearts far from their areas of activity are not invulnerable; they face the danger of theft. A heart within a demon remains ethereal even when the demon is in physical form. If the physical demon's body is destroyed and its corpse remains behind, there is no heart inside to be found, for the heart leaves the body with the spirit. However, a corpse is left behind which may contain either regular *vis* or a special Infernal *vis* called *aesfotedia* (see below).

A demon whose heart is presented before it may be made *sub stragulum* in a contest of wills (see *The Contest of Wills*, in Chapter Five). That is, the bearer of the heart receives a considerable bonus in the contest of wills. If defeated in the contest, the demon is unable to betray its new master, but only if the contest is won by a great enough advantage. If the heart is not present, such an advantage instead forces the demon to reveal the location of its heart to the lucky summoner.

A diabolist who keeps a demon's heart safe may use its Might Points to work the demon's *maleficia*, as if casting the demon's spells in his or her own right. The demon and the demon's "stone bearer" may use powers simultaneously no matter how far apart they may be (within the demon's accepted range, if any). However, the demon may cut off the bearer's access to powers if the demon is in magical combat and needs to expend all of its Might Points in its own preservation. Otherwise, the diabolist's use of the demon's powers is automatic with a successful Intelligence + Hierarchy stress roll of 6 or greater. This Intelligence roll is made every time the diabolist uses one of the demon's powers. Use of a power deducts points from the common pool of Might. If the roll is ever Botched, twice the normal number of Might Points are expended and the

power fails to function. At that juncture a demon probably denies further shared use of its powers, if the demon doesn't try to destroy the diabolist outright.

A Dark Magus who examines a demon's heart in the lab for a Season, and reads the secret runes of the Black Tongue etched thereon, may learn the demon's True Name (assuming a successful study roll is made, as discussed under *True Names*, above).

A heart may be processed in the lab to extract a number of pawns of Infernal *aesfotedia* (see below) equal to one-fifth the demon's Might score (fractions rounded down). Such an operation destroys the heart and causes anyone who learned a True Name from that heart to forget the Name, unless it was already impressed to paper. The loss of a heart by this means strands a demon on earth and prevents it from renewing its Might Points until it is finally destroyed or banished. Such an event sends a *depravati* demon back to Hell to regenerate a new heart over time, but it demotes a *terreni* demon to *astasian* status unless it receives outside aid.

A Magus who possesses a demon's heart has an Arcane Connection to the demon, and receives a bonus of +5 to all spell casting rolls made in relation to the demon (including spell Penetration). Furthermore, if a Magus has a demon's heart, *Intéllego* spells can be cast on the heart to glean information about the demon itself. Ordinarily this information is impossible to attain as part of demons' natural defenses. However, *Intéllego Mentem* spells are still useless. Furthermore, to cast any spell on a demon through its heart, a Penetration roll must still exceed the heart's Magic Resistance (which is the same as that of the demon in question — its Might score).

A demon must have its heart with it in order to possess a victim. Possession is usually reserved for minor demons, who often have to carry their hearts with them anyway. Major demons may stage a possession if they've planned ahead of time (i.e., retrieved their hearts before the encounter).

A heart in the possession of a Magus may also be used as a spell Focus. Certain Hermetic spells even call for a demon's heart as a Focus.

Of course, enterprising Magi will undoubtedly find other uses for demon-stones. You are encouraged to create other uses for the Infernal heart. See *The Dark Hearts*, below, for ideas on Infernal Auras arising from sedentary demon hearts.

Possession in Play

In order to attempt a possession, the demon in question must be in spiritual rather than physical form, its heart must be in its form, and it must be free to move about and come in contact with the physical body of the target. Additionally, demons bound to goetic sorcerers or working as agents of superior demons must receive permission from the entity to whom they are enthralled. Demons need expend no Might Points to maintain possession of a victim, but the initial invasion does require Might Points equal to the sum of the chosen target's Confidence + Stamina (+3 for the Strong-Willed



Virtue, and plus twice the victim's True Faith score if the target has that Virtue. True Faith must also be overcome to accomplish a possession; see below. If the target has the Piety trait discussed in *Pax Dei*, the value of that trait is added to the sum).

Expending Might to possess a victim functions as a spiritual assault; the demon's (Might + Possession skill + stress die) must exceed the target's Magic Resistance stress roll (using the highest of *Córpore* or *Mentem* for the defender). If the demon's roll is lower, the demon is denied entry. A Natural Resistance roll of (Stamina + stress die) which equals twice the demon's magnitude + Possession skill also denies the demon entry. A demon who fails its possession attempt may not make another attempt that day. If it Botches, the demon may never possess that particular target. However, if the defending target Botches her roll, she is automatically possessed and the demon latches on very tightly; all further attempts to exorcise the demon, whether by internal or external means, are at -3 to the roll. Unless evicted sooner, a demon may retain possession of a victim for a maximum duration equal to its Might score expressed in days.

A demon may even attempt to possess a person with the True Faith Virtue. This is extremely difficult, however. That person may automatically roll a stress die (results of 0 are counted as zero, but no Botch checks are made). If the result is lower than *three times* the character's Faith Point total, the demon is immediately repelled. Even if this protection roll fails, the target is still allowed Magic Resistance and Natural Resistance rolls against possession.

Once possessed, a demoniac with no recourse to magic may attempt to escape the demon's control each time he or she is forced to perform an especially vile action. An example would be an order to kill friends. If the action contradicts the victim's inherent nature, Personality Traits which oppose the demonic command may be added to the roll. For example, if a character has a Trait of Loyal and the demon orders the possessed host to betray friends, the Loyalty score is added to the character's roll to break the demon's hold. If the character has a Passion Virtue that opposes ordered actions, like a character with the Love Passion who is ordered to kill a loved one, the Passion may be activated for the scene. (Passion and Personality Trait bonuses cannot be applied at the same time, though.) Confidence may be used as usual, and the character gets a Passion bonus on all rolls made against the demon in the scene. The Virtue Strong Will also adds three to any rolls made to break the demon's hold.

At the Storyguide's discretion, certain other events, such as being dragged to Mass or entering unusual *regios*, can allow new rolls to resist possession. A victim is allowed a minimum of one attempt to break possession a week.

Attempts to break free of possession are made just as the demon's invasion rolls are made — the victim's True Faith, Magic Resistance, and Natural Resistance are *all* rolled against the demon's (Might + Possession skill + stress die). These rolls are called "escape rolls." The only new twist to these rolls is the addition of the victim's Personality Traits and Passions, which apply to all escape attempts. If the human victim Botches an escape roll, the demon completely possesses the character and no future escape rolls are allowed without outside help. If the demon Botches its side of the escape roll, it is driven from the body and may never possess that character again.

(Note, however, that Magic Resistance rolls to escape possession can be nearly invalidated by the possessing demon. The demon can command its host to undo any *Parma Magica* protection, if the host has any. In this situation, the host's Magic Resistance roll is limited to the score of *Córpore* or *Mentem*, whichever is the host's highest Form. If the host has inherent Magic Resistance, that cannot be nullified, and applies normally.)

Demoniacs who have the Gift also have a chance to escape possession every sunrise. This roll is in addition to any personal escape rolls allowed. The power of demonkind wanes at sunrise, and possessed Magi can use these ebbing moments to chip away at the evil holding their bodies. This escape attempt is instinctive and requires no learned skill. Hermetic Magi add *Rego* or *Vim* (whichever score is higher) to a stress roll and compare it to an Ease Factor equal to twice the demon's Might score + Possession Skill. The amount by which each "sunrise roll" exceeds this Ease Factor is recorded and accumulated daily. If the sum ever equals or exceeds the demon's current *Infernal Might* points (temporary points, not permanent score!), the *energumen* breaks the demon's grasp and forces the evil spirit out of his or her body. As Storyguide, you must keep tabs

on the demon's day-to-day Might score, anticipating the time that it slips lower than the Magus's accumulated "escape" points.

If one of the Magus's "sunrise rolls" is lower than twice the demon's Might total + Possession Skill, the difference between the scores is subtracted from the Magus's accumulated "escape" points. The Magus's score can never fall lower than zero. If the Magus ever Botches a "sunrise roll," her accumulated points automatically fall to zero.

MAGIC AND THE ENERGUMEN

While possessing a victim, a demon is considered to be in physical form and thus may use any physical form powers in its arsenal (along with *Psychomachia*, which is always available). It can only use its spiritual powers on its victim, if such prove necessary or beneficial.

In addition to the demon's own *maleficia*, it may use magic abilities known to its *energumen*, provided it is able to pry the powers from the victim's mind. Possessed Magi can even be forced to cast spells by the occupying demon. Every time the demon attempts to use one of its victim's powers or spells, the host makes an Intelligence stress roll, plus the magnitude of the spell fought over (one-fifth the spell Level, rounded up), against an Ease Factor equal to the demon's Might + Possession Skill. This system means demons have greater trouble prying more powerful spells from a Magus's mind. If a power, not a spell, is being fought over, the power must be assigned an equivalent spell Level, and the magnitude of that Level modifies the character's roll.

If the Magus's roll is lower than the Ease Factor, the demon successfully commands the spell's use and spell casting rolls are made as usual. If the Magus ever Botches an Intelligence + magnitude roll, the demon gains complete control over all the Magus's spells and powers and can use them at will; the character may make no future resistance rolls. If the Magus's roll is higher than the demon's, the demon may not force the use of the desired spell — this time. It may still attempt to force the spell casting in the future.

Each attempt by a demon to command a spell or power's use costs one point of Infernal Might per magnitude point of the spell, whether the attempt is successful or not. Though demons can demand spells at any time, they usually avoid excessive demands for fear of weakening themselves.

The following *Exempli Gratia* helps clarify this spell command system:

A demon with 25 Might and a Possession Skill of 3 demands a Level 20 spell from its Magus victim. The Magus has an Intelligence of +2. The Magus's resistance stress roll is therefore modified by +2 (for Intelligence) and +4 (for the magnitude of the spell fought over), for a total of +6. To deny the demon use of the spell, the Magus must beat an Ease Factor of 28 (25 Might + 3 Skill score).

CONCEALMENT

A demon possessing a person may go into a dormant state by avoiding use of all but its spiritual powers. Such a demon may not be detected save by an exorcist with great experience and persistence, or by a character with the Second Sight or Sense Holiness and Unholiness Abilities (Intéllego spells to detect a demon are useless). Furthermore, the Dominion is considered to be half its normal Aura value when determining how it affects a demon in concealed state (that is, how much the demon's Might is reduced by the Dominion, as discussed under *Destruction and Banishment* above). Only overt acts, such as the victim's taking Communion, touching holy water, or breathing fumigations of sulphur, reveal the demon. Of course, under normal circumstances the demon actively resists such an impending event.

When a demon makes its presence in a host known, it is subject to normal possession rules and is vulnerable to the Dominion as usual. Only when it goes back into concealment is it protected again. A concealed demon also makes itself vulnerable every time it uses a physical power. The demon is subject to normal Dominion and fumigation effects for a number of Rounds equal to the spell Level of any physical *maleficia* it uses. Once this time passes, the demon can sink back into concealment.

Someone who has a Cardinal Pact with a devil does not have her own personal spirit. A demon who possesses such a person has an unusually secure haven from which to conduct its affairs. Such a demon can ignore the Dominion altogether, save for its effects on the diabolist's powers and mood, and is immune to fumigations. A firmly entrenched demon's Infernal Might is also considered twice normal when facing exorcism and the like. Most of the time, demons possess diabolists with the "victim's" consent — said "possession" is more of an alliance. However, the relationship could be adversarial if the diabolist has fallen out of favor, or if her plans deviate from the demon's.

The Phantasmata

Although the fallen angels are no longer God's first race, these rejected elders still have their Divine natures (or remnants thereof), and possess their own source of magic, the Ash Empyrean. Bodied-souls may never know which slice of the True Empyrean is superior — their own Shadow, or Hell's Ash — but it is clear that the Ash Empyrean has some strange potency where it mingles with the Shadow and manifests in the world of matter. Such manifestations, when they produce effects unique to the False magic of demons, are known as *Phantasmata*.

The *Phantasmata* are powerful illusions, illusions so strong that they are sometimes indistinguishable from reality. The word illusion, used in the context of an Ash phantasm, is not entirely encompassing. The demonic ability to look into the future is a phantasm. The ability to make a person think she is

flying across the countryside at great speed, and then to have her actually physically arrive in a distant location, is a use of the False powers of illusion. The same is true for the Infernal ability to conjure great riches before a diabolist.

In a general sense, these effects fall under the category of *maleficia*. However, they are impossible (or extremely difficult) to duplicate with powers of the Shadow Gift. *Phantasmata* are therefore evoked by powerful demons or groups of demons working together, although they may be presented by a single demon. (For example, there might be one minor demon in charge of making each coin in a treasure hoard presented to a diabolist.) Presumably any sufficiently powerful demon or group of demons can create *Phantasmata*, but only over a long period of effort or with intense preparation. Demons use these illusions to deceive and lure their victims into sin. As the creation of such illusions is so time-consuming, or involves the unseen industry of many lesser demons, *Phantasmata* is not listed as a power specific to individual demons. Almost all demons, save the weakest, have access to it through some means, and you may implement *Phantasmata* in your stories as befits your needs.

Phantasmata are commonly kept "within the fold," used on and for people devoted to the Unholy. They make the Dark Powers seem even more impressive and effective. Thus do un-Gifted black witches fly through the sky on broomsticks — thus do the sacraments of the Black Mass effect the members of the Devil's Church. Those affected by the illusions are willing dupes, and thus *Phantasmata* assume "reality" status. Among the most extreme examples of how *Phantasmata* take effect are those involving star demons. Star demons, described later in this chapter, actually make Dark Magi think they can fly to the stars, and a group of goetists known as the Roseblack Circle actually became convinced history itself was completely different. They perceived Mythic Europe differently than its other inhabitants.

Like demons, faeries have an illusion-evoking power, called Glamour (see the *Ars Magica* Second Edition supplement, *Faeries*, p. 15 and 49). With their own insight into deception, and lacking souls with which to believe in the power of Satan, faeries can see through and ignore the effects of *Phantasmata*. Because *Phantasmata* are utterly real to demons, faerie obliviousness is quite disconcerting, so demons tend to avoid faeries at all costs. Imagine, a race that doesn't believe in Evil, much less Satan!

Demons in the World

The rigid controls of Hell's power hierarchy are nowhere in evidence among the *terreni*. While Hell is the devils' battlefield, earth is the demons' chaotic playground. The only directive applied on earth, for all demonkind, is the corruption of that world and its inhabitants. This is probably the only rule actually obeyed by any demon or devil, on earth or in Hell. Even demons exiled to or abandoned on earth follow the conventions of their distant society. Indeed, Infernal alliances and enmities can follow a demon on its journey to earth.

The chaos of earth is also demonstrated in its Infernal organization, or lack thereof. Where Hell is divided into domains, manors and estates, earth has no Infernal territories. Each demon on earth tends to be an isolated loner unless working as an agent of some other power. This other power might be a superior demon or it might be an Infernal ally of some kind. Otherwise, earth is open to whatever harm demons can cause; no one demon has claim on any land.

While this free-for-all is the most common *modus operandi* of the *mundus infernus*, a few more formal Infernal societies have developed on earth and instituted their own rules. These societies might be called cults; they are formed by demons who operate within a common bond. The existence of these groups creates considerable intrigue on earth. The information that follows presents the lines along which demonic groups can form on earth.

There are four distinct classes of demons in the *mundus infernus*: major (or greater), minor (or lesser), astasian and submundane. Unlike the system of nine diabolic echelons and their armies, the divisions here are not merely artificial means of describing social standing, privilege, and proper points at which to bestow greater power. Each class has a unique set of properties and inherent potential.

As with the more artificial categories of Hell, goetic sorcerers are also aware of these classes and use the terms themselves. This four-tiered system is only the fundamental basis by which to classify *terreni* demons; there are other more detailed classifications in use by various wizardly and scholastic groups. These other classifications are human conventions, though, and do not alter the true nature of demons in the world.

Major/Greater Demons

Each greater demon has a unique appearance and a long personal history. All greater demons possess True Names by which they can be bound. They can appeal to the Watchers to keep a Tally of Souls for them (that is, they are able to take part in angelic trials and Accuse souls). Almost all major demons have their own souls awaiting them in Hell.

A greater demon's heart can be hidden in a faraway place or a deep *regio*. When the demon's physical body is slain or its Might is reduced to zero, it suffers the equivalent of "banishment" for a period of time if it has a soul. A body left by a dead major demon can either remain as a corpse or dissipate back into the Shadow Empyrean. The demon may later return with powers and memory fully restored. Should a greater demon break free of control during a goetic summons, it may take both the body and the soul of the unlucky sorcerer back to Hell.

As mentioned above, demons who are familiar with the current political situation in Hell usually continue to operate along factional lines. They may even perpetuate Hell's wars and intrigues on earth. Some greater demons try to establish earthly domains for themselves and thereby gather demonic retinues, but without the force of the Watchers' Laws there is no group cohesion. Earthly domains require more effort to maintain than the status they afford, so most greater demons stick to the

nomadic life, or a life of dormancy. Some demons even try to develop human retinues of worshippers and allies, but these tactics are Infernally frowned upon as far from subtle.

Major demons always have Might scores of 25 or greater. Semi-permanent loss of enough Might warrants demotion to minor class by the Nephilim. The Watcher devils take away the demon-in-question's right to Accuse souls and divorce the demon from many of its heart's powers (it retains its True Name and unique identity, though). If a demon has only one heart and that heart is destroyed while the demon remains on earth, the demon is reduced to astasian status and loses its True Name.

Minor/Lesser Demons

Minor demons lack most of the features described above for major demons. Lesser demons are most typically those evil spirits generated by Satan when he warped the material world to evil, before and after the Revolt. A few demons in this category are the least impressive children of the Watchers, excommunicants who have been vastly demoted in power, or agents and Masks sent to do less subtle, less important work, and abandoned by those Below.

Lesser demons are generally concerned with specific humans and the development of human societies, as opposed to greater schemes. Lesser demons have no resources to create domains for themselves, and no designs beyond peripheral involvement in the Infernal political scene. These demons are sometimes mistaken for particularly vicious members of the faerie Unseelie Court. These are the demons of the common man.

Minor demons almost never have True Names, and those exiles who possess personal souls are ignored by the Watchers as a part of their punishment, thus denying the demons access to the Tally. Only by "lesser meals" may these exiled demons sustain themselves until a promotion or a reinstatement is granted. The sorcerer who fails his summoning of one of these creatures risks only his body, not his soul. However, losing a contest of wills still results in enslavement (see Chapter Five). Minor demons must maintain their hearts within their forms at all times.

Most minor demons are of the Mask variety, if *depravati*, or of the *terreni* equivalent. (Much as with elementals and the World-Soul, Satan generated many similar entity "types" instead of a variety of individual species, so most of the *terreni* are non-unique.) Vanquished *terreni* are destroyed rather than simply banished; their bodies remain on earth. Spirits are eternal, however, and in time minor demons reincarnate in their familiar spiritual and physical forms. Indeed, such entities achieve full rebirth; they remember nothing of their past history, and no grudges carry over into their new forms. (Particularly ruthless diabolists destroy all minor demons they summon after said demons perform required tasks, thus ensuring that no brooding enemies are created.)

Demons of this caliber are poorly suited to carry out subtle plans or complex tasks, and need greater supervision. It is not possible to make a Cardinal Pact with Minor demons. They are



considered to have half their true Might at the time of summoning for purposes of gaining Experience Points in Hierarchy (see Chapter Five).

Minor demons have Might scores of 25 or less. If a lesser demon's Might score increases permanently, the demon is promoted to major status. In a ceremony performed by the nearest Nephilim, the demon is invested with the rights and wisdom of the major demons. The first soul the new major demon sways toward sin and Accuses is linked to the demon and marked in the Tally. All souls corrupted after that point are subject to Hell's "taxes." New major demons must choose between *terreni* and *depravati* status. Note too that the Nephilim and Watchers keep track of lesser demons' improvements and evil acts of significance within the minor order. Thus, even within the minor class, some spirits can look forward to gaining rank and new powers, with access to Hell (and echelonhood) as an ultimate goal.

Astasians

Astasians are messengers and spies, remnant shards of evil spirits who have devolved to an animal-like state after years of rough treatment. These spirits are described more fully in the previous chapter, in the section on Hell's hierarchy; astasians found on earth are of identical stock. Generally, astasians are even weaker than minor demons. While they face many of the same restrictions (e.g., no True Names, no Accusation), they are in an even worse state because they have no *caligo* hearts. This makes it easy for other demons to take command of astasians by winning very quick Rituals of Mastery.

Because they are only partial spirits, astasians may travel at vastly greater speeds than other spirits. This allows them to perform their duties more effectively, imparting knowledge of faraway events and secrets to demons who have commanded them. Demons who employ the quick astasians are sometimes accredited with great speed and vast powers of insight. As astasians are invisible, multitudinous, and able to work quicker than most spells, it is easy to see where greater demons get this reputation.

Demons may use astasians at will, with no need to consult rules and no possibility of failure, unless astasians are prevented from coming into a demon's proximity. Unlike submundanes, astasians are affected by all forms of magic aimed at demonkind. Humans who desire to make use of astasians must develop spells in the laboratory (ReVi 20) — one per specific instruction — to force any astasian in the area to carry out a task.

Submundanes

Submundanes are, if it can be believed, many times greater in number than all the other sorts of demons combined. For the most part, submundanes should be considered eidolons. Even when forced to reveal themselves physically, they are extremely tiny. These are the only demons able to break the Rule of Size, as the largest submundane is still smaller than a barley corn.

These are the most insidious and most common demons. Indeed, their presence is as ubiquitous as the air around us. A sneeze, a shooting pain, a toothache, influenza, food poisoning, heartburn, the tendency for meat to transform into maggots, of foods to spoil, of fences to fall apart and foundations to rot — all are purviews of the submundane. Submundanes have no True Names, no hearts, and no distinguishable forms of any significance.

Not only are submundanes immune to diabolic conjuration, but they are immune to *Parma Magica*, *Aegis of the Hearth*, and all Divine Auras. No passive magic can affect submundanes, but directed magics of all sorts can do so easily, with no resort to demonic Magic Resistance. Thus, a Magus can catch the flu in his lab but can then use *Córporem* spells to bring it to an end.

Though submundanes are certainly responsible for minor and "conventional" evils, like back pains, they can also be responsible for more esoteric evils. In many cases they plant the first seeds of evil in places where passive Divine forces would otherwise inhibit that evil. For instance, a desire to talk during Mass, or corrupt thoughts during prayer (*phantastikos*) can be brought about by submundane infiltration. As they are immune to passive Divine opposition, submundanes can go places and effect changes that more powerful demons might be uncomfortable visiting or effecting.

Submundanes work in large groups, and only the largest groups possess even an Infernal Might of one. A group this large might intend to cause an extremely potent sickness. Spells intended to affect submundanes directly must specify the exact symptom to be nullified, isolating the submundanes to be destroyed. As specified in the above example, a *Córporem* spell could eliminate a submundane-induced cold. There is no need to go about rewording every spell in the rulebook that prevents rot or cures disease, or anything else in the submundane purview. Submundanes shouldn't require any rules at all; they're already responsible for bad things in the world, and magic already affects that world.

EARTH-BOUND FACTIONS

As mentioned above, there are many specific groups of *daemones terreni* which can be developed to fit into their own distinct categories. These do not need to be true factions in the political sense. Any circumstance or unique power that makes a set of demons a coherent "species," apart from the generic mainstream, allows you, the Storyguide, to develop a branch of demons worthy of separate consideration. Here are three brief examples of new demons. They are by no means complete, and can be fleshed out if you find any one group especially appealing.

Star Demons

When the rebellious angels Fell from Heaven they traded a place among the stars for a place amid the flames. Some refused to accept their Fall and decided to suffer a voluntary exile from Hell. These beasts took up residence in the world's skies in order to be closer to their old realm. An entire pantheon of demons has sprung up around this urge to climb back up and reclaim the stars. Knowing they cannot actually achieve this goal, star demons apply their Ash magic toward creating an elaborate phantasm of the heavens.

Thus, if the demons cannot reach their goal, they can at least trick foolish humans into believing they have. Many sects of diabolists have developed the belief that they summon demons from the stars. These diabolists have also been duped into thinking that celestial influence upon evil spirits (or these evil spirits, at any rate) is caused by association with celestial bodies. There is even an elaborate ritual that star demons have developed for diabolists who forge alliances with them (remember, star demons do have souls in Hell, so Cardinal Pacts are possible). In the ritual, converts are brought to the "doorstep" of the star demons' realm — the moon itself — and return from the journey with a moon rock as a souvenir. (This is just a ruse, since demons may not enter the Lunar Sphere, nor any section of the heavens for that matter. The ruse is made possible by a powerful collective *phantasmata*.)

The star demons began their pantheon almost immediately after the Flood, so theirs is one of the oldest factions still in existence. They became quite popular in Chaldean culture; a group of corrupt priests pretended to turn to the harmless art of astrology, spreading their corruption as mediums to the "gods." When that culture declined, the star demons lost their biggest organized group of human allies.

Urn Devils

In his mystical prime, Solomon trapped a number of powerful devils (yes, devils) in large magical urns (one devil per urn) and buried them deep in the ground throughout the eastern Mediterranean lands. Some scholars say there are 72 such urns to be found beneath the earth. Others believe Solomon bound 72 demons to his court, and claim the first group mistakenly confuses that number with the number of "urn devils," which is actually unknown.

The strong magicks of the sealed urns allow them to act as surrogate bodies for the devils trapped within, thereby granting the evil souls earthly existence without true bodies.

Although these ancient brethren are cut off from the hierarchy of Hell, the Watchers do keep track of them after a fashion. Urn devils may send agents out to corrupt humans, and even Accuse any who succumb, but the angelic jury only sends the spirits of these sinners into the urn of the Accusing devil. Souls must go to Hell to be Talled, so the urn devils gain no power in Hell. However, Watchers permit urn devils to forge Cardinal Pacts with diabolists, and upon the diabolists' deaths the Watchers offer the devils some *maleficium* to repre-

sent the conclusion of the pact. The urn devils also collect the spirits of their victims. In return, the Watchers collect urn devils' garnered souls and take these souls to Hell.

For their part, the urn devils make good use of the resources they have accumulated over the years. All of them have developed a *phantasmata* dimension within their urns, making urn interiors seem like vast Infernal countries similar to true diabolic fiefs in Hell, populated by hapless spirits the devils have captured over the centuries. Favored (or unfavored) diabolists are often permitted to visit urns as honored guests (or inmates), using magicks similar to those that make *regio* access possible.

Urn devils may create soul avatars, and explore the modern world from time to time in demonic form. As they possess spirits, urn devils can be summoned and bound by any powerful diabolist who unearths the ancient magical secrets of Solomon.

Fief Demons

There are many exiled demons of Hell in the material world. These evil spirits well remember the dark and fiery place where they left their souls. It is inevitable that some of these disgruntled beings ally and attempt to recreate their old environs. These entities have developed a vast and deep *regio*, their staging ground for the "New Hell." In this *regio* the demons have recreated Hell in all the detail their power can muster. Unfortunately, these are demons pretending to be devils, spirits ruling a Spiritual Inferno instead of souls with true power over humanity. Fief Demons must therefore deal in the inferior commodity of spirits.

Like urn devils, the demons of New Hell create vile domains for themselves and use spirits as servants, agents and subjects of entertaining torment. Unlike the devils of the urns, Fief demons all exist in a single realm. Thus, the wars and political games of Hell are aped with some accuracy, as demons of different fiefs intermingle and form alliances with and against one another. However, it is much easier for humans to wander into the Fief demons' realm than the urn devils', and therefore easier to become unwilling pawns or disruptive participants in the games of the populace. After all, finding New Hell does not involve finding specific, localized and well-secreted *regio* pockets such as the urn devils' estates. The *regio* of the Fief demons is accessible from many regions.

Brave or foolhardy diabolists take great interest in New Hell's imitation devils. In fact, diabolists occasionally make themselves a part of the demons' volatile and chaotic society. Those who have already signed Cardinal Pacts are even accepted as demons in their own right, gaining favors and influence in the society according to the prestige of their Prime Master (the devil who owns a diabolist's soul).

Most Fief demons have souls in Hell and may thus participate in Accusation and the Tally of Souls unless specifically ignored by the Watchers as part of an exile punishment. Souls taken by a demon in New Hell go down to the corresponding

The Mundane Pact

Any character who possesses the Gift of magic must sign a written compact in order to forge an official agreement between herself and any of the Devil's satellites. The signing of the pact gives the devil permission to take the Gifted individual's spirit at the onset of the bargain. The signing is also necessary to begin the process of Shrouding (see Chapter Five, under *Contract*).

Mundanes, on the other hand, may forge exclusively verbal contracts with devilkind. Their spirits are also taken at the outset of the agreement, even without written consent, since mundanes have no inherent defense against such assault, and they do not develop Shrouds no matter how long they remain on Satan's list of consignments.

Mundanes, who by default must deal with the Infernal as beseechers, have only one possible class of contract with the Devil, whether written or oral. They must sell their souls. Mundanes may be bestowed many powers and servants after this agreement, but all depend upon the Cardinal Pact rather than the many minor pacts which Dark Magi may solicit.

Some mundane folk have been known to follow a system of informal favors and demonic appeasement in return for aid from evil spirits. Some spirits have even been known to freely offer their services when first attempting to lure humans into their clutches. However, these are not officially binding forms of interaction. Only the Cardinal Pact itself gives an Infernal consort steady and authoritative access to demonic power, and the Watchers only become caretakers of a relationship when official channels are followed.

devil's domains in Hell proper, arriving in the devil's name. In the meantime, those souls' spirits are torn away and delivered to the demon in New Hell as substitutes for the actual soul.

For details about the intricacies of the Fief demons' lands, politics and culture, refer to the ecology of Hell itself in Chapter Three, omitting situations that are entirely soul-dependent.

Under the Influence

The primary subjects of this book are the demons of the *mundus infernus*, who wage war against mankind using morals and magic as weapons. However, there are other people, places and things in the world that have Satan's fingerprints on them. Demons are the catalysts of a great Infernal movement within the ranks of humanity. Indeed, Mythic Europe is a breeding ground of groups influenced by the corruption they see around them, and who reach forth from several quarters. These camps require some mention here. Also worthy of mention are forces under Satan's influence that only peripherally relate to demons. Since these things could be encountered by characters in the course of a demon-influenced Saga, these too are listed here.

PEOPLE

Of all Mythic Europe's elements, people are the most commonly corrupted by demonkind. Although the land itself is corrupted by the *mundus infernus*, land is ultimately but one unit, bound to related units like sea and sky. In contrast, humanity is made up of many, many units, the entirety of which makes for broader Satanic influence.

Christian Diabolists

Undoubtedly the most heinous of those dedicated to the Dark are those who once were true to the Light. Like the fallen angels, people who turn to evil have had the opportunity to know God and have spurned him. By choosing Satan they turn their backs on all things Right.

The Low Branch (The Dark Congregation)

As discussed in the history presented in Chapter One, diabolists throughout time have been isolated, lacking both resources and direction. Now, though, the phenomenon of the Devil's Church grows in strength. With Christianity as a universal model to fight against, the tendency toward inversion common to Satanic ceremony permits a universal anti-religion. This camp, known as the dark congregation, does not have the national and international organization of the true Church. Rather, it is a spontaneously consistent social deviation which follows the structure of the Black Mass, perhaps with a few wandering priests to keep more active groups in touch.

The dark congregation began with individual minor covens which lacked leadership and direction. The congregation has evolved since those early days and now mocks the elaborate ritual, organization and doctrine found in the western Church. The Devil's Church has its own set of seven sacraments, with the same names as their orthodox parallels (but every sacrament sign is devoted downward, and is accoutered with appropriately evil rites and chants). The Devil's Church has its own Bible (the famed Black Book) its own Unholy days and calendar events, and its own Cult of Saints devoted to patron devils. Joining this culture requires a new member to speak a profession of faith against the Church and sign a mundane pact bequeathing his soul to Satan.

Sacrifices at the dark altar are part of the diabolic Mass, and the congregation shares a black, triangular host (made of turnip) at Communion. An ordained priest presides, the believers congregate on desecrated ground, and the Mass has occasional access to Infernal miracles, the *mira* (marvels). These marvels are effectuated by phantasms from Satan's agents, or from patron devils. Most Dark Churches pop up in small, isolated communities far from large cities (with their

large Churches of God). In seclusion, a whole village or hamlet can be brought under the Devil's sway without risk of discovery.

In game terms, whole congregations develop a group faith rating ("anti-faith" if you will) that is a function of both the number of worshippers and the average Hierarchy score of everyone involved. Also, some individuals of exceptionally despicable character (high priests of Satan, for example) might develop personal scores in False Faith as well. (If such people are goetists, Faith replaces Confidence in the contest of wills, but multiplies by 20 instead of just eight.)

For guidelines on utilizing evil marvels when characters are confronted by a dark congregation, refer to the *Miracles Chart* (*Ars Magica*, p. 331) and invert the bonuses as appropriate (i.e., reverse the signs). You might even add some entries to this list, indicating how recent sacrifices, animal or human, aid in the performance of evil miracles. The desecration of holy ground might also make *mira* more likely. It is easy to imagine what vile acts could garner aid from Below, but be sure to get the Troupe's approval before directly subjecting their characters to anything too gruesome, whether as witnesses or fictional participants.

The High Branch (The Theurgists)

Theurgy is the art of commanding boons and behavior from demons by calling upon Divine names, holy water and incense, and other trappings of true (non-inverted) Christianity. Also called Ceremonial Magic (as opposed to black magic), theurgy is usually performed by those who have intimate knowledge of Church doctrine and believe in its power. Consequently, theurgy is the diabolic method of choice for most orthodox clergy who fall under Satan's influence. It is also a common form of dark worship for scholars and nobles who are deeply involved in Christian philosophy and ceremony in their daily lives. These theurgists, by and large, believe themselves to be harrowing demons, just as Christ harrowed the devils after His crucifixion. In truth, they subconsciously apply demons to their own ends.

The Pauline Art

Despite the decay of all standard theurgy toward diabolism, there is a very rare form of ceremonial magic which is truly Divine in nature. Known as the Pauline Art (for it is said to have been passed down from the apostle Paul in the days of Rome), this brand of theurgy is characterized by exorcisms and banishments, or forced "acts of repentance" performed by demons.

Practitioners of the Pauline Art are rarer than holders of True Faith. They are characterized by lack of selfish motivations, and rarely use their power. Certain of these "Divine wizards" have lived for centuries, lying low as humble peasants and hermits, only to rise up in secret defense of a community when Satan's campaign against humanity renews. Such persons have also been known to bide their time within Divine *regio*, or to unwittingly create *regio* of their own over the years.



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Theurgists are an insidious problem, for while they seem loyal to the Church, they are secretly in league with the ones they appear to attack. Indeed, even theurgists who refuse to believe they commit sin by their actions are nonetheless discreet about their less orthodox practices. Such diabolists only reveal themselves to a choice few deacons and assistants who are also corrupt, or to those too ignorant to know their superiors are not genuinely orthodox. Theurgists publicly act holy and speak God's word. Only a shaded meaning here or an altered phrase there serves to put them in suspicion, and this only by persons well-versed in Church doctrine.

Rather than promote Devil's Churches of their own, theurgists usually burrow themselves deep into the true Church. They make their way through Church ranks by maintaining legitimate appearances and by secretly destroying their rivals. Any Magus unfortunate enough to uncover a theurgist has to deal with both the diabolist's Infernal allies and his dupes within the Church. A surprising number of attacks on the Covenants of "heretical wizards" have been incited by dark priests who wish to slay witnesses of their secret art.

Diabolists of Convenience

Those described above are called Christian diabolists because their intercourse with Satan is tied to their relationship with the orthodox Church and the corruption of that relationship. However, other people, regardless of religious convictions, find a friend in the Devil for completely non-religious reasons. While all sinners are sinners because the weight of the flesh has led them astray, only those who make an explicit call for Lucifer's aid are legitimate diabolists.

These diabolists of convenience are characterized by simplistic motives, flimsy rationales (or none at all), and pacts of impulse. These pacts are based on single incidents or on the normal course of demonic oppression in life as opposed to a careful trap set by a demon. It is typically believed that astasian spies overhear pledges of Infernal covenant and gleefully relay those pledges to the nearest appropriate demon. A Magus frustrated by a lab project might make an offhand remark about selling her soul for unseen answers. These are the people demons respond to. Diabolists of convenience work alone rather than in groups, and usually keep to themselves unless discovered (in which case they go on the offensive to cover their tracks).

The diabolic pact made on impulse need only be verbal, but most demons like to include a written agreement (even when the prospective diabolist cannot read the parchment). Written word makes the deed official, and puts on a good show for the diabolist, who often expects minor pageantry to accompany the agreement.

Diabolists of impulse are usually peasants, and are almost never Gifted. Such folk also tend to find themselves intellectually manipulated by the demons they sign up with, usually because they lack bravery, confidence, and in many cases, the mental capacity to come up with a plan of their own. The

Divine Inspiration

One very pervasive aspect of most traditions of diabolic magical practice is the use of Christian elements. This use is particularly common among theurgists. Unlike Magi of Hermes and other "nonpartisan" groups, diabolists are far from indifferent to the doctrine of the Church — Biblical influences and inversions of orthodox ceremony permeate Satanic rituals. One of the most common examples of Church reference is the use of the Divine Names of angels, Biblical figures, and the planets.

Those involved in ceremonial magic believe they invoke holy power to control an unholy enemy, and thus are doing God's work — a large doctrine of belief revolves around the mistaken idea that angels have power over demonkind, forcing evil spirits to do their bidding. Indeed, theurgists often believe they do God's work but actually become embroiled in the diabolic by "opposing" it. Ceremonial magicians believe they imitate Divine spirits when they command demons.

Other diabolic factions have different rationalizations for invoking the Divine. In some circles diabolists claim to play Divine forces against their own enemies. Other diabolists state they mention Divine names to disrupt those Divine influences. Still others claim to tap into a set of Power Names, like those of pagan deities, which the Divine has falsely usurped. Whatever the theory and reason behind the diabolic trend to invoke the name of the enemy, certain members of the Satanic calling even adorn their practice in Christian garments. By doing so, these diabolists show that not even overtly religious acts and ceremonies can conceal their acts of mortal sin. When a theurgist is prepared to reveal his dark self, he may wear ostentatious Christian garments to emphasize his true corruption.

powers of these diabolists, because they are not Gifted in their own right, are usually illusory, or are fully subject to the whims of the demons who chaperone them.

Black Witches

While usually of Christian stock, this type of diabolist has joined the Devil through the auspices of Satanic witchcraft, and only interacts with Satan through the traditions of this witchcraft. Satan is proud of his witches, and honors their traditions after a fashion. The black witches have access to a wider range of diabolic *phantasmata* than even the dark congregation, though they elicit fewer saintly marvels. Their primary phantasm is the *Flight of Fancy*, leading to the witches' Sabbath, wherein witches climb through their chimneys in order to enter an Infernal "stream" of *regio*, by which they can fly to the place of meeting.

Black witches, sometimes called *lamiae*, should not be confused with "nature witches," referred to as *sagae* (meaning wise women). Nature witches (typically pagans) practice their own white magic to benefit humanity and the world. They have knowledge of herbal remedies and the like. Black witches are the ones who place curses upon neighbors and kill unbaptized infants for use in *malefic* unguents. Black witches allegedly have the power to cause impotence or uncontrollable lust in

men. They work spells and create evil charms with the help of their Familiars, imps commonly disguised as black cats, toads or owls. Nature witches sometimes bond with animals too, but their Familiars are generally benign companions and spiritual mascots rather than evil imps.

Few *lamiae* have the Gift of magic, but all may employ a complex set of rituals and charms which allows them to partake of the False magicks of Hell. Thus, these diabolic women do have power of a sort, especially when in large groups. Such groups are known as covens, and while some covens prefer isolation, many are part of larger communities. Covens in large communities are more likely to have hierarchies of status and systems of communication.

Hermetic Magi need not necessarily fear witches' magic, for *Parma Magica* is usually adequate protection save when the most dark and powerful curses are invoked. Witches, by contrast, rarely have protection against Hermetic magic, but some do possess the Black Blessing (the equivalent of the *Parma Magica*, predominantly linked to a Familiar's presence).

Dark Infidels

The Prince of Darkness is at war with God, and hence is at war with Christianity. While he seeds rebellion and recruits his flock from within the ranks of Christianity, he is not adverse to using other faiths as weapons against God. Mythic Europeans already believe the Church's propaganda proclaiming pagans to be infidels under Satan's sway, and at war with Christendom. Yet, while there are indeed struggles taking place between a variety of faiths, these are usually nothing more than wars by default, arising because different religions compete for the same people.

The pagan Old Gods and the Islamic Allah, to name the most prevalent factions, merely present their own ideas, untainted by Satan. In truth, very few religions are genuinely evil, but the *mundus infernus* prevents people from realizing this truth. Mythic Europeans' deluded minds believe their truth to be the only truth, and those who oppose it evil by contrast. If not for demons' work in the world, humanity might recognize the lessons that can be taught by its many parts, but the Devil is not about to lift the fog of prejudice. In fact, he takes advantage of human shortsightedness, perpetuates hatred, and from time to time throws out a bone on which humanity can pounce and thereby justify their bigotry.

With an insidious subtlety the Devil moves among humanity and subverts non-Christian elements into his Infernal schemes. The inherent corruption of humanity lays the foundation for his work. By manipulating a group's hatred for the persecuting Church, by pointing out the incursion of Christian powers into pagans' spirit pantheons, and by kidnapping pagan "believers" in the Christian name, Lucifer gains the allegiance of non-Christians seeking revenge. Diabolists so inspired are known as siphoners, or dark infidels.

The word siphoner is used to reflect these pagans' new nature, for these sects have broken from their old faiths and now funnel their energies of worship down to the Devil. These

diabolists therefore siphon off power that might previously have gone to an enemy of Satan. (After all, Lucifer hates what he cannot control, and all who are not for him are obviously against him.) There are even cases where actual deities have been intercepted and manipulated into accepting fiefs in Hell. Some join voluntarily, bringing their worshippers with them surreptitiously. Others despise their forced allegiance and turn their backs on their followers, maybe out of bitterness, or maybe to save those folk.

Whether small groups or entire faiths are dragged into the Infernal, siphoners are a bane of Christendom. Fortunately, these dark infidels are a lesser threat to God's faithful than other diabolic factions. Siphoners are not as insidious as Christian diabolists, not as prolific as *lamiae* or diabolists of convenience, and are already under Church suspicion. Thus, siphoners may not make a concerted movement against Christendom without sparking a Church pogrom or crusade. Furthermore, infidels may be assaulted in their sanctuaries without reprimand from Mythic Europe's ruling institutions.

Though they are overly conspicuous and blatantly hostile to the Church, siphoners nonetheless have demonic arsenals at their disposal. Demonic weapons range from Infernal *mira* of the False Faith, to diabolic spells and devices, to demonic henchmen. All of these are tied to exotic religious and cultural trappings. Siphoners therefore offer all the brute force of the Infernal realm with none of the bother of concealment and consequence.

Warped Messiahs

Another group of diabolists consists of those individuals inspired by Satan to create religions or sects of their own. Most of these people are far from sane, and many have magical abilities arising either from demonic assistance or the Gift. While many are Messianic figures, some do not claim that status, merely offering themselves as examples of a new form of worship. Certain of these individuals offer their experiences as a deceptive means of achieving commune with the Christian God or some other "ultimate" deity.

During their lifetimes, these warped Messiahs usually manage to gather small cults. Upon their leaders' deaths, these cults disband due to lack of vision and leadership. Sometimes such cults continue for several generations in a single location, while other times they spread to new communities. In the latter case cults also tend to warp further so that each community follows something slightly different. Two examples of the Warped Messiah phenomenon follow, taken from actual historical accounts (the second, because its historical details are sketchy, includes some imaginary details to give it a more interesting slant).

Simon Magus, born in Christ's time, was jealous of the power of True Faith and the Divine sacraments. He therefore tried to bribe the apostles to teach him their powers; he was a wizard with many spells at his disposal, and he wanted to add Christian rituals to his repertoire. The apostles, of course, refused him. Furthermore, they claimed Divine powers would

be beyond Simon's command even if they could teach him what they knew. When arguing with Peter (in front of Emperor Nero), Simon tried to prove his powers by flying into the air from the roof of a tall tower. When Peter, after many warnings, called upon his Faith to banish the wizard's powers, Simon fell to his death.

Before death, Simon Magus proclaimed that he was not beaten, and if buried he would rise again on the third day, as had Christ. Simon had already built up a following in life, and his Gnostic sect took his body from the base of the tower and departed for parts unknown. A prostitute of Tyre who was Simon's confidante became leader of the sect after his death, assuming the title Queen of Heaven. The activities of the Cult of the Magus, if it still exists, are unknown. The truth of Simon's claim to bodily resurrection is also unknown (but, if true, would surely be the result of a phantasm planned before his fall).

In A.D. 1148, Eon de l'Etoile of Breton went on a rampage, setting fire to villages and cities on a circuit of France he referred to as his "Flame Pilgrimage." Every time he was captured he escaped the authorities using demonic powers, only to reappear and wreak havoc in another town. When finally captured in Rheims, Eon was brought before Pope Eugenius III. The Pope craved an audience because many claimed to have seen the madman with demons, and many more claimed to hear heretical overtones in Eon's speeches along his pilgrimage route.

When questioned before his execution, Eon spoke these words: "*I am Eon who shall come to judge the quick and the dead and the world by fire.*" After his execution, exorcists who investigated the fires found nothing unholy in their searches, until one of them noted that the route of the Flame Pilgrimage itself was, when drawn on a map, in the shape of a half-finished demonic sigil. It is unknown whether a cult has developed around Eon's journey.

PLACES

Certainly Mythic Europe itself is infused with the corruption of the Devil. However, there are certain places where the dark is particularly deep, and the *mundus infernus* is made to seem hospitable by comparison. These corrupt spots are where diabolists and demons congregate, so discussion of these spots is important to your Saga.

Infernal Auras

The Infernal realm is the source of one of the four mystical forces common to Mythic Europe (Rationality being non-mystical). The Infernal realm's supernatural Auras affect the other realms as listed in the *Realm Interaction Chart* in *Ars Magica* (p. 308). For a description of the characteristics of Infernal Auras in general, see *Ars Magica*, p. 320. For examples of specific Infernal *regios*, see the two *Mythic Places* supplements, written for the Second Edition of the game. There is no

need to elaborate upon this "standard" material here. It is the purpose of this section to elaborate on the Infernal Auras of Mythic Europe.

The Infernal realm is populated by numerous demons of oppression, mostly submundanes. The oppression they cause permits effects beyond the standard ones described in the rules for Auras. Since life in the *mundus infernus* is already painful, life within an Infernal Aura should emphasize that pain. To incorporate this quality into your stories, the following rule is suggested:

Physical rolls that could possibly result in injury are modified by Aura value to promote the most harm. Thus, in an area with an Infernal Aura of four, someone could be made to roll four less on a Dexterity test to avoid falling down (making the character more prone to fall and get hurt). By the same logic, attackers receive a +4 bonus to Attack and Damage rolls, while defenders suffer a -4 modifier to Defense and Soak totals. The score is also applied to Fatigue rolls, making it easier for characters to be harmed by exhaustion. Note, too, that it is the actual Aura rating that acts as a modifier, not the penalty calculation determined by the *Realm Interaction Chart*.

Furthermore, because of the harmful nature of Infernal Auras, the number of Botches rolled for physical actions are increased as they are for supernatural actions (see *Ars Magica*, p.309). Thus, a Grog is more likely to gore himself accidentally in an area of heavy Infernal oppression, just as a Magus is more likely to ruin a spell.

Those aligned with the Infernal realm are immune to these detrimental physical effects if said effects put diabolists on the receiving end of harm. However, diabolists must have Hierarchy scores (see Chapter Five) equal to or greater than the area's Aura rating to avoid its added physical dangers. Otherwise, they suffer the full effects.

Quiet Auras

The Infernal, for all its faults, can never be accused of being slothful in the acquisition of souls. Devils use many means to catch their prey. One such means is the quiet Aura, an Infernal Aura that is subtle and insidious instead of blatant and oppressive. It is often difficult to overlook the evil radiating from of an Aura aligned with Hell. Decay and warping of nature make obvious the power at work. Indeed, in such environs the virtuous are on guard against sin. In a quiet Aura, the setting seems innocent and free of hateful forces. Therein lies its terrible danger.

Generally, quiet Auras are not detectable as Infernal save by perceptive people of Divine character, or those with Sense Holiness and Unholiness (a stress roll of 18+, minus Aura rating, is required to recognize the area for what it is). Not even Hermetic Intellego spells can detect them; quiet Auras have the deceptive protection that demons do.

Quiet Auras are unusual in that they most often arise as pockets inside areas of another Aura type (even inside the Dominion). Areas of Faerie Aura are not immune to this effect, as members of the Unseelie Court have sometimes been

converted to the demonic camp as *terreni*, but the Dominion, the realm of Reason, and the Magical realm are more common targets.

At the border between a quiet pocket Aura and the surrounding Aura, the rating of the surrounding Aura is reduced by the value of the pocket Aura. This is an unavoidable "dampening" effect. Should the quiet Aura be stronger than the surrounding Aura, the difference between the two is counted as a standard Infernal Aura. Although the dampening of the pocket's surrounding Aura may be noticed by travelers or inhabitants, the cause of the dampening is only apparent to those of Divine nature or the Sense Unholiness and Unholiness Ability.

Here, then, is the danger of a quiet Aura: unsuspecting travelers of an Aura do not realize their environment is gradually changing toward the Infernal. Before long they are in the midst of an Infernal Aura and are affected as usual. That is, spell casting and other supernatural rolls are modified, and Botches become more common. (Keep in mind, though, that quiet Auras are not centers of oppression; the "physical harm" purview described above for standard Infernal Auras does not apply here.) A quiet Aura is so insidious that residents of the surrounding Aura may often be unaware of what lurks around them.

As an example of where quiet Auras might appear, most theurgists have tiny sanctuaries of quiet Infernal Aura within their churches (if they are single-benefice clergy). Some are even able to generate a temporary quiet Aura with their ceremonies. If created at the altar, such an Aura can even prevent the sacraments from taking effect.

Finally, note that quiet Auras are both subtle and difficult to access. A diabolist's Hierarchy score, divided by two (rounded down), acts as a functional maximum to the bonuses diabolists can gain toward their spell casting rolls in a quiet Aura. Higher bonuses would draw attention to a local center of Infernal power.

Tide Auras

A Tide Aura is a temporary surge of supernatural force that resembles a true Aura, but which fades away shortly after forming. The Infernal realm alone experiences this phenomenon with any frequency; its tides are usually called black tides, or ill-tides, by those who are aware of them. The most important aspect of the black tide is that (if nursed by a knowledgeable practitioner) it can overcome other Auras of higher value.

These evil tides are caused by localized or widespread temporal conditions such as celestial influence, the moods and actions of large groups of people, and actual diabolic activity in an area. If these influences are maintained for long periods of time (i.e., not celestial influences, since their durations are fixed and brief), the tide Auras they cause can become permanent. As a rule of thumb, if the tide Aura's cause remains in effect for a number of years equal to twice the Aura it generates, the Aura becomes permanent.

Tide Auras are more conceptual in nature than quantitative, but some guidelines for black tides follow:

- Focused campaigns of oppression (such as a terrible sleet storm, accompanied by howling winds and biting cold) are usually capable of blanketing the affected area in an Aura rated one or two. Particularly brutal oppressions such as plague, famine and flooding can evoke much higher tide Aura ratings. The most common cause of an ill-tide is nightfall, which provides a standard Infernal Aura of one in all but a few bastions of other powers (i.e., Magical, Divine, and Faerie regions). Nightfall is not a long-term event and thus does not cause a permanent Aura.

- Celestial omens are usually limited to brief periods of time, such as a few hours while a star reaches its apex, or an entire night when a constellation is under special influence. However, these events can affect enormous areas of Mythic Europe. The average ill-omened celestial event can only impose a +1 black tide rating, although higher values are possible for infrequent but terrifying events, such as a "dark star" which is visible for only a single night once every century. Certain events progress in stages, generating increasing Infernal tides until some peak range of influence is reached for a brief time (certain eclipses are examples of this). Diabolists who utilize such an evasive dark tide to work magic must attempt to finish their rituals at exactly the proper instant, before the peak of the tide recedes.

- Human situations are much harder to evaluate, but the average city slum, where muggers murder victims and beggars die of diseases, has an ill-tide of at least two, increasing as high as four in areas where particularly infamous acts have taken place. Wars are the preferred feeding grounds of demonkind, and the site of a war can easily produce an Aura of five or greater if the level of suffering and hatred is sufficiently high. (The entire cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their inhabitants' dark predilections, were so Infernally corrupted that God destroyed them altogether.)

- Auras arising from diabolic rites are somewhat easier to quantify (tide Auras may not form from every single manifestation of diabolic activity, but significant activities or uses of power certainly generate Auras). In some cases, the diabolists in question actually promote a black tide (with hopes of making it permanent) by casting Infernal spells. Details of the tide are determined by the spell used.

Even if the diabolists who perform a given ritual want to remain hidden, they cannot disguise all the evil energy they evoke. A residual tide Aura arises. This Aura rating equals the average Hierarchy score of ritual participants, modified as follows: +1 if there are between 20 and 50 participants, +2 if there are 50 or more, and -2 if there are fewer than 20 diabolists involved. If a diabolic event even warrants calculating a tide Aura rating, that rating is always at least one.

The locale of the Aura is designated by the reach of the ritual. It extends as far as its participants spread, or simply as far as the physical boundaries of the environment extend (e.g., within the building, or to the edge of the forest clearing).

A place qualifies for "constant tiding" if diabolists perform rites there at least once a week. Otherwise, the Aura recedes in even increments after the end of the first missed week.

Obviously, specific areas within a diabolic theater should have appropriately higher Auras associated with them, such as the altar in a Devil's Church or the magic circle in a goetic sorcerer's laboratory.

- Any Gifted diabolist who meditates within the bounds of a tide Aura, for a period of time equal to the Aura value in hours, may add her Meditation score to the Aura's rating (however, the Aura can rise no higher than nine). The Aura also persists for a number of units of time equal to the diabolist's Meditation score. The unit of time depends on the nature of the tide Aura. If it ordinarily lasts a matter of days, the Aura's life is prolonged by a number of days. If the Aura's life is measured in hours, the Aura persists for a few hours more.

Tide Auras may develop anywhere, even in areas that already possess Auras of another supernatural force. In this respect tide Auras are like quiet Auras; a blurred border forms between the two supernatural powers. The Aura at the boundary between the two is determined by subtracting the rating of the Infernal Aura from that of the surrounding Aura. Any positive points remaining indicate the new, lower rating of the outside Aura. Any negative points produce an Infernal Aura of the remaining value (treated as a positive number). Regardless of the border rating, however, the interior of the tide Aura is at full strength, regardless of the rating of the power outside.

Tide Auras, like normal Infernal Auras, warp their environment. It's therefore fairly easy to recognize the Aura, but the temporary nature of the Aura is not immediately apparent (spells or Abilities like Sense Holiness and Unholiness might be used to determine this).

Tide Auras also have the full destructive power of Infernal Auras, so supernatural rolls of other forces are interfered with, more Botches are possible, and physical harm is more likely inside the Aura. Those aligned with Hell receive full bonuses to magic and other rolls when in a tide Aura; bonuses aren't limited by a factor of Hierarchy as they are in quiet Auras.

Ante-Hell Regio

Conceptually, Infernal *regio* layers are sometimes said to sink deeper with each increase in Aura value; thus an area's level five Aura is said to be "lower" than its level two Aura.

There are also rumors that a single vast *regio* of Aura nine exists at the border between earth and Hell. That *regio* is said to be accessible from all Infernal *regios* which extend to Aura nine (an Aura of 10 is a gate to Hell itself, so there can be no *regio* with layers of value 10). This dark kingdom on the shore of Hell is called Ante-Hell, and, if it does exist, is the location where fief demons (see above) have chosen to set their New Hell.

For Storyguides who wish to use Ante-Hell as a true place in the mythic world, consult the entry on fief demons and reread Chapter Three.

THINGS

Certain other features of Hell are not easily classified or organized. Like the devils they relate to, these bits of information are unique and are thus discussed in individual entries.

Aesfotedia

A black, resinous substance is found in some areas of Infernal Aura. The stuff possesses magical properties like those of raw *vis* but is aligned purely with the dark forces and black magicks of the world. This "Infernal *vis*" is called *aesfotedia*, known to Germanic Magi as *Teufelsdrek* (the Devil's Turd). *Aesfotedia* is linked to the Infernal and may be manipulated into a raw *vis* substitute for any goetic ritual, lab experiment or Infernal spell. Indeed, in the hands of a diabolist, *aesfotedia* can be used in place of any Art-specific *vis* type.

Even Magi of Hermes can milk some usefulness out of *aesfotedia*. The spell *Change the Nature of Vis* may be used to change *aesfotedia* into a number of pawns of raw *Vim vis*, but for every pawn changed, one is also lost. An Infernal version of the spell also exists; this spell changes any other Form of *vis* into *aesfotedia*. However, use of the spell requires a full Season, and requires the diabolist to distill and consume one pawn of raw *vis* for every five Levels of the spell. Over the course of the Season the diabolist excretes an equal number of *aesfotedia* pawns. Of course, extraction of the stuff requires the diabolist to collect and refine his feces for several months.

The corpses of certain demons may contain *aesfotedia* instead of ordinary *vis*. *Sense the Nature of Vis* registers *aesfotedia* as silver in color, and a Perception + Occult Lore stress role of 12+ is necessary to recognize the difference between Infernal *vis* and *Vim vis*. (Any attempt to use *aesfotedia* in a Hermetic spell without first transforming it into "standard" *Vim vis* — by means of *Change the Nature of Vis* — results in the immediate Botch of the spell cast. Infernal spells can be cast using unconverted *aesfotedia*, though.) Anyone who uses *aesfotedia* extracted from a demonic corpse to boost the power of a spell is essentially casting an Infernal spell and receives one Hierarchy Experience Point for each different spell cast with this unholy influence.

Hermetic Magi working with *aesfotedia* should remember the origins of the stuff. It is concentrated evil, and Hermetic Magi caught with it may be placed on trial by the Order. The stuff may also attract the attention of demons, especially those willing to help one extract more power from it, for a price. . .

Hell Tomes

The Watchers have created a number of tomes on demonology, and Nephilim spirits have subsequently dispersed them throughout the world. Satan desires to promote interest in goeticism, Hell, and the occult in general. These texts are his tools. Hell tomes, sometimes called Black Ledgers, are constantly being updated, sometimes right before a reader's eyes.

Thus, a Hell tome is always accurate in its information. The demons described are always ones whose enemies in Hell can afford to have them "written up" in the books.

Hell tomes therefore contain profiles on *depravati* demons more often than *terreni*, but some *terreni* have been known to get on the wrong side of the Watchers and other echelon demons. Thus, *terreni* profiles are not unknown. Once a demon bargains to get back in the good graces of the Dark Powers, the Nephilim journey to all Hell tomes containing the subject's description and remove the appropriate entry. A profile that is transferred to a mundane or magical text before this time is out of reach, though, and may be spread by mortals; thus, even "favored" demons are susceptible to summonings.

Greater Seals

A greater seal is a type of demonic pact discussed in Chapter Five. It allows a diabolist to demand certain powers from a demon's arsenal, while the demon is imprisoned inside an object for the duration. Indeed, greater seals are emblems which capture demons of great power and actually use their essences to create a new *maleficium*. These *maleficia* are even more powerful than normally possible for the trapped demon. The *maleficia* created by these seals are unique, devastating effects: floods, earthquakes, plagues, infestations and mighty storms — things almost apocalyptic in nature. Not surprisingly, greater seals are quite rare.

A demon may be placed in a greater seal and used to create a *maleficium* of twice its Might score in equivalent spell Level effect. However, the seal needs time to build up this power, so it cannot release the effect until a number of years equal to the effect's Level have passed. Breaking a greater seal prematurely sets the contained demon free, sometimes as a grateful ally, other times as a wrathful spirit of vengeance. In any event, the craft of greater seals is unknown to Hermetic Magi, and very rare even in Infernal circles.

Curses

Black witches and other mundanes without the Gift may nevertheless have access to spell-like effects. They can simulate magical power by calling upon dark curses. Curses are supernatural effects born of the earth but nursed and nurtured by submundanes and other demons. They are unique in that they are accessible to both the False Empyrean and the Shadow Empyrean; curses are created from the *mundus infernus* and thus are both magical and corrupt. Since they are managed by evil spirits, dark curses are usually not the province of the Gifted. Anyone may therefore call for a curse and have a chance of seeing his wish come true, but maybe at the expense of his soul.

Some demons fulfill curses to gain converts, others to see what moral effects a curse has upon the one who places it, still others because they are "contracted" to aid specific Infernal allies, such as witches and members of dark congregations. Gifted practitioners may invoke curses without calling upon

demonic aid, but this is nevertheless a gray area between true magic and Infernal *maleficia*, so the Order frowns upon use of curses in the same way it frowns upon necromancy.

The power and frequency of curses is left wholly in your hands. Characters with the Hex Ability (*Ars Magica*, p.94) may curse, but they run the risk of tarnishing their souls as others do.

THE UNDEAD

Mankind was made subject to death because of the treachery of Satan. Furthermore, the realm between material life and death is also under the purview of Infernal powers. However, the land of the dead is a human concept only recently taken over by Hell and given an evil connotation. Many cultures therefore view the undead as a non-Infernal phenomenon. The Christian is not one of these cultures.

The soul may not be compromised due to its Divine nature, but the spirit is a substance of the earth and may therefore be warped into an unnatural state by *malefic* or magical manipulation. A spirit which continues to exist without a body may become a ghost. One which animates a body after the soul and intellect are gone is a zombie (or skeleton, depending upon bodily decomposition). A spirit with intellect and body may even be a thinking apparition with the ability to make its own decisions.

There is even rumored to be a state of vampiric life-in-death, wherein a great curse permits the soul to remain with the body after undergoing a terrible change. Only amazing moral fortitude allows victims of such a curse to enter Heaven after suffering some final death.

The undead are the progeny of earth demons (in spirit if not literally), and are created by the same pool of dark force from whence spring curses. Undeath is thus the province of both wizards and goetic sorcerers, and necromancers walk a blurred line between the two realms of supernatural influence. Fortunately, it seems that a Gift for working either normal or dark magic is necessary to gain control over the stalkers of the night. Thus, they are unavailable to the average, un-Gifted diabolist, save by rare Infernal favors or ceremonies.

THE DARK HEARTS

The game-related effects of *caligo* hearts are described earlier in this chapter, but these demon-stones have residual powers as well. Simply put, unattached demonic hearts "leak" evil Auras. In addition to creating permanent Infernal Auras when left in one place long enough, hearts can interact with the power source which creates curses and the undead and thereby cause any number of unpredictable results.

There are no specific rules to follow here, as this is more a tool of story convenience. Foul Infernal creatures like the beasts of Hell, undead versions of local fauna, and poisonous, man-eating flora are just some examples of possibilities which can stem from sedentary demon hearts. Thus, even "unprotected" hearts in remote areas of the world form protective ecologies over time. Retrieving a demon-stone is not an easy task.



MASTER AND SERVANT

CHAPTER FIVE

Preamble

This chapter details the rules for controlling and losing control of demons. A character may not actively control a demon unless she possesses a means of tapping into the spirit's Regime of Dichotomy, and has a means of imitating the Ritual of Mastery. These feats require the secret Divine power of the Pauline Arts, a theurgist's bastardized ceremonial magic, or true black magic. Because *The Maleficium* is meant to complement the expected scope of most *Ars Magica* Sagas, rules here concern only the last category of evil pursuit. True black magic is that pursued by the Dark Magus, a renegade of the Order of Hermes who uses combinations of Hermetic and Infernal magic.

The Ritual of Mastery, used to summon and control demons, is described here in game terms. For reasons of space and policy, nothing is said about the elaborate rituals and equipage required for mastery of evil spirits. Details are abstracted, but individual Troupes can add as much color and graphic detail as they desire, to fill in the visuals and components.

A Mechanical Interlude

Before diving into specific rules about controlling demons, there are three topics that require the application of new game mechanics:

THE PRINCIPLE OF UNCERTAINTY

The person playing the goetic sorcerer must never know the results of her own die rolls where stages of the Ritual of Mastery are concerned. Let the player roll for her character's actions, but hide the die behind the *Parma Fabula* before it stops rolling. Such a rolling style is crucial to the flavor of demonic dealings, and it should drive the player crazy. All goetic rolls are made on stress dice (obviously!), so when 1's and 0's must be rerolled, let the player roll those follow-ups normally. Don't specifically tell her if the first roll was a potential Botch or die multiplier, though. Let her sweat. If the results are obvious in the story (i.e., the summoned demon overcomes restraints and attacks), so be it.

NUMBERS OF THE BEASTS

Just as Magi measure Hermetic spells in increments of five "game" Levels, known to them as magnitudes, so too do they quantify demons in increments of five "game" Infernal Might Points, also portrayed as magnitudes. For instance, a demon with a Might of 30 has a magnitude of six. This value is usually used to figure an Ease Factor or Experience Point tally. The rules also often call for using "twice magnitude" (i.e., 12 for the demon with 30 Might). The summoning diabolist must estimate the magnitude of his subject (since he never knows for certain), but when the roll is made, the actual magnitude (known to the Storyguide) is what counts. Since the player doesn't see the rolls, the unknown difference between assumed magnitude and known magnitude remains unknown.

THE CONFIDENCE GAME

Wrestling with the supernatural might and mind of a demon takes a great deal of self-confidence. The slightest hesitation or moment of uncertainty could prove worse than fatal. In the Ritual of Mastery, there are no Confidence rerolls. This may seem counter-intuitive, but the reason is that the mechanics of Confidence are handled differently here. Confidence Points must be consciously spent and hoarded, put at risk and left as a final bulwark of mental defense; thus, high Confidence equates to a marked and linear improvement in goetic talent instead of a new random chance with the same likelihood of failure.

HIERARCHY SCORE

Hierarchy is a new Ability available gained only through exposure to the black arts, whether derived from magical or Infernal quarter. Hierarchy is an Arcane Talent (an Infernal Talent, to be accurate), and represents the ability to absorb those brief glimpses of Hell that dealings with demons and Infernal powers provide. With wider Infernal experience, and a higher Hierarchy score, the Dark Magus becomes adept at juggling alien concepts and forces, and gains an intuitive understanding of Infernal entities and supernatural theories. In short, increasing Hierarchy reflects the Magus's gradual acclimatization to Hell's ways.

All persons embroiled in the Infernal milieu have ratings in Hierarchy. The score reflects the degree of their warping, and no Gift of magic is needed to have the score. Black witches, members of the dark congregation, and mortals who sell their souls to a devil are all candidates for Hierarchy (but simple mundane sinners aren't). However, as only Dark Magi and other Gifted sorcerers may initiate goetic rites, only their Hierarchy scores have deeply arcane connotations.

Hierarchy vs. Occult Lore

Hierarchy and Occult Lore are both important Abilities for a diabolist character to gain, and each Ability covers a slightly different aspect of the Infernal experience (though they are, at times, used simultaneously). Occult Lore represents a more scholarly realm, being a reflection of accumulated memories of earth-based demonic lore and a knowledge of the craft rituals, traditions and auspices of the Black Arts.

Hierarchy, on the other hand, is more involved with "field work." It deals with direct experience with aspects of demonology linked to Hell itself, and reflects insights arising from the slow corruption of a character's soul toward the Satanic schema.

To put it another way, Occult Lore is human education about the aspects of demons and goeticism. Hierarchy is a Talent born of and magnified by exposure to the Infernal realm when that realm is embraced as an ally. Use Occult Lore to see if you know a demonic magic device's history; roll with Hierarchy to delve into the device's secrets.

As do other Abilities, Hierarchy has Specialties. Diabolist characters can choose from: *demon Names, summonings, banishment, heart-stones, making deals*, or anything else you can think of.

THE GOETIC ARTS

There are three arcane skills associated with the black arts that make up the Ritual of Mastery: Summon, Bind, and Dismiss. These scores, when in the hands of a Dark Magus, are developed in light of previous Hermetic insight (i.e., the magic Arts), but once in place these theatres of practice may be improved upon as if separate Arts in and of themselves (they can be improved upon as discussed under increasing Arts, *Ars Magica*, p.56).

Summon

Summon represents a magical procedure of Ritual length. Summoning requires 15 minutes for every level of magnitude of the Contact spell (see below) used for the summoning. The spell is fueled by pawns of Vim vis equal to twice this magnitude. The spell must be cast from either a permanent or temporary magic circle, and it summons either a *depravati* or *terreni* demon into the diabolist's presence. See *The Summoning Ritual*, below, for the application of the Summon Art.

Summon Score = Stamina + Vim/2 (rounded up) + Occult Lore. Any bonuses from excess Contact spell Levels used can be added to this.

Bind

Bind is a potent non-ritual (or "Formulaic") ensorcellment which is crucial to a Ritual of Mastery. It allows the Dark Magus to keep a demon in thrall for an extended period of time without active effort. The contest of wills must be won by the Magus before the binding is attempted, and sometimes the contest's results are not conclusive enough to permit a true binding. In

this case, there is a temporary binding of a short time or a few tasks, after which the demon must be released. This temporary binding does not fall under true Binding's purview.

Bind = Rego + Vim + Hierarchy

Dismiss

Dismiss, in contrast to Summon, is a spell that sends a demon back to its place of origin. This is a "Formulaic" spell (no time or raw vis is needed), and it works best when the subject cooperates. It has an Instantaneous Duration and Range of 15 paces. When the demon cooperates it works automatically, provided the diabolist's Dismiss score equals or exceeds twice the demon's magnitude. A demon willingly accepts dismissal if it wishes to return to its place of origin, whether the Dismiss caster is the same person who summoned the demon or is someone else. *Terreni* demons who are summoned and then dismissed return to their location at the time of summoning. *Depravati* return to their fiefs in Hell. Dismissal is harmless to the demon; it causes no damage and melds the bodies of *depravati* back into the Shadow Empyrean until they return to earth. (Thus, there's no corpse, and no vis to scavenge. A corpse is only left if a demon is banished or destroyed.)

Dismiss = (Rego + Vim)/2 + Occult Lore. Any bonuses from excess Contact spell Levels used can be added to this.

These three black arts are the only ones recognized by the Watchers (and hence are under their "legal" protection). Warding against and destroying demons are magical effects beyond goetic rites. The first effect, that of warding, is accepted as a part of human fear, and is exemplified in the use of magic circles, which keep demons from harming summoners. Banishment spells and destruction spells, on the other hand, are anathema, and sure to bring Infernal displeasure. Such destructive spells inspire the greatest Infernal hostility when used in the summoning process. A demon who has been summoned and defeated according to the Ritual of Mastery cannot escape or attack the diabolist, so destroying the "defenseless" being is considered cheating. However, if a demon assaults a diabolist when no Ritual of Mastery is at stake, the case is perceived as a matter of survival of the fittest, with the weaker opponent deserving punishment.

FAMILIARITY

The first step in any Ritual of Mastery is learning about the subject. One cannot simply cast a generic "summoning spell" and have any old spirit pop up as desired. A goetist must gain a Familiarity rating with each unique demon, or with each specific type of demon (for Masks and lesser *terreni*), she wishes to summon. Familiarity can be obtained by studying a demon in a text, by learning its True Name, or by interrogating another demon who knows the subject.

Guidelines for learning a True Name are given in Chapter Four. Knowledge of a True Name provides an automatic Familiarity score of 10 with a given demon.

Demonic interrogation and written demonology texts offer a chance to gain Familiarity through interview or study. The information to be gleaned from each source is rated from one to three. This rating is called the Profile Value. The Magus's Familiarity score on a topic is compared to the Profile Value of the source, and the Familiarity score may be increased in a manner similar to studying Magic Theory from raw vis (see *Ars Magica*, p. 237). In this case, though, Aura does not count, and the rating of the source equates one, two, or three pawns of vis. By these rules, a source can offer one to three Familiarity Points.

If a roll to raise Familiarity Botches, the character's Familiarity score for a demon drops by one point. Contradictory information is discovered, thus making the character uncertain of information. If this Botch occurs in the first attempt to learn about a demon, Familiarity effectively drops to -1.

THE SUMMONING CIRCLE

To effectively summon a demon, a Dark Magus must etch into the ground a magic ring from which to perform. It is possible to forego this step, but it is not recommended. First of all, a summoning without a magic circle does not control where the subject manifests; it could appear behind the goetist, in the next room, or even the next kingdom. The circle allows the Magus to focus the "tunnel" of magic so that the subject appears





in its core physical form immediately in front of her, and cannot wander away (at least not until she allows it to, or the demon defeats her).

Second, when a demon arrives without the use of a circle, assuming the Magus is lucky enough to have it appear in the vicinity, it is under no compulsion to regard the Magus's person as sacred. It cannot drag the goetist off to Hell, but it can kill her. The magic circle prevents this by acting as a ward. The demon may not enter the circle as long as the Magus remains inside (contrary to some fantasy beliefs, the summoner stands inside the circle, not, under most circumstances, the demon).

Every magic circle is given a Level rating according to the rules which follow. No demon whose full Might score is less than the circle's Level + the summoner's Familiarity with the demon (represented by sigils drawn around the circle) may enter the circle, direct *malefic* powers or lesser spirits into it, or reach inside to cause its resident harm. Such protection is even provided against demons who are not subject to the Ritual of Mastery (i.e., the ritual fails or is simply not used), unless the goetist specifies that the demon may penetrate the circle. A circle may be constructed for temporary or permanent use.

Permanent Circles

A permanent circle, usually three paces in diameter, is supernaturally "impressed" into the ground or floor with dyes, carving tools and raw vis. This process takes one Season of laboratory time, and results in a Level equal to:

Permanent Circle Level = Rego + Vim + Intelligence + Magic Theory + (Occult Lore x Infernal Aura). Familiarity for a particular demon is added to this total.

The Magus must expend one pawn of Rego or Vim vis for every five Levels of the circle or fraction thereof. This design is quite permanent, infinitely reusable, and not ruined by anything short of Holy consecration or utter destruction of the surrounding ground.

Permanent circles are of two varieties, Infernal and Magical. An Infernal circle may only be created in an area where the Aura does not inflict a penalty on Infernal workings (i.e., Infernal, Magic, and Reason realms are acceptable). Furthermore, the above Occult Lore multiplier only applies if the circle is located in an area of true Infernal power. Purely Magical circles, on the other hand, may only be impressed into Magical areas, and Occult Lore itself is merely added to the total (Occult Lore is not multiplied by the Magical Aura rating).

Powders and inks must be applied to the outline of the permanent circle each time it is used, and appropriate sigils of Familiarity must be used for each demon. If the inks and powders are disturbed, only the Familiarity bonus is lost. The preparation of these inks and powders for each individual demon requires 15 minutes' time. After this time, the Contact spell can be cast (see below).

Temporary Circles

Temporary circles are inscribed when a Dark Magus seeks to summon a demon, but is not in his or her sanctum and cannot use a permanent circle. Creation of a temporary circle requires only inks, powders and other fleeting, perishable ingredients. (The boxed Insert *Drawing the Dark Circle* details a spell which may be cast during circle creation.) A temporary circle may be destroyed by a misplaced step or a good scouring. A temporary circle also has a lower protection level than a permanent circle. The circle's total Level of protection equals

Drawing the Dark Circle (ReVi Gen)

Spell Focus: An arthame made of coral (+4)

R: Spec., D: Ring

This is an Infernal version of the spell *Circular Ward Against Demons* (*Ars Magica*, p. 234). The circle drawn is three paces in diameter and the spell is cast while the Magus prepares the physical aspects of a temporary magic circle. Upon casting, the spell's Level + Familiarity + a stress die are treated as the circle's total Level. (Botches are possible, but this spell is always treated as if cast with *Extra Care*, as detail in *Ars Magica* p. 187, so one less Botch die is rolled, and Meditation is added to the spell casting roll.) Time required to cast this spell is Instantaneous, but the preparation of circle ingredients delays completion of the project by 15 minutes. Unlike Infernal permanent circles, this magic ring can be set up in areas that give Aura penalties to Infernal magic (but the calculated Aura penalty, from p. 308 of the rules, is subtracted from the total Level of the ring).

An arthame is a ritual dagger used in some Infernal ceremonies.

the spell's Level + a stress die (and don't forget Familiarity). If the Level roll Botches, the circle is flawed and provides no protection, but the Dark Magus does not realize it.

A temporary circle takes a mere 15 minutes to create, using the combination of a Formulaic spell and the application of ingredients.

Temporary Circle Level = Spell Level + stress die

If the Might of a demon summoned outside a circle (permanent or temporary) is greater than the Level of the circle + Familiarity, the demon may attack the summoner. A *depravati* demon may grab the hapless diabolist and, using the summoning tunnel that is still in place, drag her off to its estate in Hell (body and soul, without the consent of the angels). *Terreni* may only bodily attack their host, and those who are listed in the Tally of Souls may Accuse the soul if she is slain. This is the ultimate and most extreme fate that may befall a goetist.

THE CONTACT SPELL

The final requisite of demonic summoning is the Ritual Contact spell (the boxed Insert, *Contact Demon*, details such a spell). The goetist must seek the demon out and create a mystic link, a "thread," which the summoning tunnel follows. Since demons are immune to magical detection this link requires a purely Infernal *maleficium* known as the Contact spell. Each demon needs its own unique Contact spell (and since each spell is unique, it acts as an Arcane Connection to the demon). Demons of a common species, like Mask demons, can be summoned by a spell common to that species alone. Since many demons are different, however, the Dark Magus is commonly forced to invent unique Contact spells in the lab, one per summoning subject. While Contact spells may be found by lucky goetists in dark tomes, most must invent their own versions.

The Magus must first have a Familiarity of three or more with the target to even begin to develop a new Contact spell. Inventing a Contact spell in the lab uses the standard spell creation rules (*Ars Magica*, p. 239); *Intéllego* and *Vim* are the respective Technique and Form, but inventors may also add their Occult Lore and Familiarity scores to the Lab Total.

Since individual demons' Might scores are subject to change, and often vary between demons of comparable power, Contact spells must be adaptable. Contact spells are therefore designed to affect demons within a given range of power, and are then tailored to affect a specific demon within that range of power. The following chart delineates the general classes of demons that Contact spells affect, depending on the Level of the Contact spell. These Levels are the minimum required to contact and summon a demon of a certain class.

Demon Type	Contact Level
Astasian, <i>terreni</i>	10
Minor, <i>terreni</i>	15
Minor, <i>depravati</i>	20
Major, <i>terreni</i>	25
Major, <i>depravati</i> :	
7th-9th echelon	30
4th-6th echelon	40
1st-3rd echelon	50

Thus, a goetist who intends to summon a Minor *depravati* demon must use a Contact spell with a minimum Level of 20. A spell of that Level can contact and summon any Minor *depravati* demon. However, as Contact spells must be personalized to a specific subject, only one demon can be summoned with one spell. To summon another Minor *depravati* demon, the caster has to invent another Contact spell.

A Contact spell can also be cast at a Level higher than the required minimum. However, the caster must know or have a copy of the higher Level spell. For example, a Level 20 spell can be used to summon a *terreni* astasian, which normally only requires a Level 10 Contact spell. Using a spell of excess power affords the caster more control over the demon. For each two Levels (fractions rounded up) the spell is over the required minimum, +1 is gained on Summon and Dismiss rolls.

Finally, casting a Ritual Contact spell costs two pawns of raw *Vim vis* or *aesfotedia* per point of magnitude of the spell. Thus, casting a more powerful spell costs more *vis*.

Contact Demon (InVi Gen & Spec)

R: Spec., D: Inst., Ritual

This Ritual spell creates a mystic link between the caster and one specific target demon. If the demon is already bound to the caster, the two may converse via the link. If the demon is not bound to the caster, the Dark Magus learns the demon's current state: banished/destroyed, all avatars in use, bound to another diabolist, or free. In this last case, and possibly in the next to last, the diabolist may use her Summon Art to call the demon into her presence, from anywhere in Hell or on the earth. A demon who is contacted always knows the exact location of the contactor (and if bound to another diabolist, may relate that knowledge to its master).

For every magnitude point of the spell cast, two pawns of *Vim* or *aesfotedia vis* must be spent. Fifteen minutes of time is also expended per magnitude. Meditation Skill may be applied to spell casting rolls and standard Fatigue loss rules for Ritual spells apply. For every two Levels (fractions rounded up) that the spell is cast above the minimum spell Level needed for the demon, a +1 bonus is applied to Summon and Dismiss rolls. For example, summoning a minor *terreni* (Level 15 minimum) with a Level 25 Contact spell delivers a +5 bonus.

If the spell casting roll fails, the spell itself fails and the demon sought is not alerted to conspiracy. However, if the spell roll is Botched, the demon may be alerted to danger, and may learn who and where the diabolist is.

Helping Hands

Like Hermetic Magi, Dark Magi sometimes need apprentices, or at least fellow goetists willing to lend assistance. This is particularly true if a Dark Magus hopes to perform greater feats in the summoning chamber than unaided skill permits. A Dark Magus may have one assistant to a Mastery procedure per point of the Magus's Hierarchy score. These assistants lend half their own Hierarchy scores (rounded up) to one of the three goetic art rolls: Summon, Bind or Dismiss. Each assistant must be instructed or choose a particular step of the summoning process to assist before the ceremony begins, and an assistant may not change the nature of his assistance during the ceremony without reducing his efficiency by half again (dropping the assistant down to one-fourth Hierarchy).

The Rule of Cardinality

Each goetic pact is contracted between a single demon and a single goetist. The contract has a mathematical cardinality of one human "host" and one demonic "guest." While it is possible to include multiple aides and assistants in the black ritual, a single diabolist hosts the contacted and coerced demon, and hers is the soul placed in cosmic jeopardy.

Other diabolists can, of course, lend their mystic support to the endeavor (namely, Hierarchy points, as described above). This act places them at great physical risk should the ceremony go foul. Their souls, however, are only at risk insofar as they participate in an inherently evil and despicable act. The host alone risks immediate forfeiture of soul to the creature summoned. However, such a loss only occurs if the leading Magus loses the contest of wills or if the magic circle's ward is not strong enough to keep the demon out.

The Summoning Ritual

A goetist may summon only evil spirits into his presence, whether they tend toward the physical, the spiritual, or are pure spirits of eidolon class. True devils may not be summoned save by great ceremonies of the Storyguide's devising, nor may pure fiends or astasians in Hell be summoned. (The former have no spirits, while the latter have only partial spirits, too small to be grasped from afar.) Shades of dead sinners being tortured in Hell may also be summoned if they have their spirits with them, but these are not true demonic summonings. No contest of wills is required to summon a shade of the damned. Details of these "minor" summonings are up to the Storyguide.

Through research, the diabolist estimates the general magnitude of a given demon (and the player calculates its relative Might score). This information may be surmised by the Level of the Contact spell cast (average Might scores of demons are listed under *Echelon Devils*, in Chapter Three, and as a rule of thumb, major demons have Might of 25+ while lesser demons have scores lower than 25). The magnitude of a demon

can also be learned from a demon's profile (often acquired in Infernal books). The most accurate of these references are Hell tomes and demons who are rivals of the one being summoned.

The estimated magnitude (Might) of the demon summoned is important knowledge because it gives the summoner an idea of how powerful the demon is. This knowledge enables the diabolist to ensure that his defenses will contain the demon. Knowledge of a demon's magnitude also gives the diabolist an idea of how a demon can alter its power during the summoning; thus, the demon has less opportunity to surprise and overwhelm the diabolist.

In traversing the "summoning tunnel," whether from somewhere on earth or from Hell, to the goetist's summoning chamber, demons are immersed in the Shadow Empyrean itself. *Terreni* subjects, if they have bodies, are propelled at amazing speeds without their bodies, which reform at the other end of the tunnel. *Depravati* leave their Hell-based bodies behind (if they have such) and form new physical bodies out of the material of the Shadow Empyrean.

The entire summoning process involves ceremony and ritual. Preparation of the protective circle always requires ceremony and sometimes Formulaic magic (for temporary circles). Casting the Contact spell requires a Ritual spell. The summoner stands in the center of the prepared circle; the helpers (if any) sit just inside the perimeter. The diabolist then casts the Ritual Contact spell to initiate the summoning, and spends the required time and vis. This spell establishes a link to the demon in question.

The Command

Once the circle is established and the Contact spell is cast, a tie is formed between goetist and demon. The demon is now subject to the summoning, but the goetist must force the demon to participate, using *malefic* power to seize the demon's freedom. The diabolist makes a stress roll modified by his Summon Art score (see *The Goetic Arts*, above). For every two Levels (rounded up) that the Contact spell exceeds the minimum Level required for the demon's power class (see *The Contact Spell*, above), +1 is added to this roll. The result is compared to the demon's full Might score. If the diabolist's roll is higher than the demon's Might, the demon is forced to participate in the summoning. The diabolist may therefore proceed with the remainder of the Contact spell.

Demon Participation in Summoning: Summon Art + bonus from excess Contact spell Levels + stress die versus demon's full Might

It's important to remember the amount by which the summoner's roll exceeds the demon's initial Might. That value determines how much control the diabolist has over the demon during the actual summoning.

If the diabolist's roll is lower than the demon's Might score, the demon notices an attempt on its freedom and resists the diabolist's summoning. The demon knows who and where the would-be summoner is. If the demon is already Bound to another Magus, the demon may relate its knowledge to that

Magus. A failed roll breaks the Contact spell established between diabolist and demon. All vis spent to cast the spell is lost. The Contact spell may now be renewed but the demon is certainly prepared for that eventuality and may make further summoning attempts more difficult (see below).

If the diabolist's Summon roll Botches, the spell fails and all vis spent is lost. The demon in question not only knows who and where the summoner is, but may use the still-open Contact spell to travel to the Magus of its own free will. The Magus cannot attempt a contest of wills but can try to Dismiss the demon. The demon, on the other hand, may do as it pleases in the diabolist's presence, or may even go elsewhere. Unless the demon can overcome the summoner's protection circle, though, it cannot directly affect the summoner.

Alternately, on a diabolist's summoning Botch, the demon may send an agent, like a Stead-beast, to dispatch the diabolist. The demon might also simply inquire as to the goetist's needs and maybe even fulfill them—all with the intent to corrupt the diabolist further and ensure collection of another spirit, if not another soul.

Delivering the Demon

If the diabolist's Summon roll against the demon succeeds, the Contact spell takes effect. A "summoning tunnel" forms between diabolist and demon, and the demon is transported to

the summoner's location. The demon's transport through the tunnel poses the next danger to the diabolist, for the demon can alter its power with intent to undo the diabolist's control.

The summoning tunnel allows a demon access to a great deal of raw energy. Indeed, demons may actually reach out and latch onto extra energy as they travel, thus arriving before the diabolist with far more Might than expected. Then again, certain demons fight the summoning force in just the opposite way. They shed as much energy into the tunnel as possible, intending to retrieve that energy once Dismissed. A demon may shed its power to thwart a goetist, leaving powers behind that the summoner desires to use and hopefully encouraging the diabolist to Dismiss the useless demon. Even if the demon is not Dismissed, a "shaved" spirit is less susceptible to the temporary deaths of banishment and destruction and thus its period of stasis is proportionately shorter (a demon destroyed with half its usual Might and powers goes into stasis for half the usual time).

Though the summoned demon can alter its power in the summoning tunnel, the diabolist can also try to curtail the demon's efforts. To maintain control over the demon in the tunnel, the diabolist may choose to "rein in" the demon, keeping it from acquiring more power. The diabolist may also "whip" the demon, ensuring that its powers cannot be reduced. As a third option, the diabolist can let the demon arrive as it will.

The diabolist must choose one of these options. A summoned demon cannot be reined in and whipped at the same time. This means gambling on the demon's response to the summoning. By and large, a demon responds according to its personality and the importance the task it was involved in when summoned. If angered, the demon may choose to amass power and exact revenge on the diabolist, or shed power to divert the diabolist's interests and return to its plots. If the diabolist chooses to whip the demon and the demon actually accumulates power in the summoning tunnel, the diabolist may be in trouble.

Reining

Before a diabolist summons a demon, the diabolist acquires information about the spirit and is likely to learn its estimated magnitude (or Might score). However, by traveling through the summoning tunnel and collecting energy a demon may become more powerful than the summoning diabolist expects. By accumulating energy, the demon hopes to take the diabolist unawares and overwhelm any limited protection the human has prepared against it.

Energy taken from the tunnel increases the demon's Infernal Might score. Bonus Might Points are determined by adding the result of a stress die to the standard or starting magnitude of the demon (before it enters the tunnel). This sum is added to the demon's Might score. If the demon's roll is Botched, the demon is stripped down to half its original Might. Such are the dangers of tapping the summoning tunnel.

Demon's Bonus Might Points = stress die + starting magnitude



A Magus who is prepared for a demon's attempt to gain power can "rein in" that power and reduce the extra Might Points gained. The value by which the Magus's original Summon roll exceeded the demon's original Might, is the value by which the demon's extra Might points are reduced. Thus, if a demon acquiring Might Points in the tunnel gains 11 extra points, and the Magus's initial Summon roll exceeded the demon's starting Might by eight, the demon only gets three extra Might Points from the summoning tunnel ($11 - 8 = 3$).

If the excess of the Magus's Summon roll equals the demon's extra Might Points, the demon gains no extra points. The diabolist also has the option of using leftover points to actually reduce the arriving demon's Might. If the demon in the tunnel gains 11 extra Might Points, and the diabolist's Summon roll was 14, the diabolist can choose to lower the demon's normal Might by three points ($14 - 11 = 3$). However, a diabolist who reduces the demon's arrival Might runs the risk of denying the demon some of its powers. Powers with high Might costs may be rendered useless, and a demon with lower Might may not use any of its powers as frequently. A diabolist who chooses not to reduce a demon's original Might may even secure extra favors from the demon in gratitude for mercy shown.

The only way for a demon to restore Might diminished by a powerful diabolist is to return to Hell, or any other home, after services to the diabolist are complete. Once at "home" the demon regenerates lost Might Points. This restoration may take some time, during which the demon will undoubtedly brood on its ill treatment by the diabolist.

Thus, if the diabolist's original contact with the demon is powerful (i.e., a high Summon score is rolled), the diabolist maintains a tight grip over the demon. However, if the diabolist's initial roll barely managed to contact and summon the demon, the demon may still be able to gain power and overcome the diabolist upon arriving before him. If the demon rolls repeated 1's during its attempt to acquire more Might Points, it could even overcome a powerful Summon roll made against it. A demon whose arriving Might is high enough may conceivably be able to overcome the barrier of the diabolist's protection circle and thus drag the human down to Hell, body and soul.

However, the summoner has some choice in how much power the demon can gain. The chosen Level of the Contact spell may increase Summoning rolls if the chosen Level is higher than the required minimum for the demon. If the diabolist casts the Contact spell at the minimum Level, he runs the risk of making a low Summon roll (as no bonuses are allotted to the Summon roll from spell Level). This is a risk diabolists have to take.

Whipping

In contrast to the above, a demon can shed its energies and thus lower its initial Might score. This depletion of power makes the demon ineffectual and hopefully of less appeal to the summoning diabolist. By shedding power a demon hopes to be

Dismissed by the diabolist. Once in the summoning tunnel back to its former location, the Dismissed demon may reacquire its lost energy and return to full strength.

If the summoning diabolist anticipates the demon's treachery, the human may try to "whip" the demon into obedience. A whipped demon is deterred from shedding power and retains some or all of its initial Might score and powers.

The Magus's original Summon roll must exceed the demon's starting Might score for whipping to succeed (after all, if the Summon roll was lower, the demon could not be summoned).

The demon trying to shed Might Points makes a stress roll and adds the result to its own initial magnitude rating. The total is *subtracted* from the demon's initial Might score.

Might Points Shed = stress die + initial magnitude

A Magus who is prepared for a demon's attempt to shed its power can whip the demon to make sure it can't shed Might Points. For every point by which the Magus's initial Summon roll exceeded the demon's starting Might, the demon is forced to retain one Might Point. Thus, if a demon tries to shed 10 Might Points and the diabolist's initial Summon roll was four, the demon sheds six Might Points ($10 - 4 = 6$).

If the diabolist's Summon roll exceeds the points shed by the demon, the demon is not forced to gain Might Points. For example, if a demon tries to shed 10 Might Points, and the diabolist's initial Summon roll was 12, the demon's starting Might remains the same. It does not increase by two.



The lowest score to which a demon's Might can be shed is five. At this level the demon has the comparable power of an astasian. If a demon has a starting Might of five or lower, it cannot shed its power. Magi summoning demons of this power therefore know the demon can only increase or maintain its current power. The Magus therefore has a better chance of successfully summoning the demon he needs.

As discussed above, when a demon loses its Might Points, its ability to use Infernal powers is reduced. Powers that have high Might costs may now be impossible to use, and powers certainly cannot be used as often as before.

If the demon attempting to shed power Botches its stress roll, the demon still loses power. However, that power is lost permanently to the summoning tunnel.

The points lost from the demon's Might score equal the demon's magnitude.

A summoned demon who sheds power before appearing runs the risk of angering the summoner. The diabolist may attack the demon, who is already in a weakened state. The body of a destroyed demon remains on earth, and its shed power is lost to the summoning tunnel. That lost Might must be regenerated by the fleeing spirit.

If the demon is from Hell, its spirit returns there and the adjoining soul is put into stasis. As previously mentioned, the period of that stasis is based on the proportionate reduction of the demon's Might score. Thus, if the demon shed one-third of its Might score, the demon's stasis period is reduced by one-third.

If the demon is from earth, its body is left as a corpse. Its spirit joins with the *mundus infernus* to regenerate and return to earth one day in a new body.

Testing the Summoning

Once a spiritual entity has been brought through the tunnel of summoning, the summoner has a chance to evaluate the subject and see how its powers might have changed from the expected. The inspection requires a **Perception + Hierarchy stress roll against the demon's original Might score**. Success indicates the goetist accurately gauges the demon's arriving magnitude, and therefore apparent powers. Of course, the result of the Perception roll is still unknown to the player (as discussed under *The Principle of Uncertainty*, above), so the player may suspect the demon of disguising its actual power.

If the goetist's Perception roll fails, the difference between the result and the Ease Factor is the number by which the demon's Might score is misjudged. The error can be an over- or underestimation of the demon's power. If the Magus expects the demon to have increased its power in the summoning tunnel, the Magus overestimates the demon's arriving Might. If the Magus expects the demon to have shed power, the Magus underestimates the demon's arriving Might.

If the goetist's Perception roll does exceptionally well or Botches, the player (not having seen the original number rolled) cannot tell which is which until it's too late. If the roll is exceptionally high (through repeated 1's), the goetist is

certain of his evaluation of the demon's power, and is correct. If the roll Botches, the goetist is equally certain of the demon's power, but the diabolist's perceptions are wildly inaccurate. Of course, the latter situation is the kind learned about the hard way.

CONTEST OF WILLS

The core of the Ritual of Mastery is a mental battle between the summoner and her subject entity. This psychic struggle is known as the contest of wills. Demons may only engage in contests of will with those who are linked to them via Contact spells or similar magicks (as in contests involving demons in magic items and Magi in temporary Twilight). The two known times when a mental struggle with a demon can occur are at the time of summoning, immediately after the spirit emerges from the summoning tunnel, and any time control of a Bound demon is questioned by demon or captor.

Secondary Summonings

A demon bound to a goetist's court, but not currently being contacted or commanded to perform a task by the goetist, may be summoned in turn by another diabolist who is familiar with the demon. The only exceptions are demons kept under granting pacts (below), who are considered to be constantly performing a task for their owners and are therefore never available for external borrowing.

Stealing a demon away from another diabolist requires the standard summoning rituals and contest of wills. However, the Hierarchy score of the owning diabolist is added to the Might score of the demon, making that demon more difficult to control. That modified Might is converted into magnitude for rolls that involve magnitude.

If the demon wins the contest of wills, the summoner is put at the demon's mercy, but the demon still owes allegiance to its original owner. In this situation, the demon is not likely to tell its true master of the interfering character unless the demon has reason to.

If the demon loses the contest of wills, it must obey the commands of a second owner whenever contacted. This status remains in effect until both owners call upon the demon at the same time. In this situation, opposed rolls are required of each owner:

Advantage + Hierarchy + Familiarity + Contact spell Level bonus + stress die

The demon remains in the winner's court, and performs the winner's task instead of the loser's.

The struggle for control of a demon is exhausting. The loser suffers the loss of a Short-Term Fatigue Level for each five points (or fraction thereof) difference between the rolls of winner and loser.

If the loser Botches his roll, the demon is lost and can never be summoned again by the diabolist. The diabolist's contest roll is also considered zero for determining Fatigue Levels lost in the contest.

The contest combines intimidation, tactics, conversation, debate, evocation of charms, secret sigils and formulae, and direct mind-to-mind assault. Though reduced to procedures and dice rolls here, the narrative value of the contest should not be overlooked. This is a scene common to fantasy fiction, from Marlowe's *Faustus* to low-budget horror movies, and a tremendous amount of drama can be milked from the interplay between summoner and summoinee.

The contest is handled as a multiple-Round set of dice rolls. Both sides attempt to gather a certain sum (known as the "Advantage"). The party that reaches this number controls the other as desired. The rolls are as follows:

Demon's Will = current Might Points (after the summoning) + Intelligence + stress die

and

Summoner's Will = Intelligence + Hierarchy + (Confidence Points spent x 8) + (Familiarity x 2) + stress die

If the summoner has the Strong-Willed Virtue, a +3 bonus is added to the summoner's rolls. If the summoner possesses the summoned demon's heart, the summoner begins with an immediate +30 bonus to the first die roll. This bonus is not applied to any other contest roll. The Principle of Uncertainty requires the Storyguide, not the player, to keep track of the Advantage gathered from Round to Round.

At the onset of the contest, the player states the result her character wants from the battle, such as forcing the demon to relinquish a contract over the character. The same goal is announced by the character to the demon, but in a dramatic manner — roleplay it. As Storyguide, you must find this goal, or a comparable one, on the *Advantage/Outcome* chart below. The chart lists the rating of the goal in terms of how much Advantage must be won over the demon to achieve it. When the diabolist's Advantage total equals or exceeds the rating appropriate to her goal, she has ostensibly won the battle.

The only requirement for true victory is that the character win a Round in which the Advantage is at the appropriate score. At that time the diabolist can announce an end to the fight. If the character's Advantage rises to a suitable level after one Round, but the demon wins in the next Round, the diabolist cannot yet win the fight. The diabolist must win a Round to claim a victory, assuming the Advantage score is still in the realm of the character's goal.

The demon also has a goal of its own. It wants to see the character's will broken. If the demon's Advantage score reaches a point appropriate to its desired goal, and the demon wins the telling Round, the demon may declare itself the victor.

Of course, one side might simply concede the fight out of exhaustion or adherence to Hell's rules of battle (explained below). If the other combatant agrees, the Advantage rating at that moment determines the winner of the battle.

If either combatant Botches a Will roll, the opponent receives an extra 10 Advantage points in his or her favor above and beyond those won by normal means in the Round.

Until one side achieves its goal or concedes the fight, little indication of the accumulated Advantage is possible. The summoner is unlikely to know if she has won until either she or the demon brings the contest to an end. There are indicators of who is winning, though. The winner of a Round has the power to veto any announcement (plea) to end the struggle. Thus, if the character wishes to end the contest and the demon says "no," things look bleak for the character.

The character can also make a roll to perceive relative success. To be precise, a **Perception + Hierarchy stress roll against the demon's full Might score** (after the demon has been through the summoning tunnel) is required to get a reliable estimate. Success with such a roll allows the character to analyze the tendencies of the demon and thus determine whether it is winning or suffering. If the roll fails, the difference between the result and the demon's Might is added to or subtracted from the current Advantage score, as you please. That inflated or deflated value is where the character believes herself. If the character's Perception roll Botches, the character believes herself nearly victorious or nearly defeated, again as you please. A character who Botches the Perception roll suffers a -5 modifier to the next contest roll.

Confidence Use

Confidence is integral to the contest of wills. At the beginning of each Round the diabolist must decide how many Confidence Points are risked in that Round (these points are



reusable from Round to Round). The amount of Confidence spent in one Round must be matched or exceeded in the next; thus it is impossible to gain a high Advantage in the early Rounds and then stop risking so many points later on.

Use of Confidence also runs the risk of its loss. If the diabolist loses the contest of wills, and the diabolist used Confidence at any point during the battle, the highest number of points used in any Round of the battle is lost. Thus, if three were used in one Round, and fewer were used in previous Rounds, three points are lost after the battle. If the final Advantage score of the battle is no lower than -15, lost Confidence Points can be regained after a few weeks, or after the end of the current story. If the final Advantage of the battle is lower than -15, Confidence spent is lost permanently. Confidence lost permanently can only be regained through future acts of self-assurance and events of which boost morale, as determined by story events.

There is another danger to using and losing Confidence during a contest of wills. Use of Confidence in the contest of wills makes victory more likely, but binding the demon becomes more difficult, as the character is taxed by the exertion of the contest.

If the character exerts all her Confidence in the contest, she may suffer a complete failure and thus be dominated by the demon. If Confidence drops to zero because of a lost battle, the character falls into Hell's Regime of Dichotomy. The Regime demands that human become servant and demon master. This relationship should be roleplayed; furthermore, the character acquires a Loyalty Passion of +3 toward the demon. This Passion overcomes all other Passions or traits which might invest devotions elsewhere. Only the restoration of Confidence Points breaks the demon's hold over the human. Such recovery should be the product of a story which affirms the character's self-worth.

Thus, if some Confidence is kept in reserve during the contest of wills, the character has a better chance of binding the demon. Furthermore, should the contest be lost, the diabolist has an "insurance policy" against subjugation. (That is, unless the final Advantage total weighs heavily in the demon's favor, in which case even unspent Confidence may be lost by the diabolist; see the *Results of Battle* chart.)

The Mechanics of the Struggle

Each Round of a contest of wills, the opponents roll dice and totals are compared (by the Storyguide). The demon's Will total is subtracted from the summoner's Will total, and the result is referred to as the Advantage of the contest. If the Advantage is positive, the goetist is winning. If it is negative, the demon is winning. At the end of each Round, either participant may ask to end the contest, but if the current winner wishes to continue, the loser's wishes are ignored. When the current winner declares an end to the contest (which can only be done after a Round in which the current winner maintained the lead) or allows the loser to end the contest, the Advantage is referenced on the following table to discover the outcome of the mental battle.

Results of Battle

When the contest ends, the Advantage is checked against this table to determine how severely the loser falls under the control of the winner.

Advantage	Outcome
+50	Demon becomes <i>sub stragulum</i> (totally submissive). This state can only be achieved if the demon's heart is within it. If it is not, the demon reveals where its heart is hidden.
+40	Demon may be forced into a magic device (Seal pact)
+30	Demon is bereaved of its contract
+20	Summoner may attempt to bind the demon
+10	Demon is temporarily bound in return for dismissal
+9 to -9	+1 to +9: Demon takes die + Advantage Damage (modified by Soak); -1 to -9: demon free to wander off
-10	Summoner must lose one point of Confidence, even if none were spent. If some were spent and lost, the additional point is not lost. Demon may wander off
-25	Summoner scared out of circle, may be bodily attacked
-40	Summoner automatically loses one Confidence Point on top of any normally spent and lost in contest. Demon may demand dismissal when it desires
-55, -70, etc.:	Same as for -40 (cumulative Confidence loss in increments of -15; demon may demand dismissal)

(Explanations of *sub stragulum* and other concepts listed in the positive Advantage portion of the table are provided below.)

If the contest continues into successive Rounds, the Advantage of the previous Round is added to the difference of the next rolls. This "holdover modifier" therefore helps the previous winner and hinders the previous loser. Once this lingering bonus/penalty is added, the final difference for the Round determines the new winner, who may decide to end the contest with the new Advantage, or continue it further. Continuing Rounds of battle follow this same pattern.

If the summoner defeats the demon in the contest of wills, the demon may either be commanded to perform a specific function and then dismissed to its realm, or it may be bound (as discussed below). In either case the power of human over demon is proven. If the demon wins, it may ignore the summoner, wander off on its own agenda, or even make the diabolist its slave if the diabolist's Confidence is lowered to zero.



Spoilsport Tactics

A Dark Magus who believes she is going to lose the contest of wills has three last-ditch options to avoid the consequences of failure. In increasing order of desperation, these are: 1) she may direct her mental energies toward dismissing the demon, 2) she may break off the contest by attempting to destroy or banish the demon, 3) or she may promise the demon that she will sign a Pact of Ashes, thus making the demon her liege.

Dismissal is forced. The rules for dismissal are provided below. The goetist had better be certain of her chances, though, for a failed dismissal indicates that the contest of wills has not ended. The demon's recently calculated negative Advantage is automatically increased by 50% (since the Magus was busy doing other things).

Destruction or banishment (rules for both are provided below) definitely put the goetist in disfavor with the Watchers. Likewise, failed attempts at destruction or banishment put the diabolist in immediate jeopardy. The etiquette of the contest is broken and the diabolist's circle provides no further protection. The demon may now attack the goetist directly. The demon may also ignore the diabolist and go about its own business.

Last of all, the truly desperate Magus may admit she has met her match and accept the demon as master. The Magus who chooses this option cannot have signed a Cardinal Pact. By selling her soul, the diabolist saves herself from terrible suffering in the contest at the cost of eternal suffering in the afterlife.

Boundaries of the Contest

The contest of wills, although a multiple-Round endeavor, cannot go on forever. If it did, the opponent who achieved an immediate Advantage could continue to demand rolls forever, or at least until the Advantage was high enough to purchase any desired outcome. Here are the two ways in which limits are placed on the number of Rounds a contest of wills can continue. One is utilized by humans, one by demons.

Face the Strain

The mental struggle of the contest is a terrible strain on the human participant. A high Stamina is necessary to endure prolonged combat of the mind. The initial roll for the summoner's Will, described above, includes a bonus equal to the summoner's Stamina score (if negative, this becomes a penalty). Each Round of mental battle thereafter reduces this bonus by one (or worsens the penalty by one). Eventually, the bonus becomes a penalty (and the penalty becomes a bigger penalty). Thus, later contest rolls suffer greatly. As demons feel no Fatigue, they face no such penalty.

Thus, diabolists find themselves in a race to accumulate an adequate Advantage total in the few short Rounds before strain takes its toll. This suffering prevents summoners from engaging in long contests and stops them from racking up enough Advantage points to make every demon *sub stragulum*.

In reality, the character's actual Stamina trait is not reduced by the contest of wills. The contest is very fatiguing, however. For every five points or fraction thereof that the diabolist's Stamina is reduced, a Fatigue check (against an Ease Factor of six) is made each Round. If any Fatigue roll fails, a Short-Term Level is lost. The Fatigue check is made on a stress die; on a Botch, two Short-Term Levels are lost.

The best way to make this system clear is with an *Exempli Gratia*:

A Dark Magus has Stamina +1 and begins a contest of wills. At first, he receives a +1 bonus to his Will roll. As the contest continues, his Stamina bonus becomes +0 in the second Round, -1 in the third, -2 in the fourth, and -3 in the fifth. A single Short-Term Fatigue check is required in each round after the first (as Stamina penalties are fractions of five). If the contest ends here, the Magus's Stamina is still +1, but he may have lost as many as four Short-Term Fatigue Levels, depending on how poorly he's rolled.

If the contest continues into an eighth Round, two Fatigue checks are made per Round (one for the full unit of five and one more for the fraction of five that Stamina has fallen below zero). The Stamina penalty incurred has now dropped to -6.

Of course, the casting of the Contact spell also costs at least one Long-Term Fatigue Level depending on how well the spell is cast (it could have cost two Levels). These lost Levels are cumulative with those lost during a contest of wills, so characters in a contest may fall unconscious quickly.

Penalties incurred by loss of Fatigue are applied to succeeding Advantage rolls and to succeeding Fatigue checks in the contest. Thus, loss of Fatigue Levels in the contest of wills inflicts cumulative penalties upon the diabolist as Fatigue penalties and Stamina penalties accrue.

The Rule of Five Feints

Because prowess and prestige are so important to the Tally of Souls and Hell's hierarchy in general, the Watchers have imposed a rule on the Ritual of Mastery; this rule is called the Rule of Five Feints. This rule motivates demons to be graceful and creative in their defeat of summoners, and might be another sign of Watcher sympathy for humanity.

According to the rule, once a demon is winning a contest of wills — that is, once it has achieved a negative Advantage — the demon may make no more than five additional thrusts into the mind of the human to wear him down.

In game terms, if the demon is winning, it may only continue the contest five more Rounds to accumulate as much negative Advantage as it can. After making five thrusts, the demon must call the battle to determine the winner. If the human wills the battle to continue, the demon's Feints are returned to zero and five more may be pursued. If, at any time before the five Feints are fulfilled, the Advantage returns to zero or the positive side, the demon's Feints are again reset to zero.



This rule ensures that diabolists enslaved by a demon reflect the strength and willpower of the demon, not the fatigue and disadvantage of the human.

Future Contests

Keep in mind that the contest of wills is not only fought when a demon is summoned, but also whenever the demon questions the diabolist's command or when the diabolist's command falters. There are many ways in which a diabolist's authority can be jeopardized, and most are left for you to judge as grounds for a new contest of wills. Grounds for a new contest might arise if the demon is commanded to defy a law of Hell, if commanded to relinquish a significant number of souls, or if commanded to permanently exile itself from Hell. In turn, if the diabolist acquires a Decrepitude Point, suffers a temporary Twilight, or shows tendencies toward good, the demon might try to break free. Regardless of why they're fought, future contests of will are based on the demon's full Might score, not that derived after the last journey through the summoning tunnel.

A new contest of wills determines a new Advantage score between diabolist and demon. This new score redefines the relationship between the two. If the new Advantage is less than 20, any previous binding (see below) of the demon is forfeit, replaced by a simple temporary command over the demon. If the new Advantage is 20 or greater, a new binding may be established. However, if the new Advantage is in the demon's favor, it might free itself from control or even exact revenge on its former master.

BINDING THE SPIRIT

It is possible to call forth a demon in a long, involved ritual and temporarily force it to do your bidding. The contest of wills is one means to achieve this end. However, temporary binding is rarely a profitable way to operate as the demon only has to be released in the end. The cost of obscure ingredients and equipment for the ritual is also quite high, and must be paid every time a demon, even the same demon, is temporarily summoned and released. Binding a demon is the more profitable alternative to temporary control.

Whereas the contest of wills gives the summoner a one-shot chance to assert mastery over the summoned entity, binding allows the summoner to forge a formal, long-lasting relationship with the demon. In essence, the demon is forced to remain "on call" should the diabolist require its services. The demon must perform an unspecified number of tasks for its master until it is released or it escapes the diabolist's control. See *Custody*, below, for more details on the demon's "ownership."

If the summoner chooses to bind a demon to him, the binding is performed after the contest of wills. However, the diabolist must have won the contest with an Advantage of 20+ to assert the binding. In fact, the actual score of the Advantage should be recorded because it's important later, in the *Custody* section.

Binding requires the summoner to make a Bind roll (Bind score + stress die — see *The Goetic Arts*, above) versus an Ease Factor. Binding is rolled against an Ease Factor instead of an opposed roll from the demon because the demon's will has now been broken, so it cannot personally oppose the summoner's binding).

The Ease Factor of the Bind roll is based on the greatest number of Confidence Points spent by the diabolist in any one Round of the contest of wills. That is, if the diabolist risked three points in one Round, but risked no more than that in any other Round, the Ease Factor of the Bind roll is based on those three points. By risking more Confidence Points in the contest of wills, the diabolist places himself under more psychological strain. The more points were risked, the more "spirit" was taken out of the summoner, even though none of those Confidence Points were lost. Confidence use therefore determines how psychologically taxed the diabolist is and thus how difficult binding is (although a demon's inherent power also plays a role in the difficulty.)

Bind Ease Factors

The following chart outlines Ease Factors:

Confidence Spent	Bind Ease Factor
0	2 x demon's magnitude
1	6 + (2 x demon's magnitude)
2	12 + (2 x demon's magnitude)
3	18 + (2 x demon's magnitude)
4	24 + (2 x demon's magnitude)
5	30 + (2 x demon's magnitude)
6+	36 + 6 per further Point + (2 x demon's magnitude)

If the Bind roll is successful, the normal *Custody* rules apply to the diabolist's control over the demon.

If a Bind roll is unsuccessful, the demon is considered to be under the temporary control of the diabolist. Regardless of the final Advantage of the contest of wills, the new practical Advantage of the contest is +10. This is the penalty the summoner pays for attempting and failing to bind the demon. Temporary control over a demon involves the Advantage spending rules listed in the *Custody* section below. However, the diabolist's Rego score, which is usually added to custody of a demon, is not applied for temporary control. Once the diabolist's Advantage Points have been spent on temporary custody, the demon is freed without the possibility of recapture (unless summoned again).

If the diabolist's Bind roll Botches, the demon is no longer under the summoner's heel and must be allowed to return to its realm. The diabolist suddenly finds himself unable to control the demon: maybe information is forgotten or the strain of the contest of wills simply proves too great. Freed as a result of a binding Botch, the demon cannot be recaptured unless summoned again.

Alternately, the demon may pretend to be bound and may strike against the diabolist when circumstances best suit its needs.

DISMISSAL

Once it finishes its contractual obligations or is strong enough to win a contest of wills by a large amount, a summoned demon may demand to be dismissed. The diabolist is obligated to apply the Dismiss Art by casting a dismissal "Formulaic" spell (though the spell has no conventional similarities to Hermetic magic and takes no time to cast). Failure to dismiss a demon when obligated unravels the *malefic* fabric of the diabolist's summoning, including his protection by the summoning circle. (The Watchers at least offer this in protection of their demonic brethren.) Refusal to dismiss the demon therefore allows it to physically attack the diabolist. Such breach of Infernal etiquette also brings the animosity of the Nephilim upon the diabolist. There's no telling what future horrors these demons put the diabolist through.

The Dismiss Art is first presented under *The Goetic Arts*, above. As discussed there, if a diabolist's Dismiss score equals or exceeds twice the demon's magnitude, the demon can be dismissed automatically. However, automatic dismissal assumes the demon is a willing participant. If the diabolist's Dismiss score is lower than twice the willing demon's magni-

Saga Adjustments

Other chapters of this book stress general ideas. In this chapter it is necessary to get into specifics, particularly for the Ritual of Mastery. As a rule of thumb, Storyguide diabolists can be created along the following guidelines: a newly-apprenticed Dark Magus, using the Ritual of Mastery system, requires a few years of research and preparation (no adventuring), after which demons of Might 20 to 25 can be summoned at even odds of success. Familiarity is crucial to success, and an area of high Aura (Infernal or Magical) is needed at all times for an adequate warding circle. Diabolism, therefore, is a highly personal venture between a Magus and a demon, performed in a preplanned location rather than at whim.

If, in the course of play, you feel the Might of a given demon is too high or too low, you may alter its numbers, adding or removing points as desired. You might do so to make a summoning more difficult or easier for a character based on story needs. Indeed, while the systems of Mastery are open-ended, may be used by relatively uninformed diabolists, and prove dangerous to diabolists with low power, they can certainly be changed to suit a situation. For instance, if a demon is particularly powerful and has a grudge against a character, summoning that demon might be more difficult than usual, imposing greater limits on the Mastery system.

Other modifications to this book's systems are also welcome. For example, you might feel the *Teaching Covenants*, below, abuse game balance. An effective modification involves requiring a Season of the diabolist's time for every Ability learned.

It is hoped that other changes suggest themselves as easily, for your Saga is yours, and this book has no intention of imposing boundaries upon it.

tude, dismissal requires a concentrated effort on the part of the diabolist (as if performing a forced dismissal). If the demon resists dismissal, the diabolist must apply effort to the task.

The Level of the Contact spell used by the diabolist affects both willing and forced Dismiss attempts. For every two Levels of the Contact spell over the minimum Level required to summon the demon (fractions rounded up), Dismiss rolls receive a +1 bonus.

Although usually applied to demons summoned personally, Dismiss can also be used to dispose of demons summoned by others. If the demon summoned by another willingly complies, it can be dismissed automatically, as above (unless, of course, the demon is *terreni* and has nowhere to go). Should the unfamiliar target be unwilling to leave its current situation, it struggles against this effect. (Of course, since the diabolist did not summon the strange demon, the Dismiss bonus gained from extra Contact spell Levels does not apply.)

Forced dismissal, whether imposed upon a familiar or unfamiliar demon, requires a roll of Dismiss + Hierarchy + a stress die. If the demon in question was summoned by the diabolist, Familiarity applies to the Dismiss score. However, if an unknown demon is disposed of, Familiarity does not apply to the score. The result of the Dismiss roll must exceed the demon's magnitude $\times 3$ + a stress die to be successful. If the demon was summoned by the diabolist, the demon's magnitude is based on its Might score after arrival through the summoning tunnel (so magnitude might be higher or lower than the demon's usual score). Helpers can aid in the forced dismissal of both familiar and unfamiliar demons.

If a demon subject to dismissal is bound to another diabolist, that diabolist's Hierarchy score is added to the demon's current magnitude (before its multiplication by three), to derive an effective magnitude which must be overcome. If the dismissal is successful, the demon is sent back to Hell or its original location at the time of its summoning, regardless of who summoned it. If another's demon is dismissed, that diabolist must go through the whole summoning process again to reclaim the demon. Needless to say, the offended diabolist is irate with the Magus who dismissed the demon.

If a diabolist fails his attempt to dismiss a demon (familiar or otherwise), the diabolist may try again. However, the demon can now attack the diabolist if it could not before, because the contractual arrangement between the two is officially complete (assuming the demon can overcome the diabolist's circle of protection).

After a failed Dismiss roll, the diabolist may make further attempts to dismiss the demon, though the demon may no longer be a willing participant after the first failure. If the diabolist's repeated Dismiss rolls fail, the summoned demon is now trapped on earth, if it originated in Hell, or is stranded far from its original location on earth. The demon may leave the diabolist alone, go in search of another that can send it home, or seek to corrupt the diabolist further in the hopes of winning a spirit or soul.



A demon who belongs to another diabolist and is unsuccessfully dismissed by the character may automatically alert its true master to the character's interference.

A diabolist who Botches an attempt to dismiss a demon may make no future attempts to dismiss that demon — ever. The demon may attack the diabolist directly if the diabolist's circle can be overcome by the demon. The trapped demon must seek out another diabolist or wizard to return home.

RITUAL OF MASTERY SUMMARY

- Choose demon to summon.

• Research demon; must have Familiarity of 3+ to summon demon. Must learn estimated magnitude (Might) of demon.

• Invent Contact spell for demon. Use Lab Total of Intellego and Vim, with Occult Lore and Familiarity as bonuses. Level has minimum based on demon targeted, but higher Level spell can be invented.

- Create a summoning circle:

Can be permanent. Takes a Season to prepare, costs pawn of Rego or Vim vis for every magnitude of circle Level. Circle Level = Rego + Vim + Intelligence + Magic Theory + (Occult Lore x Infernal Aura); Aura bonus modified if outside an Infernal Aura. For specific use, a permanent circle must be prepared for 15 minutes, adding Familiarity to circle Level.

Can be temporary. Takes 15 minutes to prepare, with casting of *Drawing the Dark Circle*. Circle Level = spell Level + stress die + Familiarity.

Demon must have Might in excess of total circle Level to affect Magus.

• Cast Contact Ritual spell. Costs two pawns Vim vis or *aesfotedia* and 15 minutes for each magnitude of spell.

Casting of Contact spell can involve as many helpers as prime Magus has Hierarchy Points. Half of each assistant's Hierarchy score added to one of Summon, Bind, and Dismiss.

• Summon demon. Summoning art + bonus from excess Contact spell Levels + stress die versus demon's full normal Might. Keep record of amount by which Magus's roll succeeds.

• Magus may choose to "rein in," "whip", or allow demon to arrive as it pleases.

Reining: Demon adds own magnitude + stress die to its Might score. Magus subtracts success of Summoning roll from extra Might Points.

Whipping: Demon sheds Might Points equal to its own magnitude + stress die. Minimum final Might is 5. Magus adds success of Summoning roll to Might Points shed.

• Test the summoning. Perception + Hierarchy stress roll versus demon's original Might score to gauge arriving power level of demon.

• Contest of wills. Contest fought when demon summoned, and whenever Magus's control is questioned. Demon and Magus fight mentally to control each other. Each makes one roll per Round:

If the demon Botches its roll when resisting dismissal, the demon is dismissed and its soul goes into stasis for twice the usual time. If the demon has no soul, it is forced into seclusion for a period equal to the time it would otherwise be in stasis.

A dismissed demon, willing or not, is transported in its entirety to its place of origin (although *terreni* demons are just allowed to go). There is no corpse left behind. A corpse is only left behind if the demon is destroyed or banished.

Demon's will = current Might Points (after summoning) + Intelligence + stress die.

Magus's will = Intelligence + Hierarchy + (Confidence spent x 8) + (Familiarity x 2) + stress die.

Rolls compared with result (Advantage), positive or negative, carried over from Round to Round until one party reaches desired goal and wins current Round. That combatant wins contest. Confidence used must be maintained throughout battle.

Storyguide keeps track of Advantage. Magus may gauge success with Perception + Hierarchy stress roll versus demon's full Might (after summoning).

If contest ends prematurely, compare current Advantage to Outcome chart for results of fight.

If Magus fears terrible defeat before contest is complete, attempt can be made to dismiss, destroy or banish demon, or make a Cardinal Pact with it.

• Boundaries of contest: Magus is restricted by Stamina and Fatigue. Demon is restricted by Hell's law.

Magus's Stamina for contest rolls reduced by 1 per Round after first. For every five Stamina points, or fraction thereof, lost, Short-Term Fatigue stress roll against 6 required per Round. Fatigue penalties and lost Stamina penalties accumulate against contest of wills rolls, and Fatigue penalties apply against further Fatigue rolls.

Once demon has gained negative Advantage, it is only allowed five more Rounds of attack unless Magus refuses to quit or Advantage increases to zero or more once again.

• Binding the Spirit. Requires Advantage of 20+. Magus makes Bind roll: Rego + Vim + Hierarchy + stress die versus Ease Factor based on largest number of Confidence Points spent in any Round of contest of wills. Bound demon may be summoned at any time (but see Custody rules for parameters on binding).

• If demon is not bound, it is commanded to perform desired action.

• After action is performed or binding period is over, demon is dismissed. Dismiss score = (Rego + Vim)/2 + Occult Lore + bonuses from excess Contact spell Levels. If demon is willing, and above score is twice demon's magnitude, dismissal is automatic. If dismissed demon is not one summoned by Magus, Contact spell bonus does not apply. If Dismiss score is lower than twice magnitude, dismissal requires effort and is treated as forced dismissal.

Forced Dismissal = Dismiss score + Hierarchy + stress die + Familiarity (if demon is known) versus demon's magnitude x 3 + stress die.

Magnitudes of demons are based on Might scores after demons have been through summoning tunnel.

If dismissed demon is under control of another Magus, his Hierarchy score is added to demon's effective magnitude before multiplying by three.

Contracts: Sign on the Dotted Line

Despite the chaos, despite the deceit, and despite the hatred of Hell, Infernal hierarchy imposes some order, continuity and predictability upon the Infernal realm. This organization is inflicted upon devil and demon alike by their superiors. Infernal desire is not a factor; cooperation is forced and relative loyalty is irrelevant. A human who wishes to command demons must magically tap into Hell's hierarchy of power, the Regime of Dichotomy.

The desire to command demons is a staple mortal sin. Whether by failing to master a demon and being dragged down to Hell, or succeeding in the mastery, all souls dabbling in the Dark are eventually pulled Down. Thus, by taking command of demons, diabolists ultimately feed demons and broaden their power. The "good" that diabolists do Hell does not end



Degree of Covenant

Degree of covenant is a phrase used to describe the axis of compromise inherent in a given pact. In some pacts the summoner gets a raw deal. He is forced to do many hard or embarrassing favors for the demon to earn the right to command the demon. At the other end of the axis, the demon may work for the smallest and most trivial of favors.

Compromise for either party varies depending on the nature of the pact. Compromise is traditionally variable for sumptuary bonds; one-sided (in the diabolist's favor) for teaching covenants, compacts and entity seals; and nonexistent for Cardinal Pacts.

The exact nature of "pact favors" is left to you and the Troupe to create. As a rule of thumb, the degree of covenant is based on the Advantage of the contest of wills. An Advantage score of +10 indicates the diabolist gets a raw deal, +20 indicates a fair trade, and +30 or more indicates that the demon only gets a trivial favor. (A positive but low Advantage score is hard on the diabolist in terms of a pact because +10 is the lowest score at which a diabolist can even negotiate a pact.) Temporary pacts are treated like sumptuary pacts, but the covenant overwhelmingly favors the demon.

with their souls, though. The hardship that commanding diabolists spread with their demonic powers leads to the corruption of other humans, who turn to evil for comfort from that hardship.

For these selfish and malicious reasons — and because he probably could not stop them if he tried — Satan allows humans to participate in the Regime of Dichotomy through their own Rituals of Mastery. He allows humans and demons to sign pacts, ensuring the ongoing corruption of humanity and an ongoing supply of Infernal sustenance. It is the duty of the Watchers to ensure the maintenance and preservation of these pacts and to oversee laws and practices for future Infernal sustenance.

Fantastic Integration of Pacts

The generic term for any Infernal contract (besides the verbal) is "pact." The infamous pact which signifies the selling of one's soul to Satan is formally known as the Cardinal Pact, or Pact of Ashes. The Cardinal Pact represents the apex of diabolic compromise, but it is only one of several pacts which the Watchers have developed to make the Ritual of Mastery effective.

Written Infernal agreements are fantastical covenants born of the False Emphyrean. Far from being mere paper objects carried from place to place, they are integral to the goetic act. A demon summoned through the fires of the summoning tunnel, its spirit reined and whipped into shape, has no thoughts for secretarial work. Nonetheless, the net result of a summoning, followed by a contest of wills, is a demon (hopefully enslaved) who holds in its hands an Infernal pact to be signed by the summoner. Once signed, the pact bursts into flames and the ashes sink back down to Hell to be gathered and filed by the Watchers.

Pacts vary in the degree of compromise required. A diabolist who performs marginally in the Ritual of Mastery must settle for a strict pact, one with many compromises and favors required from the diabolist in return for the slightest task from the demon. On the other hand, exemplary use of willpower to master a demon can result in a pact that is a veritable certificate of ownership, with some trivial favor owed the demon in return for years of servitude. Most pacts fall somewhere between these extremes, with minor tasks performed without special acknowledgment and major tasks performed only with some demonic appeasement.

TYPES OF CONTRACTS

While each pact has an inherent "degree of covenant," which sets forth how much the summoner owes the demon for its services, pacts also come in different types, regardless of degree. The actual game applications of these pacts follows, in *Custody*, below.

Cardinal Pacts

As previously discussed, the Cardinal is the pact which offers a demon the summoner's soul in return for a large favor. Only demons with access to the Tally of Souls, namely most greater *terreni* and spiritual avatars of devils, may produce Cardinal Pacts. Such pacts usually offer broad, almost unlimited access to a powerful demon's favors, but only for a limited time, or toward a single goal. Unlike other pacts, there is one degree of covenant associated with the Pact of Ashes, and one alone. Cardinal Pacts permanently trap a sorcerer's soul in the Devil's clutches. As such, Cardinal Pacts may only be signed by a willing signatory, under no physical duress (otherwise, Watchers declare the pacts void).

These pacts are an exception to the usual "fantastic integration" rule. No demon is sent through the summoning tunnel with a Cardinal Pact. If the diabolist discovers she cannot have what she desires without signing away her soul, the demon must be dismissed so it can request a Cardinal Pact from the Watcher overseeing its fief. The dismissal of the demon for this purpose aborts a contest of wills which the goetist would otherwise have lost. The fortunate spirit then reappears in the goetist's presence some minutes or days later (depending on how familiar the demon is with Watcher bureaucracy and how effective it is at cutting through red tape), with a Pact of Ashes in hand.

This reappearance requires no contact or summoning on the diabolist's part, and nothing short of a high Divine Aura prevents the demon from gaining audience with the soul-selling goetist. The demon is owed one last dismissal from its new charge, but may request it up to seven days after the pact is signed (a binge of celebratory destruction, sometimes in the company of the diabolist, is common). Most demons on the verge of completing Cardinal Pacts show up in their most pleasing human forms, thus putting victims at ease and preventing last-minute changes of heart. If the diabolist does change his mind, the demon is entitled to attack him unless the

diabolist has prepared a protection circle (which must be overcome by the demon). By attacking, the demon hopes to liberate the diabolist's soul before it can seek salvation.

The metaphysical implications of the Cardinal Pact are discussed below. Each human has only one soul, and thus may only sign one Cardinal Pact. Among Dark Magi, the lucky recipient of the pact is called the diabolist's liege-angel, or Prime Master.

For some effects of a Cardinal Pact, see *Implications of the Cardinal Pact*, below.

Sumptuary Bonds

These contracts, sometimes called "back-scratching pacts," are the most common pacts used in Rituals of Mastery. Sumptuary bonds are used to bind demons to tasks and labors. The name is derived from English sumptuary laws, which are very specific, and sometimes very petty rules of purchasing used to enforce, among other things, differences in modes of dress between the aristocracy and lower classes. One such law states that only royalty can wear purple. Another states that peasants cannot wear a certain type of shoe within so many miles of a major city. Demons bound to these pacts are also bound to such petty performances.

Infernal sumptuary bonds list tasks a demon performs, in return for so many favors of a similar ilk. Like humans, demons are not always practical. Minor demons are notorious for requiring favors that are silly and trivial. Certain imps have been known to demand belly rubs and undignified dances from captors. Others of more solemn aspect can require more ominous or practical favors, like the letting of a drop of blood from the diabolist's left palm.

Almost any demand may be made with a sumptuary bond, from expenditure of raw vis, to recital of a poem denouncing the Church, to human sacrifice. You are encouraged to be creative, but to avoid the graphic. It's suggested that player and Storyguide roleplay to agree on the exact sumptuary bond chosen. After all, it's assumed that character and demon negotiate terms of the pact.

Teaching Covenants

Demons are ancient beings, and most keep in close contact with earth's cultures and disciplines; thus, demons are vast storehouses of knowledge and skill. Their most frequently consulted knowledge is that of earth's current, past and future languages, but almost any common or obscure knowledge may be possessed by demons, and they are able to teach all manner of physical and mental skills, save those of Arcane status. Beyond these mundane teachings, demons may teach their *maleficia* to Gifted persons. Teaching pacts tend to last long a time, as new things learned are only remembered as long as the demonic teacher is kept bound.

Granting Compacts

While it is possible to force a demon to do a task, or to use one of its powers in the pursuit of a task, the demon's contribution need not be immediately fulfilled. There may be many reasons for a delay in a demon's favors. A demon that's already bound to a diabolist might be distant from the diabolist when the human requires a favor and thus must be contacted magically. A bound demon might also be dismissed by another diabolist before the demon can fulfill the favor owed its master. (In this case the dismissed demon is no longer bound to the former master, and must be summoned again to resume the binding. However, the favor owed to the former master must still be fulfilled according to the word of the old contract.) A diabolist might also want a favor at his disposal that he may call upon whenever necessary.

The granting compact is therefore a guarantee that a demon will fulfill its part of the bargain at another time, usually after the diabolist has followed through on his part. The demon is always available to the diabolist for the fulfillment of the favor, and may be called upon at any time. However, the favor must meet the degree of the contract. Thus, if the diabolist requests his favor but demands something beyond the scope of the contract, the demon may refuse the request.

Oftentimes, grantings are used to give the appearance that a diabolist is casting a spell or causing a supernatural effect which he cannot actually perform. Having performed the effect, the demon is no longer in service to the diabolist unless several performances of the act were agreed upon. This favor is useful to the goetist too impatient to spend a time learning from a teaching covenant, or when the *maleficium* sought is beyond the diabolist's capabilities.

Entity Seals

These are the most binding pacts, and a goetist able to force such a pact has immense power over a demon, enough to reduce her side of the pact to a mere trifle. Entity seals are pacts written upon tiny waxen crests; unlike other pacts, these seals remain with the summoner for the duration of her ownership of the demon. An entity seal allows the diabolist to trap a demon inside some prepared object, to which the seal is affixed. The item in question may be any size and of any material so long as it is a single solid object. The period of entrapment is finite, usually measured in years (though the actual time is a function of the amount of strain under which the spirit is placed).

A demon trapped in this manner may be used as a source of raw Might and employed in the crafting and fueling of magic devices. The power or powers invested into the device do not need to match those known by the captured demon, but they are limited by the demon's own raw power (magnitude), and require the usual expenditure of raw *vis* or *aesfotedia* to create. For details on the game parameters of entity seal devices, see *Custody*, below.



Bereavement of Contract

This is not a type of contract but a degree of success in the Ritual of Mastery. The diabolist so intimidates the demon that it not only serves the human, but is forced to tear up the contract for that service upon completion. Bereavement forces the demon to admit its servitude to the master without provision. The demon may still struggle to escape, and must still be controlled while in custody (see below), but receives no favors for its labor, and that labor may continue indefinitely.

It is impossible to bereave a demon of a Cardinal Pact, since, under the terms of such a pact, the demon arrives unheralded after a specific request is made by the diabolist. Other pacts may be voided in this manner, though.

Sub Stragulum

This is not an actual pact either. A diabolist who brainwashes a demon into being kept *sub stragulum* ("under the folded wing") convinces the demon that its fate is tied to the diabolist's own. A *stragulum* demon believes its master's goals are its own, and that if the master dies, it will die as well. This deception is the closest one can come to extracting loyalty from a demonic slave, but it has several flaws.



First of all, a demon must have its *caligo* heart within it to be rendered *stragulum*. If the diabolist gains sufficient Advantage in a contest of wills to render a demon *stragulum*, but said demon's heart is not within it, the spirit is usually defeated enough to reveal where its heart is.

The mental slavery inherent to *stragulum* status strips the demon of all subtlety and most decision-making faculties. Because of this, a demon under folded wing is unable to take the initiative in a complex situation, and cannot perform a task on its own unless it has received precise instructions. Furthermore, the demon always acts as a simple-minded bodyguard in the diabolist's presence, and attacks anything perceived as a danger to the Magus. In play, treat such demons as the equivalent of dogs in intelligence and demeanor, but without the affection or playfulness.

What's more, the *stragulum* demon is not always alert unless tied to the Dark Magus via a *granting compact* (above). Thus, even a demon tricked into loyalty must be contacted before it can act on its master's behalf (assuming it's not already in its master's presence). The diabolist can even be prevented from casting a spell to alert the demon if the diabolist is taken by surprise and made incapable of using magic.

Finally, *stragulum* demons, although they do not knowingly struggle against their confinement, still unconsciously "pull at the tether" when commanded to perform tasks. Control must therefore be maintained by the diabolist. If control ever lags (as discussed under *Future Contests*, above), the demon can unwittingly try to break free, regardless of its folded

wings. The rebellious demon initially feels it is trying to force the diabolist to obey its wishes "for his own good." If the demon wins the resulting contest of wills, the diabolist's ruse is revealed and the demon is no doubt quite angry.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CARDINAL PACT

There are three important metaphysical conditions associated with the signing of the Cardinal Pact, aside from the most obvious (the bypassing of the demon's need to Accuse a soul upon the body's death). These conditions are:

The Ashen Gift

All Magi must possess the Gift in order to work magic. This Gift is the ability to use mind and spirit to interact with the Shadow Empyrean and effect a change in the mundane world. When considered from such a cosmological perspective, this power can be referred to as the Shadow Gift. In kind, those who possess True Faith and are able to evoke miracles have the True Gift, the ability to beseech favors from the powers of Heaven (who touch upon God's True Empyrean).

There is also a power which has its source in Hell, that of the False Empyrean. This realm's power source, also known as the Ash Empyrean, is the degeneration of the Heavenly Fire. Diabolists who complete Cardinal Pacts with devilkind are granted the Ashen Gift as a seed inside their preexisting Gift. This diabolic Gift permits Dark Magi to receive bonuses in Infernal Auras, to learn Infernal magicks more easily than those of Hermes (see below), and to be recognized by demons as allies of Hell.

The three forms of Gift are not mutually exclusive; however, no bodied-soul ever possesses both True Faith and the Ashen Gift (which should go without saying).

Since a Dark Magus, despite new allegiance, is still a practitioner of the earthly art of magic, a constant battle for primacy is waged between the two Gifts.

The battle within a diabolist arises because the Ashen Gift allows the Magus some interaction with the Shadow Empyrean, and the Shadow Gift allows some meddling into Infernal powers. It is therefore difficult to make a conscious effort to keep the two in balance (should a Magus even suspect what is occurring). Worse still, the Magus can be kept ignorant of the conflict in his body. Lesser *terreni*, those in league with the diabolist's bound retinue of demons, can be told by Hell's powers to "help" the Magus. They do so by nudging here and there, bolstering the Magus's magical skills and preventing him from knowing just how far his abilities have degenerated. In short, when a Magus signs a pact with the Prince of Darkness, he paves the way to the loss of his art, not to mention soul.

Congression, below, offers insight into how a diabolist declines.

The Spiritual Peragrations

When a Prime Master sinks back down to Hell with a Cardinal Pact willingly signed by a Dark Magus, the Infernal entity is not satisfied by a mere piece of paper. The demon wants solid proof of the diabolist's willingness to sacrifice her soul on death. The written contract is a mere token of the diabolist's good faith, but the diabolist's spirit is proof positive of the human's loyalty. Once a Cardinal Pact is signed, the signatory no longer has a spirit. Immediately after the demon is dismissed, it reappears as if the dismissal failed to work. The demon then proceeds to offer its services to the Magus in fulfillment of its part of the pact.

The reason behind the apparent failure of the dismissal is quite simple. The dismissal actually affects the pact signer's own spirit. The spirit is sent to the appropriate devil in Hell and the demon accompanies it to ensure its safe arrival. Thus, the dismissal delivers the spirit and not the demon to the devil's soul. The demon itself can then return to the diabolist to fulfill the pact between them.

Note, however, that if the demon has already fulfilled its side of the Cardinal Pact upon dismissal, it takes the diabolist's spirit to Hell and does not return to the diabolist. It is free to pursue other Infernal delights.

As stated before, a devil that accumulates multiple spirits can project those spirits, as demons, throughout earth and Hell. The devil is in contact with each and is aware of their relative surroundings.

For the diabolist's part, the contract is the beginning of the end. She loses no powers and gains many new *maleficia*, but such powers are sent from Hell via the link allowed by the peragrated spirit. A side effect of this loss is an effect known as the Craving. Essentially, there is a void in the goetist's life, and Infernal power becomes a means to fill that void. For more on the Craving see *Congression*, below).

Shroud of the Gifted Soul

Cardinal Pacts signed with the Gifted are particularly valuable to devils. While access to an extra spirit and the assured reception of a soul on consignment would be advantage enough, the Gifted soul has a special property known as the Shrouding. Shrouding is an accumulation of "accidental" (i.e., foreign) energy beyond the energy inherent in the substance of the soul itself. Magic, *malefic* spells, and goetic rituals act as magnets for this accidental energy. Thus, a deep shroud accumulates in the lifetime of more powerful wizards; the stronger their magicks, and the longer they practice them, the more pronounced this shroud becomes. This, of course, grants a great deal of excess energy to the devil who holds their pact. The desire for a Shrouded soul leads to greater compromises and extra labor which demons would otherwise be unwilling to commit to their "owned" diabolists.

Custody: What's In It For You

And, more importantly, what is the diabolist in it for? This section presents the details of using demons and keeping them in thrall.

THE COURT OF THRALLS

A demon bound to a goetic sorcerer after a Ritual of Mastery is termed a thrall. All thralls bound to a single diabolist are said to be in that diabolist's court, or retinue. Bound evil spirits usually remain dormant in their forms of tendency when not called into service. Thus, physically-tending demons need a place to hide when dormant (which the diabolist can provide). Spiritually-tending demons need an object of focus around which to hover. This focus can be any solid, inanimate object of Size -2 or less, and is referred to as the court-stone; this the diabolist can also provide.

A diabolist can only have one court-stone, no matter how many thralls are in her court. However, most choose to create auxiliary court-stones (in a lab Season, using the rules for Talismans). Court-stones may be taken along on travels or left at home. Members of the court may be called into the diabolist's presence from any location provided the journey does not take them too far away from their hearts (if hidden elsewhere). Such a quick summoning requires the casting of the demon's Contact spell (see *The Contact spell*, above), and arrival time depends upon the distance involved (see *Speed Demons* in Chapter Four).

Maintaining a thrall is a latent but nonetheless demanding task, requiring no conscious concentration but much subconscious energy. Thus, a Dark Magus may not retain the services of an infinite number of *malefic* spirits. The maximum number of demons a diabolist may bind to service at any one time is determined as follows:

Maximum thralls = (Rego + Vim)/2 + Confidence + Hierarchy

LENGTH OF SERVICE

While maintaining a court and demanding service from demons is a constant struggle, and any one incident can bring an end to the master and servant relationship, there is a maximum length of time that a Dark Magus may pursue this constant struggle. This upper boundary is written into the Infernal pact immediately after the contest of wills, and depends upon the summoner's success in that initial contest.

Length of Service = summoning Advantage bonus expressed in years

Task Control Cost

Mechanical Complexity

Simple, single action, no skills involved	+1
Routine, multi-step procedure, physical skills	+2
Adaptation to circumstances, mental skills	+3
Initiative and creativity, social skills	+5

NB: If there are several stages to the task, assess mechanical complexity for each stage and add costs together.

Time Investment:

1 combat Round	+0
1 hour or less	+1
Sunrise/sunset or less	+2
1 week or less	+3
1 month or less	+5
1 year or less	+8
Entire length of servitude	+12

NB: If the demon must concentrate for the entire time, either to maintain a *maleficium* or to use skills, quadruple the listed time cost. Remaining alert for a given situation or opportunity to use its powers or skills does not count as demon concentration.

Powers Involved:

For all *malefici* integral to a task, or the demon's survival in pursuit of a task, add the Might Point cost of the power to the cost of the task. Each power's cost is only added once, no matter how many times that power is used.

Inherent Danger Factor: (this value multiplies the above tally)

No chance of peril	x 1/2
Only accidental peril possible	x 1
Poor performance causes peril	x 2
Peril possible even with good performance	x 3
Suicidal, destruction is likely	x 5

Early Release From Binding Promised: -10 after multiplying

Since an Advantage of at least 20 is needed to even earn the right to attempt a Binding, most summoners maintain their thralls for as much as two decades. At midnight on the last day of servitude, the demon appears before its master as if it has been contacted and demands dismissal.

The duration of temporary service (resulting from an Advantage score of 10 to 19) depends on the services demanded by the diabolist and the precise Advantage of the contest of wills.

The duration of a Cardinal Pact is different from that arising from a contest of wills. Such duration is discussed below.

CONTROL OF THRALLS

Summoners receive a Control rating with their thrall equal to their Rego score plus the amount by which they beat the demon in the most recent contest of wills. Thus each thrall has a separate Control rating that must be recorded.

Individual Demon's Control Rating = current Advantage + Rego

(Note: If a diabolist's effort to bind a demon fails, control of the demon becomes temporary, and the Advantage is considered to be +10. In this case, Rego does not modify that +10 score, so the diabolist's Control rating is 10).

Control is a fluid value, for it is "spent" and "used up" over the course of ownership and use of the demon. This is not a finite boundary on the ownership of the demon, though, unlike the time limit given above. Not only is it possible to use all Control Points up and fight for more, but goetists may try to spend in excess of their Control rating when demanding service from a demon. In fact, this is typical, since the player does not know the character's Advantage bonus, only a rough estimate.

Once its Control score drops below zero, a demon who is not bound to the summoner (a demon only under temporary control) may demand dismissal, while a bound demon may initiate a new contest of wills. If a bound demon wins this latest contest of wills, a new dominator is determined; the demon may manage to escape or even enslave the summoner.

A thrall may also decide to pretend it is still controlled, after a demand brings it to negative Control, in hopes of gaining an even larger negative sum when the diabolist makes another demand. When the demon initiates a new contest of wills, any negative Control translates directly to an Advantage penalty for the summoner, thus stacking the contest of wills in the demon's favor.

To avoid this and judge his relative Control over a demon, the summoner may perform a Ritual spell called *Feeling the Tether of the Court* (InVi 10). This spell must be cast for each demon in the diabolist's court and requires 30 minutes per demon and two pawns of *Intellego* or *Vim vis*, or *aesfotedia*. The spell reveals whether or not Control score for a demon has fallen below half (rounded up) the Advantage score achieved in the last contest of wills.

When Control is less than half Advantage, the summoner may decide to initiate another contest of wills, using what is left of the Advantage bonus to aid the first roll of the contest. A contest may not be provoked before half the Advantage score is lost in Control Points. Post-binding contests can only be used to re-bind a demon or lose control of it altogether. Furthermore, it is not possible to impose *sub stragulum* status upon an already bound demon. Only the initial summoning contest may be used toward that goal, when the energies of the evil spirit are in a raw, creative state.

Sumptuary Demands (Temporary Control Tasks)

A demon who is beaten by 10 or more (but less than 20) points in a contest of wills is under the temporary control of the diabolist. The demon cannot be bound at this point, but can be made to perform tasks that reflect the diabolist's marginal victory in the contest of wills.

Due to the Regime of Dichotomy and the Ritual of Mastery, the demon must do as the summoner wishes, following explicit instructions to the letter. As demons speak all languages, there is never a barrier to verbal communication between sorcerer and spirit. Every task has a certain cost as determined by the boxed chart. When a task is attempted and/or accomplished, its cost is subtracted from the summoner's Control rating.

Teaching Demands

A diabolist may command a demon to teach her something it knows, so that in a day she gains an Ability or power not possessed before, or known to a lesser degree. Each power or Ability in question takes one day to learn and is retained at a fixed level for the duration of the demon's servitude. Once the demon is released from thralldom, the power or Ability is lost.

Demons may generally teach any Abilities — Talents, Skills, or Knowledges — they possess, save ones with Arcane status. Exceptional Talents may also be taught, though they are treated as *maleficia* (see below), and are usually available to the demon only as powers to be taught (that is, demons may not use the powers themselves, though they may teach them). *Maleficia* possessed by a demon may also be taught as Infernal spells in the Hermetic mold, but *Psychomachia* may not be passed on to human subjects, nor can possession or any other obsession.

Commanding a demon to teach these traits, and commanding a demon to remain under control during the use of those traits, costs Control Points.

Abilities

A demon's repertoire of Talents, Skills and Knowledges is typically far greater than that of any single human, if only because most demons have lived as spectators for ages. A particular demon's Abilities are not listed in its description, since that would be too much to relate in a small space. Instead, hints about a small fraction of a demon's complete Ability repertoire are revealed in profiles about it (i.e., texts or Infernal word of mouth). Diabolists who learn about a demon's Ability repertoire may pick and choose to their hearts' content. (In other words, the player tells the Storyguide what abilities are sought, and the Storyguide tells the player what demons — those familiar to the character — are known to have those Abilities.)

As a general rule, minor demons are usually limited to bestowing physical Abilities, while major demons are able to offer mental and social Abilities as well. Astasians are limited to bestowing the (Area) Lore Knowledge for the region from which they are summoned. Finally, each demon's ability to teach is a function of its Intelligence and fundamental Might. The maximum level it may bestow upon its master in any single Ability is limited to its magnitude plus half its Intelligence (rounded up). Negative Intelligence subtracts from magnitude when determining Ability level.

Skill Level Bestowed = magnitude + Intelligence/2

Abilities learned from a demon are forgotten when the teaching demon is released, because the Abilities are not truly learned. Instead, they are a combination of demonic assistance and insidious *phantasmata* used to affect mind and body as needed. Physical Abilities can be thought of as mini-possession of the diabolist's body (possessions unaffected by protective spells because the participants are under contract). Mental Abilities are implanted by a host of astasians who have the proper knowledge. Social Abilities are obsessions brought on by possessors, conscious advice, and special submundanes (all of which make the diabolist use certain mannerisms, act a certain way, and say certain things, simultaneously duping the diabolist's audience into believing they appreciate the result).

Powers

While Abilities learned are open-ended and left to Troupe necessity, powers that may be bestowed upon Dark Magi are very explicit. If the demon does not have the requested power in its description (meaning its game description as crafted by the Storyguide, not some dark tome written about the demon), the demon may not bestow said power. Exceptional Talents are one possible exception, since they belong to the nebulous Ability list. Being otherworldly in nature, Exceptional Talents are taught as *maleficia*.

Any *maleficium* with a Hermetic spell Level equivalent of less than the demon's Might + the goetist's Hierarchy score may be taught in one day. Thus, Dark Magi need never again spend entire lab Seasons inventing previously unknown spells. They simply find demons who have Infernal versions of spells desired. (Of course, Seasons still get used up doing any number of diabolic tasks, such as inventing Contact spells or studying about demons.) Ultimately, the diabolist's "Infernal grimoire" is limited by the number of demons that can be bound and the variety of powers those demons possess.

For Exceptional Talents it is necessary to assign a Hermetic Level equivalent to each mystic talent as if it is a spell. Some Level equivalents are already given in the Ability section of the rulebook, but most must be estimated by you. Level 20 is a good middle ground, with Read Lips as an obvious example of a lower Level effect, and Visions an example of a higher Level one.

Power Points

Any Infernal spell taught to a Gifted individual may be cast by that person as a spell of the wizard's usual magic tradition. Since this chapter deals exclusively with Dark Magi — those turned from Hermes — spells follow the conventions of Hermetic casting given in the *Ars Magica* rules. There is, however, a special connection between caster and demon-teacher where Infernal spells are concerned. The Magus may add up to five of the bound teacher's Might Points (and only those from a *bound* teacher, not a temporary one) to all the Magus's casting rolls with the spell. Penetration, Casting Speed, Targeting and Concentration are also increased. Since demons allow their victims to overreach themselves (in the hopes of escaping sooner), this bonus is often used to cast a high

Level spell when the diabolist's Form and Technique are too low for normal use. Expenditure of these Might Points, which the demon loses for the day, also counts as a service cost against Control.

Control of Teachers

A demon trapped under a teaching covenant does not teach the Dark Magus every Ability or power it knows without a struggle. Each demand made by the diabolist annoys the demon and wears away at its Control. Every Ability level taught subtracts one point from Control, so that teaching Stealth +6 subtracts six points from the diabolist's Control rating. Each new power bestowed upon the Magus subtracts its equivalent magnitude from Control, so that an Infernal version of *Whispers Through the Black Gate* (InCo 15) cost three points of Control.

If a new contest of wills is fought and results in the demon's re-binding, the diabolist can proceed to learn more Abilities or powers with new Control Points. All Abilities and powers previously learned are not forgotten. By maintaining a grip on a demon, a diabolist can eventually learn all the demon has to teach.

Granting Demands (Triggered Services)

The mechanics of granting compacts are almost identical to those for bestowing *malefic* powers through teaching covenants. The demon goes into spiritual form and treats the Dark Magus, not a court-stone, as its focus. The demon then serves as a mystical lackey, using one or more of its powers upon demand. Each power "granted" subtracts its equivalent magnitude from the diabolist's Control score (this score is only charged once, upon "bestowal" of the power). The power's Might cost is also subtracted from the Control score whenever the power is used. However, the diabolist does not actually use Infernal Might Points, since the demon really casts the spell, based on the diabolist's trigger words and gestures. For appearance's sake, the diabolist would seem to be using magic, though.

Teaching powers and granting them are very similar in effect, but two differences make granting pacts useful. First, a teacher may, for a short period, be summoned away or dismissed from the diabolist's court by a more powerful diabolist. In the demon's absence, powers and Abilities taught are temporarily forgotten. By contrast, a demon bound under a granting pact constantly attends its master; it may not go on errands of its own, nor may it be contacted by others. A master always has access to these demons' powers.

Of course, granting requires constant alertness on the part of the granting demon. Powers cannot simply be granted for years without respite. The diabolist who controls a granting demon must allow it time to "stretch its wings" now and again. Thus, a granting demon may be forced to provide powers for as many days in a row as it has years of servitude (i.e., one day per point of the original summoning contest Advantage + Rego),

after which it requires one full day's rest. If the diabolist demands that the granting demon skip this rest, each extra day worked subtracts two from the diabolist's Control total.

Seal Demands (Devices)

It is possible to create a magic item using the spiritual force of a demonic entity trapped in a seal. Unlike granting or teaching powers, the effects instilled in the device do not need to be known by the demon. Instead, the demon's Might itself fuels Infernal powers designed by the Dark Magus. Entities in seals are the exception to the Control rules, for they never need to be controlled. The duration of the demon's servitude is based upon the usual calculation (determined by Advantage). However, this duration of servitude takes into account the difficulty of the sealed task (i.e., the strength of the magic item); thus, demons forced to do comparatively trivial work to power a magic item remain in service longer. Those under major strain may cut short their usual length of service.

The amount of raw *vis* found in a demon's Shadow Empyrean form (i.e., what would be left in the corpse according to the demon's description) may be treated as *vis* used in enchanting a demon/object combination (using the standard magic item creation rules in the rulebook, p. 242). This *vis* total is used as the limit on what powers may be placed into the magic item and fueled by the demon. Each pawn of *vis* can operate and fuel 10 spell Levels. The summoning Ritual and pact signing (followed by the presentation of the waxen seal) complete the preparatory enchantment, so a Season is not required for this stage.

Powers created by the diabolist can then be invested into the magic item using normal investment rules. Any variations on the rules are presented here:

The type of *vis* in the demon's body determines the powers that can be invested into the magical device. One of the power's two Arts must match the *vis* in the body. Therefore, if the demon has *Córporem vis* in it, only powers involving a *Córporem* Art may be invested. However, if the body has *aesfotedia* in it, any Infernally based power may be invested. The presence of *aesfotedia* in the body also allows any power involving *Vim* to be invested.

During the investment of powers, the diabolist's Occult Lore may be added to the Lab Total. Furthermore, any invested power that complements the demon's natural methods and purview is entitled to a +3 bonus on Lab rolls. Usual Form & Effect Bonuses for the object itself — that which the demon is contained in — are also permitted, even if they overlap with "demonic inclination" bonuses.

Powers invested in the sealed device may exceed the standard limits set by the demon's raw *vis* count. However, every 10 spell Levels beyond the accepted limit cuts the demon's remaining servitude in half. Thus, 20 extra Levels of powers reduce servitude to one-fourth the time determined by Advantage. A demon may also be given a lighter load to draw out its length of servitude. The same modifiers listed above are

used — for example, powers which total 20 Levels below the demon's limit increase its period of servitude to four times normal.

Automata

The phenomenon of the Infernal automaton is also covered under the topic of Seal Demands. A goetic sorcerer can force an evil spirit to initiate motion in the device to which it is sealed, creating an automaton. An automaton is made of a series of parts, each of which has a demon sealed inside. By applying a variety of Rego-type spells working in conjunction, all sorts of moving Infernal beings may be made and set to tasks for which they are specifically designed. (For more background on golems in general, see the Chapter on *Animates* in the *Ars Magica* Second Edition reference, *The Medieval Bestiary*.)

Cardinal Demands (Trading on the Soul)

Pact demands are the purview of Dark Magi, people who command service from Infernal entities. There is one pact, however, that is available to wizards and mortals alike, and offers powers never before possessed: the Pact of Ashes. This pact is a statement of high treason against Christian faith, and gives the signatory unopposed access to Infernal powers. Certainly the mortal grows in power as a result of the pact, but the one who gains real power is the demon providing worldly powers, for it gets an eternal soul and spirit.

Seeking worldly power is human wish fulfillment, plain and simple. If the partaker is a sorcerer, Contact spells do not demand attendance. A mere requested audience with the demon is enough to assure the diabolist powers; they are not forced from the creature. Such a demon usually shows up on its own, when astasians on duty tell it of the applicant. A Cardinal Pact and its fulfillment is the only sort wherein a demon takes initiative and invents an overall plan. That is, the demon is not forced to perform only specific, explicit tasks demanded by a domineering human.

A diabolist need not be careful of his requests in a Cardinal Pact, unless literal translation of those desires would cause death. The demand, "Make the college of cardinals elect me as the next Pope," is all that's required to enact a years-long campaign of manipulation, intimidation and murder that results in the diabolist's election as Pope. Provided the goals are selfish and of ill virtue, the liege-angel is more than willing to work to the diabolist's advantage. Some demons even enjoy carrying out a Cardinal sinner's desires, and best of all, they get to taste the sinner's soul when he dies.

Ashen Demands

Finally, and most important to the greedy at heart, Cardinal Pacts provide much-improved goetic abilities to Gifted signatories. When attempting an Infernally oriented task for which a roll is required, the Dark Magus may double the result

of the roll made provided the action is not directly opposed to a demon of greater Might than the Dark Magus's Prime Master. This roll bonus applies to the goetic arts, contests of will, magnitude estimates, Infernal spell casting, learning, laboratory rolls and whatever else seems appropriate. Ability rolls made for evil ends might also be doubled. Since it is not possible to detail every aspect of this boost in power, it is your prerogative to determine specifics when in doubt.

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

In any incarnation, short of being in a seal, an evil spirit with a formal or even informal relationship with a diabolist may be spoken to. Speaking with a demon requires a unique Contact spell to be cast upon it. While a warrior demon or astasian has little conversational value, greater demons often become advisors and confidantes to their human charges. If the human to which the demon speaks is a "master" through the Ritual of Mastery, conversation is an ideal means to achieve some control over the "master" by subtle manipulation and erroneous advice. (Remember, it is impossible to force a demon to tell the truth, or to use magic to know when one is lying.)

It is also possible to interrogate a demon about one of its brethren in order to compose a profile — valuable information about another demon that grants Familiarity with that demon. Indeed, the Magus must take notes to remember everything told. Information about another demon is more likely to be accurate if the other is an enemy of the diabolist's thrall. A bound demon automatically reveals what it knows about another demon. The interrogation takes one day per level of the thrall's magnitude. To study notes of the exchange and thereby gain Familiarity takes the remainder of the Season, as usual.

Unbound demons speak only if they wish to, or are forced to. A Magus who threatens or coerces a demon into talking must make a **stress roll + Perdo + Intimidation**. The result is compared to an Ease Factor equal to five times the demon's Intelligence score. If the Magus's roll succeeds, the demon answers questions, within reason and demon character. If the Magus's roll fails, the demon refuses to talk (and may charge the character Control Points, if a Controlled demon, equal to the number between the roll result and the Ease Factor). If the Magus's roll Botches, the demon is annoyed with the Magus and may start plotting against the human, actively so if plots are already forming.

Demons lie constantly, and nothing they say can necessarily be held as truth. However, the Magus can consult her stockpile of Infernal lore to determine if a demon is telling the truth. The Magus must make a **stress roll + Perception + Hierarchy**, or a **stress roll + Perception + Occult Lore**, whichever is more appropriate. The Ease Factor equals five times the demon's Intelligence. For every five points or fraction thereof that the Magus's roll exceeds the Ease Factor, one piece of information is verified as truth (if the demon speaks any truth at all). If the Magus's roll is low, one truthful item is mistaken

for falsehood for every five points that the roll falls short of the Ease Factor. If the roll is a Botch, the character believes nothing or everything the demon says, truth or falsehood.

MULTIPLE PACTS

Normally, a demon may be bound to only one task by a pact (noting the above exception of conversation). Thus, a demon bound to a court for the purpose of teaching Abilities may not be called on to fight on the diabolist's behalf or grant powers. To get other powers or services, another demon must be summoned, and that demon fills a slot in the diabolist's capacity for thralls.

Congression: Can You Govern Your Soul?

The word congress was used by the ancients to denote a contest or conflict between parties, and congression is commonly defined as a union. Lucifer wants nothing more than to unite with his Dark Magi. In contrast, Magi who command demons wish to avoid this meeting. Communion with Satan, who is beyond control, would destroy Magi. Dark Magi are thus in conflict with Satan's wishes. Nonetheless, by conspiring with demons, Dark Magi inevitably slide closer and closer to Satan, so a congression finally occurs. This downward movement is a degeneration, an accumulation of taint that finally destroys a Dark Magus. The goetic sorcerer is subject to several different phenomena during the downward spiral. Some are:

HIERARCHY CRAVING

All people involved with demons have a Hierarchy score. This score continues to increase as a Dark Magus gains experience with the Infernal realm. The score reflects a sort of addiction which builds up between the goetist and Hell. The higher the Hierarchy score, the harder it becomes to resist dabbling with the occult and dealing with demons. Whenever there is an opportunity to gain Infernal knowledge, but the player does not want the character to take the opportunity, a Hierarchy roll is made. Hierarchy is therefore treated as a Personality Trait. An Ease Factor is set based on the appeal of the power offered (in this case, particularly tempting Infernal lures lower the Ease factor) and a stress roll modified by Hierarchy is made against it. If the roll is successful, Hierarchy drives the character to pursue the Infernal act. If the roll is failed, the character's obsession falters and free will is maintained. If the roll is Botched, the character can rush headfirst into the act or stubbornly resist Infernal lures for some time, depending upon which best suits the situation.

Any strong reminder (such as watching a summoning ritual or talking to a charismatic demon) can lure the character back toward *maleficia*. At such times, Hierarchy rolls are repeated.

If the lure of Infernal magic is a prolonged one, accumulated Hierarchy rolls may be needed to resist. The Storyguide may dictate that as many rolls must be made as the character has Hierarchy Points. Points over or under the Ease Factor are tallied and if the final sum exceeds the score of the base Ease Factor, the character breaks down and pursues more Infernal activity. For example, if a character has three Hierarchy Points, three rolls are made to resist a constant, subtle lure toward *maleficia*. The Ease Factor for each roll is eight. Three rolls made over a period of time result in 11, four and 13. The total difference between roll and Ease Factor is four ($3 - 4 + 5 = 4$). Since this value is lower than the base Ease Factor of eight, the character's Hierarchy does not demand involvement in *maleficia*.

Virtues like Strong-Willed certainly influence Hierarchy rolls, reducing die results and resisting Infernal lure. Unfortunately, the next lure of Infernal power tempts the character again.

A character trying to escape the Hierarchy Craving can try to break the habit. Doing so is like fighting alcoholism, and involves as much temptation to break down. Breaking the addiction should be dealt with in terms of the story. Perhaps there are some Twilight-type side effects for Gifted diabolists trying to sever ties with Hell. Even if a character breaks away from Infernal habits, demons don't let the character go. They certainly hold onto the character's spirit and probably seek to kill the character before he can turn to the Church and save his soul.

When diabolists don't have to hide or control their activities, certain demons can still prompt them to further Infernal depths. These demons have "Craving" *Psychomachia* powers. Typically sent up from Hell by unhappy devils, or by rival covens, these spirits can force unfavored diabolists to feel as if they suffer from withdrawal, particularly at moments when diabolists are not involved with Infernal research or ritual. The demons' Craving scores are added to forced Hierarchy rolls to determine results. Victims of these demons tend to act agitated, maniacal, over-confident and suicidal (they make perfect villains).

Gaining Hierarchy

Remember that Hierarchy is an Infernal Ability. As an Ability it can be raised through Experience. Hierarchy Experience Points are gained in a number of ways, all of them bad. Such points tend to accumulate more rapidly than do Experience Points of other Abilities. Since Hierarchy represents the beginning of the end, accumulation of Experience is the limiting factor on a diabolist's worldly rise in power. Experience Points in Hierarchy are received from:

- the magnitude of each Contact spell learned or invented
- the Profile Value (1 to 3) of each Infernal source studied
- 1 per each different permanent circle used in career

- 1 per each 3 points of demonic Familiarity (all totaled)
- magnitude of bound and half magnitude (rounded up) of temporarily controlled demons (even if later released)
- standard magnitude of demon if True Name known or heart dissected/destroyed
- Storyguide's whim (e.g., temporary Twilight during goetic rites, trips to Ante-Hell)

Hierarchy Substitution

This is an important rule, for it supersedes everything else mentioned in this chapter. It is crucial that this rule be remembered at all times, since there are no reminders elsewhere in this book. Fortunately, players of diabolist characters are usually willing to remind you as needed, since this rule allows them to increase their goetic scores.

Simply put, during goetic rituals and Infernal chores in general — that is Infernal, not Hermetic magic — Hierarchy value can substitute for Magic Theory and/or any one magic Art score which would normally be used, as long as Hierarchy is higher than the trait in question. Even if a roll calls for Magic Theory + Intéllego + Vim, Hierarchy score can replace Magic Theory and any one Art that Hierarchy score exceeds (wise players replace the Art with the lowest score). This replacement represents the way in which talent and insight into the Infernal realm make diabolism easier to perform. The bonus encourages diabolists to reach farther and farther into the Infernal until they overstep themselves and Hell can claim them.

Reliance on Hierarchy bonuses also lure the Magus from the Shadow Gift, allowing magic abilities to atrophy in comparison to Infernal abilities. This is the ultimate, subtle lure to the permanent Pathway Dark. A Magus who ceases diabolical activities often finds she has wasted years of her life without magical progress. Only by retaining evil powers does the Dark Magus have something significant to show for her efforts. What Magus would throw away decades of supernatural growth over moral qualms?

In terms of game application, you are advised to mark Infernal spells known so they may be differentiated from Hermetic spells. Those Infernal spells then receive the Hierarchy substitution bonus.

SABBATHS

Sabbaths are meetings of diabolists. Attendance of Sabbaths is mandatory. Sabbaths are therefore organized means to ensure the corruption of diabolists, as demons impose their will upon humanity's dark element.

Sabbaths are not the sole province of the black witch. In fact, it was the sorcerers who, at the prompting of their demons, opened the Sabbath up to the rural witch. These witches' Sabbaths began around the year A.D. 800 and were arranged as a distraction for the Christian Church, which had grown at an alarmingly rate after Rome's fall.

By transforming witches' Sabbaths into flashy, party-like Black Masses, Dark Magi and other "scholarly" diabolists of the time were able to keep their own low-key meetings from drawing undue attention. Sabbaths, it was thought, were wild encounters with monsters, fires and witches flying on broomsticks. By contrast, the collection of elderly gentlemen, gathering at midnight in the empty guild hall with a few bottles and pouches, were simply clubgoers.

Thus have things continued. The sorcerers' Sabbaths, or "audiences," as they are also known, are quiet affairs which take place anywhere inconspicuous or private, even within city walls. The participants arrive on foot, without demonic servants at their elbow. Participants need only draw a temporary circle at the site, easily erased by morning. There are no loud chants, no magical contests, and no human sacrifices to underscore the event or pique anyone's curiosity. By these means, wizards' Sabbaths have been kept a secret from those without the Gift, and from historians in general.

A sorcerers' Sabbath may only be called by a devil in Hell. Any devil who has one free spirit (no matter how many others are in use as avatars), may demand that diabolists bound to the devil by Cardinal Pact, sumptuary bond, teaching covenant or granting compact attend a regular meeting in the devil's honor. The frequency of such meetings depends on the devil's vanity and caution. Such meetings are known as Private Sabbaths.

The same devil can also demand that all humans bound to his vassal devils attend a meeting in his honor. Such meetings are Full Sabbaths, and may be called only infrequently, based on the devil's Might. The time between such Sabbaths is equal to the Might needed to contact a demon of the devil in question, so that devils of Hell's Sixth through Fourth Echelons may call Full Sabbaths only once every 40 years (as demons of these devils tend to have Might scores around 40).

Goetists called to Sabbath, Full or Private, must attend if not physically or magically prevented from doing so. There is a compulsion to journey to the location of the meeting (the knowledge of which is suddenly implanted in the mind). Failure to attend has dire consequences (Storyguides, make up something nasty). A private Sabbath is generally an intense *phantasmata* session wherein the attendees are made to antagonize one another until they fight and someone dies (freeing their demonic court and delivering a soul to Hell as tribute to the devil in question). High Control scores allow diabolists to ignore the *phantasmata* and taunting, and give diabolists the edge in any fighting that takes place. If the appearing demon (who called the meeting and creates the *phantasmata*) is well-controlled by all diabolists in attendance, they need merely toast the appropriate devil's name to bring an end to the meeting without mishap.

Full Sabbaths are less personal, but also much more exotic and much harder to emerge from without being manipulated. The meeting, usually involving dozens of sorcerers, begins with an agent of the devil arriving and naming one favorite attendee, "King/Queen of the Sabbath," and a disliked attendant, "One Less Favored." By evening's end, the One Less

Favored is slain, and the King or Queen receives additional powers (usually the services of the dead sorcerer's court for one year).

The magic circle drawn for a Sabbath is actually used as a window into Hell. Through this window the honored devil and cohorts may view those in attendance and pose questions, enact debates, or even demand audience with other demons in an attending diabolist's retinue. Sabbath circles are therefore used to keep devil-images inside while sorcerers sit outside their perimeters, unlike ordinary summoning circles.

You should expand Sabbaths to make them more interesting; what is given here is just a starting point. For example, a group of Dark Magi known as the Roseblack Circle uses Full Sabbaths as glorified ex-Hermetic Tribunals (called Shadow Tribunals). Attendance is based on the relationship of members to individual demons, rather than by House or Covenant. Meetings are used to discuss business and to plan Roseblack strategy, in addition to the direct demands of the Sabbath. Sabbath Kings and Queens, chosen by luck, have unique influence on the Circle's policies due to their favored status, and retain the honorific until the next Sabbath of that particular devil.

PHANTASMAL CONGRESSION

Phantasmal congressions are usually more subtle than Sabbaths, but no less dangerous. During such a meeting of diabolists, visions and experiences of Hell are shared among members, allowing closer communion with the honored devil. Given this rapport with the devil, *phantasmata* are prominent and have the power of reality. In fact, the reality of the *phantasmata* is more firm and exotic for attendees with higher Hierarchy scores.

At a Phantasmal congression the loss of the chrism (a mark of ash and oil placed on the forehead at baptism) is possible with a Hierarchy of one. Witches with scores of three can ride broomsticks to a Black Mass. Star demons may actually carry a diabolist up to their abodes in the sky, letting them "walk among the stars," if the diabolist has a score of seven or higher.

Aside from these and other specific incidents, certain demons with *Psychomachia* powers may cause their victims to have "waking dreams." The *Psychomachia* is called Dreaming, and diabolists who suffer prolonged *phantasmata* can gain points in Dream as if it is a Personality Trait. Rather than provoking action, this trait provokes dream situations of varying intensity and duration. Anything may be provoked, and the diabolist cannot tell the difference between dream and reality unless the demon is being "creative" with the environment it creates.

Greater "dream" demons may even combine dreams and reality to produce conscious hallucinations and subtle sleepwalking. Almost any course of action may be forced by manipulating the diabolist's perception of the situation or what

she hears spoken by those around her. Perception rolls are needed to help get a diabolist through such situations without reacting to the wrong stimuli. Some believe these waking dreams are the Infernal counterpart to the pull of Twilight; however, most concur dreams are merely a series of explicit tricks.

Although no rules are provided for these dreams and their management, they do make for great story potential and are included here for that reason. If game mechanics are required for a walking dream, you are invited to create them, but players are first and foremost encouraged to roleplay their dream experiences and determine qualifiers for them. Numbers can be used later for more conventional relations between diabolists and demons.

CURTAILMENT (DAMAGE CONTROL)

At some point in the Dark Magus's career, she begins to believe her material existence is about to end. For better or worse, she made the decision to pursue the Dark Path at some point in her life, and now must consider what comes next. There are a few common choices, and many more less common ones. The latter type are left to the Storyguide to create, with Troupe help (players whose characters are facing imminent demise can often be quite creative). Some common forms of curtailment are described below:

Demurrage

Demurrage is a delay of sorts; the diabolist stalls for extra time. While it is not possible to delay once death has occurred, demurrage is commonly used by still-living diabolists (not just Dark Magi). These people know ahead of time that their hour is upon them and take steps to avoid their fate. Among those disposed toward demurrage are signers of Cardinal Pacts, particularly pacts meant to last only a fixed period of time (seven, 33, and 66 years are the common durations, the last one reserved for long-lived Magi). By demurrage, the diabolist agrees to find a substitute soul for the demon in order to remain in power for one more year.

The demon usually gives the diabolist 66 days to procure the substitute soul. A Christian target must be picked and the diabolist must manipulate him or her into committing a mortal sin. Once this is done, the diabolist must kill the person with a special ritual dagger, thus sending the soul down to Hell in her own place (without Accusation). By committing such crimes, diabolists living on borrowed time become demons in their own right, tempting people to evil and then slaying them if they succumb (something genuine demons cannot do). Unfortunately, such subtle corruption takes a great deal of time. A character partaking of demurrage therefore has less annual time to devote to the lab and other pursuits. When not otherwise accounted for by a story, yearly perpetuation of power through demurrage costs one Season's time.

If a demon ever desires to deny demurrage, it cannot simply say no to the diabolist, for demurrage is accepted by the Watcher devils as part of pact protocol. However, the demon can ask some Craving demons to perform *Psychomachia* on the character and make her succumb to Craving symptoms. A diabolist under such strain is unlikely to be capable of subtle strategy.

Divine Intervention

A diabolist's ultimate, final resort is complete repentance and a heartfelt desire to join with God. Fear of the Devil and the desire for self-preservation are not enough. True cosmic grief and profound rediscovery of Christ's message is all that works, and such things are entirely in player and Storyguide hands, for no die rolls can be made to represent repentance. The only rule of any sort in this regard is that simple faith is a requisite. Thus, lacking faith, most Magi are beyond Divine notice (see the supplement on the Divine, *Pax Dei*, for details on faith).

Saints and angels can tear up Infernal pacts, deny souls during the trial of Accusation, or prevent souls from going directly to devils' fiefs. Such salvation from a Hellish fate is generally outside the scope of the Saga, save when Divine spirits come down from the Heavens to confront demons, demanding that the Nephilim retrieve pacts from the Watchers.

Rituals of Divorce

Since the relationship between the Ash and Shadow Em-pyreans is ultimately untested, with neither known to be truly superior, many Dark Magi believe they can resort to supernatu-

ral practices to break Hell's grasp on their souls. In general, such magicks are called rituals of divorce, and may take place at any stage in a goetist's career, with unknown results.

Such rescue from Hell can even occur after death. In one case, a diabolist, fearing that his soul would go to Hell upon death if he did not take action, left detailed instructions about his funeral:

"Immediately upon death, sew up my body in a deerskin and place it in a stone coffin. Fasten the lid with iron and lead fixtures, bind it with three chains, and bury in on the fourth day after death. Hire fifty psalm singers, and have fifty different priests throughout the land give Masses in my name for three days before my burial."

The Blasphemous Canonization

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. The most vile and ill-spoken of all diabolists can become supreme examples of their particular depravities and thus achieve the equivalent of saint status in Hell. Such souls become Patrons of Sinful Circumstance, the Cult of Saints for the diabolic. Devil's Churches have artwork depicting their evil saints, special chants and holidays based on their saints, and rules for canonization and an intermediate wicked (instead of blessed) stage of recognition. Any cultural and theological role that saints fulfill among the true Church can be stolen and reversed by the dark congregation.

Achieving status as such a Dark Saint affords a more comfortable existence in Hell. Thus, diabolists who know their demise is imminent may indulge wholly and passionately in a single sin, hoping to attain Patron status



BESTIARY

CHAPTER SIX

Preamble

This chapter presents some examples of evil spirits that you may use in your stories. These samples show how the general traits given in Chapter Four may be used to create *daemones terreni* or *daemones depravati*. There is no such thing as a set of game statistics for a fallen angel, for devils themselves are almost never encountered in play.

Though you may be a bit disappointed with this chapter's dearth of examples, this supplement, as already explained, is meant only as a framework. Each Storyguide must bring demons to life in his or her own way, being as creative and unpredictable as possible. If players had an official tome from which to memorize a set of standard evil spirits, the value of storytelling in *Ars Magica* would be lost. By keeping this chapter's list of demons small, the need to expand and tailor new demons is virtually mandatory, and disallows lazy habits taught by other games.

A Note on Entries

As said throughout this book, demons are unique entities. The Might scores given here, though "permanent" in comparison to Infernal Might Points (which get used up and replenished each day), are only suggested averages. They are target Might scores likely intended for game descriptions, from which target magnitudes are derived within the context of the Saga. In

truth, even "permanent" Infernal Might scores can change. An Infernal holiday, a rare star in the sky, a strong north wind carrying evil vapors, or a constellation in a certain part of the heavens — any of these factors can change the Might of an earthly demon. Political maneuverings, human-fueled rituals in Hell, and promotion to deeper echelons could all affect the Might scores of demons and devils in Hell. Be aware of the tendency of Infernal Might to fluctuate. If characters expect to encounter a weak demon, but meet a strong one because it's All Hallow's Eve, they will be more wary of demons in the future.

The nine entities described here provide examples of each of the following classes: minor demons with no spiritual form (pure fiends), minor demons with physical form tendency (normal fiends), minor demons with spiritual form tendency, minor demons with no physical form (eidolons), major demons with physical form tendency, major demons with spiritual form tendency, and major demons with no physical form. (Major demons without spirit form — with only physical form — do not exist, as major demons come from devils in Hell.)

While other demon classes each have one representative in this chapter, three examples are provided of demons with spirit form tendencies. This is because this class most commonly plagues Mythic Europe. As for submundanes, they should exist only in theory in *Ars Magica* Sagas, and astasians should be seen and not heard (or something to that effect). Nonetheless, a tenth entry covering astasians is provided to demonstrate their powers in proper game format.

In the entries that follow, if Body Levels end in "Destroyed" instead of Incapacitated, the demon is of the *terreni* class and may be "killed." The body of the demon remains as a corpse and the spirit of the demon disperses to reform elsewhere on the earth (near its heart if it has one cached somewhere). If Body Levels end in "Banished," the demon is of the *depravati* class. The body of the demon remains behind as a corpse, but its spirit sinks back to its component soul in Hell, to remain in stasis for an allotted time period. Creatures sent up from Hell with no souls to return to (pure fiends, Stead-beasts and certain Vulgate demons, for instance) are abandoned above, and hence Destroyed. There is no Incapacitated category for demons (unless a demon in human form wishes to feign unconsciousness to fool people).

A demon in spirit form has no physical traits such as Strength or Stamina. However, those traits might assume significance in the spirit realm, particularly if such a demon is attacked in that realm. Thus, purely spiritual demons that are given ratings in normally physical traits, like Strength, may use those traits in the spirit realm only.

A *Psychomachia* score of zero means the demon can impose an unmodified Personality Trait, even when roleplaying and the situation at hand otherwise make such a test unnecessary. If the *Psychomachia* entry reads "none," the power is not available to the demon.

Possession ability is only available to those demons who have scores in Possession (those that cannot use it have "none" written for the power). Treat Possession scores of +0 as "standard" abilities, with Possession rolls based on Might alone. Modifiers specifying "Assault" aid the demon in gaining the initial victory over the *energumen*. Modifiers to "Escape" aid it in preventing demoniacs from escaping possession over the long term (i.e., sunrise rolls and such; see Chapter Four for details).

Apparent forms (the false images a demon may assume) follow the rules delineated in Chapter Four and are not mentioned here unless they play a vital role in the demon's affairs. Apparent forms should be listed in the Physical Form section of demonic entries, and should be determined by the Storyguide before the evil spirit enters play.

Under power descriptions: if the Hermetic equivalent of a power lists more than one Form or Technique separated by a slash (e.g., Pe/MuCo 20), the second is a Requisite. These values are required should Magi wish to duplicate or manipulate Infernal powers in the lab. To determine a demon's Penetration for a power (compared to the defender's Magic Resistance), use the demon's current Might Points or the equivalent Hermetic Level of the power, whichever is higher. (A supernatural effect has a certain minimum potency. If a demon is able to spend the required Points to create the effect, it is evoked at minimum potency regardless of the demon's own state.)

Finally, keep in mind that the demonic traits described in Chapter Four can be obeyed and ignored as best suits your story. Demons within your Saga can be whatever you wish

them to be; The Maleficium only represents a foundation from which to create demons. Where the imagination leads from here, nobody knows.

Example Demons

ASTASIANS

Infernal Might: 1 to 4

Vital Statistics: Size n/a (-8?), Cunning (insidious) +1, Perception (alert) +8, Strength (feeble) -6, Stamina (puny) -6, Presence (exhausted appearance) -3, Communication (tormented wailing) -2, Dexterity (clumsy) -4, Quickness (quick-silver speed) +10

Personality Traits: Curious +6, Talkative +3

Reputation: None

Confidence: 0

Combat Totals:

Body Levels: OK, Destroyed (*terreni* or *depravati*)

Dodge Defense +18 (24 Action), Soak n/a, Fatigue n/a

Psychomachia: None

Possession: +0 (rarely successful, but they can try)

Spiritual Form Powers:

The Tableau Memory (unHermetic), 0 Points — Astasians remember everything they see, hear and smell in their journeys. All demons of Minor and Major class may use an inherent power to "play back" these experiences when interrogating an astasian. A Magus must create an appropriate spell to do so.

Slipping Through the Magic Ward (unHermetic), 1 Point — Astasians may ignore the effects of any powerful supernatural Aura or ward; their very insignificance allows them essentially to "slip under the radar." If an astasian's Might is less than or equal to the Aura value or the magnitude of a warding spell (including *Aegis of the Hearth*), it may "slip through."

Physical Form Powers: None

MINOR, PURE FIEND

Scrith, the Tick-Bats

Infernal Might: 7

Vital Statistics: Size -6, Cunning (uncreative) -1, Perception (potential victims) +6, Strength (weak) -7, Stamina (puny) -7, Presence (batlike appearance) -6, Communication (chirping voice) -3, Dexterity (lithe) +4, Quickness (darting) +10

Personality Traits: Ravenous +5, Cowardly +3, Curious +1

Reputation: None

Confidence: 1

Combat Totals:

Scratch Totals: First Strike +12, Attack -1, Damage -2

Bite: First Strike +12, Attack +0, Damage +0*

Body Levels: OK, Destroyed

Dodge Defense +12 (18 Action), Soak -3** (3 Action), Fatigue n/a

* Victim must make Stamina stress roll of 12+ or suffer a strong parasitic attack within 1 hour, causing a loss of 1 Body Level. If the roll is Botched, two Body Levels are lost. Victims of bites are required to eat a large meal afterwards, or lose an additional Body Level by day's end.

** Tick-bats are immune to damage from the four elements, as well as to most effects of the weather (such as heat and cold, lightning, sandstorms and waterspouts).

Psychomachia: Gluttony +4

Possession: +5 Assault, -2 Escape (penalty to demon)

Spiritual Form Powers: None

Physical Form Powers:

The Gluttonous Leeching, Mu/PeCo 20, 1 point — If a scritch is able to scratch an opponent three times in a single spot (usually when the victim is asleep or faced with too many attackers to do anything about it), it is able to burrow just beneath the victim's skin. Favored spots are the back of the neck and the stomach. When a scritch is in place it takes a skilled physician (Chirurgy score of 4+) to detect its presence and remove it with no harmful effect.



The victim of the *Leeching* is ravenously hungry and must eat twice as much food as a normal person of his size and weight to avoid losing one Long-Term Fatigue Level per day. The victim feels extremely edgy and is prone to fits of anxiety while under the influence of the *Leeching*; however, the scritch transfers some of its perceptive qualities to the host (the victim receives a +4 bonus on all Perception rolls from a radar-like sense).

Physical Form

A scritch is a pure fiend without spirit, a Shadow Empyrean body wrapped around a *malefic* animating force. It is about as large as a dragonfly and resembles a tiny, red-skinned bat with transparent wings and a small cockatoo crest on its head. It has only one apparent form, that of a fat horsefly.

The main body is worth one pawn of *Córpore* vis.

Purview

Scritch are insects of Mythic Hell, and often ascend to earth by using the excess energies of a summoning ritual to slip through a rift into the summoner's lab. In this way, scritch are the miniature equivalents of Stead-beasts.

These tick-bats are often discouraged when they attempt to burrow into Magi, because of Magi's magic resistance. Accordingly, scritch tend to plague a Covenant's mundanes. Scritch tend to multiply in large numbers (exactly how is unknown), even when just one entity crosses over to earth, so tiny swarms of tick-bats are not uncommon. Armed with their powers of brief possession, a swarm can cause utter chaos among mortals.

Diabolists sometimes preserve tick-bat wings with special oils and hardeners, making them into pretty baubles and using them as Infernal spell Foci.

Story

The Covenant suffers a silent scritch infestation. Why are the covenfolk going through so much food, and why are the Groggs always tired-looking? Once the culprits are found, how are they dealt with? More importantly, does their presence imply a Dark Magus at work at the Covenant? "Ouch! What just bit me?"

MINOR, SPIRITUAL TENDENCIES

Communion Toads, the Tongue Spirits

Infernal Might: 5

Vital Statistics: Size -5, Cunning (lazy-minded) -1, Perception (foggy vision) -3, Strength (lazy muscles) -5, Stamina (soft body) -5, Presence (warty, slimy) -5, Communication (croaking voice) -3, Dexterity (graceless) -3, Quickness (great leaps) +3

Personality Traits: Lazy +3, Gluttonous +6

Reputation: None

Confidence: 1

Combat Totals:

Sting Totals: First Strike +6, Attack +2, Damage +3*

Body Levels: OK, Destroyed

Dodge Defense +1 (7 Action), Soak -2 (4 Action),

Fatigue n/a

* plus poison; Stamina stress roll of 3+ or die instantly (Hierarchy Points may be subtracted from this roll if a diabolist is in poor standing with Hell.)

Psychomachia: None

Possession: None

Spiritual Form Powers:

Swallow the Host, *PeIm* 10, 4 points — This power allows the spirit to conceal one very small item for up to one hour. It can conceal any item small enough to be placed whole in the human mouth. For purposes of spiritual travel, the toad is considered encumbered in spiritual state.

Physical Form Powers: None

Physical Form

A small milk-white toad with a scorpion's tail; a communion toad has no apparent forms available to it, and no measurable raw vis in its corpse.

Purview

The communion toad is a very minor *terreni* demon which exists in spiritual form except when summoned. When summoned it can be commanded to accept a new object to carry

(with a simple victory in the contest of wills), or (with an Advantage total of 20+) it can be forced to cancel any current *Swallow the Host* spell maintained to reveal the object currently carried.

The communion toad is summoned in the night from nearby ponds and marshes. It is called by witches and diabolists who desire to use its powers. Typically, the toad is used by Satanists who wish to partake of an orthodox Communion at Mass, in order to retain the Host for later diabolic ceremonies, without seeming conspicuous or resorting to sleight-of-hand.

The toad must hop into the summoner's presence in physical form (though the majority of the journey from marsh or pond can occur spiritually). Once the toad arrives the diabolist places it in his or her mouth (it has a very foul taste). The communion toad then reverts to spiritual form and awaits the offering of the Host. From the moment it "swallows" the wafer, the demon can keep it concealed up to one hour.

Unbeknownst to the stupid creature, close contact with the Communion for longer than half an hour is inimical to its Infernal composition. The task proves fatal for the toad. If the diabolist is able to receive the Host and quickly take leave of the Mass (in under thirty minutes), the toad's life is not put in danger. The communion toad can be used to conceal non-Holy items without fear of death, should the summoner have other uses for the toad's concealment power.



Story

One of the more religiously-inclined covenfolk attends a Mass at the same time that a certain demon grows weary of an annoying worshipper. The demon decides to use a communion toad to be rid of its human slave. This Mass is the next occasion that the worshipper uses the toad's services, and the demon commands the creature to use its poisonous stinger immediately after the Communion wafer is taken (for the sake of perversity).

The character is the only one to see the toad after the unfortunate diabolist falls dead. The person's information can be used by clergy or Covenant to accurately assess what has befallen the erstwhile parishioner.

Hail Maggots, The Writhers

Infernal Might: 4

Vital Statistics: Size -4, Cunning (obsessive) -3, Perception 0, Strength (thin arms) -3, Stamina (resilient) +3, Presence (self-mutilating) -6, Communication (distracted conversationalist) -1, Dexterity (acrobatic) +2, Quickness (bounding) +4

Personality Traits: Brave +2, Mischievous +1

Reputation: Daredevils (*terreni* demons) 1

Confidence: 3

Combat Totals:

Claw Totals: First Strike +10, Attack +4, Damage +1

Body Levels: OK, -3, Destroyed

Dodge Defense +8 (14 Action), Soak +4* (10 Action), Fatigue n/a

* Cannot Soak fire damage at all

Psychomachia: None

Possession: None

Spiritual Form Powers: None

Physical Form Powers:

The Icy Form, MuCo 15, 0 or 1 point — These creatures are able to transform into very large (crow-sized) hailstones. As soon as they touch ground, they revert to usual form. If a hailstorm is in progress, this transformation ability is automatic. Otherwise, becoming a hail stone costs one point of Might.

Physical Form

Hail maggots appear as tiny, white imps with wings, claws, and permanent maniacal grins. Their skin is snow-textured and is always cold to the touch. Hail maggots have one apparent form, that of a fist-sized hailstone.

Three hail maggot corpses (provided the creatures were not killed by fire) can be melted and distilled into three drams of a fetid-smelling liquid worth three pawns of Aquam vis.

Purview

Hail maggots are known as such not because of their size and physical form, but because of their favorite pastime. These odd little demons receive pleasure from one of the lowest ideals on the Infernal food chain: self-mutilation and the subsequent surprise or disgust caused in humans who witness their antics.



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A hail maggot usually resides in invisible hibernation, but when a hailstorm occurs it awakens and flies up into the clouds in order to accompany the more mundane hailstones in their fall to earth.

Rather than plummet randomly to earth, a hail maggot guides itself to a location where it can rake its claws along a human or animal target (an additional +5 to First Strike and +3 to Attack with this tactic), or at least fall within sight of a human (preferably a squeamish one). This fall inevitably causes one Body Level of damage to the demon, and as the creature reverts to impish form, it appears horribly mangled and flattened, writhing in pain and pleasure both.

Immediately after it is spotted, the creature becomes spiritual once more and flies up to perform the stunt a second time. This second fall results in physical death, though, leaving a mangled corpse on the ground. By the time the next hailstorm comes, the creature has reformed a new body just for the occasion. However, if a hail maggot makes a Cunning stress roll of 6+ (at a -3 penalty because of its low score), the demon can decide to wait until the hailstorm that awakened it is over, saving its "rides" for a later time. Each day of waiting requires another roll. If a roll is ever failed, the demon assumes hail form and falls regardless of weather.

Story

As Magi attend an out-of-doors festival or political meeting, bad weather quickly moves in (a local seer might have warned of foul weather as an ill omen of some sort). The storm

produces hail and at least one hail maggot falls. Characters may spot a single maggot land away from the crowd and realize the danger of letting the demon fall again. If allowed to, the cunning little maggot lands a second time, this time on the public meeting table, upsetting any ladies present. If they don't stop the demon from killing itself in front of so many influential people, the characters' political influence is undermined and their plans are ruined.

For its part, the tiny villain earns itself a promotion to higher Infernal status, or perhaps passage to Hell courtesy of a local Nephilim spirit.

Lerajie, the Prolongers

Infernal Might: 20

Vital Statistics: Size -1, Intelligence (aimless) -1, Perception (spotting wounded) +2, Strength (vicious power) +1, Stamina (mutilated) -3, Presence (gory) -10, Communication (damaged voice) -1, Dexterity (mangled hands) -2, Quickness (energetic) +4

Personality Traits: Gloating +2

Reputation: None

Confidence: 2

Combat Totals:

Claw Totals: First Strike +9, Attack +6, Damage +8

Body Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Destroyed

Dodge Defense +10 (16 Action), Soak +10 (16 Action), Fatigue n/a

Psychomachia: Self-Pity +1

Possession: None

Spiritual Form Powers:

Prolong the Pain of Battle, PeCo 15, 1 Point — When cast upon someone who currently has an open wound caused in combat, this spell reduces all Wound Recovery rolls by five, thus delaying recovery and forcing prolonged bed rest. This -5 penalty may not cause a recovery Catastrophe, but it can harm the victim with any other bad Chirurgy rolls it causes. The -5 penalty is also applied to any spell casting rolls intended to heal the character. In addition to prolonging the time needed to heal, this *maleficium* can, if used once per day upon the victim, cause him to feel that the wound is still fresh and newly painful for up to 13 days after the battle.

Physical Form Powers:

The Inflictor's Form (variable), 5 Points — If a Lerajie is ever forced into a physical confrontation, it can choose to take physical form as a simulacrum of whatever person or beast caused the wound in the victim that the demon most recently haunts. For all intents and purposes, the demon is treated as that other entity, using the inflictor's statistics and weaponry. Supernatural abilities and spells may not be duplicated in this way. A form assumed is maintained for the duration of the current conflict, and is lost if the demon is destroyed.

If a character was badly hurt by an opponent, and that opponent is faced again in the form of a demon, the character might suffer psychological effects. A Brave test, for example, might be required for the character to stand ground.

Physical Form

A Lerajie is a three-foot-tall, gray-skinned humanoid with bleeding wounds of various sorts all over its body. Half of these entities have five pawns of *Córporem vis* in their chest cavities. The other half have hard black nodules worth five pawns of *Perdo vis* buried within the gore of the biggest wound on their bodies.

Purview

The Prolongers were developed from other *malefic* spirits many centuries ago, when Chaldean diabolists aided their nation in battles against neighboring states. While the old Chaldean sorcerers are no more, the Lerajie live on, seeking out battles in the modern world. Prolongers were conceived as what ancient sorcerers called "spirits of duty." Today, all that remains of such duty is the warped pleasure that pain and suffering cause, and the psychological trauma faced by invalids and those recovering from long bouts of illness — the Muting of Christ's birth wiped out the Prolongers' original directives.

Lerajie generally latch onto a single victim after a combat, nestling into the victim's biggest wound. Once the 13 days of excruciatingly fresh pain are over, the spirit moves on, but delayed healing persists.

Story

During the final, climactic combat of a story, one of the Covenant's Grog becomes host to a Lerajie spirit. The Magi can uncover the demonic cause of the Grog's pain, and may confront the spirit. However, they are surprised to find they have to relive the battle of the last story to defeat the demon.

MINOR, PHYSICAL TENDENCIES

Bock, Mask of the He-goat

Infernal Might: 20

Vital Statistics: Size -1, Intelligence (animalistic) -2, Perception (wary) +2, Strength (bulky) +3, Stamina (stubborn) +6, Presence (bestial) -2, Communication (grunting) -3, Dexterity (clumsy hooves) -1, Quickness (powerful gallop) +1

Personality Traits: Cowardly +1, Violent +2, Stubborn +3

Reputation: Herd Animals (greater demons) 5

Confidence: 1

Combat Totals:

Hoof Totals: First Strike +8, Attack +6, Damage +8

Bite Totals: First Strike +5, Attack +10, Damage +15

Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -5, Destroyed



Dodge Defense +8 (14 Action), Soak +13 (19 Action), Fatigue n/a

Psychomachia: None

Possession: None

Spiritual Form Powers: None

Physical Form Powers:

The Black Clatter, CrVi 15, 1 to 3 Points — When a bock is coerced into participating in a *Black Clatter* it gallops in a circle around the coercing diabolist, bleating, screaming and kicking up debris. This *maleficium* amplifies the disturbance to truly chaotic proportions, causing a cacophony which distracts all non-diabolists while encouraging and focusing the instigator(s) of the action. The effects of the disturbance are more pronounced and potent if multiple bocks join to form a group "clatter."

In game terms, the disturbance boosts the goetic sorcerer's Confidence score, contributing one point per point of Might spent on the endeavor. The Might expended by the bock(s) also penalizes non-diabolic characters in the vicinity; they each lose a Point of Confidence until the *Clatter* ends (Confidence can go no lower than zero). A maximum of three Might Points may be spent on the effect, and all bocks involved in the clatter must agree to expend the same amount. If there's a disagreement the lowest possible bonus/penalty is imposed. A single bock, however, may only lend one point of aid with a *Black Clatter*. In order to contribute more, more bocks must be involved in the caterwauling procession: four bocks allow up to a two-point bonus/penalty, while nine or more bocks allow the full three-point bonus/penalty.

Physical Form

The bock is the Mask of the he-goat; it resembles a goat with enlarged, human-like genitalia, and forehooves splayed to mimic the human hand's five digits (including an analogous opposable thumb). Bocks walk upright but with greatly hunched backs (save when forced to run four-legged in a *Clatter*), and their odd, half-human mouths are always twisted into a hideous grin, showing their rotting, razor-sharp teeth.

The bock's male appendage is worth six pawns of *Creo vis*.

Purview

Bocks are soulless demons native to Hell proper. There they are forced to produce milk for devils who hold elaborate feasts in their courts. Bocks may only come to earth by being sent from Below (they cannot be summoned because of the Curtain of Spheres), and this is only done to appease favored diabolists.

It is a common Hellish custom to drink the milk of the bock after deals are made in word but not writing, as a way to reassure both parties that words are spoken without deceit; the drinker is thought to be subject to a curse if the word is broken. Some diabolists, Dark Magi especially, adopt this custom in their own dealings.

Bocks are among that rare breed of demon that must reside in physical form almost exclusively, even though not of the warrior class. When bound to a diabolist for a long period,

individual bocks are capable of developing unique personalities and quirks, and they have a great affinity for "going native" (that is, adapting to and getting used to earthly cultures). Some bocks have even developed skill with weapons, but only those that can be made to function with the bocks' gross motor skills (the beasts balance on their back hooves).

Story

Because bocks are so useful in diabolic rituals (because they boost Confidence), and yet are hard to conceal (given their inherent physical state), they are an ideal means for you to give characters an overt clue about a Storyguide character's diabolic tendencies. When a bock is sighted on several occasions wandering Covenant halls, the Magi undoubtedly get involved. How do they track the bock? How do they keep gossip about diabolic doings from spreading? Best of all, whom do they suspect and how do they deal with their suspects? If the bock is still on the loose when the Magi confront the diabolist(s), it certainly supports its master(s), using weapons or *maleficia*.

MINOR, EIDOLON

Assessors, Spirits of Despair

Infernal Might: 20

Vital Statistics: Size n/a, Intelligence (subtle) +1, Perception (probing) +6, Strength 0, Stamina (persistent) +2, Presence (tormented expressions) -3, Communication (broad vocabulary about sorrow) +3, Dexterity (fumbling) -2, Quickness (swift) +5

Personality Traits: Stubborn +3, Gloating +2

Reputation: None

Confidence: 2

Combat Totals:

Body Levels: OK, Destroyed

Dodge Defense +8 (14 Action), **Soak** +5 (11 Action), **Fatigue** n/a

Psychomachia: Despair +5, Self-Loathing +3

Possession: +0 (cannot force suicide)

Spiritual Form Powers:

Shroud of the Black Mood, CrMe 25, 2 Points — Once per day, an assessor can force a target to brood upon some bad aspect of his or her life, either a period from the past or one suspected to be in the future (whether real or imagined). This spell is identical to *Weight of a Thousand Hells* save in its duration and subtlety. Each spell of despair lasts only a few hours, and seems to be generated from fully internal effects rather than intrusive foreign emotions.

Each month spent under this onslaught of hopelessness (provided the spell takes effect at least 18 times in that month) forces the character to make a Personality Trait roll as if possessing the Trait of Depressed +0. If a similar Trait is already possessed, increase its score by one for the purposes of this roll. If the roll is seven or lower, the character behaves normally. If the roll is eight or higher, the character assumes the Depressed

Personality Trait at a score of +3. The Trait persists until the next month's roll (which is now based on Depressed +3, but renewed monthly depression does not increase the Trait's intensity). If a Depression-like Trait is already possessed, it increases by one for the duration of the depression. If a monthly Depression roll is Botched or results in a score of 20+, the Depressed +3 Trait is gained permanently. If a similar Trait is already possessed, its score permanently increases by one.

This power slowly encourages a victim to commit suicide.

This spell effect is available to an assessor in addition to its normal *Psychomachia* powers. This power is more subtle than *Psychomachia*, though, and works over a much longer period.

Physical Form Powers: None

Physical Form

None. If captured and studied in the lab in spiritual form (requiring special, non-standard Rego Vim magicks of Level 25), an assessor can be treated as a source of Mentem vis (3 pawns), but may only be used to improve that Art. A Botch when using this vis indicates that the Magus attempts to commit suicide instead of learning, as the vis lures the Magus to the mindset of the assessor.

Purview

Assessors are evil spirits of earth who try to lure their victims to suicide. Aside from moral implications, a suicide provides these spirits with the sustenance they need to survive and prosper. Assessors are extremely stubborn, latching onto a single victim for months or years until the victim succumbs. Even if chased away by exorcists or magic spells, an assessor is likely to try to return to the victim when the threat is gone or barrier removed.

Aside from *Shroud of the Black Mood*, assessors can impose Despair and Self-Loathing Traits upon victims through *Psychomachia*. Any rolls made by a victim of such *Psychomachia* which result in Botches provoke the character to commit suicide within the hour. Mundane intercession, Church aid, and Mentem spells cast by friends can all counteract the immediate impulse, but the demon is still hard at work.

It is not suggested that this demon be used against players' characters, unless all parties concerned are prepared to accept the possible outcome.

Story

Though assessors usually work for their own benefit, more powerful demons are known to command their services. Such greater demons usually wish to indirectly destroy a specific target over a long period of time without undue suspicion.

Such a plot is enacted under the noses of the Magi. The victim is an important ally, and his or her change of mood does not go unnoticed. Perhaps the characters are present during a suicide attempt and must use magic in front of mundanes to prevent the unthinkable. Characters must find the demon behind the crime and learn what it is trying to gain by surreptitiously slaying the victim.

MAJOR, EIDOLON

Sonneillon, Eidolon of Enemies (unique)

Infernal Might: 32

Vital Statistics: Size 0, Intelligence (crafty) +3, Perception (astute) +2, Strength 0, Stamina (weak-willed) -1, Presence (embodies treachery) -3, Communication (silver-tongued) +3, Dexterity 0, Quickness (pursuing guile) +3

Personality Traits: Brave -1, Belligerent +2, Resentful +3

Reputation: Treacherous (Hell's Devils) 3

Confidence: 3

Combat Totals:

Body Levels: OK, Banished

Dodge Defense +7 (13 Action), Soak +4 (11 Action),
Fatigue n/a

Psychomachia: Pride +1, Wrath +2, Suspicion +3

Possession: +1 Assault, -3 Escape

Spiritual Form Powers:

Stoke the Fires of Hatred, CrMe 20, 5 points — This power allows Sonneillon to temporarily boost her *Psychomachia* of Wrath by five additional points (for a total of +7 to such Personality Trait rolls). If the targeted character succumbs to wrath in a very strong manner (a modified roll of 16+ or a Botch), he gains the Wrath Trait (at a score of +2), as well as a Specialty in it toward a person chosen by Sonneillon. The Specialty acts like any other, adding one to all rolls toward the subject, but in this case it applies to a Personality Trait.

The imposed Wrath Trait lasts longer than the current scene. It lasts throughout the current story. After the story, when there is time to reflect, the character is entitled to an Intelligence stress roll. If the roll is successful, the character loses his wrath, realizing the emotion was irrational. If the roll fails, the Trait is maintained until and throughout the next story. Another Intelligence roll is allowed after the next story, and after each successive story that the wrath persists through. If the initial, or any following roll Botches, the Wrath Trait is gained permanently.

The Ease Factor for the Intelligence roll depends upon the legitimacy of the hatred: overcoming hatred for a long-time friend is a "very easy" task (say 3+), for a complete stranger it is "not too hard" (6+), for an intellectual opponent or formal rival it becomes "difficult" (9+), and for a true enemy or physical opponent, it is "extremely difficult" to put aside the new anger (15+).

Physical Form Powers: None

Physical Form: None

Purview

Sonneillon was a camp follower in wars between rival fiefs in the middle levels of Hell. She would travel from one pitched battle to the next without care for which faction won; all that

mattered was the carnage and the potent hatred one side felt for the other. Once, when an impending battle seemed on the verge of being called off because the leaders had worked out a compromise, Sonneillon crept into both camps bearing "proof" that the other was about to stage a sneak attack. The battle was resumed.

Later, though, Sonneillon's machinations were discovered, and it was clear that she had overstepped her bounds. With the influence of their own masters, the two leaders were able to get Sonneillon banished to earth as an eidolon, stripped of her former powers.

In her exile, Sonneillon has not remained idle. Although human battles have much less appeal, and seem to evoke anguish and fear among the rank and file instead of the hatred prevalent among Infernal armies, it is still possible for her to cause individual leaders to hate each other. This is the task Sonneillon sets herself. Where Sonneillon is at work, grudges last for years and factions maintain unreasonable policies that injure both parties. Sometimes wide-ranging distrust and hatred permeates both camps. Usually, however, the average peasant or lesser knight only wants the fighting to stop, and blames the other camp for its continuation.

Saint Stephen is directly opposed to Sonneillon, and is a very efficacious power in dealing with her schemes.



Story

Sonneillon sets her sights on two rulers near the Covenant. These lords have been rivals in the past, but never to the extent that Sonneillon now provokes. Eventually, commerce is disrupted and Magi undoubtedly decide something must be done. If they gain audience with both lords, and listen to the gossip at both courts, characters may conclude that an unreasoning force is at work and a demon is likely to blame.

Sonneillon cannot be faced in physical form, but must be dealt with somehow. Finding a way to face the demon can be a means to tempt a character into becoming a goetic sorcerer. Magi can also use more conventional methods of luring the spirit into their proximity and assault it outright with appropriate Perdo Vim spells.

MAJOR, PHYSICAL TENDENCIES

Nuckelavee, Despoilers of the Sea

Infernal Might: 40

Vital Statistics: Size +3, Cunning (vengeful) +2, Perception (keen-eyed) +5, Strength (powerful limbs) +8, Stamina (tough hide) +10, Presence (vicious) -3, Communication (grunting) -3, Dexterity 0, Quickness (strong gallop) +3

Personality Traits: Ferocious +5

Reputation: None

Confidence: 1

Combat Totals:

Hoof Totals: First Strike +9, Attack +9, Damage +25

Tentacle Totals: First Strike +13, Attack +8, Damage +14*

Bite Totals: First Strike +7, Attack +12, Damage +18

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5, Destroyed

Dodge Defense +10 (16 Action), Soak +18** (24 Action),

Fatigue n/a

* Stamina + Size stress roll of 10+ or lose one Body Level to poison damage. The roll must be repeated each day until the victim dies or a successful one is made. Levels lost to poison can be healed normally, but if healing is impossible, may accumulate (along with other wounds) to cause death. Poison causes the body to visibly rot; the body crumbles upon death. Magic Resistance against poison is made versus PeCo 35.

** PeAq spells which get past the demon's Magic Resistance cause double damage, or are cast at +1 to the spell casting roll per magnitude of the spell if the spell is not designed to do damage. (Nuckelavee do not have the usual immunity to fire, but Soak counts fully against fire damage.)

Psychomachia: None

Possession: None

Spiritual Form Powers: None

Physical Form Powers:

The March of Rotting, PeHe 45, 0 Points — Whenever a nuckelavee treads on dry soil, plant life in the area dies from a fast-acting disease. Forests are denuded, gardens wither, and croplands rot from the ground up. All the vegetation within one league of a nuckelavee's path is killed automatically. Supplies of Herbam vis are also destroyed. Plant life within two to five leagues of a Despoiler's march is in similar jeopardy, but measures can be taken to preserve such lands. If an area is drenched in a water and cinnamon solution, its plant life is protected; faerie forests, *Aegis of the Hearth*, and the Dominion also offer protection.

Spell Equivalents, PeHe, 1-3 Points — Nuckelavee have an array of powers which destroy plants. Assume they may duplicate all Perdo Herbam spells found in the *Ars Magica* book.

The Death Blossom, PeCo/He 40, 5 Points — With a successful bite attack, the nuckelavee plants a seed inside any victim it knows to be a murderer. In 40 days, a pony-sized nuckelavee sprouts from the victim's chest (resulting in instant death), and heads for the sea. The newborn has a Might of 20 and causes a smaller version of the *March of Rotting* (three leagues to either side rot but may be protected, and only a 15-pace corridor is too close to be protected).

Physical Form

Nuckelavee are horrendous, demonic equestrian beasts; they resemble huge horses with tentacles on their backs, a set of curled horns, and a large maw full of fangs (the top set of which overbites the bottom). A nuckelavee's coat is mottled gray with patches of black and green; it is covered in a coat of slime and draped with foul-smelling seaweed. Older creatures have elaborate barnacle growths which can cause +12 Damage (Soaked normally) to flesh brushed while galloping past. A nuckelavee has no apparent forms, and may only change into spiritual form when in the sea.

The nuckelavee's tongue (a gross acquisition indeed) is worth 15 pawns of Aquam vis. A stillborn Death Blossom (see below) is worth 12 pawns of Perdo vis.

Purview

Nuckelavee are said to gallop in great numbers across the ocean floor in the southern, evil portion of the earth. They are also said to serve as mounts for water demons who battle one another beneath the sea. A stray nuckelavee, freed from its master in the confusion of battle, can wander north, waiting for people to enter the water. The demon then uses its tentacles to pull hapless victims underwater and far from shore (i.e., as does undertow, but without the tentacles).

Admittedly, these theories about nuckelavee are unconfirmed at best. The only positive fact about them is that they are a favored form of Stead-beast (see Chapter Three, *Mythic Hell*), sent by demons to cause panic and famine where coastal goetists practice their craft.

Once it makes its journey to the sea, a nuckelavee may not come back to shore until the conditions are right. The demon must find a spot where a murdered corpse lies resting half in and half out of the water. The demon can then "climb up" the

body. (Pirates who believe in the nuckelavee often tie down their slain victims with stones or burn the flesh off bodies to avoid giving Despoilers a source of escape from the sea.) Once on land, a nuckelavee usually roams for seven days, causing wanton destruction and wholesale panic.

When a Despoiler first crawls on land, it tries to impregnate the corpse which allowed it to emerge from the sea. That body then houses a Death Blossom. Unfortunately, the Blossom never grows, miscarrying in the dead body. This vile formation is a source of raw vis, but only evil Magi can collect it without suffering nightmares. Once a Despoiler examines the body that allowed it to emerge, the demon becomes aware of who murdered the person and knows where the murderers are located. If they are less than seven days away, the nuckelavee seeks them out. One is made to bear a Death Blossom; the rest are slain.

Story

For whatever reason, the characters know about a murder and the murderers involved. The victim is then used by a nuckelavee to access dry land. When they learn of the Despoiler's approach, the characters are asked by a friendly noble or churchman to stop the beast, for the loss of crops in the area already threatens famine for years to come. The murderers, it turns out, are right in the middle of a crucial agricultural region. How do the characters solve the situation? How do they get the beast's targets to leave the area? (Perhaps the characters promise to protect the murderers or maybe they flat-out threaten the killers' lives if they don't leave.) Then again, what if the characters were the murderers? Knowledge of the fate that awaits them is quite a burden to bear.

MAJOR, SPIRITUAL TENDENCIES

Straagus, Archmage of the Courts (unique)

Infernal Might: 78

Vital Statistics: Size +1, Intelligence (devious) +7, Perception (astute) +5, Strength (sinewy) +4, Stamina (scaly skin) +6, Presence (commanding) +5, Communication (powerful tone) +5, Dexterity 0, Quickness 0

Personality Traits: Calm +2, Sarcastic +2, Haughty +3, Solicitous +4

Reputation: Dangerous (greater demons) 5

Confidence: 5

Combat Totals:

Claw Totals: First Strike +9, Attack +8, Damage +18

Quarter Staff Totals: First Strike +12, Attack +9, Damage +11*, Parry Defense +6 (12 Action)

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Banished

Dodge Defense +13 (19 Action), Soak +15 (21 Action), Fatigue n/a

* Target must resist a Level 35 MuCo spell or turn to stone for as many days as the demon's current Might Points. A Natural Resistance Stamina stress roll against an Ease Factor of 10 is also allowed. Any Resistance roll that Botches results in stone shape for 78 days, the demon's full Might score. Sight and hearing are retained in stone form, but no speech, movement or sense of touch is possible. (Magi may still cast spells with the usual penalty for no words or gestures, but no raw vis on their persons may be accessed).

Psychomachia: Greed +5, Elitism +4, Nonconformity +3

Possession: Never used

Spiritual Form Powers:

The Forgotten Council, Pe/ReMe 40, 5 Points — When Straagus uses this power, everyone in the same room with him forgets what was heard or seen as soon as the room is left. Victims do not recognize the omission in memory until at least one day has passed. If queried concerning the missing knowledge before this time, they believe they know what happened but simply cannot relate that information. At sunrise, an Intelligence + Mentem stress roll of 16+ must be made; success indicates the victim realizes the truth. Failure indicates the roll must be attempted again upon the next sunrise (or upon being confronted by someone else from the "forgotten" room who has successfully broken the spell). If the roll is ever Botched, the person can never remember what occurred in the demon's presence.

Physical Form Powers:

The Memory Suggested, CrMe 25, 2 Points — Straagus may implant a single new memory into a victim's mind by fully inventing the memory in his own mind, then referring to it in conversation with the victim. If the victim is supposed to have been involved in an event related to the "memory," the event is remembered as if it had been experienced. If the victim is not supposed to be part of the memory's context, the victim at least accepts the memory as a factual event of the past.

The person hearing the memory may recognize its fabricated nature with a successful Magic Resistance roll. A Natural Resistance stress roll is also allowed; this roll is made with Intelligence against an Ease Factor of 10. If any Resistance roll is Botched, the memory is accepted as truth and can never be seen through.

With time an accepted memory can be undone. A victim who is shown hard evidence contradicting the implanted memory may purge it from her mind with a successful Intelligence + Mentem stress roll of 15+. If the roll is Botched, the false memory is accepted as truth and can never be seen otherwise. If not directly challenged, a memory remains in place indefinitely.

The Familiar Stranger, Cr/MuMe 35, 3 Points — This power causes a single target to believe he or she knows and trusts the demon (it's used when Straagus is in human form). This person will not question Straagus's presence save under the most conspicuous of circumstances (a third person in the bedchamber on the night of a honeymoon, for instance), and he is treated like any other confidante.

If this power is used on several people at the same time, none of them question Straagus's presence, and all act as if he belongs (such group acceptance might even be enough to fool people who haven't been affected by the power).

The victims of this power are allowed a Magic Resistance roll and a Natural Resistance stress roll (Intelligence versus an Ease Factor of 12). If any such roll succeeds, the demon is recognized as an outsider trying to pursue some scheme, but the stranger may not be recognized as a demon. If the roll Botches, victims always accept the confidante.

The duration of the demon's acceptance is sunrise/sunset (unless the victim Botches his roll to resist the demon).

Infernal "spells," varies, 0 Points — In addition to his automatic powers (of which there are many more than the few mentioned here), Straagus may actually cast spells he knew as a human. Most of Straagus's spells are rituals that require group participation.

Physical Form

Straagus looks like the archetypal demonic entity, with a huge frame, rough, dragon-scale skin, hooves, horns, a great maw full of teeth, and odd fin-like protrusions all over his body. A strong desire to blend into the society of his former life gives Straagus a special hold upon an apparent form: a white-haired, frail-looking human wizard in a gray robe and sandals. Straagus also has several other wizardly forms (one female), a few peasant-type forms, and one bird form (that of a crow).

Straagus's left eye is a hard green stone worth 25 pawns of *Mentem vis*.



Purview

Straagus is a Twilight demon. He was transmuted into Hell's realm after a failed attempt to build his own *Infernal regio* in A.D. 66 resulted in a huge Hell-fire. The explosion destroyed a large section of Rome. In addition to his sorcerous craft, Straagus claims to have been a senator of Rome during Nero's reign, and no less than a confidante to the Emperor. (Alas, his original Roman name is unknown.)

Straagus quickly rose into the echelons, for he was immediately contacted by seven of his goetic followers. They had taken part in the botched experiment and saw their leader vanish into Hell, and thus were willing to become his agents (each dedicating a soul to his cause).

The souls of his followers were the first Straagus acquired after rising into the echelons. However, when his once-followers died Straagus broke a Watcher law by refusing to torture their souls. Instead, he used his warped wizardly-malefic skills to link the followers' spirits back to their souls, making them into both avatars of himself and individual devils in their own right. Straagus therefore gained a loyal set of henchmen, henchmen who became the envy of every lord in Hell.

Given his personal success and the obvious envy of other devils, Straagus offered his services to others. He served as a "court wizard" to various fiefs, attempting to duplicate his results for those lords (for a hefty fee). However, Straagus's efforts to garner loyal servants for other devils were never again successful (though his fee was still charged).

When one devil grew angry with Straagus's failure, he threatened Straagus with a Ritual of Exile. Straagus's other dissatisfied customers supported the irate lord. Straagus, although backed into a corner, nonetheless bargained the punishment down. He agreed to send himself to earth (not in exile) in order to corrupt the new Order of Hermes he had heard so much about. When all 12 Primi of the 12 Houses succumb to diabolism, Nephilim spirits will escort Straagus back to Hell where he will be received with royal pageantry.

And so, Straagus works to undermine the Order. He tries to force the more morally rigid members out of power while helping less moralistic ones rise. He wants weak pawns in power before luring them to diabolism. Straagus also likes to cause general anarchy and dissent within Hermetic ranks. His most common tactic is to use the three powers described above: first to convince Magi at Tribunal that he belongs among them; next to switch into spirit form when no one notices and make all forget he was at Tribunal; and finally, to visit each Magus in turn, suggesting a new version of Tribunal decisions before Magi realize they've forgotten real events.

Story

A story involving Straagus is pretty clear. Using the tactics described above, Straagus dupes the Covenant's Magi into believing a Tribunal they just attended had an entirely different agenda. The future actions of characters in relation to the Order might thus be wildly out of synch with the expected.

Then again, this demon might pick a particularly unscrupulous Magus and help her rise to high position in the Order, ultimately hoping to install her as a diabolic Primus.

Missing Themes

The above entries are but a few possibilities. Consider some of the following prototypes when designing more evil spirits: demons who stress illusion, *depravati*-tending entities, demons who tell the future or offer wealth, demons who use lies

to destroy relationships, demons who reveal secrets, demons who aid theurgists, the undead, land-based Stead-beasts, storm demons, *incubi* and *succubi* (and the devil-children they produce), spirits that possess animals and give them extra powers, demons with unlimited apparent forms (shapeshifters), Infernal Familiars (which, by the way, are called *agathion*), warrior demons, huge automata, and demons who always work incognito as humans. (To get the rules you need for some of these creations, like Infernal Familiars, shapeshifters, golems and beasts, see *The Medieval Bestiary*.)



J. Cobb



THE SHAPE OF THE SAGA

CHAPTER SEVEN

Preamble

This final chapter presents a brief set of ideas about your *Ars Magica* Saga and the use of devils and diabolists therein. While the rest of this book contains general and specific background about the Infernal milieu, this chapter provides guidelines for using that material in continuing stories.

Scope of Exposure

How does the Infernal realm rear its ugly head in your Saga or in a specific story? Three degrees of exposure may be attempted; each has its own dramatic and thematic considerations. Different tales within your Saga may require different degrees of diabolic presence. The three levels of exposure are:

INDIRECT

The characters never actually confront a demon. Instead, they witness the indirect results of demonic ploys. They might witness someone afflicted with *Psychomachia*, they might investigate the ruins of a village destroyed by a demon or a church desecrated by diabolists, or they might have to deal with political fallout when a highly-placed member of the Order is Renounced for diabolism. Demons are background explanations and plot hooks but are never seen face to face.

INCIDENTAL

Characters cross paths with a demon or diabolist in the course of play and resolve the situation within the story. An encounter of this sort isn't planned by the demon and has no impact on the rest of the Saga. Perhaps a demon is guarding a treasure or manipulating a friend until the characters stumble upon the spirit and stop it. The encounter is peripheral to the Saga.

TARGETED

The machinations of the Infernal realm are aimed specifically at the characters. Diabolic incidents are meticulously planned and lead the characters into constant confrontations (or one big, well-executed confrontation). The eventual confrontation can be magical, moral or physical, and it can be motivated by anything.

The Saga itself subtly guides the characters toward one Infernal plot after another. They are personally targeted and nothing they face is accidental. Satan strongly desires to dominate the Order of Hermes, and therefore Magi are often the targets of demonic persecution or temptation.

It is suggested that the degree of exposure vary from story to story, or Saga to Saga. Engaging in a constant moral or mental struggle with Hell's minions can be severely taxing. Players who must constantly run such a rigorous gauntlet might well

seek a break from *Ars Magica*. Sometimes it's best to put this book in the closet for a few weeks and tell some lighter stories, or at least more mundane ones.

Then again, the constant threat of demonic entrapment keeps characters and players on their toes. Players who discover that a single isolated story involves demons and temptation may well play their characters like monks for a few hours, thus avoiding pitfalls of the soul. In a Saga of constant demonic activity, characters must constantly be on their best behavior, for they may slip up when it counts most.

Ultimately, the way you apply this book and its ideas to your Saga depends on your own storytelling tastes and those of your Troupe.

Common Motifs

This book was designed to serve as a potpourri of story ideas. Story inspiration is the very root of this supplement. After a single reading, you should have an idea of the immense structural wealth and depth behind the Infernal realm. The Bestiary section (Chapter Six) alone contains a number of specific demonic story ideas (one per entry, in fact) and many of these story nuggets can be expanded or dissected to create new stories.

Certain common "Infernal motifs" are presented below. These are story elements which may appear over and over when the Unholy digs its claws into your Saga. A single motif can serve as the crux of many potential plots. These motifs are skeletal, and must be fleshed out to become full tales and ongoing stories. Furthermore, each idea or problem can be highlighted in an adventure of your own creation. Few of these motifs are actually mutually exclusive. Mixing and matching is both possible and probable, and many of the moral dilemmas can crop up in more than one motif.

BLACK SHEEP IN THE FOLD

Someone in the characters' own Covenant might be a diabolist. The Magi decide to take stock of the Covenant's inhabitants and determine "who's been naughty and who's been nice." This is an ideal way to spark tense intra-Troupe roleplaying. Do the Magi call a meeting and bluntly state the problem for everyone's consideration? Do they warn close friends or spy on likely culprits? Do they investigate the premises with a fine-toothed comb, or do they try to lure the suspects into "innocent" conversations and situations where true diabolists will accidentally reveal themselves? Once the goetist is found, how is he or she set up, how is he or she dealt with, and what are the physical and psychological repercussions within the Covenant?

RAT IN THE KITCHEN

Diabolists invade the characters' turf. This is the ultimate "hook" because there is really no choice involved — it's an "us or them" proposition. In a manner of speaking, the mountain comes to Mohammed. Things dear to the characters are threatened, and the formerly mundane and secure terrain of the Covenant (or other turf) becomes an object fought for, or fought on. This motif can easily lead into other motifs such as *Black Sheep in the Fold* or *Fly in the Ointment*.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

The characters discover signs of Infernal corruption within another Covenant/House/faction in the Order. However, several factors keep the characters from blindly charging in. Convolutioned Hermetic politics undoubtedly complicate the situation and its possible solution. The characters may not know the personalities and history of the diabolic region, thus placing them at a disadvantage. Furthermore, if proper channels are followed, the leaders of the Order organize any subsequent investigation; characters do not have free run to do what might be absolutely necessary. This motif neatly parallels that of *Black Sheep in the Fold*, and many of the same considerations must be addressed here.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

The characters desperately require a person's or group's resources or cooperation, but discover that person/group is a secret diabolist(s). The characters' need is great, and they may well be tempted to take care of business rather than challenge the partner.

This motif has two versions. The first version allows characters the option of walking away and keeping their mouths shut without suffering any hitch in their immediate task. However, they run the risk of having their poor ethics discovered by others. Furthermore, the diabolist(s) is still scheming and might have to be contended with later. In the second version, you either force the characters' hand (in order to tell a story dealing with corruption) or they decide to grab at the hook of their own accord. How important is their "business," how well-known and influential is their associate, and how can they resolve the situation? Do they resort to reform, whistle-blowing or commando tactics? If they attack their "ally," how do the characters fulfill their original needs, and do they seek an alternative?

LAW AND ORDER

The characters must "go through channels" and obey an authority figure or institution to properly deal with a case of diabolism. This could be because the diabolist in question is a

member of the lawful apparatus, or because only that apparatus has the resources and/or legal claim to deal with the diabolist. The obvious powers of Mythic Europe are the Church, the nobility and the Order itself.

The most common story based on this motif involves persuading the Order of Hermes to use its power of Renunciation (and the Wizards' March). However, it is also possible to have stories of this nature take place in the mundane realm. Magi of a secret society (the Order) try to avoid overt displays of magical prowess, so appealing to a secular authority is often an easier way to deal with diabolism than risking public exposure. Similarly, those rare diabolists who obtain footholds in the Dominion are sometimes more easily dealt with by the clergy. In this case, revealing oneself as a Magus is more likely to attract attention to the Magus than the diabolist. If your Saga is ambitious enough to include a diabolic Pope or King, clever use of law and custom against rightful authority makes for an interesting challenge.

FLY IN THE OINTMENT

The characters (with or without prior knowledge) become a threat to previously unknown diabolic enemies. Perhaps the characters were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Perhaps they own a resource their foes need or have recently acquired a resource belonging to their foes. Maybe the characters vanquished an enemy who had connections they never dreamed possible. Whatever the reason, the characters are subsequently targeted for assault, whether on their home turf or while traveling. Ambush, terrorism and smear campaigns are all possible. Characters must learn what is happening and who is responsible, and must develop a defense (or a good offense).

DAMAGE CONTROL

After a diabolist scare takes place in the Covenant, characters must either wage a campaign to clear their good names, or prevent damaging lies (or truths?) from being spread. The incident provoking the crisis may be unfounded rumor or honest truth. How do characters preserve their standing or keep outsiders ignorant? The answer can range from wholesale slaughter of all witnesses (something of a reputation *faux pas*), to stealthy removal of evidence, to well-placed *Perdo Mentem* spells on those with loose tongues. It is crucial that characters weigh the danger of a cover-up against the damage that would be caused without a cover-up. Do the ends justify the means?

PARANOIA, BIG DESTROYER

The Infernal realm is behind current events! Or is it? This is the perfect motif for characters who have seen it all (and for players who have read this book from cover to cover). Characters who constantly combat the minions of Hell can become

The Long-Term Saga

Although the Mythic Europe setting is based on medieval Europe during the 13th century, events in individual Sagas do not need to parallel true history beyond this period. If, however, you do choose to follow medieval chronology into later centuries, you must bear in mind that things become far worse, far more "Infernal" during the 14th and 15th centuries. The Black Death, the Hundred Years War, and the spread of Inquisitions are just a few of the social, economic and moral calamities found further up the timeline.

Given that Infernal activity is behind the hardships of the 13th century, it comes as no surprise that future evils are also Satan's work. It has already been mentioned that demons cause human conflict and strife. This demonic influence inspires the remainder of the 13th century's wars. Beyond the 13th century, demonkind takes a great leap forward by influencing the rise of Mythic Europe's first true taste of savage, all-out war: the adoption of the *chevauchee* tactic by the English. This is a cruel, destructive battle tactic used against French foes' lands and helpless families, making the Hundred Years War the very hobby of Satan and his minions.

The various national Inquisitions following A.D. 1299 are not merely a travesty of justice and an abuse of law, but a complete breakdown of both Church moral motive and Church reputation among common, God-fearing man. Perverse torture and indiscriminate witch hunts, claimed to be a form of warfare against Satan's influence, are in reality an attack upon the foundations of society, with Satan the only true benefactor.

Satan's connection to the future's plague is even more straightforward. The plague is a vast epidemic originating from unusually potent spirits of disease, moving from east to west, striking at random. Where these demons themselves originate is a point of pure conjecture. Some say they come from a particularly powerful Infernal *regio*, others that they are the creation of Hermetic magic.

Regardless of the plague spirits' origins, they are created by Satan. His attack on earth is voracious and unusually virulent, and takes the protectors of the Dominion by surprise. Horrified clergy find their common powers ineffective, and although they can bring more potent powers to bear on a case by case basis, the effort is taxing, the manpower lacking, and the cases much too numerous. Thus, when Mythic European man needs his Church the most, it fails him. Satan's most crucial victory in the upcoming centuries is therefore the engenderment of loss of faith, which might prove the beginning of the Church's end.

In the end, your Saga may progress beyond the 13th century, but Satan still holds sway in times to come, probably more so than he does today. Whether his bid for control is eventually quelled, or is very real and enduring in even later times is impossible to say. Regardless of Satan's future power, Storyguides who wish to paint an accurate portrait of post-13th century Europe (and yet retain its Mythic paradigm) must consider the degree to which future centuries are Infernally influenced.

rather obsessive, seeing Satan behind every significant and insignificant event in the Saga. No Magus knowledgeable in the ways of Hell is willing to put anything past Infernal foes. Tactics appropriate for combating diabolic plots might fall apart or backfire if the evil in question turns out to be of mundane origin (or worse yet, if there is no evil save in the characters' paranoid minds). If you're in a devious mood, a Covenant can be tricked into wasting huge amounts of time, effort and magic on unwarranted precautions against the Infernal.

Introducing the Material

At this point in your reading it's likely that much of the mystery has gone out of your perceptions of Mythic Hell. You know it all and you want to throw it at the players to see how they deal with it. This is a natural tendency, but it is one that should be quelled when first introducing *The Maleficium's* concepts into your Saga. This book contains over 100 pages of ideas. Though you can read it in just a few days, more time is needed to fully assimilate the Infernal into your Saga.

In due time, the Hierarchy and the summoning rules will be old hat. There is no need to present it all in an immediate deluge of lore and mechanics, turning confusion to familiarity with no stages in between. Draw things out. Before a character knows what a Hell tome is, let her witness the ink in a black magic text fade and disappear before her very eyes. Let her watch a political ally become irrational and fly into an inexplicable rage before *Psychomachia* is common knowledge.

If handled properly, material in this book can drift piecemeal into a Saga over years of game time. As the characters gradually unlock the mysteries of Hell, the players likewise perceive a progression. By the time characters and players become familiar with the Infernal realm, they will have also come to a deeper understanding: that Hell is never easy to comprehend, and that dealing with demons is a flirtation with lethal unpredictability in its darkest form.

ROOM TO ROAM

The Maleficium strives to establish an underlying explanation for things Infernal, an ecology upon which to build. It is hoped, however, that the specifics of the demonic world in play are anything but rigid. This book's guidelines provide several different methods for creating demonic stories and Saga ideas.

Much of this book is devoted to the metaphysical. The metaphysical sometimes holds little appeal as a source for adventure hooks. However, metaphysics can increase your awareness of the possibilities of demonkind, thus inspiring you to invent unusual or unique stories.

The following material demonstrates how an idea or theory about demons can be expanded to become a significant element of your Saga and thereby fuel many interesting stories. All you have to do is let your imagination roam.

The Fortress of Dark Souls

As an example of Infernal idea expansion in practice, consider the following description of the Fortress of Dark Souls. The Fortress is one member of a new "species" of Infernal entity. At its root, this material is simply an exercise in creative reasoning which all Storyguides are encouraged to emulate.

Background Theory

Dark Magi and other goetic sorcerers are free to summon evil spirits from earth and Hell as their knowledge and powers permit. Dark Magi are not limited to dealing with demons and devils alone, though. Just as the earth has a single World-Soul, with accompanying elemental spirits, so Hell has an overall soul that encompasses every region of the Infernal terrain. This force is actually the manifestation of one-third of Lucifer's Evil Trinity (that of Imprisoned Entity, Hell-Soul and Prince of Earth). As the World-Soul has attached spirits, so too does Hell's soul. Likewise, by a process similar to that which infuses earth with elemental spirits, Hell generates its own "Infernal elementals." These entities have spirits and can thus be contacted from earth. If properly coerced, Infernal elementals can even be summoned by a diabolist.

New Rules

Infernal elementals have great stores of Might due to their expansive natures and their intimate immersion in the Hell-Soul itself. Most of this Might, however, is residual in nature rather than being part of the core entity. For this reason, the Rule of Cardinality does not apply should a group of diabolists wish to work in concert to summon an elemental. Each diabolist may apply full goetic scores (before rolling) to any summoning total or related roll, and all souls share in the outcome of the encounter.

Infernal elementals never enter the summoner's presence in a physical form dragged from Hell. The goetist must provide a "body" for the entity once it ascends to earth. This body must resemble the form to which the elemental was accustomed in Hell. Thus, in the example below, a diabolist must provide a stone structure on earth for the summoned Fortress to possess.

The Dark Fortress, Greater Infernal Elemental

Infernal Might: 150

Vital Statistics: Size +10 or greater (varies with body), Intelligence 0, Perception (alert to surroundings and contents) +4, Strength (massive) +10, Stamina (durable) +20, Presence (imposing) +1, Communication (somber) -4, Dexterity n/a, Quickness n/a

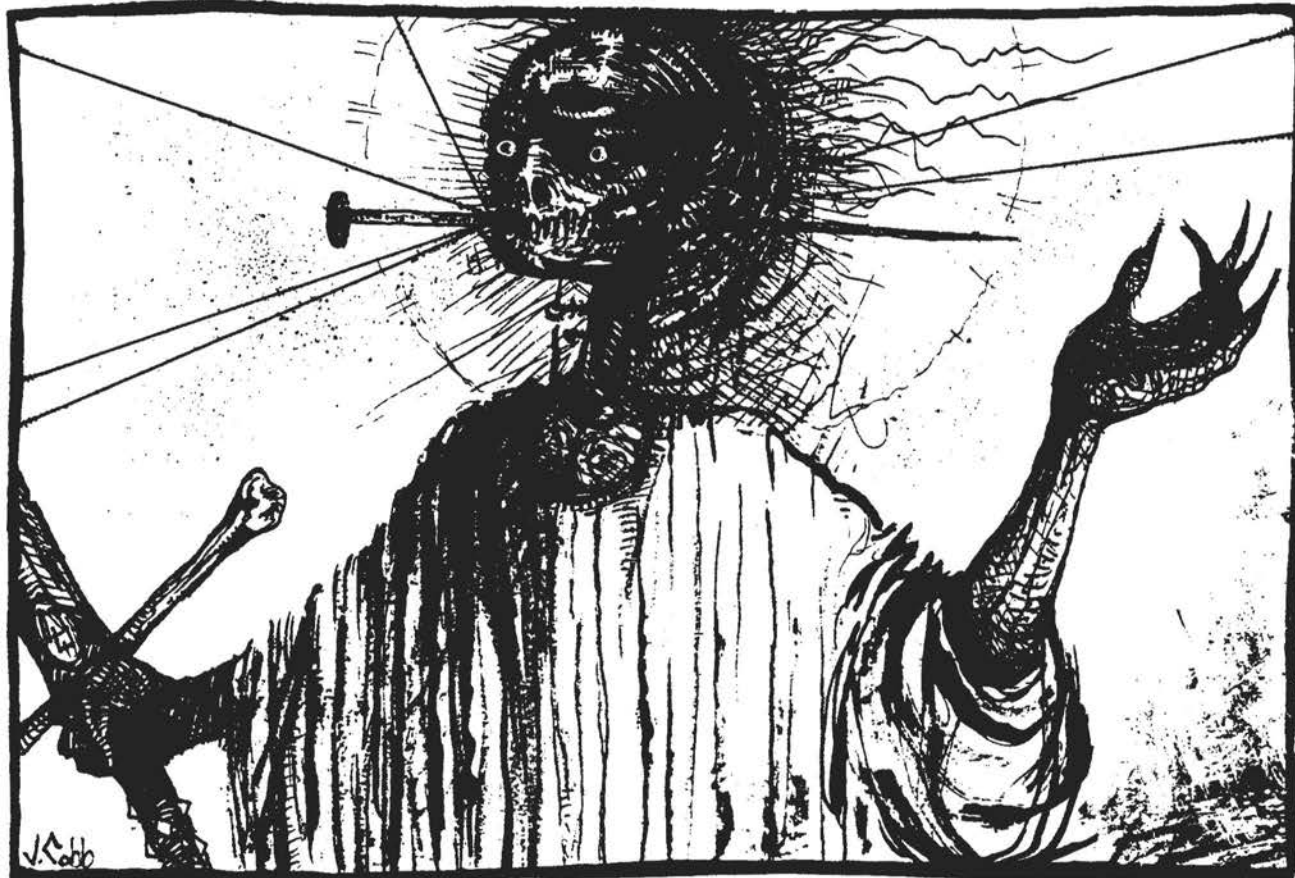
Personality Traits: Gloomy +6, Imposing +4

Reputation: None

Confidence: 0

Combat Totals:

Dodge Defense n/a, Soak +20, plus body material (26+ Action), Fatigue n/a



Psychomachia: Cowardice +5, the Seven Deadly Sins at +2 each, Craving for Diabolism +5 (see below)

Possession: None

Spiritual Form Powers:

Haunting of the Halls, CrIm 50, 0 Points — The Dark Fortress may trigger disturbing sounds, unexplained minor accidents and sabotage, and strange images at the periphery of its inhabitants' vision. These hauntings affect all adjoining buildings, including underground structures and even areas unknown to inhabitants, but unconnected structures in the same area are not affected. Hauntings occur at random intervals (i.e. at your whim).

The Legend Made Flesh, Creo ? Level 60+, 30 Points — The Dark Fortress listens closely to all tales told under its roof, be they local history, bardic fiction, or ancient myth. Upon learning of an exceptionally vile persona or violent situation, such as a man-eating kraken or a chaotic battle, the entity invests its Might into the legend, thereby bringing it to life. A horde of Mongol raiders or a bout of the plague: there's no telling what false enemies may make an assault. If the enemies evoked by *The Legend Made Flesh* "kill" a living being, the victim must make a Vim Magic Resistance roll or a Natural Resistance Stamina stress roll of 9+. Success indicates the loss of all Fatigue Levels; no bodily harm is sustained. Failure indicates the victim falls to "Incapacitated"; she is just short of death. A Botch results in actual death.

This spell requires an initial investment of 30 Might Points plus five points per day it is maintained. When the spell ends, those who are not genuinely dead immediately recover from the effects of any conflict endured.

Obsession of the Dark Path, CrMe30, 10 Points — The Dark Fortress can plague any one of its inhabitants with impulses toward diabolism. Everything the victim sees inspires an unhealthy interest in the Pathway Dark. Victims may therefore be more prone to choosing diabolism in the long run. This power is usually reserved for use on Storyguide characters (covenfolk and such), but the spell can be focused upon a player's character if you deem it appropriate.

Each month a character spends in the Fortress allows the Fortress to make a *Psychomachia* attack on the character using its Crave Diabolism trait. In a manner of speaking, it forces a Personality Trait on the character. If the character has a Hierarchy score, its value makes the Fortress's efforts easier, modifying the character's rolls appropriately.

If the character's opposed or aligned Personality Trait or Passion roll resists the craving for diabolism, the character may behave normally during the month. If the character's roll indicates alignment with diabolism, the character acquires a Hierarchy score of 1 (or another point is gained if the trait is already possessed). If the character's roll Botches, two Hierarchy Points are gained. The Fortress maintains this monthly attack as long as the character resides therein.



Physical Form Powers:

Crumble, PeTe/He 50, all remaining Points (20 minimum) —

This power is a last-ditch effort to kill the Fortress's foes. This power allows the Dark Fortress to expend all its Might in a suicidal cataclysm which destroys the building being haunted. The building begins to slowly rumble; over a period of minutes it shakes, cracks and falls to rubble. All trapped inside are buried alive or crushed to death. You are encouraged to reduce overall damage within especially strong or important structures. You are also encouraged to offer clues that warn of impending disaster, thus allowing characters to cast spells or bolster their *Aegis of the Hearth* (if the Fortress possesses the characters' Covenant).

Physical Form

When an earthly structure is possessed by the Fortress, that edifice changes to suit the nature of the Fortress. Walls, floors and ceilings turn to obsidian and brimstone, and blood weeps from pores. Certain walls also sprout stone carvings depicting partially melted demonic faces. Claws reach out from other walls; these appendages move slowly about, trying to grab all who blunder too close. A tall monolith of smooth obsidian arises from the deepest recesses of the building. This is a simulacrum of the Fortress's "heart." If taken whole, this monolith is worth 60 pawns of Terram vis. If there is no opportunity to preserve the whole heart, smaller portions can be chipped off; these shards contain proportionately lesser amounts of raw vis.

Purview

The Dark Fortress, sometimes called the Fortress of Dark Souls, is a living castle of brimstone and obsidian. It is normally located deep in the territory of the devil Anvatasuus, a fallen angel of the Sixth Echelon who usurped his fiefdom from another devil of lesser power. Even in that previous owner's reign, the Dark Fortress existed. Anvatasuus expended many souls and a great amount of power in an effort to take command of the Infernal entity. He succeeded in subjugating the Fortress, which he then used as a prison for rival devils captured in battle.

Despite his efforts, Anvatasuus discovered the elemental was not so easily tamed. When his vigilance lapsed, the castle used a potent power in its arsenal to attract one of the devil's most loyal servants and hold the servant prisoner. Anvatasuus grew angry and invaded the fortress, but it kept his servant hidden despite all efforts. When the devil left the premises, his servant's tortured cries could be heard outside as the Dark Fortress taunted its uncertain master. As the years passed, more dark souls were lost to the castle's foul cravings. However, Anvatasuus, though still angered, accepted the entity's ways. In fact, he began to use the fortress as a strategic element in battles, particularly battles which took place on his own estate. The creature was more than happy to lend its aid.

The earthly manifestation of the Fortress of Dark Souls is always much reduced in power and scope. It desires only to haunt whatever mundane edifice is set forth for its habitation, using its trifling earthly powers to entertain itself until allowed to return to Hell.

Story

The story here is fairly obvious. The Magi make some group of diabolists exceptionally angry and they retaliate by cursing the Covenant with the Infernal elemental. How do the characters find out what's going on? How do they deal with it? How does the elemental react?

Furthermore, how can the entity affect Magi in the lab? What will their spells reveal about the Fortress? How does this Infernal giant interfere with the Covenant's Magic Aura? Are the Magi able to interact with the "dark souls" trapped in the

spiritual realm of the Fortress? What happens when the neighborhood priest comes to visit? The problems and possible tangents here are endless, and the final effect on the Covenant can be quite profound.

Summary

This creation is but one example of the way the metaphysical foundation of *The Maleficium* may be used to devise a variation on the rules and add an interesting twist to the way Hell influences your Saga. The idea of Infernal elementals is an area ready-made for expansion; the Fortress of Dark Souls is just one example, and it only scratches the surface. There are plenty of other elements only mentioned in passing, plenty of loopholes to make use of, and plenty of blank spots in this book's coverage of topics. Go to work, and make the *malefic* realm your own.



THE EVIL ENTRENCHED

APPENDIX ONE

Preamble

Characters devoted to the Unholy can be intriguing and often influential elements in your Saga. They have an aura of foreboding mystery, an arsenal of unusual magicks and demonic allies, and a set of goals which put them at odds with all of society's factions, including the Order of Hermes. One of the most radical ways to alter a typical *Ars Magica* Saga is to allow one or more players' characters to assume diabolist roles. Permitting diabolists into the group is a big step and should not be taken lightly. This appendix provides some rough guidelines and a few explicit ideas to help you play and manage the diabolist role.

THE REAL WORLD

Ars Magica is a game, plain and simple. However it is also a form of personal expression, even when you express views to which you do not adhere. In the storytelling and roleplaying community, "playing good" versus "playing evil" is a topic that's been beaten to death. There's no need to discuss the merits and flaws of evil in this book (other than in the mythic context). Suffice it to say that the decision to play evil lies in the hands of each Troupe, for only your Troupe knows if it can approach the task with the proper frame of mind.

While *The Maleficium* provides background depth for and invests detailed logic into demonic motivations, you may notice that it lacks visual specifics for rituals and ceremonies. The author consulted no occult tomes or satanic bibles during his research. Furthermore, the focus of the actual writing is on plot possibilities rather than graphic understanding. Plot possibilities, after all, are what *Ars Magica* is about. Nevertheless, readers dissatisfied with this book's approach can contribute graphic details as they see fit, and it would be insulting to demand otherwise.

As author, my only request is that you do not hide behind the "only a game" aphorism if your additional details prove offensive to some. Our make-believe actions can affect the way people feel as surely as our real actions. Even if you think of something as insignificant or all in good fun, someone else might feel differently. This is not a call to live your life by other people's sensibilities; it's just a call to be sensitive yourself, and to consider the real world at all times.

Character Creation

Creation of Infernally-oriented characters involves few changes to the established *Ars Magica* character rules. Diabolists are, after all, human; they just have profound flaws of character. There are two general approaches to adopting a diabolist career: commander or beseecher. The role of com-

mander requires access to the tools of the trade — magic — and is therefore open only to Magi, hedge practitioners, and the occasional Companion with a penchant for magic.

Taking the Pathway Dark as a beseecher is another matter entirely, for it requires no Gift. The verbal pact, or the signing of a Pact of Ashes, makes demonkind well-disposed toward the character. They are more than willing to offer trinkets and services to appease the pact victim until her inevitable demise (assume the character automatically gains the +2 Background Virtue, Patron, in addition to any other benefits gained). Command is therefore a constant struggle to wrest powers and services from demons, while beseeching is an easy road filled with presents from an amenable host — until the line is crossed or time is up, that is.

Though beseechers can be individuals, they can also belong to groups of similar members. A beseecher belonging to a group is called a worshipper. A worshipper not only has the support of his patron demon(s) but has the support of his group as well. All are devoted to the destruction of the Dominion. By joining a group of like-minded folk and obeying

the Devil, worshippers may grow from mere allies into a coven and thence into a congregation. The Infernal *mira*, or marvels, and the Infernal sacraments (see Chapter Four) are available to those who practice the Dark Faith and pray to evil patrons, either individually or as a group.

BESEECHERS (COMPANIONS AND GROGS)

Companions and Groggs are generally mundane people, although they can possess some latent magical abilities. As mundanes, Companions and Groggs gain Infernal powers through the Cardinal Pact; they generally receive their gifts via supplication or as presents. Guidelines for assigning Infernal gifts are given below. Keep in mind that Dark Magi gain their gifts from demons by commanding those demons (Chapter

Infernal Virtues

The following Virtues may be gained by mundane characters as Infernal gifts. You are certainly invited to create more as needed.

Virtues: +1

Specific Messenger: You command a single astasian demon. The spirit may be used to pass sentences of up to 30 syllables in length from you to a target subject, and may carry replies of up to five syllables long from that subject. In order for the astasian to successfully deliver the message, the diabolist must make a special attempt to point out either the location to which the message must be delivered, or the exact person to whom it must be delivered. This preparation must take place on the day the message is delivered (or the spirit forgets it), and if magic wards or attacks beleaguer the spirit, it automatically fails in its duties.

A proper exchange of message and reply requires a Communication + Hierarchy stress roll of 9+ from you. If the roll is failed you fail to get the astasian's full attention or it does not fully understand its duties. It then flees in confusion and may not be contacted for one hour. If your roll Botches, either your message or the reply is completely misunderstood, resulting in catastrophe.

Low Magnitude Granting: A Lesser demon (under 25 Might) attends you as if under a granting compact (see Chapter Five), allowing you access to one *maleficium* of under the second magnitude (Hermetic equivalent of 10th Level or lower). Each time the power is needed, you must make an Intelligence + Hierarchy stress roll of 6+. If it succeeds, you can use the power. If it fails, the power does not operate, but another attempt may be made in the next Round. If the roll Botches, the power may not be used for the rest of that day. A given power may be used a maximum number of times a day equal to your Hierarchy score if the power is of second magnitude, or twice Hierarchy if it is only of first magnitude.

Inferior Seal: You possess a minor Infernal magic item. It can be any sort of object, provided it is larger than a barley corn but smaller than Size -2. The demon trapped in the device has two pawns of raw vis of any one type. See *Seal Demands* in Chapter Five for details.

Characteristic Improvement: You may improve one Characteristic by one point each time this Virtue is purchased. Characteristics may not be raised above +5, and specific Characteristics may not be improved by more than three points beyond their original value. As soon as any Decrepitude effect strikes you, Characteristic Points raised through this Virtue are immediately lost (so record how many Characteristic Points were purchased with this Virtue). This is Hell's way of increasing your chances of dying when you approach death's door; the devils want your soul.

Virtues: +2

Inferior Familiar: You possess an imp with a -3 Intelligence and a Might score of 4 + a simple die divided by two (rounded up). The Storyguide picks its powers and weaknesses using a wish list from you (refer to the *Bond Qualities* from the *Ars Magica* rules, p. 264-265, for guidelines). The Storyguide also chooses the Familiar's physical form (Size up to -2). The imp has no assumed forms, no personal initiative (it must be ordered to do everything but protect itself), and might allow its master to be harmed by its own omission of information or lack of action. No complex instructions are understood, and the imp may not speak fully — words of one syllable may be whispered into the owner's ear. The standard Familiar rules (*Ars Magica*, p. 260) do not really apply to this imp as your relationship with it is not Hermetic in nature (and you are mundane anyway).

Sub Praxis: Certain demons have been told that you do not fall into their purview, and thus they may not take action against you in the course of their Infernal mischief. Any demon whose Might is less than one-quarter that of your Prime Master knows you are off-limits (except, of course, for astasians, who may go about their usual business).

Otherwise, any greater or lesser demon who is willing to listen to you (the Storyguide's call), and whose Might is less than or equal to half, but more than one-quarter of your Prime Master's Might, can be convinced you are *sub praxis*. To convince this demon of your status you must make a Communication + Hierarchy stress roll against an Ease Factor of 12 + the demon's Intelligence. On a successful roll the demon leaves you

Five explains how these gifts are acquired). The following rules for acquiring gifts apply to mundanes who supplicate for or are given Infernal gifts, as opposed to demanding them.

Virtues Gained

The system for assigning Infernal gifts to Companion and Grog characters is open-ended. Simply decide what the character wants out of an alliance with Satan and allocate appropriate tools and powers. These are "paid" for with Virtue points; each Infernal gift costs an amount appropriate to its power level. Most Infernal gifts can be approximated with Virtues already in the rules. If no Virtue exists in the rules which simulates the desired power, a new Virtue can be created. Some sample Infernal Virtues are given in the boxed insert.

Upon signing the Cardinal Pact, a mundane character gains a Hierarchy score of one and three extra points to spend on Infernal Virtues (Virtues dedicated to Infernal gifts). These extra points are above and beyond those gained for the character's type (i.e., in addition to the three initial Virtue points that Grogs

get). Extra Virtue points received from Hell do not have to be accounted for with extra Flaws, as the rules normally require. Furthermore, the normal rules for buying Characteristics with Virtue points (as described in the *Ars Magica* rules, p. 52) do not apply here. Characteristics can be raised with these extra Virtue points, but a special Infernal Virtue must be purchased to do so (see the *Infernal Virtues* insert).

If a character is determined to have an Infernal background at the beginning of the Saga, even more Virtue points are gained during character creation. However, much of the mundane character's pre-Saga life may have been devoted to the Infernal, so the character will have particularly deep or potent diabolic ties. If a new character has been involved in diabolism for some time, she may have extensive Infernal gifts. Player and Storyguide must agree on the number of extra Virtue points the character can have.

Beginning characters with extensive Infernal backgrounds also gain more Hierarchy Points with their additional Virtue points. Each additional Virtue point bestows an additional Hierarchy point. Thus, a character who receives three more

alone. If encountered again, the same demon must again be convinced of your stature. If your initial roll fails, the demon spends a day mulling over your claim and may choose to act against you after that day. If your roll Botches, the demon may act against you immediately.

You may decide whether your "off-limits" status is genuine (a certain demon claims you), or the result of a rumor or reputation spread about you. If your *subpraxis* is genuine, and another demon tampers with you, your master may wreak retribution against that demon.

The Curse of Oaths: Nephilim spirits allow you to partake in the Watchers' pact protocols, even though you are human. Thus, the Nephilim work supernatural curses in your honor when they witness oaths between you and other humans. Any mortal who formally and willingly agrees to a bargain with you must live up to his end if you live up to yours, or he suffers a Curse (-2 Supernatural Flaw, *Ars Magica*, p. 82) of your choice.

Virtues: +3

False Faith: Through Infernal dedication and tremendous efforts to corrupt others, you are bestowed with a small fraction of Hell's power by Satan for your efforts and devotion. You therefore have one False Faith Point and can gain more, but you have no Confidence Points. More False Faith Points can be gained for every 30 Hierarchy Points you accumulate, or for any immense Infernal event which you help bring about, such as the corruption of a previously pious Bishop. You lose False Faith Points if you ever turn from the Dark, even to perform the slightest act of charity or mercy.

False Faith protects you from all manner of supernatural powers. Any time you are the target of magic, good or bad, make a stress roll (a result of 0 counts as zero, not as a Botch). If the result is equal to or lower than your False Faith score, the magic has no effect on you; indeed, no magic affects you for the entire encounter.

False Faith also allows you to invoke Infernal marvels. The chances of a marvel occurring are the same for Divine miracles (as outlined in *Ars Magica*, p. 331), but the modifiers involved have values inverted (positives are made negative, and vice versa) for Infernal application.

False Faith Points are used in the game as are Confidence Points (see the *Ars Magica* Character Chapter, p. 57).

Virtues: +4

Black Blessing: Your demonic master agrees to perform the "Ritual of Night," granting you a *malefic* shield of Magic Resistance. Black Blessing equates to *Parma Magica*, but its score may not be improved. The score is fixed at a number equal to the magnitude of the Prime Master, minus three (minimum result of one). Forms do not apply to this protection, assuming you even have the Gift. Thus, if your master's magnitude is six, you receive an equivalent *Parma Magica* score of three (6-3). Your Magic Resistance score is therefore +15 (the protection value of the Black Blessing is multiplied by five, as is *Parma Magica*).

The protection also only works at full power against Intellego, Ignem, Imaginem, and Vim magic. For any other magical assault, treat the score as half its usual value (rounded up). As with *Parma Magica*, the Black Blessing fades at sunrise and/or sunset, and must be renewed by supplication to the master. How this supplication is handled is up to the Storyguide (Communication stress roll of 4+?).

Superior Familiar: You possess a fiend of +2 Intelligence and a Might score of 14 + a simple die divided by two (rounded up). The Storyguide picks its powers and weaknesses using a wish list from you (refer to the *Bond Qualities* from the *Ars Magica* rules, p. 264-265, for guidelines). The Storyguide also chooses the Familiar's physical form (Size up to +2). The fiend has three assumed forms, can take creative initiative within the parameters of an explicit assignment, and acts as if *sub stragulum* for purposes of loyalty (see Chapter 5). The Familiar has full speech capability, and may speak with anyone it desires. The standard Familiar rules (*Ars Magica*, p. 260) do not really apply to this fiend as your relationship with it is not Hermetic in nature, and you are probably not Gifted anyway.

Other Ideas

Major Granting, General Messenger (goes anywhere), Superior Seal, and the ability to Possess people. Make it up and make it interesting.

Virtue points (above the first three gained merely for being involved in the Infernal) also receives three more Hierarchy Points (for a total of four Hierarchy and six Virtue points).

To gauge the extent of a character's involvement with the diabolic, assume each extra Virtue point takes three years of diabolic activity to earn. If a character has been involved with the Devil for nine years before the Saga begins, three bonus Virtue points are gained during character creation. However, age may impose a limit on the number of extra Virtue points available. For game balance, characters under the age of 16 are considered too young to make a Cardinal Pact (though this is not mandatory protocol). Thus, the years that may count toward Virtue bonuses begin at 16.

As a general guideline, it's recommended that Companions gain no more than six extra Virtue points (for a total of nine Virtue points and a Hierarchy of seven) and Grogs no more than four extra Virtue points (for a total of seven Virtue points and a Hierarchy of five).

It's also possible for a character to devote herself to the Infernal during the course of the Saga. If this is the case, the initial Hierarchy Point and three Virtue points are gained at an appropriate time (as determined by the Storyguide — maybe after the current story), and may be applied to the character right away. (Note: Characters dedicating themselves to the Infernal during the Saga do not have to adopt the detrimental Flaws discussed under *The Inherent Flaw*, below. However, if

the established character becomes thoroughly corrupt or Infernal activities turn against him, the Storyguide may impose a detrimental, Infernally related Flaw.)

After the Saga gets underway, characters may gain further Virtues and Hierarchy Points. See *Acquiring Powers*, below.

Acquiring Abilities

If a Cardinal Pact is signed to increase Abilities, Ability Experience Points can be gained instead of Virtue points. (The rules in Chapter Five about learning Abilities from demons are for Dark Magi who control their teachers. Mundanes who request knowledge from demons should use these rules.) Characters entering an Infernal agreement receive a number of Experience Points equal to five times the number of Virtue Points they would have otherwise received. Thus, if all Virtues are discarded in favor of Abilities, initial diabolic activity grants 15 Ability Experience Points at the expense of one Hierarchy Point.

If a given character's diabolic activity has been intense before the Saga, more Ability Experience Points can be gained. Therefore, if 12 years have been dedicated to diabolism before the Saga begins, four Virtue points are normally gained. Each of those points can be exchanged for five Ability Experience Points, thus granting a maximum total of 20 extra Experience Points. Of course, one additional Hierarchy Point is also gained for every five Experience Points.

Ability Experience Points gained can be spent to increase Abilities already possessed, or can be spent on new Abilities. Even Exceptional Talents can be purchased.

Of course, more Experience Points can be acquired to spend on Abilities as the Saga progresses. *Acquiring Powers*, below, describes how additional Virtue points are gained. Each such point may be exchanged for five Ability Experience Points.

For the limits on what Abilities a demon can impart, see the *Teaching Demands* section of Chapter Five.

Acquiring Powers

As the Saga progresses and your character becomes even more exposed to the Infernal, you acquire Experience Points toward your Hierarchy score (as explained under *Beseecher Hierarchy Gain*, below). Each time you gain 10 Experience Points toward Hierarchy score, you earn a single Virtue point that may be used to acquire Infernal gifts. Alternately, you may acquire five Experience Points to spend on Abilities. This point or points may be spent immediately for a new +1 Virtue, or for a new or improved Ability, or may be saved to buy a Virtue or Ability of higher value later on. Each time a new gift is received, the Prime Master shows up and bestows the gift during a small ceremony (or a big ceremony, depending on the Virtue or Ability and the diabolic community involved).

Note: A character can usually choose the Virtues or Abilities acquired through increasing Infernal activity. However, demons can sometimes bestow gifts that the character has



J. Cobb

Sample Dark Magus Flaw

Caligo Heart (-6 Flaw): You have deviated so far from God's realm that you have developed a nodule of "dense air" identical in nature to the heart-stones possessed by demons. You therefore have an Infernal Might score equal to your Hierarchy score times five. All your spells must be assigned Might Point cost equivalents and those scores are subtracted from your Might score when spells are cast; normal Hermetic spell casting rolls are still required, though. Fatigue Levels are no longer lost during spell casting. If a spell casting roll is 10 lower than the required value, the Might Point cost of the spell increases by 50%, but the spell is still cast. If the spell casting roll is too low to succeed, the spell fails but normal Might Points are spent anyway. If you run out of Might Points, you can cast no more spells. Your Might Points regenerate overnight as long as your heart is present or within range (see below).

Your *Parma Magica* is also made useless by your *caligo* heart and is replaced by the Magic Resistance inherent to your Might score (and the appropriate Form of a given situation). Furthermore, Penetration scores are no longer based on your Art scores but your current Might Points plus Penetration Talent.

You cannot cast spells unless your heart is within you or within your distance limit. If your heart is within you, it remains ethereal and goes to or accompanies your spirit upon death (assuming you still have a spirit). Once your Hierarchy score reaches five, you may spend a Season in the lab removing your *caligo* heart from your body (MuVi Lab Total stress roll, minus current Hierarchy, versus your Might score at the time of the "operation"). Once out of your body, your heart can be hidden somewhere. As long as you

remain within 10 miles of your heart for every Point of your full Might score, you can use your magic. Outside that range your magic fails you and you cannot regenerate lost Might Points.

Outside your body your heart turns into a solid substance and may be found by another person or being. If you die and your heart is not tampered with, it turns insubstantial and joins your spirit. However, your heart can be forced to remain solid on earth through the spells of others.

As with demons, your heart bears your True Name. If that name is called you are distracted from your actions and your total Might score for the current scene is reduced by 20 points (no lower than zero, however). The current scene lasts as long as the current time and space frames remain the same. You cannot be summoned like a demon simply because another knows your True Name; you are still human.

If your heart is found, the bearer has an Arcane Connection to you. Your powers cannot be used by the bearer through the heart, though, as demons' powers can be. However, others can extract *aesfotedia* from your heart. If your heart is destroyed, you cannot regenerate your Might Points. You are effectively made a magical invalid. Only a new, more binding pact with demonkind can restore your powers. In this case a Cardinal Pact is usually demanded by the Infernal.

The ways in which a *caligo* heart can affect your magical abilities are numerous to say the least. You and the Storyguide are encouraged to work them out as situations arise. For ideas on how you might be affected, see *Caligo Hearts* and *True Names* in Chapter Four.

not chosen or is not even prepared for. The demon may be asked to revoke the gift in favor of another, but the demon is offended and any damage resulting from the unsolicited gift is already done.

Furthermore, Virtue points gained from mounting Hierarchy contribute to that Hierarchy score. Every Virtue point or five Ability Experience Points gained adds another Hierarchy Point. (The character gains more power, but is forced deeper into the darkness in the process.) Thus, Hierarchy is not only raised by Experience Points, but by Infernal gifts as well.

Beseecher Hierarchy Gain

While Gifted diabolists can study Infernal texts and summon demons and suchlike to gain proficiency in the Hierarchy talent, Hierarchy for mundane folk is a much simpler ability score, with fewer mystical connotations and fewer ways to progress into high degrees of Infernal understanding. Some ways to gain Experience Points in mundane Hierarchy follow:

- 2 points per year just for remaining faithful to the pact
- 2 points for causing someone else to act on a major sinful impulse with violence or corruption as a result (i.e., harmful Saga impact)
- 1 point for assisting a demon in some endeavor
- 1 point per month for leadership of a dark congregation

- 2 points for desecrating a parish church
- 5 points for attending/surviving a Sabbath
- demon's magnitude for eating demon's heart-stone
- 10 points for precipitating a bloody battle
- 10 points for being elected King or Queen of a Sabbath
- 10 points for desecrating a cathedral

Of these suggestions, assisting demonkind is most common, for demons are well aware of the power of favors. Alliances are made often and for varied motives.

The Inherent Flaw

Mundane characters who enter into the Cardinal Pact are often flawed at the core of their being. When creating such characters, you are recommended to spend at least one-half their total required Flaw points on demon-related Flaws. These Flaws include: Demon Plagued, Dark Secret, Diabolic Upbringing, Susceptibility to Divine Power, Tainted with Evil, Sense of Doom, Haunted, Cursed, and Demon Tainted. Other Flaws that can be justified as Infernal by changed terminology or application, can also count toward the Infernal Flaws a diabolic character can have. A wider list of possible Flaws to choose from is provided in the boxed insert, *Common Diabolist Virtues and Flaws*.



V. K. 1988

Characters in an established Saga who turn to Hell do not suddenly gain Infernally related Flaws, but may gain them with time, continued exposure to evil, and internal corruption.

Mundane Diabolists in Play

See Chapter One: The Pathway Dark and Chapter Four: Know Thine Enemy for background considerations.

COMMANDERS (DARK MAGI)

Unlike mundane Companions and Grogs, Magi who follow the Pathway Dark are not necessarily underlings of Satan. On the contrary: Dark Magi are usually assumed to be commanders, goetic sorcerers who force service and demand powers from demons by summoning them. Goetists then enslave demons with magical Rituals of Mastery, at the core of which is the contest of wills. The rare Magus who signs a Cardinal Pact becomes a combination of slave-ally (to the Prime Master) and ritual master (to lesser spirits still commanded). Commanders are virtually part of Hell's hierarchy, as they wholeheartedly embrace the Regime of Dichotomy.

You may develop Dark Magi either at character creation or during the course of the Saga. A Magus who crosses over to the Infernal before play begins needs background motivations for doing so. You must decide whether the Magus was knowingly

apprenticed by a Dark Magus, was unknowingly taught Infernal traditions by a secretive Dark Magus, or was taught traditional Hermetic magic but discovered the allure of Hell on her own (without her *parens'* aid). In all cases, the Magus is still just emerging from an apprenticeship-equivalent regimen of learning.

Virtues and Flaws, as well as other non-magical steps in character creation, are handled normally. As with diabolic Companions and Grogs, it's suggested that some Traits, particularly bad ones like Flaws, be devoted to the Infernal. These foul Traits reflect the character's inherent affinity for the Dark. If standard *Ars Magica* Flaws don't meet your needs, you are encouraged to create new ones (as demonstrated in the boxed text, *Sample Dark Magus Flaw*. If the Magus embraces Hell after the Saga begins, foul Flaws are not forced on the character, but may be gained as the story dictates and as the Magus becomes increasingly corrupt.

For the most part, a Magus's mundane life is not affected by his or her Infernal teachings. Infernal ways affect the character's magical practices.

Infernal Apprenticeship

Even diabolic Magi require 15 years of apprenticeship before achieving full Dark Magus status. It is assumed that your dark choice is not discovered by the Order during this time. However, you can still be exposed immediately after the Apprentice's Gauntlet, in the first Season of study, or maybe never at all.

You must decide how many of your 15 years of apprenticeship are "tainted" (based on career background). Each year spent developing Infernal powers is a year during which no progress is made in the Hermetic tradition. A maximum of seven years out of the full 15 may be spent learning Hell's ways. Any greater amount results in a blatantly non-Hermetic attitude toward magic, and would be noticed by others before reaching Magus status.

Not every Season of an apprentice's year is devoted to magical study. In fact, one Season of training a year is the average. This is true for all Hermetic and Infernal apprentices. Each Season of apprenticeship training devoted to Infernal rather than magical study results in the following: one Experience Point in Hierarchy, +1 to the Magus's score in Occult Lore, and 20 Levels worth of Infernal spells. Each such Season is at the expense of the usual one Experience Point in Hermetic Magic Theory, 10 points of Arts to be distributed among Arts known, and 10 Levels of Hermetic spells.

Although Infernal training may result in Hermetic sacrifices, the apprentice at the least gets the standard training in each Art, gaining a score of zero in an Art every Season. Of course, with fewer points in Arts gained during apprenticeship, Arts have lower scores, or only a few have higher scores.

Aside from Traits determined by the sporadic training of Hermetic and Infernal study (discussed above), characters do end apprenticeship with some "standard" Traits. At the end of 15 years the character has a score of zero (the base value) in

Summon, Bind, and Dismiss. A score in Black Tongue (the Infernal script) is also gained before the Saga begins; this score is equal to the character's final Hierarchy rating. The "standard" traits for Magi — Speak Own Language, Speak Latin, Scribe Latin, Hermes Lore, Hermes History and *Parma Magica* — are all gained at normal scores. Magic Theory is usually among these traits, but its score depends on the amount of Infernal distraction during apprenticeship.

The above system delineates "standard" or "conventional" apprenticeships in both Hermetic and Infernal magic. Under that system, 15 years are divided between the two magical devotions. It is possible, however, to teach an apprentice Infernal lore surreptitiously, outside the usual "teaching Season" of apprenticeship. Such teaching provides only the basics with regard to the Infernal; however, the apprentice may continue his studies later in his career.

One to three Seasons are devoted to this teaching, depending on the teacher, with no penalties to the apprentice's Hermetic study. If a Magus is doing this Infernal teaching, one Season is spent apart from the usual Season devoted to Hermetic training. The Magus sacrifices her own time, and any projects worked on in that Season receive only half her Lab Total. As a result of that Season, the Infernal learning described for one Season, above, is achieved (with no Hermetic penalties).

If a demon is doing the teaching, three Seasons of instruction outside the usual Hermetic tutorship are spent as demon and apprentice work covertly. Again, the character receives

Common Diabolist Virtues and Flaws

Certain Virtues and Flaws are commonly chosen when creating a diabolist character of mundane or magical sort. They are listed in order of appearance in the *Ars Magica* rulebook (starting on page 67).

Cyclic Magic (keyed to Infernal omens), Magical Affinity (for demons, of course), Special Circumstances (somehow Infernal), Living Magic (self-destructive tendencies — maybe a new +6 Virtue to take Body Levels from unwilling targets?), Life-Linked Magic, Twilight Points, Infamous Master, Major Magic Deficiency, Isolated from the Order, Susceptibility to Divine Power, Passions (with sinful connotations), Need No Sleep (those secretive lab experiments), Evil Eye, Self-Confident (important for commanders), Strong Personality (negative trait), Strong-Willed, Clear Thinker, Mastered Knowledge (Occult Lore), Driving Goal (something selfish or ambitious), Delusion (demon-caused), Over-Confident, Werewolf, all Curses, Offensive to Animals, Tainted With Evil, Sense of Doom (makes for short-lived Dark Magi), Demon Plagued (by a rival of your master, if you're mundane), Bad Reputation, Favors (owed to demons), Arcane Lore, Exceptional Talent (especially Hex and Second Sight), Secret Hiding Place (for when your master must speak with you), Blackmail (courtesy of astasian spying), and Dark Secret.

one point of Hierarchy Experience, a score of one in Occult Lore, and 20 Levels of Infernal spells. Once again, no Hermetic benefits are lost.

Combinations of these two degrees of diabolic learning, intensive and cursory, are also possible during the period of apprenticeship. A combination of the two grants regular diabolic training in addition to a year's normal Hermetic training (except for the exception in the following paragraph). However, not many Magi are willing to sacrifice time to two types of training, and the Watchers only allow demons to train apprentices for seven years, so scores of three in Hierarchy and seven in Occult Lore are the practical maximums to Infernal education. No Hermetic learning is lost because of Infernal learning.

There is another limit to this combined Hermetic and Infernal learning. A full range of spells cannot be learned in each discipline, as both require the apprentice's free time to learn, and free time is something intensive training denies. Thus, only 70 Levels of Hermetic and 80 Levels of Infernal spells can be learned throughout apprenticeship.

Acquiring Dark Powers

Magus characters don't have to become diabolists at the beginning of the game. They may embrace Hell as the Saga proceeds, and all Dark Magi may increase their Infernal powers as the Saga progresses. Chapter Five: Master and Servant provides rules for the acquisition of Infernal power and indicates what pacts may be pursued to gain that power. After all, commanders of demons must use authority to increase their strength.



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Dark Magi in Play

Dark Magi represent the greater part of this book, so there's little more that can be said here about the options available to them, save to remind you to be creative when portraying their alliances with devils and the opportunities demonic alliances present. After all, these alliances are factors players must deal with. Here are some examples of creative alliance use:

Gate Rituals: Demons may approach goetists seeking a summoning to earth and thus the ability to wander as they desire. Similarly, demons can approach characters and request dismissal back to Hell. Favors can be worked out in both cases, and the rituals are often easier when "assisted from the other side" — assisted by demons in Hell. (The result of assistance may be a lower apparent Might for the demon sent, or better summoning rolls for the characters).

Heart Hunts: Rival demons can use Dark Magi as pawns to search for enemy hearts and destroy them. Hearts are well-guarded, and the hearts' owners might have Dark Magi on their side.

Stasis Assassins: Demons might ask a character to summon a specific rival demon from Hell at a certain time (such as at a crucial moment in battle), thus driving the devil in question into stasis and out of action for the duration. Hell tomes are often used to relay the necessary information (i.e., Familiarity and a contact spell). If a devil has several spiritual avatars, several Dark Magi are asked to act in unison to "assassinate by stasis."



Goetic Portfolio

There are character sheets at the end of this book for use with Dark Magi characters. These sheets should be used to record the goetic arts, permanent magic circle Levels, Hierarchy score, thralls, and other information pertinent to a *maleficium*-tainted character. Dark Magi must still maintain normal Magus character sheets (as supplied in the *Parma Fabula* pack), and you should only use these goetic sheets as additions to your standard character description.

Use of the sheets provided in this book also allows a Dark Magus to remain hidden among a group of players, and therefore characters. If goetic scores are kept separate from the standard character sheet, other players don't see foreign scores on the Dark Magus's sheet and don't suspect the character.

Players of Dark Magi should also keep a separate "tome of thralls," with bestiary-length details of controlled demons' appearances, statistics and powers. Demon e keep your controlled minions within arm's reach, just as t within the character's reach.

The Court Twin: A Dark Magi contacted by a devil who has more than one spirit and thus multiple avatars which may be summoned. The Dark Magus sends one of this devil's demonic avatars into the court of a rival who has previously taken control of another of the first devil's avatars. The impostor demon may pretend to be under the rival's control, or may simply attack the unsuspecting rival. Of course, the rival's efforts to control the demon are in vain, since the new demon has an unknown Name and is unfamiliar to the rival.

DIABOLISTS IN THE SAGA

Characters may become diabolists during character generation or may succumb during the course of play. In the first case, the player must decide how she became involved with Hell and what sort of demons assist her. The second case, obviously, crops up during play and thus can be played through as part of a story. Evolution of a diabolist during a story is not mandatory, though, since a secret diabolist obviously wants to keep encounters with Hell secret. Such encounters are therefore best roleplayed during one-on-one game sessions between larger stories.

Players who create beginning diabolist characters can also take a cue from the *Vampire* and *Werewolf* games and roleplay a "diabolic prelude." In this "story before the Saga" the Prime Master confronts the soon-to-be-diabolic character and arranges a Cardinal Pact (for a mundane) or Infernal apprenticeship (for a Magus). If a diabolist is hiding within a group of normal folk, the prelude is confidential and should be kept strictly between player and Storyguide (just one, if there are several Storyguides in the Troupe).

If real-world logistics ever cause secrecy problems, pretend there are legitimate story-related logistics at work which account for a character's strange behavior. "Why did Cindy have a meeting with the Storyguide 10 minutes before the session

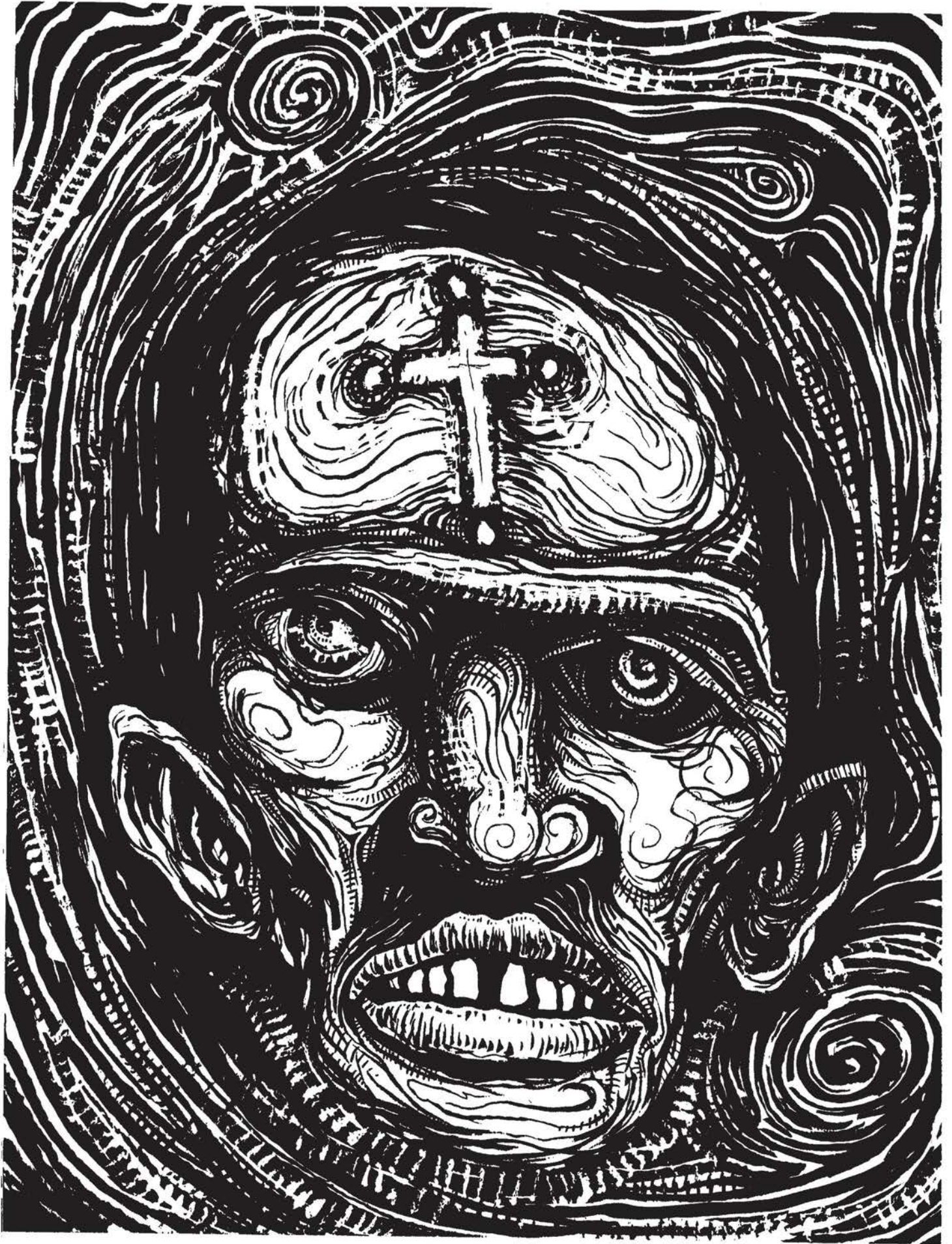
started?" can become *"Where was Glara Dynus this morn? When I awoke she was not at the campfire."* If the discrepancy cannot be explained away, perhaps it's time for the character's secret to be discovered in play.

If the Troupe decides to begin a diabolic Covenant or group, real-world secrecy is unnecessary. Players of Magi may carry their supplemental character sheets in plain sight. Indeed, you may even decide that the Principle of Uncertainty is unnecessary.

Finally, players shouldn't get attached to characters who become diabolists. When those characters are discovered,

they're likely to be attacked, and possibly killed. If immediate enemies/former friends don't get the character, Wizard's Marches, Inquisitors, a Botched summoning roll, angry demons or foolhardiness certainly will. Ultimately, Satan claims the character. A diabolist character's days are marked as soon as he or she is created.

Enjoy playing a diabolist while it lasts, and accept a vile end as part of the territory. *Ars Magica* is a game of storytelling and morals. To pursue the dramatic and just, rampant acquisition of power and wealth should be balanced with Hell's eventual victory.



THE ORDER BREACHED

APPENDIX TWO

Preamble

The Maleficium ultimately serves as a primer for the Dark Magus, the practitioner of the Hermetic arts who goes over to the Infernal camp. Provided here are a few essays about the particular way the breach between The Order of Hermes and its former brethren is flavored by history, perception and policy.

Rise of the Apotropaics

Alas, the Order of Hermes, whether considered as individual members or a collective group, has not handled the problem of the Infernal with much success until recent times. Even in the time of Emperor Constantine, certain members of the Cult of Mercury remarked upon Christian diabolists in their fold, and recognized the newly focused motivation of the anti-Church congregations. Rome's fall brought all Mercurian research into the matter to a halt, however, for the state magicians suddenly found themselves without a state, warring with old friends and rivals just to survive and preserve their knowledge.

If diabolists did exist after the fall of Rome, they were no different than any other enemy faced by Mercurian survivors. In fact, they could almost have been considered allies. Dark wizards were more concerned with battling the Christian

Dominion than fighting disenfranchised Mercurian priests, and many Mercurians held the Church largely responsible for their fall. Thus, Mercurians and diabolists had a common opponent, and many priests who had not fallen under the Church's sway actually joined diabolist ranks.

In A.D. 767, a few surviving independent wizards gathered in the Durenmar forest to build a new order in a world where the upstart Christ was supreme. All thoughts were directed toward survival, growth and mutual trust. If these wizards were at all concerned about diabolist brethren among them, they were no less concerned about the untainted wizardly majority which still fought its own chaotic squabbles. Indeed, Trianoma herself was forced to bely ideological confrontations among attendees of the Durenmar council. Thus, even at the inception of the Order of Hermes, diabolism thrived among wizards, but was not yet seen for the threat it truly was.

It was not until the beginning of the 10th century that the young Order of Hermes began to take a definite stance regarding religion. However, this movement was, paradoxically, both toward the Church and away from diabolism.

New generations of Magi who did not remember Christianity as the cause of Rome's fall began approaching the Church on less biased terms. They saw the good it promoted; indeed, a number of Magi became distant believers, if only because proof of God's power lay all around. Unification of the Order's members therefore arose because of Church doctrine, not in spite of it.

The corruption of House Tytalus was the final nail in the diabolic coffin. The Order was now faced with an immediate threat to focus upon. Whereas a clause in the Hermetic Code had intellectually acknowledged the dangers of the Satanic path, certain Magi were now following that path and thereby endangering the Order and its other members. Magi, particularly those who had accepted Christianity, took a stand against diabolism where they had not before. Even some non-Christian Magi realized the threat the Infernal posed to free will and peaceful study; devils' greed for Gifted souls endangered the livelihood of other Magi.

Another factor in Hermes' decision to oppose diabolists was the fear of attracting Church attention. If the corruption of Magi could not be quelled by their own, the Church might investigate and put all Magi in jeopardy. Even Magi with some faith understood that the Church might be prejudiced against them. Thus, many Hermetic wizards opposed the Infernal threat because of its potential to unleash another danger, Divine wrath.

Thus, general opposition to the Infernal, and a very limited pan-Hermetic Christian faith, unified the Order. In the past the Order's Magi took stock of a crime within their own ranks, determining just how damaging the crime was to the Order before passing sentence against the culprit. By the late 10th century demons were anathema and elicited a base emotional reaction. The Code's promise to slay transgressors was thus given true weight. If temporary exile or other moderate punishment had been enough before, now nothing short of a Wizard's March could resolve a Magus's turn to diabolism. Christian or not, the Hermetic Order became a definite foe of Satan.

It wasn't until the mid-11th century that an organized response to Hell's minions was founded. The political and military commotion behind the execution of Tytalus Magi and the annihilation of House Diedne had attracted attention; an alarming number of clergy had discovered the "secret" Order. Fearing reprisal by the Church, a contingent of Christian Magi (many of whom belonged to House Jerbiton and were known in the medieval community) met with the least excitable, most visionary clergymen of the day.

The result of this meeting was an understanding and a very low-key alliance. Rumors of secret wizards waging war all over Mythic Europe were quelled before they could result in public outcry. In return, a group of Magi agreed to put themselves at the disposal of a discreet branch of exorcists within the Church. A series of experiments were performed to link magic with Divine doctrine, thus allowing certain spells to be boosted with sacrament and prayer. From this alliance and sharing of power arose the Apotropaics, an organization of wizards which exists even today.

The Apotropaics, known in some regions as the Demon Slayers, are a branch of elite Hermetic Magi. They serve a function very similar to the Quaesitor hoplites, and a few hoplites are even members of this other group. The Apotropaics answer to both House Quaesitor and the few Church exorcists who know of their existence (this latter group is so secretive

that it has no name and no record of its alliance). The Magi communicate via a complex code of Scriptural phrases and references to certain icons in an obscure holy text (the meaning of which changes based on the season).

The Apotropaics take their name from their most important spell, which was developed during their first century of alliance with exorcists. The namesake spell is an *Ignem magick* that acts as a demonifuge, and is the favored weapon of Flambeau Apotropaics. The caster must be blessed before the spell works as intended. All members of this sect wear the *Agnus Dei*, a waxen seal of the Lamb of God, near their hearts. The seal was presented to the original members by the Pope in A.D. 1052. (Each new Pope is told of the Apotropaics' existence only if an exorcist deems a Pope can favorably handle the news.)

Powerful Magi in the midst of the Order's affairs, such as those in France and the Rhine, are aware of the Apotropaics. However, Magi in far-off locations (and those with low Hermes Lore scores) might not be aware of the sect. Even those who have heard of them often treat the Apotropaics as something of a myth. When Apotropaics act in the presence of the skeptical, they often joke about their affiliation, using a mythical organization's name to pretend they are of a false sect.

The Apotropaics accept this response, and even promote it at times when it serves their interests. Even certain low-level Quaesitors are unconvinced that the Apotropaics truly exist. However, when ethical and morally righteous Magi (of any House) are taken to the cathedral in Rheims, and stand before exorcists and Magi who ask them to join the fold, former doubters have little choice but to finally accept the truth. Most also accept the offer.

THE TWIN GRAVES

In recent decades a new ceremony known as the Splitting of the Dark Grave, or Michael's Bluff, has been developed by the alliance of Hermetic Apotropaics and Church exorcists. The ceremony weakens Satan's hold on diabolists. Superficially, the ritual requires a diabolist to be captured alive, executed on consecrated ground while under the effects of both a magic spell and a divine prayer, and given two burial sites. The body is left in one grave with its soul (since magic cannot affect the soul), and a supply of raw vis is left in the other (if the victim still has a spirit, it splits off and attaches itself to the vis).

This combination of Magical and Divine power disguises the scent of the soul and accentuates the scent of the raw vis, making it difficult for demons to tell the two sites apart. Although Apotropaics do not know what results from this process, the exorcists speculate that the Archangel Michael intercedes with Hell on behalf of the poor diabolist.

Michael is in charge of the Watchers, those devils who track the Tally of Souls and enforce the Byzantine rules of Inferno's political hierarchy. He monitors their actions through a set of nine lanterns; one lantern is placed on each layer of Hell so that the Watchers are unable to hide from his scrutiny. Furthermore, Michael has the authority to command the

Watchers to perform various tasks. Moved by the exorcists' prayers, Michael tells the Watchers to conceal the true location of the diabolist's soul from the devil who wishes to claim it, and to only allow that devil one chance to pick the proper grave.

If the devil is lucky, he chooses the grave containing his victim's soul. If not, he loses his claim on the soul, and only the raw vis is given to him as a consolation prize of sorts — hence, Michael's Bluff. Prime Masters will, of course, already have the diabolist's spirit in Hell, and this ceremony does not prevent a devil from keeping the unfortunate spirit for its own use even after the soul is denied. Even if the diabolist had a spirit upon death, said spirit is still collected by the devil, along with the "body" of raw vis.

Many diabolists indeed repent as death draws nigh. For these people, Splitting of the Dark Grave is a means for salvation. For those who truly wish to fulfill their obligation and join Satan, however, falling victim to *Splitting of the Dark Grave* is the ultimate humiliation. Diabolists who wish to insult one another often proclaim "a pox on both your graves," implying the other will suffer Michael's Bluff upon death (a grave insult, indeed!).

Parasites of the Order

The following letter, written by a Hermetic Magus and addressed to a Church official, expresses the Order's general position on diabolism within its ranks. The letter also expresses the widespread Hermetic fear that Church retribution against Dark Magi would eventually focus on the Order itself.

To the Most Kind Deacon of the Lady's Church in Lyon:

Kind Father of the Church, I have heard often of the good works you perform in God's service, from merchants and from the many Christian retainers who live with me outside of Lyon, but who go frequently to the city for your services. Unfortunately, I have also heard, from these same sources, of your attitudes toward the practice of magic. Normally, one such as I would refrain from a correspondence of this type, and would simply shake my head and allow you to live on in your mistaken beliefs.

Now, however, it has come to my attention that you have become acquainted with my Hermetic brotherhood. Worse yet, you have made your acquaintance in the most dreadful manner possible, by confronting and interrogating a diabolist claiming to be from our fold. As we prefer to keep our own counsel and remain in benevolent solitude, I shall try, through effort of the pen, to put your most immediate concerns to rest so you do not act to reveal us in impulsive haste.

If this effort proves successful, I request only that you delay audience with the Bishop until I have time to convince you more fully of my Order's methods and intentions. If you wish this to be a purely written discourse, I will respect your suspicions and consent to such an arrangement. For now I wish only to convince you on a personal and emotional level that my Order is not the threat you deem it to be. A new assessment is warranted.

First and foremost, know that we do not traffic with Satan's minions. We have a most stringent policy on this subject, and if we discover fellow practitioners of the Art breaking this law, we act decisively against the culprits, and with more zeal, I'll warrant, than your own Bishop would. I know that in your fully understandable ignorance (perhaps augmented by reading misconceived diatribes by such otherwise venerable and knowledgeable authors as Augustine, Isidore and their ilk), you believe all magic to be a petition to demons. In this belief you are most wrong. We of the Order of Hermes are scholars and natural experimenters in the tradition of Aristotle and Albert Magnus. Demons are both forbidden to us and irrelevant to our studies.

But, to proclaim disinterest is hardly accurate. Quite the contrary: we have an active dislike for sorcerer-diabolists, so-called Dark Magi, such as the man you have in custody. Here is the source of our enmity.

Dark Magi are parasites within the Order of Hermes. They are born, like all Magi, with a Gift for working magic (a most wondrous quality given to some folk through God's generosity). In time they are apprenticed to a full Magus of the Order. In the process they are taught, through many painstaking years, the intricacies of our craft. When they become full members themselves, soon-to-be diabolists take on a House affiliation and join one of our Covenants. (Don't worry, kind Deacon, about these terms at this moment. I shall explain our society more fully at a later date.)

These future traitors go on to study this most exciting and esoteric Art with fellow Magi and the laws of the Order as their security, with the Covenant's equipment and chambers as their resources in the pursuit of arcane experimentation, and (should magical threats arise) with the protection of an exclusive spell called the *Parma Magica*, an enchantment known only to our Order.

All this we invest in our apprentice, our spiritual progeny, yet upon becoming a Dark Magus he falls under Hell's influence and is changed forevermore. Whether this Succumbing takes a period of minutes or years, it cuts the Magus off from our brotherhood and makes him an enemy to us. And, at this early stage, the most horrible part of this transformation is that the Dark Magus is still enmeshed in our society.

Ultimately, new powers and frame of mind will reveal the diabolist to his former compatriots, and that is when we confront him. But until that time — and the subtler demons, working with strong-minded diabolists, can stall the confrontation for decades — the Dark Magus lives within the shell of Hermetic society. He is a retrospective parasite; the time, effort and resources of his past education are now meaningless, and even detrimental to the Order.

But, the worst thing such a diabolist can do is to remain a current-day parasite, living off his peers, damaging the reputation of respectable Magi (just as this Dark Magus in your custody has done), and feeding his demonic master information and opportunities for havoc that can devastate his unsuspecting ex-brothers.

Yes, good Father, we have our reasons for wishing to extinguish these Dark Magi. Our integrity, indeed our lives depend on it. By making our presence known you but increase the number of

our enemies and increase the chances for the true enemies of all mankind to slip past us in the ensuing chaos. As a member of the Church, you know the value of laws and tradition against the tendency toward lawlessness and chaos so common throughout history. I ask you to respect our laws and traditions for they are just and efficacious.

To disrupt the ability of my cousins, to allow the Dark Ones to proceed as they have for centuries, is to allow a dangerous degree of chaos to affect all society. This would give our mutual enemy more freedom than he deserves, and could only hurt Christendom as a whole. I beg of you, hand this imprisoned sorcerer to the secular authorities for immediate execution and refrain from informing the Bishop of our Order's workings.

After you have read it carefully, I beg of you to burn this note, as a sign of good faith. I await your reply.

Pilantius of Stonehill Covenant

Year of Our Lord 1203

ON REMAINING IN THE FOLD

The following is a letter of encouragement written by an unknown Magus of the Order of Hermes. In this letter, the author prompts the Dark Arts in his fellows, and offers instruction on how to pursue them.

Think upon your current position, my brother, before you choose your course of action in the wake of joining with Lucifer. Do not be too hasty to lend external trappings to reflect your choice of the Dark Path, for such things can well be impediments to your progress. Though it grieves me to admit this, Satan is perhaps the one enemy whose presence can cause society to unite unreservedly in its own defense. True enough, our patron is adept at using this very reaction to his own ends. We, though, are not as wise in our strategies as the Imprisoned Angel, and what is worse, we are in a much more tenuous physical position — in the very midst of their realm, and often targets for their narrowly focused wrath. Ours is a perspective they will never understand, and a patron they will always oppose.

Bide, then, your time, and do not cut off old resources. You know that to which I refer, dear Magus. We are no mere hedge wizards, with rude charms and petty baubles as the only signs of allegiance to some clan of pagans in the forest or some cottage full of old crones near the village. We are Dark Magi, men of learning, tradition, and formal discipline. We are members of the Order of Hermes. Do not lightly give up that membership or its rewards. When they learn of our endeavors, they will be quick enough to sever our overt ties to the organization by the ceremony of Renunciation. There is no need to rush into this predicament.

In fact, there are many things which will help you hold onto the Hermetic cloth, and find out when it is no longer feasible to do so. If you develop a strong command of your lesser spirits, countermeasures can always be enacted to ensure advanced warning of discovery. The Code itself, which prevents Magi from spying upon one another, along with the peripheral laws of the sanctum, adequately shrouds our daily practices. Our largest fear from

measures taken above the board are the Quaesitors, who are permitted to use common and rare magicks alike to investigate brothers of the Order.

Enchantments such as *The Invisible Eye Revealed* (and our own variants) provide additional insurance. And never underestimate the power of mundane conversation. From the timid and worried gossip of covenfolk to the changes in demeanor of fellow Magi, you can very often predict the tenor of a Covenant with regard to your affairs. Often, the Dark Magus can detect a change in attitude before his very subjects have managed to constructively voice their subconscious fears. This is a most satisfying and empowering sensation, and it shows that we are in no small way adopting the methods of Satan's minions for our own ends.

THREE FROM THE FOLD

Here are three examples of rationales that can be used to justify dealings with demons. Each is written (or spoken) by a Dark Magus of a different House. In essence, these are odd tangents of misguided reasoning which specific diabolists have followed in choosing the Pathway Dark. These ideas should not be seen as House platforms to which all diabolists of a certain tradition adhere.

Dark Bjornaer

Think, for a moment, about what we of House Bjornaer truly are. Yes, we are the "primitive" folk of the Order, the ones in touch with our primal animal natures. Yes, the passion of beasts great and small stirs in our blood, and at times we pursue the Heart-Beast inside ourselves with glorious abandon, seeking to merge the ideal and the practice of the subconscious animal self. It is true that we partake of that animal soul.

But we are Magi as well.

It is ludicrous to assert the notion that we can live as we do by our animal wits alone. It is a lie and it makes us the most ignorant of hypocrites, proclaiming in one breath to eschew civilized thought, then reciting in the very next a long and intricate string of arcane syllables learned over hard years of study and experimentation. We have affinities for the pagan culture from which we have yet to fully divorce ourselves, and for the animal kingdom into which we immerse ourselves with such relish. But we make use of the forms and techniques of the Roman Magus Bonisagus, and have been enmeshed in this civilized court for several centuries.

Surely, then, our souls capture some reflection of this intellectual identity? Bjornaer's blood is the blood of shape-shifters, and I believe we have adapted an intellectual Heart-Beast that parallels our animalistic side, to shift yet again and evolve into creatures more fully aligned with our environment. I have put this premise before Tribunals in the past, but I have waited until now to state my conclusion:

Simply put, we are demons, all of us.

Every intelligent human has a demonic Heart-Beast that is the true reflection of his or her soul. The "evil" spirits that strike such fear into the human heart are nothing more than the true depths of our wills. After all, we are clearly imperfect. Why else would the venerable Old Gods require that we live and die on this middling

realm, instead of serving them in the perfect realms where they now reside? We have deep-seated faults to resolve, imperfections in character and emotion that must be tended to.

Until we face these flaws, we are doomed to remain apart from the perfect world of the Gods. The animal nature is pleasing; it is a sign of things to come, of our future lives reunited in the warm and forest-filled realms of paradise. Our demonic nature is the gate to paradise. Embrace your evil twin, learn the full extent of its motives and ideals, and then overcome it.

Saghen the Wolf, of House Bjornaer

Speaking before his Renunciation in 1202

Dark Criamon

Surely you don't believe this talk of souls? You, of this most audacious Order, of this Order whose members refer to common men as mortals, and whose powers contend with Christendom's vast domain on near-equal footing? You should know better than that. We must not fall into their all-encompassing paradigm, their trap of the human unconscious, their philosophizing on souls and the battles of God. Whatever man can perceive as the universal God's milieu is, by definition, nothing more than an elaborate metaphor for an even more elaborate and infinitely unfathomable truth. Every concept to which these churchmen own, every fact, is thus a human, egocentric myth resulting only in an Earth-based monopoly of prediction and estimation with a single, united Church.

What they know is inaccurate and irrelevant on all levels but the most basic core of the heart and mind, that part from which springs a potential for oneness with something beyond our current understanding. Aside from such inner reflection, nothing the Church offers is real. There is no soul, there is no Heaven, and there is no Lucifer. I have done extensive research into the subject of demons, and I must conclude that they are illusions.

A great veil of mental energy stretches across the length and breadth of this world, a pattern into which humans place their energies and imaginations. To the Church, this veil is a potent Dominion, a prelude to Heaven on Earth, and the theologies of the patristic fathers prevail where Christian minds explore. To the faeries, the veil unfurls into a wondrous but static realm known as Arcadia, and elsewhere in the world pockets of this pattern material become regios, regions touched by sentient life and retaining its layered image.

We of House Criamon see the different aspects of this veil for what they are: small swaths of a common cloth that blankets the world, a cloth sewn into a pattern we call the Enigma. When a demon forms, it forms from this cloth, and knotted up inside its

spirit reside threads of the Enigma. But demons are illusions, dark images where the positive should be, and inversions of the actual Enigma. Nevertheless, they cannot truly subvert the veil or create their own patterns within its expanse — they can only mirror the truth. We learn from demons by counterexample, by opposition, by experiencing the flaws they thrive upon, and by metaphorically reading between the lines.

I say to you I am guilty of no sin, for sin is a metaphor and I have surpassed it. I say that I have not sold my soul, for the soul is an idea only valid to those who believe in the realm of the Church. Beyond this, the truth, of which the soul is only a fragmentary idealization, is the energy of the individual. This energy, I proclaim, cannot be taken by the illusory ones; it can only go back into the Enigma, and it is the Enigma to which I therefore have devoted my inner potential. I believe in God and I believe in the Enigma, and I believe I shall return to both upon my death.

Releureaux of House Criamon, from a final testament penned for posterity moments before his execution in A.D. 1220.

Dark Jerbiton

Jerbiton teaches that there is beauty and truth in art: the mundane art of mortals and the magical art of the not-so-mortals. This beauty extends farther still: the clearly immortal possess the greatest art of all in the very nature of their existence and their acts. As Magi, we may not view the art of the angels too closely or too often, existing as they do so far above us in the Heavens. However, the art of the Fallen Angels is within our grasp; a warped and evil art, yes, but based on the highest designs which no mere desire for difference can extinguish. There is beauty at the core of their grotesque forms, and beauty in the way they can see into our hearts and know us and want us.

Indeed, the intricate schemes and goadings and indirect influences upon the environment by which demonkind maneuvers — these are nothing less than the tools of a race of immortal artists, through which they sculpt from afar. They pursue the muse of entrapping us, body and soul. This process is a most artful one, and beautiful in the extreme. What pleasure it gives me to participate in this dance of color and shape and matter and spirit, and what joy awaits me each time I am artist enough to gain the upper hand, to match their loving perseverance! Black magic, from the raw empirical procedures of ritual and ingredient to the wildly unpredictable conversation and diabolic debate which often follows, is Art to the most enlightened of its practitioners. The mind becomes canvas and tools combined, and the subject is not the soul but the beauty which springs from the struggle for its ownership.

Reliard of Tours, Magus of House Jerbiton, from his secret diary

GOETIC PORTFOLIO SHEET

Dark Magus _____

Year of Succumbing _____

Hierarchy Score Exp.

Occult Lore Exp.

Permanent Circle Level

Rego + Vim + Intelligence + Magic Theory +
(Occult Lore x Infernal Aura) + Familiarity (if any)

Contest of Wills

Intelligence + Hierarchy + (Confidence
spent x 8) + (Familiarity x 2)

Court of Thralls Maximum Number of Thralls _____

Demon's
Common Name _____

True Name
(if known) _____

Season/Year of Summoning _____

Estimated Length of Servitude _____ years

Estimated Season/ Year of Dismissal _____

Estimated Might _____

Estimated Magnitude _____

Pact Notes

Summon Art

Experience
Stamina + Vim/2 (round up) + Occult Lore +
any Contact Spell Level Bonus

Bind Art

Rego + Vim + Hierarchy

Dismiss Art

Experience
(Rego + Vim)/2 (round up) + Occult Lore +
any Contact Spell Level Bonus

Court-stone Description

Contact Spell: Level

Lvl. Bonus

Familiarity:

Estimated Advantage:

+Rego

Estimated Control

Estimated Current Control: