

HUNTING VIS

Vis hunts are likely to be a common adventure for magi, especially young individuals from spring covenants which have limited resources and need all the supplies they can get for their new and doubtless ambitious projects. The best and most usual vis-hunting group probably consists of one mage and an escort of grogs (with maybe an appropriate companion or two). More than one mage is usually a waste of resources, and frankly, can lead to trouble, as two magi can all too easily get on each other's nerves while out and about. How strong the escort needs to be depends on the dangers of the area, and on the practical and combat abilities of the mage; this is up to the storyguide. If the group is too weak, a brief but dangerous encounter with bandits or suspicious guards can make the point clear; if it is too numerous, the storyguide can emphasize the problems of supplying, managing, and concealing such a party in open country, or even introduce threats to the covenant, where the defenses may have been left undermanned.

A vis hunt involves a process of discovering leads in the form of legends, or rumors, and following these up. Over the course of a season, the hunters can expect to follow many blind alleys: the vis may have already gone, consumed by native creatures or beings, or been harvested by other wanderers, or may have been no



more than a rumor. The magus leading the hunt will be the prime mover and vis detector, but the knowledge and talents of others will help too. Spontaneous magic is too tiring and risky to be really useful: formulaic spells and enchanted devices are much better for repeated use. Helpers with practical skills or Extraordinary Talents will also be useful. Spells and Talents will typically only help when you get close to the vis site: you cannot expect to wave a wand and simply teleport to the nearest supply! Worse still, in many cases the source will not register as raw vis until after harvesting: for example, you can extract vis from the corpses of beasts of virtue, but that does not mean the living animal is a container — in life it moves as part of the spirit of the beast.

Since a vis hunt is a good motivator to fetch magi from their labs, it is often the seed for a full scale story, with dangers, encounters, and commensurate rewards at the storyguide's whim. In that case, the storyguide estimates an appropriate reward when planning the story. However, it can also become a fairly routine "background" activity for a troupe. Indeed, it may be that there are competing stories seeking the attention of the troupe, and yet the troupe wishes to move on to the next game session, rather than going back and playing out the parallel story.

Vis Hunt Activity



A magus may distill vis from the Laboratory Aura, but only obtains Vim vis. Other Arts may only be obtained from the field (directly, or indirectly via trade), from isolated finds or from sites providing a repeating harvest. Covenants are usually founded where vis is (relatively) rich, so vis sources close to the covenant are likely already known and harvested: a hunt must look further afield, and cannot expect to find new repeating sources of vis, only isolated pawns.

A magus may go hunting vis for a season as an alternative to Lab work, in particular as an alternative to distilling Vim vis from the covenant Aura. The Vis Hunt Total provides a formula for the number and kind of pawns of vis found; the total depends on the skill of the magus in

leading and guiding this specialist hunt — unlike laboratory activities, knowledge and luck play as large a part as Arts.

The formula assumes that a vis hunt in the field typically yields less than laboratory activity, in a trade-off for obtaining types other than Vim. Some sagas may wish to adjust the formulae if they make other assumptions; adjusting the Scarcity value is easiest.

The lead magus generates a Vis Hunt Total of:

Stress Die + Area Lore + Legend Lore + Magical Aid + Assistance

The Area Searched should be a region about the size of a county or a small country; too small an area will lack vis, too large and the search lacks focus.

Penalize the Total by -3 per size step away from this:

- ★ Village or covenant -6
- ★ Locale (e.g. "the forest around the Covenant") -3
- ★ County (e.g. Cambridgeshire) 0
- ★ Small country (e.g. Brittany, or Wales) 0
- ★ Larger country (e.g. France or Britain) -3
- ★ Europe -6

If the magus possess the Area Lore knowledge of the searched area (e.g. from a previous hunt) then add their full Area Lore score to the total. If the magus's knowledge covers a smaller area within the larger (local area vs. county), or a larger area encompassing the search area

(France Lore vs. Brittany Lore), then penalize the Area Lore by -3 per step away from the size of the searched area.

Magical Aid: Add a bonus of the magnitude of the best relevant formulaic InVi spell you know (+1 if the spell is mastered), and the magnitude of the best relevant InVi effect in any enchanted device you are carrying. If you have no relevant formulaic spell level, substitute your InVi casting-without-fatigue total, typically $(Sta + Intéllego + Vim)/5$ — you still only get the magnitude of that casting level, so you do better to learn a spell.

Assistance: Also add a bonus of +1 for each of the following: if anyone in the party has a better Area Lore than you, a better Legend Lore, or a relevant Talent such as Second Sight. (So fellow hunters may add up to +3.) Furthermore, if you hunt alone without grogs, then you suffer the social penalty of your Gift, as you yourself must quiz peasants for “strange rumors.”

Vis Yield: This depends on the Scarcity of vis in the region. For each multiple of the Scarcity factor (drop fractions), the hunters find 1 pawn of raw vis. The scarcity factor varies from region to region:

- ★ an average wilderness would have a scarcity of 5 (1 pawn per 5 points of total)
- ★ a settled area might be 6 or 7
- ★ while a richer area like Brittany would be a 4.

Storyguides should feel free to adjust the Scarcity to reflect the vis richness of the Saga. Really rich hunting grounds, such as

inside an uncharted regio, might be as rich as 3 or even 2, while St. Peter’s Square in Rome might have a Scarcity of 10 or even higher.

Types of Vis Found: The storyguide can choose the type of vis obtained, or determine the type randomly; it is likely that multiple pawns will be of different types, but you may simply lump it all into one “find.” Some Forms are more common in the region of the hunt, and are more easily found.

The following table may be used, or you may devise a table to suit the Saga and the region hunt-ed. Roll a die:

Vis form— roll a simple die:

1. Animál
2. Aquam
3. Auram
4. Corpus
5. Herbam
6. Ignem
7. Imáginem
8. Mentem
9. Terram
10. Vim

With the storyguide’s approval, the magus can choose a particular Art and ignore leads other than for that: if they desire a common form for the region, subtract 5 from the Vis Hunt Total, otherwise subtract 10, and determine the number of pawns found.

If the Vis Hunt roll is botched, then something goes wrong:

- ★ The vis found may be tainted (Infernal or Faerie Vis).
- ★ Something may have been disturbed, and come back to cause problems in a later story.
- ★ It may trigger an immediate adventure, just when the magi thought the hunt was safe.
- ★ Someone may be hurt, or something lost.

Example Hunts



Advena is a recently gauntleted maga sent on a hunt as service to her covenant. She has no InVi spells, but has Int +3, and Intéllego 5, Vim 3, so could cast a $(3+5+3)/5$, or level 2 spell, without fatiguing herself. This is magnitude 1. She has no devices to help her, and while she knows her home



covenant (Covenant Lore 3) she has no knowledge of the wider region, so the covenant send a seasoned hunter with her (Area Lore (region) 4 (paths and trails)), and a wise woman (wife of one of the older guards, Legend Lore 3 (Vis Hunts)). Her companions give her a bonus of +2.

Her player rolls a 2, + 1 (spontaneous casting) + 0 (no devices) + 0 (no Lore) +2 (companions), for a total of 5.

She is hunting in Brittany, with a Scarcity of 4: she finds 1 Pawn.

The storyguide rolls to determine the Art: 6: In this fertile forest, Animal vis is common; they found and hunted down a magical bird, and took its feathers.

Advena gets exposure to Area Lore and Legend Lore for the region, for her season in the wild. (Storyguides might let players split Exposure experience between Area Lore and Legend Lore for this type of activity; exposure alone can-not raise abilities above 4). She takes an Area Lore specialization in Vis sites, and a Legend Lore specialization in Magical Beasts. She also realizes she is not using her magic effectively, and so consults the covenant library, finding a Level 16 InVi spell: with her Magic Theory 5 she can learn this, and it is (just!) a 4th magnitude spell.

For her next hunt, she asks around, and manages to borrow a wand of Vis Detection (a 1 pawn, lesser enchanted device, with a level 10 effect: InVi 5, Near, Momentary, Small, +5 for Continuous Effect). She has also deter-mined that one of the odder grogs, who “talks to the clouds,” has the Second Sight Talent. She

tells him to come with her, as he will give her an extra +1 bonus. She rolls better: a 9, + 4 (magnitude of spell) + 2 (magnitude of device) + 3 (Area lore and Legend lore score, and 1 for specialty) +3 (companions), for a total of 21; she is still hunting in Brittany (Scarcity 4) so finds 5 Pawns — much better.

The storyguide decides he cannot be bothered to roll five times, so rules that two finds of 3 Pawns and 2 Pawns were made: (6,3) Imaginem Vis: they found a shimmering crystal whose color changes continuously; and (1,8) Mentem Vis: at a cross-roads they encountered the ghost of a criminal, laid it to rest, and recovered his burial shroud.

Had Advena hunted elsewhere in France, such as Normandy (more settled, Scarcity 5) she would have found only 4 pawns; had she hunted in the densely settled areas of southern England (Scarcity 6 or 7) she would have only found 3 pawns.

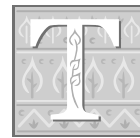
Option: Shorter Hunts

f a magus has some time free, but less than a whole season, they may still find something. A curtailed hunt will bring a penalty, according to time lost or time hunting:

- ★ Up to 10 days lost: no penalty
- ★ Up to 1 month lost: -5
- ★ Up to 2 months lost: -10
- ★ 2-4 weeks hunting: -15

Shorter hunts are unlikely to yield anything unless the magus knew where to look anyway — in which case the Vis Hunt Total formula is not really relevant.

Option: Finding Repeatable Vis Sources



Typically these are rare, and usually result from a full-scale story rather than a random roll for a background activity. However, if the Troupe desire, a large find may be substituted with a smaller repeating site:

Divide the number of pawns by 3, and drop fractions, to determine the annual yield.

The Troupe should decide how the vis is harvested, and the amount of effort required, but usually it is a matter of being in the right place at the right time of year — a full season's hunt is not required to repeat a harvest.

Option: Alternative Lores



The Troupe may wish to consider allowing Faerie Lore to be used in place of Legend Lore, if the Hunt is to focus on Faerie lands; there may also be circumstances where Occult Lore is appropriate.